

# “Sharpshooters Made a Grand Record This Day”

## Combat on the Skirmish Line at Gettysburg on July 3

Timothy J. Orr



On the morning of July 3, 1863, Corporal Eugene B. Kellerman, a soldier in Company I, 20<sup>th</sup> Maine Infantry, descended the slopes of Big Round Top, a rocky eminence where his regiment had spent the previous evening. Near dark on July 2, the fatigued Maine regiment scaled the wooded heights, drove off an enemy brigade, and took possession of the summit. As per standard procedure, the 20<sup>th</sup> Maine's commander, Colonel Joshua Chamberlain, deployed skirmishers to determine the layout of the Confederate line and to make certain that his regiment truly held the hill. Midway down the southwestern slope, Kellerman and his comrades collided with skirmishers from Colonel James Sheffield's Alabama brigade. A short fight ensued, lasting only a few minutes. The Maine regiment lost Lieutenant Arad Linscott, who had seized an abandoned musket so he could get a shot at the gray-coats himself. A ball struck Linscott in the thigh, and he died several hours later at the Jacob Weikert farm.<sup>1</sup> During this engagement, a Confederate skirmisher kneeling behind a rock took aim at Corporal Kellerman, who also lowered his own rifle and fired. Kellerman got off his shot, which passed through the Alabamian's mouth and came out the back of his head. When the shooting subsided, Kellerman went to the blood-spattered boulder and noticed that the man's hat had been left untouched by both the bullet and the resulting gore. Kellerman had long wanted a new hat, so he took this one from his fallen adversary. Still, the incident left him a little unnerved, and Kellerman wrote to his brother about it. But he also cautioned his sibling, telling him not to say anything. "[D]o not [make] noise about it," he wrote. "[He] was the only one that I know of hitting for certain." What happened that morning on July 3 was a situation that repeated itself across the battlefield of Gettysburg: the deadly clash of skirmishers, resulting in inevitably personal—in this case, face-to-face—confrontations.<sup>2</sup>

In the pantheon of Civil War literature, few soldiers are as poorly understood as sharpshooters and skirmishers. Recent studies of Civil War tactics focus their attention on the importance of rifled muskets and the persistence of linear combat. Generally, debate among scholars of Civil War tactics has deadlocked around whether or not a "rifle revolution" occurred. Strangely, authors such as Perry Jamieson, Grady McWhiney, and Paddy Griffith discuss sharpshooters and skirmishers in a cursory way,

centering much of their analysis on large-scale, infantry combat—tales of lines-of-battle, saber-swinging cavalry charges, and grand artillery batteries—which caused the majority of combat deaths. More recently, in *This Republic of Suffering*, Drew Gilpin Faust explored the image and reputation Civil War sharpshooters in the national mindset, at least as perceived by those on the home front, but she never supported her explanations with any analysis of the actual roles of sharpshooters in combat.<sup>3</sup>

It is fair to guess that sharpshooters and skirmishers may never be as well understood as their comrades who fought in the line of battle. This oversight stems from an unavoidable deficiency in sources describing this style of combat. The hypersensitive age of Victorian sensibility placed a vicious stigma—either of cowardice or cruelty—on the reputation of sharpshooters, and this shame followed them wherever they went. Many Americans looked down upon those who sought cover in the midst of battle and who, while hidden, intentionally aimed at and killed enemy soldiers. In the Gilded Age, as the struggle for Civil War memory began with the publication of personal memoirs and regimental histories, moments like that described by Kellerman were forgotten. So too did the memory of skirmishers diminish. Although skirmish lines had been important formations during the Civil War—they began and ended nearly all Civil War battles—their significance shrank, not only because the U.S. Army did away with them, but because veterans’ memories gravitated toward more lurid tales that reminisced the heated throes of intense “stand up and shoot” contests, pitched engagements between opposing lines of battle. Grand bayonet charges, stalwart defenses, mighty huzzahs, rebel yells, and sword-wielding officers mounted on powerful steeds became the central image of the Civil War’s epic face of battle.<sup>4</sup>

There is much evidence to suggest, however, that sharpshooting and skirmishing played a major role in Civil War battles and resulted in far more deaths than scholars have previously accounted for. Rare admissions by Civil War soldiers in their private letters reveal that they intentionally shot at individual enemy soldiers or killed them willfully, confirming that such behavior was commonplace on the battlefield, especially after 1863. Whenever these letter-writers admitted to the deliberate killing of another soldier, they followed it with an expression of shame or regret or an immediate warning to those at home not to brag about what they had done. How many others purposely killed and never wrote home about it? Obviously, we will never know that answer, but we must guess that, given the personal nature of sharpshooting and skirmish combat, the number could have been sizable.

How often did skirmishing and sharpshooting occur? In subtle ways, after-action reports and regimental histories reveal that infantry units on both sides participated in these tactics to a substantial degree. As standard practice, every commander, from major general to sergeant, sent out a cloud of skirmishers and sharpshooters to “feel out” enemy positions and determine strength and deployment. Also, skirmishers and sharpshooters performed other essential roles: They guarded flanks and forward positions, detected the approach of an enemy assault, and sometimes paved the way for grander assaults against fortified positions. Quite often, skirmishers and sharpshooters followed a Napoleonic truism, serving as “light infantry,” dispersed formations that led the way across the deadly ground, shielding the heavy assault that was soon to follow.<sup>5</sup>

The role of sharpshooters and skirmishers only increased in significance as combat in the Eastern theater progressed. During the Mine Run and Overland campaigns of late 1863 and mid-1864, the Army of Northern Virginia and the Army of the Potomac constantly entrenched, fortifying their positions at every confrontation. As commanders on both sides scanned for ways to breach each others’ lines, infantrymen from both armies remained in constant contact with each other, not only for the sake of weakening each others’ positions, but also for determining when and if the opposing army had maneuvered or redeployed. For forty-four straight days in May and June 1864, the Union and Confederate armies in northern Virginia grappled with each other in a gory stalemate. Not a day went by when sharpshooters and skirmishers remained silent. In his thorough survey of the Battle of Cold Harbor, Gordon Rhea speculated that between May 26 and June 3, more than 4,200 men succumbed to sharpshooter and skirmish fire. Indeed, this warfare proved just as deadly, if not more so, than the infamous June 3 assault for which the battle is often remembered.<sup>6</sup>

Sharpshooting and skirmish warfare on the third day of the Battle of Gettysburg provide an excellent case study of when and how this kind of combat evolved. As the main bodies of the two armies glared at each other from across the deadly ground between Seminary Ridge and Cemetery Ridge, a flurry of skirmishing and sharpshooting occurred in between. On July 1 and 2, both armies had fought “traditional” engagements—in a loose sense of the word—with long lines of battle smashing against each other. Now, as General Robert E. Lee’s army repositioned itself for the final punch, both sides tested the same deadly ground to determine what might happen next. Then, when Union victory appeared certain, sharpshooters and skirmishers scrambled into the “no man’s land” once again to determine the pace of Confederate retreat and its obverse Union pursuit.

First, some explanation should be made to define the roles of sharpshooters and skirmishers during the Civil War. In the lexicon, postwar writers used these terms interchangeably. Wartime writers sometimes blended their use too, but more often than not, “sharpshooter” and “skirmisher” meant completely different things. The term “sharpshooter” typically referred to an infantryman who operated by himself and who aimed at a specific individual, sometimes a general or soldier of importance, but often at ordinary infantrymen. Sharpshooters often possessed superior firearms, sometimes augmented by telescopic sights, and generally, they expressed great pride in their skill.

In July 1863, the Army of Northern Virginia possessed only two sharpshooter units in the truest sense of the word, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Georgia Sharpshooters and Blackford’s Alabama Sharpshooters.<sup>7</sup> On May 3, 1862, in response to the success of and the positive newspaper accounts regarding Colonel Hiram Berdan’s United States Sharpshooters, the Confederate Congress passed a law authorizing the Army of Northern Virginia to form individual “sharpshooter battalions” out of its various brigades. Under this new directive, every brigade commander now had the power to transfer the best shots from each regiment and form ad-hoc sharpshooter units. It took considerable time for this plan to catch on. Naturally, regimental commanders disliked transferring their best riflemen to other units, so most brigade commanders exhibited indifference when they heard about the new law. Finally, in January 1863, Brigadier General Robert Rodes acted on the directive, ordering squads consisting of one-twelfth of all the soldiers in each of his regiments to form into sharpshooter battalions. Confederate unit rosters are somewhat unclear on the specifics of this transfer, but it appears that some of those selected for assignment rotated into and out of it on a constant basis. Rodes wrote,

The corps of Sharpshooters thus formed will be constantly drilled as Skirmishers by its commander but is not to be considered a separate command except in the immediate presence of the enemy when it will cover the front of the brigade. At all other times the officers and men belonging to it will remain & do duty with their respective Regts.

At Gettysburg, Rodes’s original sharpshooter battalion fell to the command of Major Eugene Blackford, whose men operated in their roles on a part-time basis only. A few other brigades in the Confederate 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps adopted these orders. In fact, at Gettysburg, all five brigades in Rodes’s division had sharpshooter battalions, and according to Blackford, all of them fell under his overall direction. However, evidence cannot deduce if Blackford retained command of all the division’s sharpshooters throughout the entire battle.<sup>8</sup>

Several other Confederate divisions had sharpshooter battalions at Gettysburg—at least they did on paper—and these included several brigades in the “Stonewall” Division. However, only one brigade in the Army of Northern Virginia had a consistently segregated sharpshooter battalion, Colonel William T. Wofford’s brigade in the Confederate 1<sup>st</sup> Corps. In April 1863, Wofford directed each of his five regiments to commit fifty men to the battalion. All of them did so, and one regiment, the 16<sup>th</sup> Georgia, provided 100 men. Wofford, it seems, encountered some resistance to his directive, as one of his soldiers commented, “It is mean to take men from the company of their choice against their wishes and put them in a company whose officers they do not like. The feeling against it in the Brigade is bitter, and if

Wofford organizes the battalion he will do it in the face of universal opposition.”<sup>9</sup> Wofford persisted, completing this organization on June 9, when he announced,

All these officers [commanding the six companies] without exception are young healthy and athletic, and from the best evidence that I could procure are moral intelligent gentlemen. In point of courage, intelligence, and morality I feel justified in saying that they are equal if not superior to the officers of any regiment or battalion in this brigade.<sup>10</sup>

This unit became known as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Georgia Sharpshooters, and Gettysburg would be its first battle.<sup>11</sup>

Generally, the Army of Northern Virginia’s sharpshooter battalions carried with them their regular arms—British-made Enfield rifled muskets—but an unspecified number wielded British-designed Whitworth rifles.<sup>12</sup> These elegant weapons, invented by Joseph Whitworth in 1859, sported an eleven-millimeter hexagonal bore that fired a slightly larger bullet. The snug fit produced a tight spin when the bullet exited the muzzle, and in the hands of skilled marksmen, these weapons were accurate to more than 800 yards. Also, a small number of Confederate soldiers in Brigadier General Jerome Robertson’s Texas and Arkansas brigades carried privately purchased target rifles. Prior to the war, several Northern manufacturers produced these hefty rifles—some as light as seventeen pounds, others as heavy as thirty pounds—each usually fitted with a telescopic sight. Such weapons went to assigned riflemen in Robertson’s brigade who specialized in long-range work. Robertson’s brigade probably carried no more than twenty of these rifles, but the men who wielded them were crack shots and operated entirely on their own hook.<sup>13</sup>

Contrary to assumptions offered in Michael C. C. Adams’s classic explication of Union military failure in the East, *Our Masters the Rebels*, the Union Army of the Potomac delved into a vastly deeper pool of sharpshooter resources.<sup>14</sup> Not only were Northerners closer to the scene of target-rifle production, but they had a longer and more deeply saturating tradition of sport shooting. The great influx of German and Swiss immigrants in the 1840s and 1850s brought with it a strong gun culture. *Schuetzen* clubs, prominent among officers from the German armies, took root in America as part of immigrants’ efforts to reestablish cultural communities in the United States. Fearful of what ethnic rifle clubs might do to the sanctity of the Republic, nativist gun clubs organized in retaliation. The absence of massive immigration in the South stifled a similar rivalry from occurring among local gun clubs. In a way, ethnocentrism and Know-Nothingism produced a healthy atmosphere of competition in the North among this new class of sport shooters. Target shooting, described by one newspaper as “the offspring of a manly Northern sport,” became popular among upper-class gentlemen in the Northeast and Midwest. Those who prided themselves on exceptional hand-eye coordination and scientific thought gravitated toward this blossoming activity. Young ladies decked out in fine hoops, bonnets, and parasols often searched out gentlemen at annual shooting exhibitions, and this female attention further swelled sport-shooting’s popularity.<sup>15</sup>

The North’s homegrown talent eventually found its way into the ranks of the Army of the Potomac. By July 1863, it had five fully trained sharpshooter units. Of these, Colonel Hiram Berdan’s 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> U.S. Sharpshooters were the most well-known. In June 1861, Berdan concocted his idea to raise a “corps” of the best marksmen in the North, and the War Department, after some cajoling, accepted his plan. Quartermasters and ordnance officials outfitted Berdan’s men with green frock coats and armed them with the Christian Sharps’s Model 1859 .52-caliber breech-loading rifle, fitted with a double-set trigger and the R. S. Lawrence pellet-primer system. Although sometimes exaggerated, the marksmanship exhibited by Berdan’s troops surpassed anything the American army had ever produced. Wrote one Union observer, “These sharpshooters are the greatest terror to the enemy and well they may be for no sooner does one of them Rebels show himself then plunk goes a bullet into his body, and he is done from secession for this world.”<sup>16</sup> In addition to carrying their trusty breech-loading weapons, the best shots in Berdan’s two regiments deployed privately purchased telescopic target rifles for long-range tasks.



