

**JOSHUA LAWRENCE CHAMBERLAIN:  
A VOLUNTEER OFFICER IN THE CIVIL WAR**

**Bruce E. Matthews**

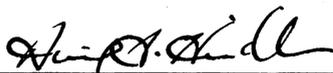
**A Thesis  
Submitted To  
The Graduate Faculty Of  
Salisbury State University  
In Partial Fulfillment Of The  
Requirements For The  
Degree Of  
Master Of Arts**

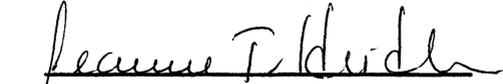
**Salisbury, Maryland**

**August 1990**

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**Thesis Abstract**

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**Directed By Dr. David Heidler**

In 1862, Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain accepted the lieutenant-colonelcy of the Twentieth Maine regiment. As a volunteer officer, Chamberlain emerged as one of the Civil War's outstanding fighting generals, rising far above everyone's expectations except his own. His combination of extraordinary talents--courage, intellect, discipline--coupled with service under some of the Fifth Corps' finest officers, enabled the former minister and professor to become the Union army's quintessential volunteer officer.

Chamberlain developed rapidly as an officer during his first year of service. He first came under Rebel fire soon after the battle of Antietam, along the Potomac River at Shepherdstown. Taking part in his first major campaign at Fredericksburg, Chamberlain displayed both leadership and compassion on the field. During the battle of Fredericksburg, Chamberlain personally led a portion of the Twentieth Maine into action, suffering himself a slight wound to the face.

It was not until Gettysburg that Chamberlain fully demonstrated his talents as an officer. During the action on Little Round Top, Chamberlain held the Army of the Potomac's extreme left flank, repulsing several Confederate assaults. To thwart a last possible attack by the Rebels, Chamberlain turned to the offensive and charged, forcing the enemy to flee. Chamberlain's composure and heroism throughout the battle earned him lasting fame and later, a medal of honor.

After the Gettysburg campaign, Colonel Chamberlain received the command of a brigade. Unfortunately, he spent most of the fall and winter of 1863-64 recovering from malaria and pneumonia in an army hospital. It was not until late May, with General U. S. Grant now in the East, that Chamberlain returned to action. On 18 June, leading his brigade upon the Rebel works at Rives' Salient, Chamberlain was seriously wounded, the bullet passing through his hip. Near death, the colonel was given an immediate promotion for his gallant action by Grant.

Unbelievably, General Chamberlain survived his wound and returned to duty. And in the closing days of the war, Chamberlain played a vital role in forcing General R. E. Lee's army out of its works at Petersburg, and finally its surrender. Chamberlain fought brilliantly at Quaker Road, White Oak Road, Five Forks and Appomattox. To honor the unselfish general, Chamberlain was given the command of troops by his superiors during the Army of Northern Virginia's surrendering of arms. Chamberlain exhibited magnanimity in victory by ordering his men to shoulder arms and salute the defeated Southern army.

By the end of the Civil War, General Chamberlain's talent as a volunteer army officer was widely known. He was respected by both friend and foe alike. After the war, he returned home to Maine and became governor of the state during the Reconstruction period. But he always remembered fondly his days of service to his beloved Union, confident that he had done his duty to the best of his ability.

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## **Prologue**

### ***I KNOW HOW TO LEARN***

In 1909, Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain wrote, "Great crises in human affairs call out the great in men, they call for great men . . . [they] are not self-seekers; they are saviors. They give their strenghts to the weak, the wronged, the imperilled." Although these few words were meant for the immortal Abraham Lincoln, Chamberlain, through his own words, had effectively described himself. It was during America's greatest crisis, as the nation sat divided between North and South, that Chamberlain came forth rather than watch his nation wither and perish. Like so many other farmers, teachers, merchants, and politicians--he volunteered to do his simple duty, fight for the Union. But Chamberlain, himself a former minister and Bowdoin professor, rose far above the rank of dutiful soldier during the Civil War. Because of his strength of intellect and ardent belief in the concepts of manhood--courage, fortitude, and self-command--Chamberlain achieved his place in history as the quintessential volunteer officer.<sup>1</sup>

Chamberlain did not become the classic officer in his first few days of his military service, but he grew gradually into the role over a period of years. He exhibited the qualites of a blossoming officer during the Fredericksburg campaign, finally realizing his potential as a regimental commander on the slopes of Little Round Top. It was here that Chamberlain sealed his name into history; so much so that Chamberlain's handling of the Twentieth Maine in battle has been utilized as a case study of leadership and small-unit cohesion by today's army.<sup>2</sup>

But Chamberlain continued to grow as an officer even after his glory at Gettysburg. His conspicuous courage, most aptly demonstrated in the charge upon Rives' Salient, brought him both the recognition of General Grant and a general's stripes though he nearly lost his life. It was because of this type of courage that such notable generals as Gouverneur Warren, Philip Sheridan, Charles Griffin, and Grant came to rely upon a volunteer general from Maine. And at the end of the war, Chamberlain received the supreme honor of accepting the Army of Northern Virginia's surrender of arms; a moment in which Chamberlain's magnanimous gesture of salute would never be forgotten.

Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain was born in the village of Brewer, Maine, on 8 September 1828. Though Lawrence, as he was called by his parents and friends, was the first of the Chamberlain stock to be born in the new state of Maine, the family had resided in the New England region for several decades.<sup>3</sup> Lawrence's father, Joshua Chamberlain, a farmer by trade, proved to be one of the leading citizens of Brewer, playing a significant role in the town's civil and military affairs. His services included a brief tenure as county commissioner and service as lieutenant-colonel of the militia regiment ordered eastward during Maine's almost comical "Aroostook War" of 1839 with New Brunswick. Lawrence's grandfather, also named Joshua, left Massachusetts around 1799 and settled near Orrington on the lower Penobscot River. The eldest Joshua prospered in the ship-building business until the War of 1812. During the war, the British sailed up the Penobscot and destroyed two of his vessels and wrecked his shipyard. As if to avenge the rapacity of the British marauders, he accepted a colonel's commission and commanded the American garrison at Eastport. In 1817, he moved to Brewer and purchased a large farm and with the assistance of his sons, the colonel spent the better part of his days between farming, milling, and some ship-building at the head of the Penobscot River. Apparently, the military tradition was securely

imbued in the Chamberlain blood. Even Lawrence's great-grandfather, Ebenezer Chamberlain, had served as a New Hampshire soldier in the Revolution and in the French and Indian War.<sup>4</sup>