The Morgan James rifle, the American target rifle, and the Northern target rifle—all of them considered some of the best distance weapons in the world—saw use by talented green-coats. These target rifles fired an octagonal bullet rammed down a much smaller bore. Berdan's Sharpshooters boasted of their ability to hit targets more than 1,000 yards distant. Each weapon came equipped with a globe or telescopic sight. Lieutenant Charles Stevens of the 1<sup>st</sup> U.S. Sharpshooters remarked, "These telescopes had powerful magnifiers, so much so that a small object could be seen at a long distance. But the cross-wires within them tremble so easily that it requires a steady hand to hold the cross on the mark." An infantry officer who looked through these scopes marveled at "their power and the distinctness with which objects of at least a mile distant are brought under the eye of the observer." Although it took the steadiest of nerves to make these weapons effective, such technology gave Berdan's men a powerful advantage.<sup>17</sup> One member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> U.S. Sharpshooters, Sergeant Wyman White, once used a thirty-pound telescopic target rifle in 1864. One day during the Overland campaign, with relative ease, he scattered a cluster of Confederate engineers. White wrote in his diary, "I have no doubt the working party of rebels was more than a mile away and I had no trouble in driving them away. I also have no doubt if I hit any of them, they received an awful wound."<sup>18</sup>



Colonel Hiram Berdan. LC

Early in the war, Berdan's men served an important role by making sharpshooting popular. Although some newspapers feared that raising sharpshooter regiments would produce too many promiscuously armed and ill-disciplined soldiers, Berdan maintained, "A deadly marksman, by picking off the commandants and officers of the enemy, would . . . effect a more complete rout on account of the confusion ensuing than a whole battery of grape or shell." He stated, "[T]hey would be of more real value . . . than five, or ten times the number of common troops with the common weapon."<sup>19</sup> An advertisement that Berdan placed in the *New York Times* read,

The prodigious efficiency of detachments of such Sharp-Shooters, armed with our Northern Patent Target Rifles, needs only to be alluded to to be recognized at once by all who have any knowledge of this subject. . . . That skill . . . can be converted into a powerful military instrument so readily, I feel confident the subject need only to be suggested to ensure its being fully and properly attended to.<sup>20</sup>

Berdan established strict qualifications for entry into his corps. Each applicant had to pass a shooting test by hitting a target at 200 yards, standing or kneeling, placing ten consecutive shots into a ten-inch diameter. Even for expert marksmen in Northern rifle clubs, this test proved remarkably difficult. In Albany on July 13, 1861, 100 men tried out, but only six passed. On July 22, thirty men from a Swiss rifle club—veterans of Crimea and the Italian campaign—showed up at Berdan's rendezvous at Weehawken, New Jersey, but none supposed they could meet the stringent requirements. To quell these grumblers,

Berdan easily put ten shots into the bull's-eye. A reporter remarked, "Colonel Berdan exacts the very *crème de la crème* of skill, no one of them had confidence enough in his abilities to submit himself to the rigid test."<sup>21</sup> By December 1861, Berdan had raised 1,800 men, no doubt some of the most talented riflemen in the North, and the War Department eventually assigned Berdan's regiments to the Army of the Potomac. Newspaper reporters followed the path of his 1<sup>st</sup> U.S. Sharpshooters to the Yorktown peninsula in 1862, heralding the daring exploits of the green-coated band, and by the end of the campaign, a great many skeptics had come to accept the usefulness of this new branch of service.

Several other Union sharpshooter regiments organized during the same period. In the late spring of 1861, a Pennsylvania politician, Thomas Leiper Kane, raised the 1<sup>st</sup> Pennsylvania Rifles, a unit comprised of raftsmen and deer hunters from the northern counties of Pennsylvania. Each member could ostensibly hit a deer on the run, so they all wore deer tails in their hats, earning them the nickname, "The Bucktails." Finally, two independent companies, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Massachusetts Sharpshooters, both armed with telescopic rifles, augmented two brigades in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> corps. Altogether, at Gettysburg, both armies probably fielded no more than 1,500 specially armed and trained sharpshooters, or no more than 0.9 percent of both armies combined. However, a great number of the line-infantry regiments in the Union army organized themselves as "rifle regiments" or had "rifle companies" attached to them. Many German-speaking regiments, including the 27<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania and the 54<sup>th</sup> and 58<sup>th</sup> New York from the 11<sup>th</sup> Corps, formed from old rifle clubs or from rifled militia based in Philadelphia and New York City, as did a few native-born regiments, such as four companies belonging to the 13<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts which had once been part of Boston's prestigious 4<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Rifle Battalion. Some regiments, including the 14<sup>th</sup> Connecticut, the 2<sup>nd</sup> New Hampshire, and the 1<sup>st</sup> Minnesota, had rifle companies armed with Sharps rifles, and these companies usually operated as skirmishers, putting their sharpshooting prowess to the test at major battles. The list could go on.

But what of skirmishers? How were they any different? In simplest terms, skirmishers were regular infantrymen deployed in an unusual formation. A skirmish line consisted of a single rank of infantry that fought dispersed. According to contemporary tactical manuals, a skirmish line started out from a two-rank line of battle. Under the command, "take intervals," officers dispersed each cluster of four men, or "cell," to a distance of twenty paces. Once the officers separated the cells, the cell-mates, in turn, scattered into a single line, each man taking intervals five paces from his nearest file partner (rear rank men on the left, and front rank men on the right). Skirmish lines were hardly new to pre-modern combat. Armies had used them for centuries, from ancient times up to the Napoleonic and Crimean wars. By 1860, they had become a standard formation for all infantry units. Nearly every regiment or company had to perform skirmish duty at some point during the war, and although some regiments and companies rotated into and out of this service, most veteran regiments in the Eastern theater became experts at this formation and its accompanying style of warfare. From a skirmish formation, soldiers kept up a continuous fire, even while advancing or withdrawing. When each front-rank man loaded his weapon, his file partner covered him, and vice versa. Skirmishers advanced over open or broken terrain with relative ease, gathered crucial intelligence about enemy formations, or delayed enemy advances until reinforcements arrived.

Unlike lines of battle, which tended to fire indiscriminately into opposing formations, skirmishers took aimed shots. Thus, skirmish lines offered soldiers a chance to practice their marksmanship in a hostile setting. Consequently, observers sometimes mistook skirmishers for trained sharpshooters, thus accounting for the interchangeability of the two terms.<sup>22</sup> But, regardless of the appellation, the continual use and gradual acceptance of sharpshooting and skirmishing as a centerpiece on the American battlefields induced a modicum of respect to an otherwise despised craft. At the commencement of the war, America's traditional military ethos held skirmishing and sharpshooting in suspicion, if not contempt. Midway into the war, soldiers and officers became more accepting of their presence. In 1864, an officer from the 17<sup>th</sup> Maine, Major Charles P. Mattocks, put this feeling into words when he took command of the 1<sup>st</sup> U. S. Sharpshooters. As a new student of skirmish tactics, he remarked at the novelty of the 1<sup>st</sup> U.S. Sharpshooters' unique style of drill. He wrote,

The sharp shooters have a very peculiar duty in action. They are the skirmishers who go ahead and “kick up the muss” as they say. In fact it is almost a new branch of service. . . . We have some fancy movements in skirmish drill. . . . I was always fond of skirmish drill, but never more so than at the present time. . . . They understand skirmish calls on the bugle so well that it is rare sport to drill the battalion.<sup>23</sup>

Under skirmish drill, soldiers now had to “become their own general.” They had to choose where, when, and how to fire at an enemy, and individually, they had to make the decision to kill, a decision they would not have made if they continued under the guidance of their officers during line-of-battle warfare. In many ways, the acceptance of skirmishing and sharpshooting not only boosted discipline and morale, but it induced an immense psychological leap in the mindset of the American soldier. When thinking back on skirmish warfare—recalling specifically the third day at Gettysburg—a New York veteran reflected upon unusual style of skirmishing and the dramatic change it produced:

As *skirmishing* is a most important feature in war, and as few unmilitary people have a correct idea of it, we will insert some descriptive notices of this peculiar mode of warfare. So important is it, that *skirmish drill* is part of training in every well drilled organization. The men are trained to use every wile and manoeuvre to conceal their own persons, while they watch every opportunity to pick off their antagonists. To run with a dodging, irregular, zigzag motion, so as to foil the eye of the marksman; to crawl like a reptile among vines and bushes; to hide behind trees, or rocks and stones, or in rifle pits; to keep the eye stealthily but steadily fixed upon the foe; in short, to intimate in every possible manner the cunning of the savage or the beast of the prey, these are the accomplishments of the skirmisher. No trick is thought disgraceful; no stratagem is thought unmilitary, if only successful; and when he takes his murderous aim, the skirmisher is fully aware that, at the same moment, an unseen foe may be taking equally fatal aim at him.<sup>24</sup>

Historians still debate the importance of the rifled-musket in the Civil War. Paddy Griffith and Earl Hess argue correctly that if the rifled musket had any role at all in changing combat in the Civil War, it affected skirmishing, not regular battle.<sup>25</sup> Still, Hess contends, “good skirmishing was never a substitute for good fighting by the battle line.” In Hess’s view, the Civil War was the “high point” of skirmishing, as it declined quickly in the decades afterward. This may be true, but certainly, the above quote suggests that skirmishing left a lasting legacy, throwing off the mantle of Victorian sentimentality, forcing soldiers to become “savage beasts of prey,” to think “no trick disgraceful,” or to take “murderous aim” willfully.<sup>26</sup> It is important, then, to determine where and when these changes played out. In the Eastern theater, the third day at Gettysburg became one of those moments.

By summer 1863, the scene was ripe for a showdown between the sharpshooters and skirmishers of the Army of the Potomac and those of the Army of Northern Virginia. When dawn broke on July 3, the two armies found themselves arranged in two concentric fishhooks, their right and left flanks opposing each other almost directly. The Union right flank perched itself at the base of Culp’s Hill, a wooded terrain feature that guarded the vitally important Baltimore pike. Throughout the morning, a horrendous battle surged up and down the slopes of this hill as elements from three Confederate divisions tried unsuccessfully to dislodge the Union defenders from the 12<sup>th</sup> Corps who had constructed elaborate breastworks midway up the slope. At noon, this climactic fighting sputtered out, but as it did so, skirmishers from both sides went to work immediately. By midday, Confederate soldiers from Major General Edward Johnson’s and Major General Robert Rodes’s divisions took shelter behind the large boulders that abutted Rock Creek. Although their earlier attack had been repulsed, the Confederates intentionally prolonged this fight by deploying skirmishers to keep the Union line pinned. Both

Confederate divisions had an easy time deploying their men, since the brigade commanders of both, thanks to their implementation of the May 1862 Congressional order, knew which men to send forward. Those chosen to serve in the temporary sharpshooter battalions sprinted from the shattered ranks of their parent regiments and started firing. Brigadier General George H. Steuart stated that “nearly half” of his brigade deployed as skirmishers for the “rest of the day.” Brigadier General James A. Walker wrote that his Stonewall Brigade intentionally kept up “a desultory fire until dark.” Colonel R. H. Dungan, another brigade commander, wrote that he “kept out a heavy line of skirmishers during the whole time [of July 3], and heavy skirmishing was kept up almost constantly.” Colonel John C. Higginbotham of the 25<sup>th</sup> Virginia Infantry of Dungan’s brigade wrote that his “sharpshooters”—a squad of fifty men commanded by lieutenants J. G. McCray and J. H. Yancey—“were engaged during the entire day.”<sup>27</sup>