While the Chamberlain men were of the rough and ready mold, Lawrence's mother, Sarah Dupee Brastow, introduced a somewhat different heritage into the family. She was the daughter of Billings and Lydia Dupee Brastow of Holden, Maine. Lydia Dupee was the daughter of Charles Dupuis whose surname on the army lists of the Revolution had been changed to Dupee. The first member of the Dupuis family to reach the colonies was Jean Dupuis, a Huguenot from La Rochelle, who had fled to Boston in 1685 to escape possible religious persecution after King Louis XIV's revocation of the Edit of Nantes.<sup>5</sup>

The marriage of Sarah and Joshua Chamberlain brought together two unique personalities, which would greatly influence their son, Lawrence. Lawrence's father was a reticent man who could, at times, be rather severe in his countenance and attitude. However, he was usually indulgent regarding his family and open-minded on the political and social problems of the day. Joshua, like his father (Lawrence's grandfather), expressed his political awareness in the names of his sons. (Two of Joshua's brothers were named John Quincy Adams Chamberlain and Elbridge Gerry Chamberlain.) Joshua named his first son Joshua Lawrence in honor of Captain James Lawrence of the famed frigate U.S.S. *Chesapeake*. (Captain Lawrence, after suffering a mortal wound during an engagement with H.M.S. *Shannon*, had cried out, "Don't give up the ship!") In addition, Joshua named one of Lawrence's brothers John Calhoun Chamberlain after the South Carolinian politician which would ultimately cause the New England family a slight embarrassment.<sup>6</sup>

In sharp contrast to Lawrence's stern father stood Sarah, his mother. She was a vivacious and an industrious woman who possessed a strong distaste for any indolence.

She kept all those around her bustling and working. Sarah's five children--Lawrence, Horace, Sarah, John, and Thomas--were enough to keep anyone busy. When discussing her oldest child, Lawrence, Sarah wanted him to become a minister, but her husband insisted their eldest have a military career, perhaps beginning with attendance at West Point. Sarah, however, could be as stubborn and stern as her husband on occasions. Later the occasion would indeed arise.<sup>7</sup>

While Lawrence was just a schoolboy growing up outside Brewer, he divided his time between play and work. Living in such close proximity to the Penobscot River, he became an adept swimmer as well as learning to sail the family sloop *Lapwing*. If not near the water, Lawrence would spend his time playing the Indian game "round ball" or mock battles. His father taught Lawrence and his brothers how to shoot and wield a cumbersome broadsword, but Lawrence discovered a greater pleasure in the music he heard in school and church. He learned to sing and eventually taught himself to play the violin.<sup>8</sup>

On the other hand, Lawrence did have his share of hard work. One did not have to travel far to find work on the Chamberlain farm; there was always plowing, planting, harvesting, and woodcutting to keep Lawrence occupied. He learned much about perseverance from his father while working on the farm. Once, when Lawrence and his brothers could not clear a heavy stone from a field, Lawrence made the mistake of telling his father it could not be moved. With the bark of a seasoned commander, his father turned and said "Move it!" The stone was then moved. Lawrence learned more than the importance of determination from this incident; he also learned value of discipline in a demanding situation.<sup>9</sup>

One difficult task Lawrence did conquer with a noteworthy fervor was his studies. At the age of fourteen, Lawrence was marched off by his father to Major Whiting's military academy in Ellsworth, where he was to excel in military drill, Latin, and

French. Nearing the end of his stay at the academy, Lawrence experimented with the teaching profession. He developed a taste for "keeping school," as teaching was referred to at that time, and soon he established an evening singing school. The time was fast approaching, however, when Lawrence would have to leave the academy and choose a career.<sup>10</sup>

While Lawrence was undecided about his future, his parents were not. His mother saw her son in the frock of a minister while his father envisioned him as a West Point cadet. The choice between the ministry or a military career would be a difficult one, but Sarah Chamberlain rose for her occasion. Lawrence would do the Lord's work, not as a minister per se, but as a missionary. In the field of mission work, Lawrence could than continue his teaching of school while spreading the message of Christianity.<sup>11</sup>

To become a missionary, Lawrence first had to acquire a college education. The best suitable college for Lawrence's needs at that time was Bowdoin College in Brunswick. Admission requirements for Bowdoin included a knowledge of Greek. Lawrence already knew Latin and French, but Greek proved much more difficult to learn. Lawrence, however, would not be discouraged. For the next six months, Lawrence spent his evenings in the garret of his father's house studying the language. (It must have now been a pleasure for Lawrence to interrupt his intense study to do such work as chopping wood or moving heavy stones.) In 1848, Lawrence's rigorous preparation was rewarded when Bowdoin accepted him.<sup>12</sup>

At Bowdoin, the young Chamberlain's academic performance was superb. In Greek, the language Chamberlain had needed for acceptance, he ranked first among his class, and earned the highest honors in French. Mathematics and astronomy, two subjects that originally gave Chamberlain difficulty, were quickly mastered. He was a first assistant librarian and first assistant in chemistry. At the Scholarly Exhibition of 1851, he was given the privilege of presenting the German Junior Part. In addition to

his honors, Chamberlain received two prizes, one for declamation and the other for English composition. Upon his graduation in 1852, Chamberlain was one of three students to deliver orations at the commencement. His undergraduate career culminated with his election to Phi Beta Kappa.<sup>13</sup>

Some of Chamberlain's interests extended beyond the scholastic sphere of Bowdoin. He taught Sunday school during his freshman and sophomore years and was head of the First Parish Church's choir in his junior and senior years. The pastor of the church was Reverend George E. Adams. Chamberlain was interested in Reverend Adams' discourses, but he was even more interested in the Reverend's daughter, Fanny Adams. Soon, Chamberlain started courting her and the relationship blossomed.<sup>14</sup>

Before the two could be married, Chamberlain felt he had to complete his training for the ministry. Therefore, he decided to enroll in the Bangor Theological Seminary for the fall of 1852. Once enrolled, Chamberlain tackled theology in Latin and church history in German. Now he would also begin his study of three additional languages, Arabic, Hebrew, and Syriac. (It would take Lawrence six years to master the three languages.) Because of his knowledge of German, Chamberlain was able to teach the language to classes of girls from Brewer and additionally, he was given the responsibility of supervising the schools in his hometown.<sup>15</sup>