Confederate sharpshooters bore the brunt of the fight at Culp’s Hill in the afternoon and evening hours of July 3. Not a minute went by before darkness fell when shooting did not occur. A number of gray-clad marksmen climbed into tall trees to overlook the Federal entrenchments. The 12<sup>th</sup> Corps soldiers dubbed these annoying Confederates “tree frogs,” and they expressed extreme pleasure whenever one got knocked off his perch. A soldier in the 28<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania remembered that one skilled shooter found a roost that assured “him of a victim at every shot.” Adjutant Samuel Goodman of the 28<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania eventually spotted him, and borrowing a sergeant’s rifle, summarily brought him down. Private Henry Brown of Company A remembered, “Mr. Reb came down head first, striking a large boulder that had been split . . . in such a manner that his head entered the crevice, his shoulders striking either side, and being crushed, he was wedged in so tightly, with feet extending upward, that it was utterly impossible to extricate his body for burial [the] next day.” Amused by this tree frog’s gruesome death, the soldiers of the 12<sup>th</sup> Corps’ 2<sup>nd</sup> Division applauded, for Adjutant Goodman’s marksmanship had temporarily ended their worries.<sup>28</sup>

Farther down the line, at the curve of the Union fishhook, the scene on neighboring Cemetery Hill was not too different. Here, Union soldiers from the 11<sup>th</sup> Corps sat behind low stone walls on the hill’s summit, taking occasional shots at Confederate marksmen near the hill’s base. Unlike their counterparts on Culp’s Hill, these Confederate sharpshooters did not have any trees to climb, so they fired from houses on the southeast side of Gettysburg or from furniture barricades erected in the streets. Here, the Confederates deployed their ad-hoc sharpshooter battalions to good effect, including Major Blackford’s Alabama Battalion. Confederate riflemen shot from windows and doorways and then recoiled into the protective confines of the houses. Their accurate shooting gave the 11<sup>th</sup> Corps soldiers plenty to fret about. Colonel Andrew L. Harris, commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade, 1<sup>st</sup> Division, 11<sup>th</sup> Corps, wrote that his “skirmishers commenced a heavy fire upon the skirmishers of the enemy, which they replied to with vigor. This was kept up the entire day, in which my command suffered severely.” Captain Emil Koenig of the 58<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry agreed. “The fire of these sharpshooters was very annoying to us,” he wrote, “as we could not show our heads above the fence[s we occupied] without being fired at.”<sup>29</sup> Twenty-year-old Captain George Benson Fox of the 75<sup>th</sup> Ohio Infantry wrote to his father, “The Reb sharp shooters played havock with many of us.” Fox saw his brigade commander, Colonel Harris, struck by a sharpshooter’s bullet, but luckily, his “hide was too tough to let it enter.”<sup>30</sup> Josiah R. Sypher, a correspondent for the *New York Tribune*, interviewed some 11<sup>th</sup> Corps soldiers after the battle. The Germans admitted that more than 300 of their number had fallen from sharpshooter and skirmisher fire on July 3, all of them struck, they believed, by only a dozen snipers hidden inside a brick house along Baltimore Street. “Sharpshooting has become a serious service in battle,” wrote Sypher. He lamented, “The house might have been destroyed, but in doing this many others in town would have been damaged. It is a question, however, whether the whole town is worth the lives it cost to save it.”<sup>31</sup>

Generally, the Confederates kept up skirmishing and sharpshooting against the Union right flank to keep their foes fixed in position. Fearful of a Union counterattack on that flank, they simply shot at it to keep it from moving. Once darkness fell, Lieutenant General Richard Ewell, operating under orders from Lee, commenced withdrawing his corps back to Oak Ridge in preparation for retreat. Ewell’s extraction

began around 10 P.M., and the last elements of his corps left the Union right flank at 3 A.M. on Independence Day. Given the rough terrain and large force Ewell had to move, his withdrawal—which did not alert Union forces during the night—displayed masterful military precision. The 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> corps soldiers did not realize that the Confederate left flank had changed position until late morning on July 4. The desultory sharpshooting and skirmishing had achieved its tactical purpose.<sup>32</sup>

Skirmishing and sharpshooting grew equally dangerous between the Union and Confederate centers. Just after dawn, blue and gray soldiers filtered out into the open fields between Cemetery and Seminary ridges to commence their deadly game. The fighting began as soon as the first rays of daylight penetrated the sky. The Union skirmish line held a position about 200 to 300 yards in advance of its main line. On the west side of Cemetery Hill, blue-clad skirmishers fought behind rail piles they collected in the Emmitsburg road. Some of the braver souls advanced fifty or more yards beyond the roadway into shallow pits they had dug the previous evening. Farther south, the Union skirmish line ran parallel to the Emmitsburg road, but here, most of the skirmishers held a position in the crop fields west of the roadway. The Confederate skirmish line roughly paralleled the Union one. At the north end, skirmishers from the Confederate 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps took shelter inside a depressed road bed—Long Lane—at the southwest corner of town. This line connected with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps skirmish line, which then passed through the William Bliss farmstead and finally drifted southeast past the Sherfy peach orchard. All along the line, Union and Confederate skirmishers went at each other, getting in their fatal work.

At the north end, in front of the Abraham Brian farm, four companies from the 126<sup>th</sup> New York deployed on the west side of the Emmitsburg road. One New Yorker described the morning skirmish battle as the “severest service the Regiment was ever engaged in.” In several hours, three of the four company commanders had been killed, as had many of the rank-and-file. One of those killed, Captain Isaac Shimer of Company F, received a fatal bullet in the forehead after he raised himself from a prone position—only for an instant—to observe the enemy position. A bullet tore through his open mouth and passed out the back of his head. One soldier remembered, “He died without struggle or motion, except the falling of his head.” Shimer’s soldiers did not evacuate him immediately, because standing up would endanger their own lives. Four enlisted men rolled his lifeless corpse over the grass onto two rifles. Then, when it became apparent that the Confederate skirmishers had discharged most of their pieces, the four men lifted the rifles, with Shimer’s body resting on them, and ran to the rear.<sup>33</sup>

Just southeast of the Bliss farm, two companies of the 14<sup>th</sup> Connecticut held the west edge of a large grain field. As standard practice, these two companies kept half their skirmishers on the front line behind a fence, while the other half held a reserve position in the Emmitsburg road. Every hour or so, the reserve units came forward to swap places with those at the fence. This system showcased the meticulous movements involved in skirmishing. Also, it revealed the constant danger of such warfare. Standing atop Cemetery Ridge, Chaplain Henry Stevens watched the awkward process occur:

When the reliefs went to their places there was excitement. The relieving squad would leave the reserve rendezvous moving in any way possible to avoid the observation of the enemy, but when a place was reached where exposure was unavoidable each would take to running at his highest speed, and upon reaching the fence would throw himself at once upon the ground. Then must the relieved ones get to the rear in a similar manner; and “relieving” seemed a misnomer.<sup>34</sup>

Skirmishing along the fence was equally dangerous. The soldiers kept low to the ground, huddled under piles of wheat. Sergeant Elnathan B. Tyler wrote, “We were stationed two or three fence lengths apart and although we could hardly see each other . . . the standing grain afforded considerable protection from view, we occasionally spoke to each other on either hand for companionship or to ascertain if each was all right.” Fighting in this dehumanizing fashion rankled a few. Sometime in mid-morning, Private Hiram Fox called over to Sergeant Tyler saying that the man to his left, Corporal Samuel Huxam, did not

reply to his friendly conversation. Tyler crawled over to find Huxam dead, shot through the forehead. Apparently, having grown tired of lying flat, he rose to a kneeling position to fire between the fence rails, “a risk the rebel sharp-shooters had quickly availed themselves of,” said Tyler, “and not unlikely the very one that attracted Huxam’s attention was the one that proved too quick for him and fired the fatal shot.”<sup>35</sup>

A division commander in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps, Brigadier General Alexander Hays, became so vexed by the small arms fire that he personally redeployed several men from the 1<sup>st</sup> Massachusetts Sharpshooter Company into the most dangerous part of the field—the bald, western face of Cemetery Hill just north of Zeigler’s Grove—with hopes that they might do some good. Reluctantly obeying, Lieutenant Luke Emerson Bicknell chose twenty men from his company and rushed them from their position inside the Abraham Brian apple orchard to a ravine and knoll that Hays needed protected from Confederate skirmishers.<sup>36</sup> Dispersing his men along the knoll and in the ravine, Bicknell found that he could look down upon the Confederate rifle pits in the fields below. Bicknell commented, “I found we could hold it [the knoll] as well as a brigade of Infantry, even better, but we could not hope to do more than hold the enemy down in their pits; for they were evidently our old antagonists at Deep Run.” Bicknell’s twenty sharpshooters possessed privately purchased target weapons, many of them personally modified. Using their long-range scopes, the Massachusetts riflemen commenced a cat-and-mouse exchange with their antagonists that required precision and continual attention. Bicknell’s men could not afford to become careless, yet the fatigue of the previous two days had caught up with them, and their self-discipline deteriorated. Several hours of shooting and dodging left Bicknell’s sharpshooters exhausted. While lying behind a tree, heavily fatigued, Bicknell cautioned one of his men not to expose his leg so carelessly. Bicknell remembered, “He did not heed the caution, in fact rather resented my well meant advice; and received a shot through the ankle in a few minutes, from which he afterwards died. It was close work; and the men who held the pits hour after hour got in their work at a terrible sacrifice of life.”<sup>37</sup>

As this person-to-person contest went on, General Hays directed an operation against the Bliss farm. The house and enormous barn—described as a “veritable fort” by the men of the 14<sup>th</sup> Connecticut—had provided safe haven for skirmishers from Colonel Carnot Posey’s Mississippi brigade. An earlier assault on July 2 could not keep the Confederates from reoccupying the structures, so at 10 A.M., Hays ordered eight companies from the 14<sup>th</sup> Connecticut to charge the farmstead and drive out the Mississippians. Forming a column of companies, the Connecticut troops attacked and seized the buildings, losing ten men killed in the process. However, once they arrived at the farm, they found that they could not hold it. Since all the windows in the barn faced the Union line and the large, banked opening faced the Confederates, it proved entirely useless to the bluecoats as a structure to protect sharpshooters. Confederate artillery plowed through the opening and the roof, wounding several of the seemingly victorious Connecticut soldiers. When General Hays learned that the regimental commander, Major Theodore Ellis, planned to abandon the farm, he sent a message to torch both the barn and house, which Ellis’s men carried out promptly.<sup>38</sup>

The Bliss farm went up in flames and the 14<sup>th</sup> Connecticut infantrymen retired, carrying off their dead and wounded. However, this did not end the skirmishing. Shooting lasted until noon, when firing sputtered out as the Confederate line prepared for its attack against the Union center. For the next four hours, the skirmish warfare between the centers of both armies went on hiatus as a furious cannonade and the calamitous repulse of “Pickett’s Charge” rent the field with shot and shell and littered the ground with dead, wounded, and dying. As Lieutenant Bicknell of the 1<sup>st</sup> Massachusetts Sharpshooters wryly noted, “When the artillery duel which preceded the grand charge was fairly opened, both sides seemed to consider sharpshooting as to[o] insignificant to be continued in the presence of the greater work of death.”<sup>39</sup> However, at 4 P.M., the battle had barely paused when both sides shook out a line of skirmishers. Probes from the Union 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> corps pushed out to the Emmitsburg road and beyond. Meanwhile, a few disorganized brigades in the Confederate 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps threw out their own skirmishers to block what they thought was a counterassault coming across the open field. The resulting action lasted another six hours.

In the waning daylight of July 3, the skirmishers trod over the killing ground, viewing the epic carnage up close. A member of the 14<sup>th</sup> Connecticut remembered, "It was a horrible sight to see those poor fellows lying there who, a few hours before, were in full bloom of manhood." Soon, the popping of muskets intermixed with the whimpers of the wounded to create a hellish choir of danger and despair. The Connecticut skirmisher continued, "The night was still and dark; I could hear the groans of the wounded that lay betwixt the two skirmish lines nearly half a mile off calling for water."<sup>40</sup> For the Union skirmishers, as the exhilaration of victory wore off, the fear of death resurfaced in pronounced ways. At the north end of the field, just west of the Abraham Brian farm, the 111<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry joined several Union regiments on the advancing skirmish line. Private Norman Eldred, an eighteen-year-old in Company H, expressed displeasure at being called to this duty. Eldred later remembered that, "it was dangerous . . . for the rebel sharpshooters were alert for every move in our direction. . . . It is generally against the custom to exchange shots on the picket line, but let that be as it may, they shot at me a few times." Nevertheless, Eldred gamely replied, returning fire as quickly as Confederates dealt it to him.<sup>41</sup>

However, while Eldred took up the fight, some of his comrades displayed acts of desperation. They too dreaded skirmish duty, but unlike Eldred could not restrain their panic. Eldred related a curious incident that occurred on the evening of July 3, underscoring the intensity of the affair. As he knelt and fired from a barricade of rails along the Emmitsburg road, a nearby soldier—"a tall fellow from Co. A"—took exception to his persistent shooting. This soldier—undoubtedly Private Archibald McAfee—told him to stop firing because it attracted too much attention. Eldred replied, "What do you think I ought to do? The rebels are firing on me!" McAfee snorted, "Let them fire!"

Eldred did not heed McAfee's request. He continued shooting and the Confederates replied in kind. McAfee's anxiety rose until, finally, with murder in his eyes, he said, "Stop that! If you shoot again, I'll fix you!" Eldred knew that McAfee meant what he said, so he reached for an abandoned rifle, blew into its muzzle, found it clear, and then loaded a round. He reloaded his own rifle and then fired upon the Confederate skirmishers. Immediately, Eldred grasped the second rifle and spun to defend himself. McAfee raised himself up "to shoot me as I supposed," Eldred remembered, but before either man could fire, a Confederate ball struck McAfee in the temple, killing him instantly. Eldred wrote, "If he hadn't have raised from the ground he would have been all right but in his excitement he exposed himself. Foolish man, to gratify his evil disposition, he placed himself in deadly peril and lost his life."<sup>42</sup> Certainly, this example demonstrated an extreme case of anti-skirmish behavior, since it led one Union soldier to try to murder a comrade in order to keep himself safe. However, it underscores the intense alarm that petrified skirmishers on both sides, for skirmishing antagonists understood that incoming fire was meant for them and them alone. Such realizations deflated the supposed glory of war, and some could not cope with that disillusionment. Still, despite the danger, Union skirmishers ventured across the field of Pickett's Charge in significant numbers, and their adversaries in gray rose to meet them. A majority of blue and gray put their fears behind them when skirmish duty called. For instance, the 2<sup>nd</sup> U.S. Sharpshooters cleared the area west of Plum Run after a grueling fight at the Peter Rogers farm. After Confederate forces retreated from their position at the Angle, Confederate sharpshooters took shelter in the Rogers buildings and commenced sniping at Union officers. Major General David Bell Birney, the 2<sup>nd</sup> U.S. Sharpshooters' division commander, sent his green-coated riflemen to quiet the enemy.

Squads from the 2<sup>nd</sup> U.S. Sharpshooters advanced cautiously across the marshy ground near Plum Run, using a few scattered boulders for cover. One marksman, Vermont-raised Private Eli A. Willard of Company E, after failing to discover a troublesome adversary, approached Brigadier General George Stannard and asked for his field glasses, saying, "I guess now, I'll find that fellow." Willard discovered his foe in less than a minute; the Confederate gunman sat perched in a tall tree along the Emmitsburg road. "I've found him," Willard uttered as he dodged from boulder to boulder. Once he gained a position about 100 yards in front of the Union line, Willard took careful aim and fired, knocking his target from the tree with one shot. As one of Willard's comrades later related, "There was no further annoyance from

that quarter.” Willard remained where he was for the rest of the afternoon, expending more than 100 rounds by firing on Confederate skirmishers and artillerymen.<sup>43</sup>

At dusk, the Confederates reinforced their position at the Rogers house with nine pieces of artillery from Colonel Henry Coalter Cabell’s battalion.<sup>44</sup> The arrival of this new threat prompted General Birney to ask the 2<sup>nd</sup> U.S. Sharpshooters for assistance. One of Birney’s aides rode up and shouted the request. Upon hearing it, the entire regiment rose in unison, but the aide limited the participants to forty men. Five men selected from each of the regiment’s eight companies constituted the assault. According to Captain Abraham Wright of Company A, when his men moved out, General Stannard “expressed surprise that we should try such an experiment.”<sup>45</sup> Drawn into a skirmish line, the men of the 2<sup>nd</sup> U.S. Sharpshooters bolted across the plain. When Cabell’s gunners saw them approaching, they loaded canister to wipe them all out. Before the men of 2<sup>nd</sup> U.S. Sharpshooters reached canister range, they dropped to their bellies and crawled through the high grass, firing as they went. First Sergeant William H. Proctor recalled, “Soon every horse with the battery was either shot or run back; a few minutes later the gunners fired their canister—hit or miss—then ran away. . . . Our men kept those guns quiet all afternoon.”<sup>46</sup>

Cabell and his gunners remembered the assault differently. Cabell wrote, “The enemy’s sharpshooters were continually firing and annoying us . . . We fired upon a line of infantry approaching, and, with the other batteries, dispersed them or drove them back. The attack was not renewed.” Rather than being forced out, Cabell’s battery officers reported withdrawing of their own volition. Lieutenant C. W. Motes of the Troup Artillery wrote, “The enemy’s pickets, having driven ours to the fence [along the Emmitsburg road], came within a few hundred yards of my position. By [Cabell’s] order, I quietly withdrew my command.” Whatever really happened, this action resulted in the Confederate evacuation from the Emmitsburg road. Lieutenant J. M. Payne’s section of the Richmond Howitzers claimed the honor of being the last Confederate artillery to leave the field of Pickett’s Charge. The final withdrawal could not have been too orderly, however. Captain E. S. McCarthy—Payne’s battery commander—recalled that his men had to leave several caissons and horses behind since “the enemy at the time [was] advancing rapidly.”<sup>47</sup> Cabell’s gunners admitted that the U.S. Sharpshooters’ fire caused them considerable havoc. Although the casualties from this fight cannot be determined with certainty, Cabell’s battalion lost at least two killed and four wounded, fifteen horses killed or permanently disabled, and two caissons abandoned. When darkness finally came, the Confederate artillerymen quietly dragged off their guns by hand.<sup>48</sup>

After Cabell’s artillery retired, Colonel Horatio P. Rogers, Jr., commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Rhode Island Infantry from the 6<sup>th</sup> Corps, received orders to move his men to the Emmitsburg road and press any Confederate skirmishers west of the Rogers and Klingel farms. The Rhode Islanders relieved the 2<sup>nd</sup> U.S. Sharpshooters at Plum Run and moved to a position between the farm buildings. For the Rhode Islanders, this short advance proved to be a heart-rending experience, as they had yet to fire a shot during the Battle of Gettysburg. As they made their way toward the road, the soldiers gazed at the carnage. Colonel Rogers wrote, “Never have I seen or heard of severer fighting. The field was bloody in the extreme.” Lieutenant Elisha Hunt Rhodes of Company B remarked in his diary, “What a scene it was[!] Oh the dead and dying on this bloody field[!] It was impossible to walk across the field without stepping on dead or wounded men, while horses and broken Artillery lay on every side.”<sup>49</sup>

When the Rhode Islanders reached the road bed, they received heavy fire from Confederate skirmishers deployed behind a post-and-board fence about 1,200 feet west of the road. Behind this fence stood a cornfield, with corn about three or four feet high. These skirmishers came from the 61<sup>st</sup> Virginia Infantry, a regiment in Brigadier General William Mahone’s brigade, one of the Army of Northern Virginia’s only unengaged infantry units. They fired upon the hapless Rhode Islanders, killing one of them and wounding five more.<sup>50</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> Rhode Island soldiers sought shelter behind the steep embankment on the west side of the road; Lieutenant Elisha Rhodes called it a “sunken road.” They remained there all evening, all night, and most of the next morning, and according to Rhodes, continued “firing upon any Rebels that showed themselves.”<sup>51</sup>



Farther North, in the middle of the field of Pickett's Charge, almost directly in front of the Copse of Trees, the 15<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts and 1<sup>st</sup> Massachusetts Sharpshooters threw themselves into the crop land west of the roadway. There, they fired at Confederate skirmishers from Brigadier General George Pickett's shattered division. After dark, Lieutenant Bicknell cautioned his men to husband their cartridges and save them for targets they could see, but eventually, as ammunition dwindled, his men ran for the rear, usually drawing a volley of enemy fire. Bicknell wrote, "One by one, as their ammunition gave out, [my] men stole back to the grove till finally I was left alone. I then approached the rifle pits to see how it fared with the men I had left around them. My approach drew out so hot and personal a fire from the pits that I sheered off without opening communication." Bicknell thought it too dangerous to tell the men from the 15<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts to withdraw. He wrote, "it would be better to let them lay there till dark, when, I supposed, their own officers would withdraw them."<sup>52</sup>

Although the situation between the centers of the two armies exhibited precariousness, it was that southern end of the two battle lines that showcased the most protracted examples of skirmish and sharpshooter warfare. Here, the two opposing skirmish lines occasionally reached no more than fifty yards apart. The firefights along this end of the line were not desultory; they were meant to kill. The fighting in this sector began at daybreak, and it involved the Union troops from the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> corps and Confederate troops belonging to the divisions of Brigadier General Evander Law and Major General Lafayette McLaws. The Union position consisted of two separate lines of battle. Three Union brigades held the lofty heights of Little Round Top, Big Round Top, and the valley in between. Seven hundred yards west, near the east wall of the bloody Rose wheatfield, sat three more Union brigades. Both Union positions had skirmish lines covering all or part of their front. In terms of infantry, the Confederate position exhibited comparative weakness. It boasted no more than two organized brigades in strength, and probably no more than eight or nine regiments in fighting condition. However, a long, contiguous skirmish line, sprinkled with sharpshooter squads, extended from the Millerstown road south through the wheatfield, then southeast around the eastern nose of Devil's Den, then south over the shoulder of Big Round Top, and finally it made an abrupt turn west, where it crossed Plum Run terminating in the vicinity of the Emmitsburg road atop Warfield Ridge.

This strong skirmish line kept bluecoats busy for most of the day. The first gunfire opened on the far left on Big Round Top and in the saddle between the two hills. Two regiments, the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania reserves, belonging to Colonel Joseph W. Fisher's brigade, held the saddle. Once dawn lit the area, bullets began to whiz from Devil's Den. Soon, the peculiar whine and splat of octagonal target rifle bullets sounded near the Pennsylvanians' ears, indicating that some Confederate sharpshooters had telescopic vision. The two Pennsylvania regiments had seen nothing of the enemy when they arrived at their position at dusk the previous evening. Now, this accurate fire startled them. Feverishly, the two regiments scavenged for stones and piled up a sturdy wall. Sergeant Major A. P. Morrison of the 9<sup>th</sup> Reserves wrote his brother,

Our men slept on their guns last night, but with the earliest dawn of the day, we were up and busily engaged in throwing up deffences, strengthening a naturally strong position. You would have been amazed to see how quickly *miles of stone wall* could be built. . . . But the rebels were too sharp for us. They contented themselves with giving us a pretty severe shelling. Their sharpshooters too had a most 'elegant' position in the cleft of an immense rock—& they made good use of it.<sup>53</sup>

First Sergeant Jesse Pryor of the 10<sup>th</sup> Reserves could only remember the harried morning firefight and the necessity of building the stone wall. In his diary he wrote, "We built a stonewall and [it] will probably be an object of curiosity for many years to come."<sup>54</sup>

On the left of Fisher's men, lying on the northern slope of Big Round Top, sat three regiments from Colonel James C. Rice's brigade. All three regiments had fought to defend Little Round Top the previous

day. Although they had little ammunition left, they deployed skirmishers to their front and left, and as these men descended the hill, they collided with that portion of the Confederate skirmish line that had not abandoned the western face of Big Round Top. Two more of Fisher's regiments, 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania reserves, sat on the exact summit of Big Round Top on the extreme left of the line. These two regiments had undertaken a confusing night march to reach the craggy summit, and like their sister regiments in the valley below, they knew little of the enemy's position. Gamely, both regiments deployed skirmishers to their front. As they made their way down the hill with Rice's men, the 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Reserves collided with the waiting Confederates from Sheffield's Alabama brigade. No long-range sharpshooting occurred here. This fighting was up close and personal. The 12<sup>th</sup> Reserves lost one man killed, Private Frank H. Hench, a twenty-four-year-old farmer from Ikesburg. Corporal E. D. Benedict of the same regiment jotted in his diary that night, "July 3... Our skirmishers in front kept up firing some through the day, one of the skirmishers out of Company A of our regiment was shot in the head and killed instantly and two other ones of our regiment [were wounded]. In the evening, we lengthened out our stone wall and lay behind it that night."<sup>55</sup> Both sides withdrew a short distance until the firing stopped. The Confederate line stayed in place. By mid-morning, four Union regiments under the command of Colonel William S. Tilton arrived and relieved Rice's men. Also, another regiment, the as-yet unengaged 9<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Infantry, showed up to bolster the position.

Although the skirmishing on Big Round Top died away quickly, farther to the right, on Little Round Top, the situation heated up. The Union troops belonging to Colonel Kenner Garrard's brigade and two batteries of artillery under Captain Frank Gibbs and First Lieutenant Benjamin Rittenhouse became pinned behind the hill's enormous boulders. Confederate sharpshooters and skirmishers firing from Devil's Den and the vicinity held the bluecoats in check, as virtual prisoners in their own lines. Anyone who stuck up his head risked having it shot at. Sergeant D. Porter Marshall of the 155<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania wrote, "Our line was not assaulted [on July 3], but with the break of day the enemy's sharpshooters commenced their deadly work. The most of the firing was from a large rock called Devil's Den. They succeeded in killing Gen. Weed, Col. Yoreck, and many others in the Brigade."<sup>56</sup>

The field of fire near the Wheatfield displayed equal peril. There, the forward line of Union soldiers posted along the east side of the Wheatfield consisted of thirteen regiments. Five regiments from the Pennsylvania Reserve Division held the stone wall that ran from the Trostle woods to the triangle field, while eight regiments from the 6<sup>th</sup> Corps—two brigades under Colonel David J. Nevin and Brigadier General Joseph Bartlett—held a position farther back in the swampy area near Plum Run between the J. W. Weikert farm and the Houck's Ridge gulley. All thirteen regiments sent men to reinforce the skirmish line. Early in the morning, Union skirmishers crept west into the trampled wheat or through the scarred northeastern corner of Rose Woods, searching out their adversaries. Soon, as fire rippled northward from Devil's Den, Rose Woods and the Wheatfield became alive with gunfire.