Just prior to his graduation from the seminary in 1855, Chamberlain returned to Bowdoin for a day and presented an oration. Chamberlain's oration, "Law and Liberty," would significantly affect the course of his emerging missionary career. "Law and Liberty" surveyed the historical development of the two concepts and concluded that law without liberty causes tyranny, and liberty without law induces both irresponsibility and mayhem. The audience, which included the Bowdoin faculty and administration, were so impressed by Chamberlain that he received an invitation to teach at Bowdoin in the fall of 1855. Chamberlain accepted the invitation and became

the instructor in Logic and Natural Theology. Lawrence filled the position that had been previously held by Calvin Stowe--husband of Harriet Beecher Stowe--who had taught the subjects during Lawrence's undergraduate days from 1850 to 1852. In only a few months, Chamberlain's life had changed course. He had embarked on a teaching career instead of the ministry, and on 7 December 1855, he took Fanny Adams for his wife.<sup>16</sup>

From 1855 to the summer of 1862, Chamberlain taught at Bowdoin. He spent his first year teaching Logic and Natural Theology but in the following year, he was elected professor of Rhetoric and Oratory, holding that position for the next five years. Professor Chamberlain spent a substantial amount of time and energy tutoring his students, believing that they should have to meet certain high standards in elocution and writing. Because of his own unrelenting attitude toward education, the professor was disappointed in the ambivalence displayed by the majority of students. Slowly, Chamberlain's interest and enthusiasm started to wane. To offer the professor some relief, the school partially absolved him of his duties, but then appointed him instructor of French and German in 1857. In 1861, the professor relinquished his duties of Rhetoric and Oratory and was elected to the head post of Modern Languages.<sup>17</sup>

The year 1861 saw more than an alteration in Chamberlain's workload; this year brought the sectional conflict between the North and the South to its final phase. After the bombardment of Fort Sumter, emotions on both sides of the Mason-Dixon Line were stirred to a feverous pitch. Upon learning of Fort Sumter's capitulation, Bowdoin students rang the chapel bell, unfurled the national flag, waved a skull-and-crossbones banner and shortly initiated daily drills on the campus. President Lincoln's call for volunteers reached the small college and sent several seniors scurrying off for an adventurous war. After the bloody First Bull Run, it was clearly evident that the war would not be a shortlived adventure. By the year 1862, the war was unmistakably

deteriorating for the Union.<sup>18</sup>

Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, a man of considerable political consciousness, grew increasingly restless and uneasy with every turn of the conflict. As Chamberlain yearned to enlist, Bowdoin's administration moved to stop him. His duty, they claimed, was at the institution. One of Chamberlain's fellow professors told him to think of the useless "glory" he would receive if a wound left him "shattered" and "good-for-nothing." Chamberlain answered his critic in a letter to his wife, Fanny. He wrote, "I think there are those who will hold me in more degree of favor better than that which he [the fellow professor] predicted." To make certain that Chamberlain did not enlist, the trustees and overseers of Bowdoin gave him a two year leave of absence to study in Europe.<sup>19</sup> But Chamberlain would not see Europe in 1862.

As pressure mounted upon Chamberlain to forgo the cause, the governor of Maine, Israel Washburn, discovered himself under pressure from a completely different quarter. Washburn had to raise troops as rapidly as possible to meet President Lincoln's demands. Lincoln had made a call for five Maine regiments on 2 July and eight more under his call of 4 August. Washburn desperately needed men and officers. Adjutant General John Hodsdon suggested Chamberlain to the governor claiming that the Bowdoin professor was a man "of the highest moral, intellectual, and literary worth." Chamberlain, anxious for a military career, traveled to Augusta to meet with Washburn. In such desperate need of officers, Washburn inquired if Chamberlain would be interested in the colonelcy and the command of a new regiment. Chamberlain declined the colonelcy of a regiment but said he would accept a lieutenant-colonelcy, thus allowing him time to learn the fundamentals of command. Washburn promised to make his decision shortly and write Chamberlain.<sup>20</sup>

When word filtered back to Bowdoin about Chamberlain's intentions, the faculty vehemently denounced him. To make matters worse, a rumor circulated that

Chamberlain had been appointed commander of the Twentieth Maine regiment. Chamberlain swiftly quashed the rumor, but the damage had been done. To discredit Chamberlain, Josiah Drummond, the Attorney General of Maine, hastily wrote to the governor asking, "Have you appointed Chamberlain Colonel of the 20th? His old classmates etc. here say you have been deceived: that C. is nothing at all: that is the universal expression of those who know him."<sup>21</sup>

To thwart such charges, Chamberlain also wrote to the governor. "But I feel that I must go," he said, "I trust that the representations they propose to make to induce you to withhold my commission will have no more weight with you than with me." Not everyone was against Chamberlain being commissioned. At least one friend sent an impressive letter of recommendation saying, "I need not tell that the prof is a gentleman and scholar but let me say that he is a man of energy and taste."<sup>22</sup>

Chamberlain desired a commission, but it seemed to be hanging in the balance. He realized his lack of actual military experience might hinder his appointment so he wrote Washburn, "I have always been interested in military matters, and what I do not know in that line, I know how to learn."<sup>23</sup>

Chamberlain felt there was more to the issue than military experience. His country was being torn apart and he could not stand by while she disintegrated before his eyes. He pleaded with Washburn:

But, I fear, this war, so costly of blood & tears--we, will not cease until men of the North are willing to leave good positions, & sacrifice the dearest personal interests, to rescue our country from desolation & defend the National Existence against treachery at home and jeopardy abroad . . . . This war must be ended, with a swift & strong hand; & every man ought to come forward & ask to be placed at his proper post . . . .<sup>24</sup>

If Chamberlain's words did not persuade Governor Washburn to offer him a commission, the professor had one more device to apply. Cognizant of the governor's need for volunteers, Chamberlain claimed men would respond to him if he asked them

to join a new regiment. Chamberlain had several young graduates approach him on their own accord and agree to follow him at any available rank. These young men preferred to form their own regiment. Yielding to the pressure from Lincoln and also from Chamberlain, Washburn tendered the persistent professor a commission. On 8 August 1862, ex-professor Chamberlain gladly accepted the lieutenant-colonelcy of the newly recruited Twentieth Maine volunteer regiment.<sup>25</sup>

Chamberlain was ordered to report to Camp Mason located near Portland, Maine. Arriving at camp, Chamberlain discovered a rag-tag bunch of backwoods farmers and durable lumberers. These men were the 20th Maine. The rather inauspicious first meeting of Chamberlain and his regiment was deceiving. In due time, both would earn reputations as some of the fiercest fighters the Federal army had ever seen.