When the shooting commenced, a low groan rose from the Wheatfield. More than 6,000 dead and wounded had yet to be evacuated, and now for those men bleeding but still alive, their place of painful repose had become a scene of lively battle. First Lieutenant James Jackson Purman, a twenty-two-year-old Waynesburg College student from Company A, 140<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Infantry, had his right leg shattered by a Minié ball on July 2. After his regiment routed, he remained between the hostile lines. Purman later described the opening of the fight on July 3:

As the streakings of light gradually merged into morning there could be seen both Union and Confederate skirmish lines. Soon the occasional shot, first on one side and then on the other, multiplied into desultory fire. . . . Nothing could be seen except a line of blue on one side and gray on the other, and nothing heard but the crack of rifles and the zip of the bullets in the wheat, or the well-known thud in the ground or the body of a wounded man.<sup>57</sup>

Purman crawled to a sergeant from the 4<sup>th</sup> Michigan Infantry who had been wounded in the legs and who begged piteously for water. As Purman and the sergeant conversed, Minié balls struck both men. The Michigan sergeant took Purman's hand and began to pray, and Purman joined in, recollecting, "If there was ever an earnest, sincere petition sent up to the Throne of Grace it was then."<sup>58</sup> Purman grew so fearful of being struck by a third ball that he called to Confederates in the Rose woodlot—those atop the acclivity known as the "Stony Hill"—to come and rescue him. First Lieutenant Thomas P. Oliver of the 24<sup>th</sup> Georgia Infantry responded to Purman's entreaties and carried him into Confederate lines on his back. The Georgians gave Purman plenty of water, but they refused to carry him to a field hospital. When Purman remonstrated, Oliver replied, "Our men are very tired."<sup>59</sup> Oliver went back to work, superintending his skirmishers.

For the soldiers who participated in the ensuing gun battle, the morning and afternoon proved exasperating. A soldier in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Pennsylvania Reserve Infantry remarked that the noise of the skirmish fighting around the Wheatfield "almost resemble[ed] that of a regular battle."<sup>60</sup> The Confederates who opened fire belonged to Brigadier General William Wofford's brigade and Brigadier General Henry Benning's Georgia brigade. Certainly, a great many of those on the skirmish line came from the talented 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Georgia Sharpshooters. Like their comrades on Culp's Hill, the marksmen of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Georgia "tree frogged," that is, climbed into high branches in Rose Woods and sniped at their foes from above. Throughout the morning and afternoon, they killed or wounded a number of bluecoats and ended the life of one officer, Captain Jeremiah Sample of Company E, 139<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Infantry, "robbing us," wrote one Pennsylvanian, "of one of our bravest and best."<sup>61</sup> The exchange of fire across the Wheatfield became severe. Private Samuel C. Shroyer, of the 139<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania noted,

We were compelled to lie prone on the ground to escape the balls of the annoying sharpshooters of the enemy, who were perched in every corner and nook of that rocky Devil's Den yonder to the left and in the high trees that stood in our front. A number of our best marksmen went out cautiously to good positions and returned the compliments as best they could. . . . I remember lying behind that stone wall with the bullets coming across it like sheets of hail. The man beside me put his head up for a quick look and instantly fell back dead.<sup>62</sup>

Private R. W. McKee of the same regiment went into the Wheatfield on skirmish duty that afternoon. That evening, he jotted his experiences in his diary:

We then went to the regiment which we found lying in the same position as we left it. I then went out on the skirmish line and was out all day. To the right of our line, H. M. Strawick of our company was out too. I fired about forty rounds of ammunition during the day. . . . Skirmishing was kept up all day, sometimes the musketry was heavy enough for a battle. Dreadful cannonading. Our skirmish line was shelled a couple of times. Today we lost Sergeant J. B. Parks and Valentine Ren, wounded. The former by a shell, the other by a ball.<sup>63</sup>

A religious man, McKee looked to God to deliver him from the frightening situation. Huddled beneath some wheat stalks, McKee read the Psalms, finding solace in the "Song of the Ascents":

The scepter of the wicked will not remain  
over the land allotted to the righteous,  
for then the righteous might use  
their hands to do evil.  
Do good, O Lord, to those who are good,  
to those who are upright in heart.

But those who turn to crooked ways  
the Lord will banish with the evildoers.

Despite all the fear and chaos they caused, the Confederate marksmen had their hands full, especially when it came to dealing with the expert shots from the 1<sup>st</sup> Pennsylvania Rifles, the storied Bucktails. The Bucktails held the most difficult position in the line, as their regiment anchored the extreme left of the forward line in the Houck's Ridge gully. A converging fire from Benning's men at Devil's Den and from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Georgia Sharpshooters in Rose Woods caused casualties to mount. The Bucktails' commander, Major William Ross Hartshorne, strode along his line, snarling, "Are you going to let those fellows pick us off? Some of you get in there." Remembered one Bucktail, "Those who caught the glitter of his eye did not hesitate but moved forward."<sup>64</sup> Companies F and I under Captain John Wolfe and Captain Frank Bell made the attack. Deployed as skirmishers, they moved south, into the gulley and up the other side. First Lieutenant John P. Bard of Company K, who watched the attack, noted, "The fighting soon became very severe, the enemy's fire indicating a large force and a position so strong that any attempt to carry it by storm with so small a body of troops must prove disastrous."<sup>65</sup> Benning's skirmishers opened fire, forcing the Bucktails to take cover. Although they were pinned in the open depression, the battle went to the advantage of the Pennsylvanians. One Bucktail opined, "Possessing [S]harps rifles, [we] were able to reload, when necessary, without exposing portions of [our] bodies, and advantage not possessed by [our] opponents."<sup>66</sup> Lieutenant Bard agreed. He wrote:

Taking cover, our boys opened a rapid fire, hoping to punish the enemy as severely as to either compel him to retire or come out of his stronghold and drive them off. The reader must bear in mind that we were armed with breech-loading rifles. . . . The great advantage of these arms when firing from cover is well known to all soldiers. . . . On this occasion, the superiority of our arms soon gave us a very decided advantage. Whenever a rebel would expose any part of his body he was sure to be hit, and the result, notwithstanding their superiority in numbers, was only a question of time.<sup>67</sup>

According to a boastful Bucktail, "at this game [we] entirely outclassed the Confederates." Thus, when they realized that their strength lay in numbers, Benning's skirmish line charged into the gulley. Overpowered by the size of the attack, the two Bucktail companies retreated. Benning's men retired to Devil's Den and for the next several hours, the area around the gulley became silent.<sup>68</sup>

The sharpshooting in the Rose Woods did not subside. Here, the men of the Pennsylvania Reserves ferreted out Confederate



An unpublished view that appears to have been taken near Devil's Den showing a sharpshooters position and a dead Confederate soldier lying behind the wall. LC

“tree frogs” and shot them mercilessly. Squads consisting of two or three men ambled into the woods where they used innovative anti-sharpshooter tactics. Captain Evan Morrison Woodward of Philadelphia’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Pennsylvania Reserves described these methods:

This kind of fighting gave excellent opportunities for the display of individual bravery and address, and the manoeuvring of the boys to get good shots at times created considerable amusement. When some enterprising “Confed.” was well posted and annoyed us much, two or three would arrange their plans to knock him over, and creeping up cautiously from different directions, one of them would draw his fire, while the other on his flank would shoot him.<sup>69</sup>

Woodward remembered how one Confederate “scamp” got high into a tree and killed several men, but a squad of Philadelphians got under him before he could escape. The Confederate sharpshooter told them that he would come down, to which the men of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Reserves replied that they were certain of that fact. They all shot him at once, and the Confederate sharpshooter fell to the ground. The Philadelphians killed another “tree frog” and left his body dangling over the branches, feet and head pointed downwards. Woodward remarked, “The boys never showed any mercy to these ‘tree frogs.’”<sup>70</sup>

Captain Frank Bell, one of the officers who led the attack on Devil’s Den, endeavored to eradicate a few gray-coated sharpshooters from Rose Woods himself. He told Major Hartshorne that he could “clear the timber in our front of the sharpshooters who were becoming dangerous, as well as noisy and impudent, keeping up an amazing splatter of shots.” Bell took a squad into the corner of the woods and sent a corporal ahead to a large rock to ascertain the deployment of the Confederate skirmish line. As the corporal started forward, a ball fired by a “tree frog” clipped his ear, and he came running back. Bell picked up an abandoned rifle, loaded it, and moved to the rock himself. He remembered that after he had gone fifty yards, “A shot or two on my right and left showed me I was about on their line. I had in fact walked past one of the most advanced of their line and as I looked by the rock I observed one of the enemy lying by a large tree looking for some of our boys to serve as a target.”<sup>71</sup> Since the Confederate skirmisher he had passed had not seen him, Bell took deliberate aim. He fired, but only the cap went off. Bell remembered, “The cap cracked louder than ever a cap cracked before or since, so it seemed to me, but the old gun did not go.” This noise alerted several Confederate skirmishers who now commenced searching the woods for the origin of the snap. In the distance, one of Bell’s sergeants gestured at him to retreat. Bell could see that Confederate skirmishers were thick around him. If he ran back directly, he might pass by a Confederate soldier who had squeezed himself into a tiny rock pen. Feeling that only boldness would save his hide, Bell elected to run for it. His narrative completes the exciting story:

Throwing down the useless old rifle I drew and cocked my revolver, and springing from my cover came rapidly in expecting to be fired at within a few feet of my friend in his little rock pen; [I] could have blown his head off easily but [I] did not dream of his being on duty until a snap shot from his piece hit me as I reached the rock where the sergeant and some of the boys were lying. The bullet crushed through my right ankle, carried away the heel of my left boot and knocked my feet into the air, dropping my head on the rocks in such shape as to stun me for the moment and to bruise my face and head badly. Recovering, I rose, and at the first step tumbled in a heap. My ankle was smashed. The Tibia and Fibula being both shattered and I was carried to the rear and lain with others in a sort of hospital. As I learned afterwards our boys opened upon my “friend” in the rock pen, and though he pluckily replied as rapidly as he could work his old Enfield Rifle in his crowded quarters, they at last succeeded in getting a shot in at his peek hole and breaking his arms, [and] they captured him.<sup>72</sup>

The skirmishing around Houck's Ridge gulley continued past midday. Ever since the daring attack by the two companies of Pennsylvania Bucktails and the equally intrepid Confederate counterattack, the fighting had temporarily subsided in the rocky gorge. However, shortly after noon, sharpshooters on both sides renewed the fight. Once again, Major Hartshorne demanded that his Pennsylvania riflemen drive out the opposition. Second Lieutenant John E. Kratzer of Company K replied to Hartshorne's entreaty, calling for volunteers. Thirty men responded, "Lead on and we will follow." Kratzer ordered his men to load their Sharps rifles and move forward in skirmish line, not firing until they reached the rocks of Devil's Den. Kratzer gave a shout, and with pistol drawn, led the way. According to Lieutenant John Bard, who watched the assault, "The rebels permitted them to get so close that their features could be easily distinguished and the bore of their guns plainly seen, when they sprang from their cover and fired a volley that killed and wounded over one-third of the brave thirty." As the two skirmish lines intermixed among the boulders, a Confederate officer called upon Kratzer to surrender. Kratzer lowered his revolver and the two men exchanged shots. Kratzer missed his mark but the Georgian put a bullet through his arm above the elbow. Failing to notice the wound, Kratzer fired again, killing his foe. Eventually, one of Kratzer's men called attention to his blood-soaked arm, and he conceded the necessity of retiring. After the initial volley, Confederate officers compelled their men to lie down in rocks. Lieutenant Bard remembered, "The lines were so close that their commands were heard distinctly though spoken in ordinary tone." Both sides settled in for another close match among the boulders, but Hartshorne grew fearful of losing all his men and leaving thirty Sharps rifles in the hands of the Confederates, so he recalled Kratzer's platoon.<sup>73</sup>