In the meantime, Chamberlain, though the ranking officer in Camp Mason for a few weeks, did not go on duty. Possibly, the lieutenant-colonel, timorous at the prospect of commanding such a band of misfits who luckily were unarmed at this point, thought it would be wiser to let the colonel of the regiment have the first crack at the men. Colonel Adelbert Ames, a native of Maine and an officer of the Regular army, was given the unenviable job. Ames was as much a soldier as most of the 20th Maine were not. He had already seen action in the war, receiving a severe thigh wound during First Bull Run while commanding a section of battery. After being wounded he was placed on a cassion and continued to give orders until the wound and unbearable heat stopped him. Colonel Ames, only in his late twenties, would have to play the role of a disciplining father to the regiment. However, when he assumed command of the 20th Maine in late August, Ames had little time to shape both the regiment and its lieutenant-colonel. On 2 September, the regiment went by rail to Boston, marched through the town, and later boarded the transport *Merrimac*.<sup>26</sup> Leaving their accustomed lives behind, the volunteers steamed southward destined for Alexandria, Virginia.

**ENDNOTES**

<sup>1</sup> Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, "Abraham Lincoln seen from the field in the War for the Union," A paper read before the Commandery of the State of Pennsylvania, February 12, 1909, M.O.L.L.U.S., p. 3, found in Chamberlain Papers, Library of Congress; and Chamberlain, The Passing of the Armies (Dayton, Ohio: Morningside Press, 1982; facsimile of 1915 edition), p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> U. S., Department of Defense, Military Leadership: FM 22-100 (Washington D. C.: Department of the Army, 1983), pp. 4-16.

<sup>3</sup> In accordance with the First Missouri Compromise, Maine entered the Union in 1820 as a free state to balance the entrance of the slave state Missouri. Maine had previously existed as district of Massachusetts since the seventeenth century.

<sup>4</sup> Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, a Sketch, prepared for the Report of the Chamberlain Association of America, no author or date given, p.3; Willard Wallace, Soul of the Lion: A Biography of General Joshua L. Chamberlain (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1960), pp. 17-18.

<sup>5</sup> Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, a Sketch, p.3; Wallace, Soul of the Lion: A Biography of General Joshua L. Chamberlain, pp. 18-19.

<sup>6</sup> Wallace, Soul of the Lion: A Biography of General Joshua L. Chamberlain, pp. 18-19.

<sup>7</sup> Wallace, Soul of the Lion: A Biography of General Joshua L. Chamberlain, p. 19; Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, a Sketch, p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> Wallace, Soul of the Lion: A Biography of General Joshua L. Chamberlain, pp. 20-21; Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, a Sketch, pp. 4-5.

<sup>9</sup> Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, a Sketch, p. 3; Wallace, Soul of the Lion: A Biography of General Joshua L. Chamberlain, pp. 19-20.

<sup>10</sup> Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, a Sketch, p.4; Wallace, Soul of the Lion: A Biography of General Joshua L. Chamberlain, p. 21.

<sup>11</sup>Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, a Sketch, p.5; Wallace, Soul of the Lion: A Biography of General Joshua L. Chamberlain, pp. 21-22.

<sup>12</sup>Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, a Sketch, pp. 7-8; Wallace, Soul of the Lion: A Biography of General Joshua L. Chamberlain, p. 22.

<sup>13</sup>Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, a Sketch, p. 29; Wallace, Soul of the Lion: A Biography of General Joshua L. Chamberlain, pp. 22-23. Three Civil War generals, besides Chamberlain, attended Bowdoin. They were Francis Fessenden, James Deering Fessenden, and Oliver O. Howard. See James Spencer, Civil War Generals (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), p. 107.

<sup>14</sup>Wallace, Soul of the Lion: A Biography of General Joshua L. Chamberlain, p. 23.

<sup>15</sup>Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, a Sketch, pp. 8-9; Wallace, Soul of the Lion: A Biography of General Joshua L. Chamberlain, p. 28.

<sup>16</sup>Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, a Sketch, pp. 8-9; Wallace, Soul of the Lion: A Biography of General Joshua L. Chamberlain, pp. 28-29.

<sup>17</sup>Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, a Sketch, p. 9; Wallace, Soul of the Lion: A Biography of General Joshua L. Chamberlain, pp. 29-30.

<sup>18</sup>Bell Irvin Wiley, The Life of Billy Yank (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1951-52), p. 18; Wallace, The Soul of the Lion: A Biography of General Joshua L. Chamberlain, pp.33-34. To Bowdoin's future dismay, the college had bestowed upon Jefferson Davis the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws. In regard to the college's war effort, it had 290 men serve in the Union forces out of a resource pool of 1200 students and alumni.

<sup>19</sup>Chamberlain to Fanny, 26 October 1862, Chamberlain papers, Library of Congress; Nehemiah Cleaveland, History of Bowdoin College (Boston: James Ripley Osgood and Company, 1882), p.671.

<sup>20</sup>Annual Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Maine for the Year Ending December 31, 1862 (Augusta: Stevens & Sayward, 1863), pp. 7-15; Chamberlain to Washburn, 22 July 1862, Maine State Archives; Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, a Sketch, p. 10.

<sup>21</sup>Chamberlain to Washburn, 22 July 1862, Maine State Archives; Josiah Drummond to Washburn, 21 July 1862, Maine State Archives.

<sup>22</sup>Chamberlain to Washburn, 8 August 1862, Maine State Archives; John D. Lincoln to Washburn, 17 July 1862, Maine State Archives.

<sup>23</sup>Chamberlain to Washburn, 14 July 1862, Maine State Archives.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Chamberlain to Washburn, 14 July 1862, Maine State Archives; Chamberlain to Washburn, 17 July 1862, Maine State Archives; Chamberlain to Washburn, 8 August 1862, Maine State Archives.

<sup>26</sup>Charles Gilmore to Washburn, 20 August 1862, Maine State Archives; Mark Boatner, III, The Civil War Dictionary (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1959), p. 11; and Theodore Gerrish, Army Life: A Private's Reminiscences of the Civil War (Portland, Maine: Hoyt, Fogg, and Donham, 1882), pp. 2, 24-25.