The back and forth skirmish combat along the Union left did not end until the arrival of General Meade and Major General Alfred Pleasonton, the Union cavalry commander. After the repulse of Pickett's Charge, both men wanted to use the hill as an observation point. The staffs of several 5<sup>th</sup> Corps officers warned them that the hill was not yet safe. The Confederate sharpshooters at Devil's Den had not been eradicated. Moreover, the recent deaths of Brigadier General Stephen Weed and Captain Charles Hazlett—two officers shot atop Little Round Top the previous evening—further reinforced the point. To eliminate the threat, Meade sent for Colonel Berdan to bring up several companies of his 1<sup>st</sup> U.S. Sharpshooters. Berdan sent three Michigan-raised companies—C, I, and K—commanded by Captain James H. Baker. Baker's eighty-man battalion arrived at Little Round Top within minutes. Reaching the bald, western face of the hill, they saw Devil's Den standing ominously before them. One U.S. Sharpshooter wrote:

This forbidden spot was situated on a hillside fronting Little Round Top about 300 yards distant, with a marshy interval or swamp intervening; and consisted of a hole in the rocks, or cavern, with a small opening, with blasted, barren surroundings[,] . . . a fitting resort for witches, freebooters—and rebel sharpshooters, who occupied it that day.<sup>74</sup>

The U.S. Sharpshooters ordered the other Union soldiers on Little Round Top to take cover while they went to work. They unpacked their heavy telescopic target rifles and took shelter in the rocky clefts. Soldiers from the 155<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Infantry watched carefully. One Pennsylvanian remembered that "the Berdans had telescope rifles, and, in securing positions and to avoid their own exposure, they could be seen creeping on hands and knees to get behind rocks or protecting crevices on the slopes of Little Round Top, from which to respond with deadly



aim to the Confederates in Devil's Den and the vicinity." Baker's sharpshooters skirmished with Confederates in Devil's Den for over an hour, cautiously making their way down the southwest slope of Little Round Top, using the immense boulders as cover.<sup>75</sup>

The Confederates in Devil's Den noticed the change in the gunfire from Little Round Top almost instantly. In his recollections, Private John Bowden of Benning's brigade recalled that the sharpshooting from Little Round Top to Devil's Den made for "one of the most exciting days of my life."<sup>76</sup> Private John C. West, a soldier in the 4<sup>th</sup> Texas, took a ball to the face. He wrote his wife that, "All day on the 3d we held our ground making unsuccessful sallies, checking skirmishers and passing shots with enemy sharpshooters, one of whom, secreted in a tree on the side of the mountain, put a bullet in an inch of my head as I leaned against a rock, part of the bullet flying into my lip."<sup>77</sup>

Sometime after 5 P.M., Captain Baker determined to stop the enemy fire "at all hazards." He chose to assault Devil's Den with a twenty-man "sortie" of soldiers armed with Sharps breech-loading rifles.

Sergeant Richard Wolsey Tyler of Company K, "a gallant soldier who had distinguished himself on previous occasions," led this band. After Tyler's band crept to the southwestern foot of

Alfred Waud sketched these Union sharpshooters on Little Round Top. LC

Little Round Top, they bolted across the marsh along Plum Run and assaulted the "cave of rock," as they called it. Confederate marksmen fired on them, but, amazingly, none of the Michigan Sharpshooters suffered a hit; however, some experienced close calls: One man was saved when a bullet hit a frying pan on his knapsack and another was spared when a bullet flattened against his rifle stock.<sup>78</sup>

Once inside the cavernous boulders of Devil's Den, Sergeant Tyler and his men discovered eighteen Confederate sharpshooters from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Arkansas Infantry who immediately surrendered to them. "They were a sorry looking crowd," wrote one U.S. Sharpshooter, "being very hungry and about famished for want of water." The Arkansans informed their captors they had been virtual prisoners all day, the fire from Little Round Top having prevented them from leaving Devil's Den. At first, the Arkansans expressed alarm at being caught, and, fearing that they would receive no quarter because they were sharpshooters, "begged lustily for their lives." Sergeant Tyler assured them that they had been caught by Union sharpshooters and no harm would come to them. When the Confederates heard this, "a sudden change came over their dejected spirits to one of undisguised happiness."<sup>79</sup> A soldier in the 22<sup>nd</sup> Massachusetts Infantry, whose regiment occupied the saddle between Big and Little Round Top, remembered how the prisoners made quite a sight. He wrote, "They proved to be the raggedest, most insignificant and dirty looking rebels we have ever seen."<sup>80</sup> The 1<sup>st</sup> U.S. Sharpshooters' adjutant, First Lieutenant Charles A. Stevens, referred to this action as "a most gallant and dangerous undertaking. . . . But our Sharpshooters were fleet travelers—to and fro—and recked not of danger, when the order came to 'go.' As it afterwards transpired, they incurred still a greater risk than most ever knew."<sup>81</sup>

General Meade witnessed the end of this affair, and no doubt, watched Tyler's band escort their eighteen prisoners to the rear. This well-executed assault proved that the area between the lines could be passed. He probably also saw the Union cavalry attack delivered by Colonel Elon Farnsworth's brigade near the Bushman and Snyder farms. This attack, delivered in late afternoon, caused a number of Confederate units to redeploy farther to the south. Thinking that the Confederate right flank had grown weak, Meade determined to test it. After a few minutes' conference with several generals, including Major General George Sykes, Brigadier General Samuel Wiley Crawford, and Brigadier General Gouverneur Kemble Warren, who all joined Meade and Pleasonton on the summit, Meade elected to advance his forward line near the Wheatfield and retake the ground lost by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps on the previous afternoon.

After receiving Meade's instructions, generals Sykes and Crawford patched together a command of nine regiments to cross the Wheatfield and secure the Rose woodlot 300 yards west of the forward line. This assaulting force consisted of four regiments from Colonel William McCandless's 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 3<sup>rd</sup> Division, 5<sup>th</sup> Corps, one regiment from the Colonel Joseph Fisher's 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade, 3<sup>rd</sup> Division, 5<sup>th</sup> Corps,

and four regiments from Colonel David Nevin's 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, 3<sup>rd</sup> Division, 6<sup>th</sup> Corps, totaling 2,586 officers and men. McCandless, the ranking brigade commander, received permission from Crawford to direct the assault. Crawford told him to advance his force through the Wheatfield in two lines and "if possible, drive out the enemy." Strangely, even though McCandless's men had faced Confederate skirmisher fire all day, and the prolonged battle must have been known to him, Crawford reported, "it was supposed that the enemy had evacuated the position."<sup>82</sup>

At 6 P.M., McCandless's forward line—consisting of five regiments from the Pennsylvania Reserve Division—crossed the Wheatfield at a run, shouting wildly as they went. Confederate skirmishers opened fire from the east edge of the Stony Hill woodlot, while an artillery piece north of the Millerstown road blasted them with canister. However, the undaunted Pennsylvanians surged onto the Stony Hill, routing about 1,000 Confederates commanded by Brigadier General Wofford. Two regiments, the 6<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Reserve Infantry and the 139<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Infantry, captured the artillery piece and three accompanying caissons, which, as it turned out, had been lost by the 9<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Light Artillery the previous evening.<sup>83</sup>

As McCandless's line approached, the twice-wounded Lieutenant Purman, who had been rescued by the 24<sup>th</sup> Georgia several hours before, gleefully told his captors, "You need not carry me off; our boys are coming." Purman wrote, "[McCandless's men] poured in heavy volleys as they crossed the field, while the Confederates, after returning a few shots, rapidly fell back through the woods. Although the balls rattled among the rocks and trees about me, I enjoyed the charge hugely, for it meant victory." Still, Purman could not help but reflect on the absurdity of the affair:

I recall it now as one of the most sublime sights I ever witnessed. One wounded man lying near the edge of the woods was very much afraid of being hit the second time. He shouted to the Brigade, at least 300 yards away, "Fire high! Fire high!" Amid all that din of musketry his voice could not reach more than a few yards. The thing was so ludicrous that I, an almost dead man, could not refrain from laughter.<sup>84</sup>

After clearing the woodlot, McCandless spotted another Confederate unit approaching his left flank. This was the 15<sup>th</sup> Georgia Infantry—298 men strong—commanded by Colonel Dudley Du Bose. Just minutes earlier, during the redeployment caused by Farnsworth's charge, Colonel Du Bose had received instructions from Brigadier General Benning to move north through the Rose Woods and connect with Wofford's brigade. Now, the perplexed Georgians stumbled into Wofford's rout. As the sound of McCandless's assault drew near, Du Bose halted his regiment on a rocky, wooded ledge south of Rose Run.<sup>85</sup>

McCandless wasted no time dealing with this new threat. He ordered four of his regiments to about face and wheel right so they all faced south, thus forming a column of regiments. After presenting the enemy with a narrow front, McCandless's men charged into the startled Georgians, driving them pell-mell from their position. Major Hartshorne of the 1<sup>st</sup> Pennsylvania Rifles applauded McCandless's quick thinking, later writing,

McCandless displayed great ability in the formation of his command at the critical period when he changed direction to the left. . . . [B]y coming into column of regiments he held his troops well in hand, with a column of four regiments to face the enemy which owing to their confusion offered no larger a front than his own.<sup>86</sup>

The Pennsylvanians surged down the Stony Hill, across Rose Run, and up the steep acclivity on the opposite side, in Captain Evan Woodward's words, "running like hounds, and yelping like devils."<sup>87</sup>

Although the 15<sup>th</sup> Georgia managed to rally three times, the Pennsylvanians' unrelenting attack, combined with the sudden arrival of the 62<sup>nd</sup> New York Infantry on the 15<sup>th</sup> Georgia's right flank and



rear, in Hartshorne's words, threw the Georgia troops "into the greatest confusion."<sup>88</sup> Captain Woodward wrote, "The gallant efforts of their officers to rally them were useless, we had them fairly on the run, and did not cease following them until we had penetrated far into their lines."<sup>89</sup> Colonel Du Bose admitted, "My men and officers fought bravely, but my loss was immense. How any of us escaped, I do not see."<sup>90</sup> The 15<sup>th</sup> Georgia lost 101 men in this fight and suffered the loss of its regimental colors.

As the 15<sup>th</sup> Georgia withdrew, McCandless's force pursued southwest and beyond the Rose woodlot. Once they broke into the clearing, the Union troops paused, and McCandless debated what to do next. He considered retaining his men at this advanced position; some of his men reported discovering piles of small arms—about 3,000 in all—collected by the Confederates at the Rose farm buildings. However, McCandless believed that he had strayed too far from the main line, and after his men secured their prisoners and evacuated any wounded Union soldiers, they beat a hasty retreat to their former position at the east edge of the Wheatfield.<sup>91</sup>

Both Crawford and McCandless expressed surprise that their assault met any resistance. Even though the Union troops had confronted a smaller enemy force, Crawford later maintained that they faced "superior masses of the enemy." Major Hartshorne of the 1<sup>st</sup> Pennsylvania Rifles perhaps explained the trepidation that afflicted his commanders when he wrote, "[We] had advanced so far away from support that if [McCandless] had attempted to fall back [in the midst of the fight] the enemy on his left having the shortest route could have cut him off and taken his brigade entire." Thus, McCandless advanced as far as he did not because he dared to, but because the 15<sup>th</sup> Georgia's unexpected appearance required him to keep advancing if he wished to return safely. Once victorious, McCandless decided to withdraw, for he did not want to keep his troops beyond the Wheatfield longer than necessary. Thus, one of the most daring and successful offensive movements orchestrated by the Union army wrapped up almost as quickly as it began. It is not certain if Meade stayed on Little Round Top long enough to witness the entirety of the assault, but it seems likely he would have reiterated the same concern expressed by McCandless.<sup>92</sup> Whatever the case, Lee had not yet issued retreat orders, and the ferocity of this engagement surely convinced Meade that the Confederate right flank was not ready to be pressed. The wounded men in the Wheatfield breathed a sigh of relief. The fourteen-hour skirmish battle had finally ceased.

The combined successes of Baker's attack on Devil's Den and McCandless's assault through the Wheatfield failed to spark General Meade into an aggressive course of action on the evening of July 3. Even though Confederate forces gave way precipitously during these actions, the intensity of these fights and the strength of the Confederate skirmish line left Meade uncertain of his adversary's intentions. At dawn on July 4, Meade issued a circular to his corps commanders, requiring them to report the present location of all their units, their amount of supplies, and the condition of their troops. Then, he stated how he expected his subordinates to conduct operations for the next twenty-four hours: "The intention of the major-general commanding is not to make any present move. . . . The lines as held are not to be changed without orders, the skirmishers being simply advanced, according to instructions given, to find and report the position of the enemy."<sup>93</sup> Then, at 7 A.M., Meade wired Abraham Lincoln's chief military advisor, Major General Henry Wager Halleck, describing his plans for the coming day. Meade wrote, "My pickets are moving out to ascertain the nature and extent of the enemy's movement. My information is not sufficient for me to decide its character yet—whether a retreat or a maneuver for other purposes."<sup>94</sup> Meade called his sharpshooters and skirmishers to action again. The fighting on July 4 would result in another twelve hours of combat, all as grim and appalling as the sniper warfare of the previous day.

Thus, Independence Day produced another bout of severe sharpshooting and skirmish combat. But, by evening, it resulted in a Confederate retreat amid a heavy rainfall. In hindsight, the skirmishing and sharpshooting of July 3 seems inconsequential because it did not induce an aggressive Union pursuit nor did it lead to another major battle. Confederate forces gave themselves substantial cover using their skirmish lines and despite the many daring efforts by Union sharpshooters and skirmishers to drive in the Confederate line, the gray-clad marksmen of the Army of Northern Virginia held their own and may have been the pivotal factor in preventing a Union counterthrust on the evening of the third day.

Pivotal or not, skirmishing and sharpshooting held substantial importance on July 3. In addition to keeping the fight alive, these light infantrymen presented insurmountable tactical problems for commanders and caused soldiers on both sides considerable consternation. Thus, the conclusion of the Battle of Gettysburg should not ignore the lurid tales of sharpshooting and skirmish warfare from its grand narrative.

How many fatalities resulted from sharpshooting and skirmishing on July 3? This number is nearly impossible to determine because, even after compiling the number killed on July 3—about 2,100—the number killed by skirmish warfare cannot be easily extracted from it. However, an examination of a few Union regimental casualty lists presents a reasonable picture of the deadliness of skirmish warfare. For instance, two regiments that fought on Little Round Top and Big Round Top on July 3, the 91<sup>st</sup> Pennsylvania and the 10<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Reserves, lost, respectively, three killed and mortally wounded and two killed and mortally wounded. The only combat these two regiments faced occurred on July 3, so sharpshooter fire from Devil's Den accounted for 100 percent of these units' fatalities. The same can be said of the 139<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania, a regiment that also experienced its only combat on the skirmish line on July 3, though its fight occurred in the Wheatfield. There, the 139<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania lost three killed and mortally wounded. Union regiments that fought near the center of the Union line suffered similarly. The 1<sup>st</sup> Massachusetts Sharpshooter Company only engaged in sharpshooting and it did so only on July 3, when it lost four killed and mortally wounded.<sup>95</sup>

These statistics suggest that regiments involved in skirmishing and sharpshooting each lost less than half a dozen men killed; however, some regiments may have suffered far worse. For instance, the 126<sup>th</sup> New York, a regiment known to have been on the skirmish line for an extended period of time on July 3, lost sixty-five men killed or mortally wounded during the battle. Of these, thirty-one received fatal wounds on July 3. Of these, three are known to have been killed on the skirmish line. (All three were company commanders.) It is possible that Pickett's Charge or the great cannonade preceding it killed off the remaining twenty-eight New Yorkers, but that seems unlikely, especially given the generally accepted interpretation that Confederate cannon fire and the succeeding infantry assault had an insignificant effect upon the Union defenders. Thus, it seems plausible that the bulk of those twenty-eight men fell to Confederate marksmen before or after the great charge. When considering this, it becomes obvious why certain Union regiments suffered more fatalities than others. Regiments that spent more time on the skirmish line on July 3 lost more men and suffered more death wounds. The 111<sup>th</sup> New York suffered the second greatest number of fatalities of any Union regiment during the battle, losing ninety-five killed or mortally wounded. Most of these fell during this regiment's harrowing counterattack on July 2. A few others succumbed to cannon fire during the July 3 bombardment. The remainder, twenty-five, received death wounds from rifle fire on July 3. Certainly, a great many of these fell to skirmisher and sharpshooter fire. Also, a nearby regiment, the 73<sup>rd</sup> Ohio—which fought at the western base of Cemetery Hill—lost fourteen men killed or mortally wounded on July 3. This regiment did not suffer as heavily during the bombardment or during Pickett's Charge, suggesting that both regiments may have lost more than a dozen men each to sharpshooting and skirmishing.<sup>96</sup>

The fighting through the town and over at Culp's Hill produced fewer skirmish fatalities. The 54<sup>th</sup>, 58<sup>th</sup>, and 68<sup>th</sup> New York regiments—11<sup>th</sup> Corps units that skirmished all day—suffered no fatalities. The 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 29<sup>th</sup> Ohio regiments—all of the 12<sup>th</sup> Corps—lost sixteen killed or mortally wounded between them on July 3. Each regiment specified that it lost one each, or 19 percent of the combined total, to Confederate sharpshooter fire.<sup>97</sup> Taken individually, these fatalities seem insignificant, especially when compared to the three-day loss of 51,000 casualties. However, when considering the large number of units from both sides that fought on the skirmish line on July 3, these small totals begin to add up. Clearly, skirmish warfare was more dangerous in some areas than others. The fighting between the centers of the two armies undoubtedly produced the most skirmish casualties, followed distantly by the fighting along the Union left, and ending with the skirmishing and sharpshooting at Culp's Hill and Cemetery Hill. The importance of aiming made these types of warfare especially hazardous. Thus, it is my conservative

estimate that on July 3, skirmishing and sharpshooting produced about 240 fatalities, about 1,200 total losses, or 11.5 percent of all casualties incurred that day.<sup>98</sup> If true, then the flurry of gunfire between the lines on July 3 produced more losses than certain minor, but famous, Civil War battles, including Front Royal, Kernstown, Hanover, Wauhatchie, and others.

But, in a larger sense, the skirmishing and sharpshooting on July 3 signaled a wider acceptance of these increasingly popular tactics. Skirmishing and sharpshooting began the war with minor, inconsequential roles. Critics expressed revulsion or diffidence at their perpetuation. Quickly though, skirmishing and sharpshooting gained ascendance, and by July 3, 1863, at Gettysburg, the two principal armies in the East showcased their newly acquired marksmanship talents in clear ways. Although sharpshooting never lost its stigma, and skirmishing never gained full credit in the realm of Civil War memory, the summer of 1863 heralded a new age of American light infantry tactics, one that would persist until the end of the war.

Still, this age of sharpshooting and skirmishing was a sad one, and everyone realized it. These tactics meant one thing: taking aim and killing. They produced a tough psychological hurdle, even for those who engaged in the profession and took pride in their work. Perhaps Lieutenant Luke E. Bicknell of the 1<sup>st</sup> Massachusetts Sharpshooters put it best. As he reflected on the day's events, he expressed sorrow and solemnity at the carnage he had seen and at his sharpshooters' participation in it. At 9 P.M., on July 3, a staff officer found Bicknell. In a huff, he asked the lieutenant why he had not brought in the remaining sharpshooters and skirmishers—those belonging to the 15<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts—then resting on their arms beyond the Emmitsburg road. Fatigued and mentally worn, Bicknell ambled off to find these errant men. For a few minutes, his mind drifted, and later he recorded his thoughts:

As I walked down the slope it brought to mind places traversed, at this hour, in childhood. With something of the old dread oppressing me I sought to penetrate the gloom beyond and learn what terrible imminent danger it concealed. Something of this same feeling shared by both picket lines made my mission a very delicate one. As I picked my way amongst the fallen, the moans of the dying rose from all around and filled the air. I wondered if this scene were present in the mind of God when he created man. The dim planets above and all pulseless voiceless nature beneath seemed to unite with the dead in silent protest; but reason answered, Yes! It must be his will that all created things that think, and act at will, should differ and contend, else it had not been so. Had you been southern born and taught you would have been watching from the opposite heights tonight.<sup>99</sup>

At first, Bicknell was disgusted; then he was resigned. He concluded simply, "The sharpshooters had made a grand record this day."<sup>100</sup>

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Desjardin, *Stand Firm Ye Boys From Maine: The Twentieth Maine and the Gettysburg Campaign* (Gettysburg: Thomas Publications, 1995), 88.

<sup>2</sup> Eugene B. Kelleran to brother, 12 July 1863, in Gregory A. Coco, *On the Bloodstained Field, II: 132 More Human Interest Stories of the Campaign and Battle of Gettysburg* (Gettysburg: Thomas Publications, 1989), 97-8.

<sup>3</sup> Paddy Griffith, *Battle Tactics of the Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); Perry Jamieson and Grady McWhiney, *Attack and Die: Civil War Military Tactics and the Southern Heritage* (Tuscaloosa, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1984); Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Knopf, 2008), 42-3. More recently, Earl J. Hess explores sharpshooters and skirmishers in detail in his book, *The Rifle Musket in Civil War Combat*. See Earl J. Hess, *The Rifle Musket in Civil War Combat: Reality and Myth* (Lawrence, Kan.: University of Kansas Press, 2008). The only other substantial work to examine sharpshooters and skirmishers—although it tends to blend all “light infantrymen” together—is Fred L. Ray, *Shock Troops of the Confederacy: The Sharpshooter Battalions of the Army of Northern Virginia* (Asheville, N.C.: CFS Press, 2006).

<sup>4</sup> David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War and American Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 185-8. Blight describes “soldiers’ memory” in a broad way, but he suggests that veterans eventually discarded their bitterness and psychological damage to reap the glory of battlefield memories. He contends, “So too the recollections of the worst combat tended eventually to be buried in veterans’ war papers, if openly expressed at all. . . . Much of the prose in veterans’ war papers, in critic Thomas Leonard’s apt phrase, hovered ‘above the battle.’ . . . Their primary subjects were their own bravery and the mathematical detail it required to describe it.”

<sup>5</sup> Paddy Griffith, *Forward Into Battle: Fighting Tactics from Waterloo to the Near Future* (Novato, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1997).

<sup>6</sup> Gordon C. Rhea, *Cold Harbor: Grant and Lee, May 26 to June 3, 1864* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2002), 362, 385, 391-2. Rhea speculates that about one quarter of the Cold Harbor campaign’s 17,000 casualties were victims of skirmishing and sharpshooting. On June 3, Lieutenant General Ulysses Grant’s attack cost the Army of the Potomac 3,500 to 4,000 men.

<sup>7</sup> Ray, *Shock Troops of the Confederacy*, 30. The Army of Northern Virginia may have had a third unit, the 1<sup>st</sup> North Carolina Sharpshooter Battalion, a two-company battalion formed in May 1862 out of extra recruits from the 21<sup>st</sup> North Carolina. However, during the Battle of Gettysburg, it is not clear whether this battalion operated independently or with its parent unit.

<sup>8</sup> Robert Rodes, 28 January 1863, National Archives, Division of History and Records, Washington D.C.

<sup>9</sup> Nat S. Turner III, ed., *A Southern Soldier’s Letters Home: The Civil War Letters of Samuel A. Burney, Cobb’s Georgia Legion, Army of Northern Virginia* (Macon, Ga: Mercer University Press, 2002), 246-8; See also, Hess, *The Rifle Musket in Civil War Combat*, 136.

<sup>10</sup> William T. Wofford, 3 June 1863 (fragment), in Gettysburg National Military Park Library [hereafter GNMPL].

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

---

<sup>12</sup> Ray, *Shock Troops of the Confederacy*, 274-6. Ray estimates that no more than 250 .451-caliber Whitworth rifles made it to the Confederacy. A great many of these went to sharpshooters in the Western theater, so no more than one or two men per company in the Army of Northern Virginia's sharpshooter battalions wielded them.

<sup>13</sup> Fred Ray's thorough book on Confederate sharpshooter, *Shock Troops of the Confederacy*, makes no estimate at how many target rifles fell into the hands of the Texas Brigade, or any brigade for that matter. Certainly, these weapons were less rare than the Whitworth rifle, but still, Southerners could not come by them easily. Probably, each regiment fielded no more than a half-dozen of these rifles. The most famous Confederate target rifle used at Gettysburg was an abandoned thirty-six pound "Northern Target Rifle" discovered by John Rosensteel in Devil's Den on July 5. Inscribed with a small plate bearing the initials, "H.C.P.," this weapon has remained a part of Gettysburg National Military Park's artifact collection for decades. In 2004, Raymond Herrington of Austin, Texas, visited the National Park and in discussion with several battlefield guides determined that the rifle once belonged to his ancestor, Private Henry Clay Powell, Company K, 1<sup>st</sup> Texas Infantry. A few amateur history buffs disagree with Herrington's contention—that his ancestor once owned this rifle—but it seems likely that Henry Clay Powell once operated as a sharpshooter for Robertson's brigade. Kathryn Jorgensen, "Owner of Gettysburg Park's First Relic is Identified," *Civil War News* (September, 2004).

<sup>14</sup> Michael C. C. Adams, *Fighting for Defeat: Union Military Failure in the East, 1861-1865* (Lincoln, Nebr.: University of Nebraska Press, 1992, originally published as *Our Masters the Rebels: A Speculation on Union Military Failure in the East*, 1978), 2, 30; Adams's thesis rests on several implicit assumptions; particularly, he supposes that Southerners always demonstrated better rifle skill than their Northern counterparts. Adams maintained, "It followed . . . that the Southerner would be proficient in the use of firearms, another basic skill needed by the soldier. . . . When not fighting, Southerners might improve their aim by hunting, a sport thought to be more popular in the South than the North, because of its rural image."