## CHAPTER ONE

### *BUT ONE BAPTISM OF FIRE...*

The *Merrimac*, after a perilous and unhealthy journey which unnerved many a Maine man, docked along a wharf in Alexandria on the sixth of September. To the landlubber's delight, the transport unloaded its cargo, which included Lieutenant-Colonel Joshua Chamberlain and the 20th Maine regiment, upon Virginia soil. Alexandria was Chamberlain's first encounter with the "land of rebellion." He and the regiment spent their first night in the war theater camping outside the city's limits. At sunrise on the following morning, the Mainers were awakened by reveille and luckily had ample time to enjoy their breakfast before marching back to the wharf to board a smaller steamer bound for Washington, D.C. After a short ride on the Potomac River, Chamberlain and the rest of the regiment found themselves in the Federal capital. For the next few days, the Twentieth would encamp in Fort Craig on Arlington Heights along with the disheartened Army of the Potomac.<sup>1</sup>

Despite finding himself among hundreds of inexperienced volunteer officers, Chamberlain did his best at least to appear worthy of his commission. Fast approaching the age of thirty-four, the former professor sat tall and erect in a saddle, presenting a gentlemanly figure, neither slender nor stout, and always carried in a graceful manner. But while physically attractive, Chamberlain's finest quality was probably his resonant and pleasing voice, a remnant of his college days as professor of Oratory and Rhetoric, which could easily bark a command that would get men moving.<sup>2</sup>

Before Chamberlain could exercise his concealed leadership qualities, he had to tolerate the reshuffling of the Army of the Potomac by Major-General George B. McClellan. "Little Mac" McClellan had resumed command of the army again after the disgraceful defeat of Major-General John Pope at Second Bull Run. The defeat and Pope's handling of the situation generated much animosity among the ranks which filtered down to the new recruits. Growling and grumbling were unusually common in the veterans' tents because the haphazard reorganization had left many of their essentials ignored. This neglect by the high command created a critical period in the existence of the Union army especially since the Confederate army was in such close proximity to Washington, D.C.<sup>3</sup>

During this trying period, Chamberlain and the 20th Maine joined Major-General Fitz-John Porter's Fifth Corps. They were assigned to Major-General George Morell's first division, Colonel T.B.W. Stockton's third brigade. Stockton, a thick, gray-haired man, headed the famous "Light Brigade," formerly led by the notable Brigadier-General Daniel Butterfield. The brigade now consisted of the 20th Maine, 16th Michigan, 12th, 17th, and 44th New York, 83rd Pennsylvania regiments and Brady's Company of Michigan Sharpshooters. With the addition of the Twentieth's nine hundred-plus men and the 118th Pennsylvania regiment to the first division, the strength of the division neared 6,000.<sup>4</sup>

Chamberlain noticed a unique attitude in the Fifth Corps that distinguished it from the rest of the army. Chamberlain felt the sense of distinction had emerged from the early existence of the corps. Early in the war, McClellan had lauded Fitz-John Porter's division, later the nucleus of the corps, for its soldierly appearance and stature. In McClellan's orders, he cited the division as a model for the entire army. The accolades for the division only had the effect of creating jealousy among Porter's covetous adversaries. Some believed there was an apparent favoritism shown to Porter. The

favoritism charges may or may not have been true, but when Porter's regulars became the second division of the new Fifth Corps in the summer of 1862, the old jealousy was aimed at the entire corps. Feeling as if their every move was watched, the corps developed an ardent sense of responsibility and endurance in their officers and men. Thus the discipline of the corps proved to be severe, especially since many of the leading officers were Regular army or West Pointers. Their pride for strict observance of military rules and regulations did not endear them to the majority of volunteers.<sup>5</sup>

Chamberlain believed a prejudice against the corps also existed in Washington, and particularly with the Secretary of War Edwin Stanton. (Stanton, a radical Republican, intensely disliked McClellan and Porter because of their affiliations with the Democratic party.) Neither McClellan and Porter were regarded favorably by members of Lincoln's party later in the war. As a consequence of this unfavorability, officers in the Fifth Corps found it difficult to achieve promotions. Promotion for an officer was usually slow in coming unless he had a friend or two in the capital. Chamberlain noted that brigades and even divisions were sometimes commanded by colonels of state regiments.<sup>6</sup> Chamberlain did have an arguable case concerning the difficulty for corps officers to secure promotions. On the other hand, several officers from the corps did indeed advance in rank; the most notable ones being generals George Gordon Meade, Gouverneur Warren, and Andrew A. Humphreys.

While Chamberlain studied his Fifth Corps comrades, the Twentieth sat idle on Arlington Heights. The regiment was badly in need of instruction and drilling, but it received little. Unfortunately, the majority of its time was spent getting accustomed to camp life. Colonel Ames did use his time wisely when the opportunity presented itself. For instance, he had begun the instruction of the officers while on board the *Merrimac*, realizing that for the regiment to be of any worth, the officers had to learn the drills before they could instruct the men. Fortunately for the regiment, there were

some promising junior officers who learned their lessons well.<sup>7</sup>

Before the basic rudiments of the march could be mastered by the regiment, the Twentieth was unexpectedly ordered to strike its tents and move out on 12 September. The sudden Federal movement was initiated after a Union soldier had unknowingly discovered a copy of Robert E. Lee's lost order which detailed the Confederate invasion of Maryland. The copy, discovered wrapped in three cigars, slowly traversed the chain of command until it reached McClellan's headquarters. In earnest, the commander of the Army of the Potomac shedded his case of the "slows" and put the Federals on the move in a blistering fashion. The road to Antietam Creek lay ahead.

The march to Antietam would be a memorable one for Chamberlain and the 20th Maine. A member of the regiment remarked years later, "The first march destroys much of the romance which has existed in the mind of the soldier, and forcibly reminds him of the reality of his new profession." All along the road to Antietam, the men abandoned what they once thought were necessities. They ditched pans, blankets, stationary, revolvers, knives and even a money belt here and there. Chamberlain, on his horse, at least escaped the incessant tramp of the foot soldier, but he had to contend with the burning heat and suffocating dust. Heat and dust knew no rank. By Tuesday, the sixteenth, Chamberlain and the first division encamped slightly north of Sharpsburg for the night.<sup>8</sup>

At daybreak on the seventeenth, the Federal assault on the Rebel left opened the battle of Antietam. The Fifth Corps scampered forward but not to join the action. Porter's corps would be held in reserve. The first division marched a short distance close to the rear line of battle and positioned itself behind a long ridge of land. They had orders to protect several batteries of artillery in the Union center. Chamberlain did little that day except for executing a forced march to the right for a mile or two to reinforce Major-General Edwin Sumner's Second Corps. Once in position to support

Sumner, the regiment was countermarched in double-time.<sup>9</sup> McClellan had missed his opportunity to pin Lee's army against the Potomac River, and for the next couple of days, the Federals rested while Lee slipped away.

Nonetheless, McClellan's half-hearted attempt at pursuit finally awarded Chamberlain his first taste of combat. On 20 September, elements of the Fifth Corps crossed the Potomac at Blackford's Ford near Shepherdstown, Virginia. Lee had previously used the ford both to cross into and then retreat from Maryland. On the Virginia side of the river, an almost perpendicular bluff was spotted with boulders and timber, while the opposite shore, the Maryland side, there was a less precipitous bluff. On that day, the water was low and tranquil under a brightly shining sun. The peaceful surroundings concealed Lee's Rebel soldiers across the river. If the Federal troops possessed the advantage of foresight, the situation would have appeared hauntingly reminiscent of the Ball's Bluff massacre eleven months before in October.<sup>10</sup>

When the 20th Maine reached the river, portions of the corps had already crossed and ascended the bluffs. Immediately, the regiment knew something was wrong. As the regiment splashed into the river, it encountered Federal cavalry coming from the other direction. Lee had decided to turn and attack the pursuing bluecoats while they straddled the river. The Twentieth kept plunging forward amid dousing Confederate shells and minie-balls and if the Rebel fire was not enough, supporting Yankee artillery fire scurried close to its heads. Once the Maine regiment reached its destination, it found it mostly deserted of blue. Extremely vulnerable to a Rebel counterattack, the regiment promptly retired to its starting point to regroup.<sup>11</sup>

Before the 20th Maine began its withdrawal, Chamberlain was ordered by his brigade commander, Colonel Stockton, to manage the disorganized columns. Chamberlain calmly sat upon his horse in the middle of the Potomac and tried to steady the damp bluecoats while urging them across. As the Rebel fire increased in intensity,

Chamberlain provided an enticing target for the enemy marksmen. Displaying reckless courage in his first taste of combat, Chamberlain placed himself in one of the deepest tracts in the river, overseeing the panicked Federal withdrawal. Suddenly, Chamberlain's horse was shot from under him, the first of many to be shot while carrying Chamberlain. The lieutenant-colonel maintained his composure and resumed his post until the entire Third Brigade, including the 20th Maine, reached the Maryland shore.<sup>12</sup>

Chamberlain achieved two important accomplishments during the Shepherdstown affair. First, he had survived his first baptism of fire. On the other hand, as a Confederate infantryman succinctly put it, "One baptism of fire did not make a hero." Secondly, the lieutenant-colonel passed one of the major requirements for an officer, he had stood his ground and showed much courage under heavy fire. Civil War officers rarely were given the true respect of the common soldier. Infantrymen did not equate worth with rank; a good officer had to win this respect. The quickest way for an officer to gain the admiration of the enlisted man was by his unflinching courage under fire. On many occasions, officers heedlessly exposed themselves to danger to prove their worthiness to command.<sup>13</sup>

As Chamberlain began to demonstrate his innate ability as an officer, he and the rest of the Army of the Potomac had the pleasure to see the Commander-in-Chief, Abraham Lincoln. On 1 October, Lincoln and McClellan reviewed the Fifth Corps. The President looked long and gaunt to the men, but he did have a smile for them as he trotted by on his horse. Chamberlain noticed Lincoln's "rugged features and deep, sad eyes" and was somewhat surprised by the President's good horsemanship. As he rode past Chamberlain, the President checked his horse to draw McClellan's attention to the Mainer's mount, displaying a fondness for the lieutenant-colonel's animal. In subsequent years, Chamberlain's admiration for Lincoln would increase. Chamberlain

wrote, in the waning days of his life, about the divine providence that had delivered Lincoln to do what millions could not.<sup>14</sup>

In his first few weeks of service, Chamberlain had lived through several sundry experiences. He had seen his first action in the Antietam Campaign and had been noticed by Lincoln during a review. But this was not an average day for Chamberlain. Most of a soldier's days were spent idling the hours away in camp. When the 20th Maine encamped for the month of October near Antietam Ford, Chamberlain was introduced to the true life of a volunteer. Idle time in its camp meant one thing: drilling.<sup>15</sup>

If the rag-tag bunch of Mainers had to be drilled, Colonel Ames was the man to do it. Ames drilled the regiment to its breaking point, pushing the men beyond their previous expectations. Chamberlain's brother Tom, a sergeant in the Twentieth, worried that Ames would be shot by his own men in their next battle. Though the enlisted men probably cursed Colonel Ames, the rigors to which he subjected them nurtured a burgeoning *esprit de corps*. Lieutenant-Colonel Chamberlain wrote in late October, "I believe that no other New Regiment will ever have the discipline we have now. We all work."<sup>16</sup>

Chamberlain, who never took any task lightly in his life, plunged into the study of anything army-oriented with a passion that rivaled his days as a student. In a letter to his wife Fanny, Chamberlain boasted:

I study, I tell you, every military work I can find. And it is no small labor to master the evolutions of a Battalion & Brigade. I am bound to understand everything. And I want you to send my "Jomini, *Art of War*" in a package Lt. [James] Nichols is to have sent soon. The Col. and I are going to read it. He is to instruct me, as he is kindly doing in everything now.<sup>17</sup>

Colonel Ames evidently had become the instructor to the former Bowdoin professor. Late into the evenings after the men were all asleep, Ames would tutor his prized pupil in a special course on tactics.<sup>18</sup>

Not all officers saw kindness and patience in Ames' methods as Chamberlain did. On one occasion, two young officers in the 20th Maine decided to leave their marching column to take a short cut through a field. Before the two officers advanced too far, a messenger carrying a dispatch from the colonel apprehended them. The officers were ordered to the rear and placed under arrest. Twenty-four hours later, the regiment was passing a village and the two offending officers wanted to visit the hamlet for a good meal. With the thought of a meal clouding his mind, one of the officers tore off a piece of paper from his pocketbook and jotted a request to Ames for visitation rights. The informal request received a firm rebuke as Colonel Ames replied that the two "will please understand that officers under arrest receive no favors, and when communicating with their headquarters hereafter, will use stationary of proper size."<sup>19</sup>

While the two officers had to grow accustomed to the army way, Chamberlain accepted it wholeheartedly. His brother Tom wrote their mother, "I wish you could hear Lawrence give off a command and see him ride along the battalion on his white horse. He looks splendidly [sic] . . . Lawrence told me last night that he never felt so well in his life." Chamberlain confirmed his brother's words in a letter to Fanny: "I am happier all the day." The lieutenant-colonel relished his long hard days, sometimes spending twelve to fifteen hours in the saddle. Every third day he was detailed as the field officer for the brigade, a job that made him responsible for all the outposts and advanced guards around for several miles.<sup>20</sup>

It is surprising that Chamberlain was so content with the military life. The camp of the 20th Maine near the upper Potomac was malarial and most unhealthy. The camp's water, gathered from the neighboring streams, was hardly drinkable because of its close proximity to the bloody Antietam battlegrounds. The regiment encountered the "stern realities of war" all around them. The few houses left standing in the area

had become hospitals for the wounded and sick while one 20th Maine private thought his most unbearable duty was to visit these hospitals. Only weeks before, these sick men had been tough and lively, anxious to serve their country.<sup>21</sup> When the regiment finally departed its camp, more than 300 men had to be left behind because of wounds and sickness. It was close to a third of the 20th Maine.<sup>22</sup>