<sup>15</sup> Earl J. Hess's book, *The Rifle Musket in Civil War Combat*, suggests that antebellum rifle clubs retained a strong masculine atmosphere, complete with drinking and crude humor. But, it seems that, during shooting exhibitions, women and children showed up to watch the events and keep score. In my own research on Berdan's Sharpshooters, I have observed similar demographics. When depicting shooting exhibitions, various sketch artists placed young women front-and-center in the crowds of spectators.

<sup>16</sup> David W. Blight, ed., *When This Cruel War Is Over: The Civil War Letters of Charles Harvey Brewster* (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), 114.

<sup>17</sup> Charles A. Stevens, *Berdan's United States Sharpshooters in the Army of the Potomac, 1861-1865* (St. Paul, Minn.: Price-McGill Company, 1892; reprint Dayton, Oh.: Morningside, 1984), 6; J. Gregory Acken, ed., *Inside the Army of the Potomac: The Civil War Experience of Francis Adams Donaldson* (Mechanicsburg, Penna.: Stackpole Books, 1998), 64.

<sup>18</sup> Wyman S. White, *The Civil War Diary of Wyman S. White, First Sergeant of Company F, 2<sup>nd</sup> United States Sharpshooter Regiment*, ed. Russell C. White (Baltimore: Butternut and Blue, 1991), 258-9.

<sup>19</sup> *New York Herald*, 11 June 1861; *The New York Times*, 26 July 1861.

<sup>20</sup> *The New York Times*, 2 June 1861.

<sup>21</sup> *New York Herald*, 14 and 24 July 1861.

<sup>22</sup> Earl Hess argued that skirmishing and sharpshooting demonstrated distinctly different tactics. As stated earlier, I concur with this interpretation. However, I believe these terms overlapped occasionally, much like a Venn diagram. Skirmishers had to practice sharpshooting—or to use modern parlance, "sniping"—since the circumstances of battle forced skirmishers to take aim and practice the craft of sharpshooting while they fought on the skirmish line.

<sup>23</sup> Philip Racine, ed., "Unspoiled Heart": *The Journal of Charles Mattocks of the 17<sup>th</sup> Maine* (Knoxville, Tenn.: University of Tennessee Press, 1994), 111, 126.

<sup>24</sup> Harrison B. Ferguson, *Disaster, Struggle, Triumph: The Adventures of 1,000 "Boys in Blue," from August, 1862, to June, 1865* (Albany: The Argus Company, 1870), 180.

<sup>25</sup> See, Paddy Griffith, *Battle Tactics of the American Civil War* (Wiltshire: Crowood Press Ltd., 1996); Hess, *The Rifle Musket in Civil War Combat*.

<sup>26</sup> Hess, *The Rifle Musket in Civil War Combat*, 174.

<sup>27</sup> U. S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1889), Series 1, 27(1): 511, 519, 533, 536. [Hereafter cited as *OR*].

<sup>28</sup> H. E. Brown, *The 28<sup>th</sup> and 147<sup>th</sup> Regiments Penna. Vols. At Gettysburg*, (n.d.), 6, vertical file, GNMPL.

- 
- <sup>29</sup> OR, Series 1, 27 (1), 741.
- <sup>30</sup> Christine Dee, ed., *Ohio's War: The Civil War in Documents* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2006), 116-7.
- <sup>31</sup> *New York Tribune* clipping, n.d., author's collection.
- <sup>32</sup> Kent Masterson Brown, *Retreat from Gettysburg: Lee, Logistics, and the Pennsylvania Campaign* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press), 76-7.
- <sup>33</sup> Ferguson, *Disaster, Struggle, Triumph*, 180, 377.
- <sup>34</sup> Henry S. Stevens, *Souvenirs of Excursions to Battlefields* (n.p.: Gibson Brothers, 1893), 16. Copy at GNMPL.
- <sup>35</sup> Charles D. Page, *History of the Fourteenth Regiment, Connecticut Volunteer Infantry* (Meriden, Conn.: Horton Publishing Company, 1906), 142-3.
- <sup>36</sup> As of the writing of this essay, this ravine is the present location of the Cyclorama Center parking lot and the knoll is the location of the defunct National Park Service Visitor Center.
- <sup>37</sup> Luke Emerson Bicknell, "The Sharpshooters," *First Company, Massachusetts Volunteer Sharpshooters 19 August 1861—18 July 1863* (n.p.), 78-9. Copy at Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts. The soldier described by Bicknell was Private Sandford K. Fuller, age thirty-one, from Lynn, Massachusetts. Fuller died in a Baltimore hospital on July 18, 1863, after a secondary amputation. John W. Busey, *These Honored Dead: Union Casualties at Gettysburg* (Hightstown, N.J.: Longstreet House, 1996), 81.
- <sup>38</sup> Page, *Fourteenth Regiment*, 145-8.
- <sup>39</sup> Bicknell, "The Sharpshooters," 79.
- <sup>40</sup> Charles Hamblen and Walter Powell, ed., *Connecticut Yankees at Gettysburg* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1993), 113.
- <sup>41</sup> Norman Eldred, *Only a Boy: A First-Hand Account of the Civil War* (n.p., 1909), 35-6. GNMPL.
- <sup>42</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>43</sup> Stevens, *Berdan's United States Sharpshooters*, 336-7.
- <sup>44</sup> This force consisted of two Howitzers and two ten-pound Parrotts from Lieutenant C. W. Motes's Troup Artillery, two three-inch ordnance rifles from Lieutenant R. M. Anderson's section of the 1<sup>st</sup> Richmond Howitzers, two three-inch ordnance rifles from Lieutenant J. M. Payne's section of the Pulaski Artillery (temporarily assigned to Captain B. C. Manly's 1<sup>st</sup> North Carolina Artillery), and one rifled gun from Lieutenant W. J. Furlong's section of the Pulaski Artillery.
- <sup>45</sup> Abraham Wright, "The 2<sup>nd</sup> U.S. Sharpshooters: The Regiment Took Part in Repelling Pickett's Charge," *The National Tribune*, 18 February 1909.
- <sup>46</sup> Stevens, *Berdan's United States Sharpshooters*, 337.
- <sup>47</sup> OR, Series 1, 27 (2), 376, 379, 384.
- <sup>48</sup> Ibid., 374-85. Anderson's section lost one killed, two wounded, ten horses killed, two horses permanently disabled, and one caisson abandoned. Furlong's section lost one killed, two wounded, three horses killed, and one caisson abandoned. Motes's battery reported one killed, six wounded, and thirteen horses killed during the entire battle, but it is likely that many of these were suffered during the skirmish at the Codori house. The losses for Payne's section cannot be determined.
- <sup>49</sup> OR, Series 1, 27 (1), 683-4; Robert Hunt Rhodes, ed., *All for the Union: The Civil War Diary and Letters of Elisha Hunt Rhodes* (New York: Vintage Books, 1985), 108-9.
- <sup>50</sup> The casualties included Private Charles Powers, Company C, killed; Corporal John Leavitt, Company B, wounded in the face; Private William McWilliams, Company E, wounded in the hand; Private George Young, Company F, wounded in the hand and arm; and Private William Thomas, Company H, wounded in the back.
- <sup>51</sup> Rhodes, *All for the Union*, 109.
- <sup>52</sup> Bicknell, "The Sharpshooters," 87-9.
- <sup>53</sup> A. P. Morrison to brother, 21 July 1863, vertical files, GNMPL.
- <sup>54</sup> Jesse Pryor journal, 3 July 1863, vertical files, GNMPL.
- <sup>55</sup> E. D. Benedict diary, 3 July 1863, vertical files, GNMPL.
- <sup>56</sup> D. R. Marshall, *Company K, 155<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Volunteer Zouaves* (Butler, Penna.: Mechling Associates, Inc., 1998), 113.
- <sup>57</sup> Robert L. Stewart, *History of the One Hundred and Fortieth Pennsylvania Volunteers* (Philadelphia: n.p., 1912), 426-8.
- <sup>58</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>59</sup> Ibid.

- 
- <sup>60</sup> Evan Morrison Woodward, *Our Campaigns: The Second Pennsylvania Reserve Volunteers* (Philadelphia: J. E. Porter, 1865), 214.
- <sup>61</sup> John P. Nicholson, ed. and comp., *Pennsylvania at Gettysburg: Ceremonies at the Dedication of the Monuments Erected by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Volume 2* (Harrisburg, Penna.: William Stanley Hay, State Printer, 1904), 679.
- <sup>62</sup> Samuel C. Shroyer, with William T. Shroyer, ed., *The Road to Cold Harbor* (Pittsburgh: Closson Press, 1986), 18.
- <sup>63</sup> R. W. McKee diary, 3 July 1863, vertical file, GNMPL.
- <sup>64</sup> Howard Thomson and William H. Rauch, *History of the "Bucktails": The Kane Rifle Regiment of the Pennsylvania Reserve Corps, Reprint edition*. (1906; reprint Dayton, Ohio: Morningside Press, 1988), 271.
- <sup>65</sup> J. P. Bard, "The 42<sup>nd</sup> Regt. P. V. at Gettysburg," (n.d.), vertical file, GNMPL.
- <sup>66</sup> Thomas and Rauch, *History of the "Bucktails,"* 271-2.
- <sup>67</sup> Bard, "The 42<sup>nd</sup> Regt. P. V. at Gettysburg," GNMPL.
- <sup>68</sup> Thomson and Rauch, *History of the "Bucktails,"* 271-2.
- <sup>69</sup> Woodward, *Our Campaigns*, 214-5.
- <sup>70</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>71</sup> Frank Bell, (n.p.), 3-4, vertical file, GNMPL.
- <sup>72</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>73</sup> Bard, "The 42<sup>nd</sup> Regt. P.V. at Gettysburg," GNMPL.
- <sup>74</sup> Stevens, *Berdan's United States Sharpshooters*, 339.
- <sup>75</sup> Rank and File of the 155<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania, *Under the Maltese Cross, Antietam to Appomattox, The Loyal Uprising in Western Pennsylvania, 1861-1865: Campaigns of the 155<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Regiment* (Pittsburgh: n.p., 1910), 176.
- <sup>76</sup> John M. Bowden, (n.d.), vertical file, GNMPL.
- <sup>77</sup> John C. West, *A Texan in Search of a Fight: Being the Diary and Letters of a Private Soldier in Hood's Texas Brigade* (Waco, Tex.: Press of J. S. Hill and Company, 1904), 95.
- <sup>78</sup> Stevens, *Berdan's United States Sharpshooters*, 340.
- <sup>79</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>80</sup> John L. Parker, et al., *Henry Wilson's Regiment: History of the Twenty-Second Massachusetts Infantry, and Second Company Sharpshooters, and the Third Light Battery, in the War of the Rebellion* (Boston: Regimental Association, 1887), 341.
- <sup>81</sup> Stevens, *Berdan's United States Sharpshooters*, 340-1.
- <sup>82</sup> OR, Series 1, 27 (1), 654.
- <sup>83</sup> OR, Series 1, 27 (1), 654-5, 657-8, 684-5, 687-8.
- <sup>84</sup> Stewart, *History of the One Hundred and Fortieth Pennsylvania Volunteers*, 428.
- <sup>85</sup> OR, Series 1, 27 (2), 416-7, 421-4.
- <sup>86</sup> David L. Ladd and Audrey J. Ladd, eds., *The Bachelder Papers: Gettysburg in their Own Words*, Vol. 1 (Dayton, Ohio: Morningside, 1994), 265-6.
- <sup>87</sup> Woodward, *Our Campaigns*, 216.
- <sup>88</sup> Ladd and Ladd, *The Bachelder Papers*, 265-6.
- <sup>89</sup> Woodward, *Our Campaigns*, 216.
- <sup>90</sup> OR, Series 1, 27 (2), 424.
- <sup>91</sup> OR, Series 1, 27 (1), 655, 657-8. McCandless estimated that there were 2,000 to 3,000 arms in the area. Crawford estimated 7,000, but since he was not present at the forefront of the attack, his guess is questionable.
- <sup>92</sup> Ladd and Ladd, *The Bachelder Papers*, 265-6.
- <sup>93</sup> OR, Series 1, 27 (3), 520.
- <sup>94</sup> OR, Series 1, 27 (1), 78.
- <sup>95</sup> Busey, *These Honored Dead*, 81, 242, 268, 278.
- <sup>96</sup> Ibid., 176-81, 191-4, 224-6.
- <sup>97</sup> Ibid., 220-4.
- <sup>98</sup> I use the statistic, 10,450 to include all of the third day's casualties: 705 Union dead; 2,745 Union wounded; 1,425 Confederate dead; and 5,575 Confederate wounded. Admittedly, my estimate for 1,200 skirmish casualties is tentative, at best. It rests on plenty of guesswork and upon the assumption that the Confederate casualty figure resulting from skirmisher and sharpshooter fire (which is virtually unknowable) equaled the rate Union casualties

---

resulting from the same source. Hopefully, one day, a detailed compilation of Gettysburg deaths will reveal the true nature of each wounding and fatality.

<sup>99</sup> Bicknell, "The Sharpshooters," 89.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.