Furthermore, Chamberlain must have been shocked by the licentiousness of an army camp. Drinking, gambling, and swearing were common occurrences. And for a man with Chamberlain's ministerial background, this behavior would have been reprehensible. He always believed, however, that moral factors had a greater importance than any material factors. When Chamberlain recommended a former student for an officer's commission, he felt the student would make a fine officer because the student had given "ample proof of high moral principles and intellectual capacity." There was one thing Chamberlain did not seem to realize about the army in his early days of service. As one bluecoat simply observed, "There is one thing certain, the Army will either make a man better or worse morally speaking."<sup>23</sup>

Despite the army's unChristian camp life, Chamberlain never thought of returning to his stultifying college career. Chamberlain confided to Fanny:

But let me say no danger and no hardship ever makes me wish to get back to that college life again. I can't breathe when I think of those last two years. Why I would spend my whole life in campaigning it, rather than endure that again. My experience here and habit of command, will make me less complaisant, will break in upon the notion that certain persons are the natural authorities over me.<sup>24</sup>

The danger of the army did not discourage Lieutenant-Colonel Chamberlain. He had narrowly escaped injury during the Shepherdstown melee. Chamberlain scrawled to his wife that "Most likely I shall be hit somehow at sometime, but all 'my times are in His hand,' and I can not die without His appointing. I try to keep ever in view all the possibilities that surround me and to be ready for all that I am called to."<sup>25</sup>

Chamberlain's simple faith would see him through many trying times before the war's end.

After spending an entire month in camp around Antietam Ford, the reluctant McClellan placed the Army of the Potomac on the move. Crossing the Potomac River into Virginia on 26 October, McClellan slipped into the Confederacy with his usual indecisiveness, or as Lincoln liked to describe it, the case of the "slows." The general's objective was the Culpeper Court House on the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, about thirty miles northwest of Fredericksburg, Virginia. If Lee did not confront the invading Yankee force, it would ford the Rapidan River and probably shift eastward toward Fredericksburg, situated on the Rappahannock River.<sup>26</sup> The Fifth Corps had started its movement on 30 October destined for Snickersville, near Snicker's Gap. The 20th Maine went into bivouac near Snicker's Gap on 2 November.

Chamberlain anticipated an engagement in the "land of Rebeldom" and despaired that any significant battle fought at his current location would be named after Snicker's Gap. Chamberlain felt that the regiment and he were primed for action. He rationalized that the regiment, being reduced to 550 men, left only the most capable soldiers. As the regiment's appearance changed, so did Chamberlain's. He described himself to his wife:

Mr. Brown [John Marshall Brown] says I am the most careless and improvident fellow he ever saw--take no care of myself at all--sleep on the ground when I have the whole Regiment at my command to make a house for me. But I hate to see a man always on the spring to get the best of every thing for himself. I prefer to take things as they come, and I am as well and comfortable as anybody, and no one is the worse for it. Picture to yourself a stout looking fellow--face covered with beard--with a pair of cavalry pants on--sky blue--big enough for Goliath, and coarse as a sheep's back--said fellow having worn and torn and ridden his original suit quite out of the question--enveloped in a huge cavalry overcoat (when it is cold) of the same color and texture as the pants; when wearing the identical flannel blouse worn at Portland--cap with an immense rent in it, caused by a picket raid when we were after Stuart's cavalry. A

shawl and rubber talma strapped on behind the saddle and the overcoat (perhaps), or the dressing case, before--two pistols in holsters. Sword about three feet long at side--a piece of blue beef and some hard bread in the saddlebags. This figure seated on a magnificent horse gives that peculiar point and quality of incongruity which constitutes the ludicrous. The Col. [Ames] says the Regiment is recognized everywhere by that same figure. Rebel prisoners praise the horse and the sword, but evidently take no bang [sic] to the man.<sup>27</sup>

During the first week of November, Chamberlain detected a weakness in the Union armor. He was afraid to write any important details about the army or its generals to Fanny since he did not know under what scrutiny the letters passed. He did, however, write his own opinion of the problem. "We shall keep on fighting, I imagine, through the present Administration. I see no signs of peace. Good fighting on both sides, but while we will not be beaten, still something seems to strike all the vigor out of our arms just at the point of victory."<sup>28</sup> That *something* Chamberlain mentioned was George McClellan. On 5 November, Lincoln directed his chief military advisor, Major-General Henry Halleck, to relieve McClellan of command, replacing him with Major-General Ambrose Burnside.<sup>29</sup>

Too much change in too short a time span will usually generate some regrettable consequences. The appointment of General Ambrose Burnside as commander of the Army of the Potomac would be unfortunate for him and his blue-clad troops. When Burnside took the reins of command from McClellan, he did not boast about the imminent fall of Richmond or even the destruction of General Lee's Rebel army as his predecessors had. What Burnside did say was very far from being boastful. He rather insisted upon his unfitness for his newly acquired position. Lieutenant-Colonel Chamberlain sadly noted that there was even a tendency among the higher echelons of command to take Burnside at his word. Soon enough, common Union soldiers began to reflect their superior officers' growing dissatisfaction with Burnside.<sup>30</sup>

Ambrose Burnside was basically a good, soft-spoken general. He stood about six feet tall and had a burly nature about him. He possessed a small head that made his heavy whiskers appear to consume his whole face. He was a decided, frank, and well-educated man from a well-to-do family. When one first spoke with him, one was led to believe that the stout general had a great deal more intelligence than he actually possessed. Burnside proved to be a difficult man to both understand and truly appreciate.<sup>31</sup>

The changes made within the Army of the Potomac did not cease with McClellan's removal. Burnside decided to reorganize the eastern army into three grand divisions, the right, the left, and the center. The Right Grand Division, commanded by Major-General Edwin Sumner, consisted of the Second and Ninth Army Corps. Major-General William Franklin was given the command of the Left Grand Division, consisting of the First and Sixth Army Corps. The Third and Fifth Army Corps were placed in the Center Grand Division. This division would be under the command of the ambitious Major-General Joseph Hooker.<sup>32</sup>

As a component of "Fighting Joe" Hooker's Center Grand Division, the Fifth Corps underwent several additional changes. The corps suffered heavily after the controversial trial of Major-General Fitz-John Porter. Porter had been removed from command, court-martialed, and arrested because of his loyalty to McClellan and his distaste for the current Union commander, Major-General Pope. Brigadier-General Daniel Butterfield returned to the Fifth Corps and assumed Porter's vacated position. The First Division's commander, Major-General Morell, was also axed for his support of Porter during the trial. Morell was replaced by the firebrand Brigadier-General Charles Griffin, who had previously been in command of the corps' Second Brigade.<sup>33</sup>

Chamberlain could not have served under a better divisional commander than Griffin. The Buckeye general had fought against Mexicans, Indians, and possibly a few

West Point cadets during his years of instruction at the academy. Griffin, a tall, well-built man with a thick moustache on an otherwise clean shaven face, commanded an artillery battery during the early stages of the rebellion. When he was transferred to the Fifth Corps, he carried with him his deep affection for that branch of the service which would serve him on several occasions throughout the war. "Old Griff," as the general was called by his men, fought with a recklessness and prowess that endeared him to his troops but not always with his superiors. When in the field, Griffin's lack of tact, especially in regard to his bellicose language, produced trouble that would invariably threaten his military career. During the Second Bull Run, "Old Griff" was overheard asking, "What Pope [Major-General John Pope] had ever done that he should be made a major-general." The candid general barely escaped with his head unlike Major-General Porter.<sup>34</sup>

While all the changes were taking place in the command structure, the army was kept on the march. Chamberlain and the Twentieth, after spending a week in the vicinity of Warrenton, Virginia, broke camp and left on 17 November. The regiment spent their next week plodding along muddy roads in a damp, drizzling rain. By the twenty-sixth, the Fifth Corps made camp at Stoneman's Switch a few miles from Falmouth between Fredericksburg and Aquia Creek. The army's winter campaigning was making the men restless for action. There would be drilling in rain, mud, and bitter cold never occurred to the volunteer when he enlisted. The soldier's shelter tents did not make the nights much better than the bothersome days. On the night of 6 December, a heavy snow fell as the temperature plummeted below the freezing point. Two members of the 20th Maine froze to death that night while sleeping in their insufficient shelter tents.<sup>35</sup>

Unknown to the majority of the Union soldiers, Burnside had formed a plan for a campaign. He had originally intended to mass the army in the vicinity of Culpeper for

a strike upon Richmond and Petersburg, but the idea had been quickly killed in Washington, D.C. Both Lincoln and Halleck feared leaving the backdoor to the capital unlocked while an aggressive Lee remained in the field. To please the bureaucrats, Burnside settled on a compromise plan. He would cross the Rappahannock River above Fredericksburg and seize the town's surrounding heights. Thereby he could use Fredericksburg as a supply base to launch his push for Richmond. The bearded general had the Federal army in position near Falmouth waiting to take the lightly defended rivertown.<sup>36</sup> Burnside's plan, however, was delayed by the wait for crucial bridging equipment and pontoons.

On the opposite side of the Rappahannock, General Lee waited. He had earlier entertained the notion of retiring his army beyond the North Anna river, but not anymore. Because of Burnside's delay, Lee had time to consolidate his scattered forces on the series of heights west of Fredericksburg. The Confederates went busily to work shaping the heights, especially Maryes Heights, into a fatal fortress. Orders were issued to study all the lines of approach and to measure the distances thus allowing the artillery dreadful accuracy. Parapets and rifle pits were securely dug to provide protection for the Rebel batteries. The ground in front of the heights could be so thoroughly raked with fire that a Confederate artillery officer remarked, "We cover that ground now so well that we will comb it as with a fine-tooth comb. A chicken could not live on that field when we open on it."<sup>37</sup>

Despite the threatening Rebel fortifications, Burnside formulated a plan of battle. The plan satisfied one of the maxims of military command; it was simple. Major-General Sumner was to secure a position with his Right Grand Division in the upper and central parts of Fredericksburg. About a mile or two below Sumner's objective, Major-General William Franklin was to unleash his Left Grand Division upon Lee's right flank. Since he had the important task of rolling up the Rebel flank, Franklin was given two

additional divisions from the Third Corps. Franklin's effectives now numbered 60,000. Major-General Hooker, with his depleted Center Grand Division, would be held in reserve, midway between Sumner and Franklin.<sup>38</sup>

Though Burnside's plan was simple, it was not clearly conveyed in his written orders. Because of the general's equivocal language, his subordinates were left confused and bewildered about their responsibilities and duties. Under the circumstances, as one man wrote, the "battle could become nothing but a simple exercise in the killing of Union soldiers." While the bluecoats tensely waited, they seemed to sense the confusion among their commanders and could only dread their next move.<sup>39</sup>

Whatever the next move would be, Lieutenant-Colonel Chamberlain did not relish his reserve status in Burnside's plan. Chamberlain and the Fifth Corps had been held in reserve during the battle of Antietam through the fault of McClellan. And everyone knew he had been removed from command for his timidity once he was in battle. Chamberlain did not want to be restrained from another great battle, fearing that the stress from anxiously waiting and watching without doing his part would erode his morale. Another disadvantage of the reserve status was that one rarely entered the fight in an offensive capacity. The reserve was usually used to relieve a battered comrade or to plug a gap in the line. If not used in this manner, the reserves frequently had the role of advancing over an already carried field, shameful for not contributing their share of the blood.<sup>40</sup>

While Chamberlain grumbled in his anticipated role, the Federal army began its descent into Fredericksburg on 11 December. Leaving their secure positions on Stafford Heights, Union engineers busied themselves in an attempt to lay pontoon bridges across the river. It was a hazardous duty since the engineers were picked off as fast as they appeared. Rebel sharpshooters had infested the deserted town's houses and

proceeded to make sport of killing Yankee engineers. The Federal's decided to rid the town of sharpshooters by pounding it into a pile of rubble. About 140 Union artillery pieces of all shapes and sizes opened on the town, the earth quivering for over an hour under the massive bombardment. But the Yankee ingenuity did little to deter the keen-eyed Rebels. The debris only offered them new positions. Finally, two regiments in boats were shuttled across the river in boats to oust the Confederate marksmen. Though much time and life were wasted clearing the town, Union troops finally started to file into Fredericksburg.<sup>41</sup>

As the Federals crowded into the town, they realized it was too late to initiate a full-scale assault. The whole next day was spent shuffling the two Grand Divisions of Sumner and Franklin to the south side of the river. Chamberlain stood with Hooker's Grand Division on the north side of the river. The lieutenant-colonel, with Griffin's First Division of the Fifth Corps, found himself stationed near the Phillips house behind a pontoon bridge. On the morning of the thirteenth, Burnside's blind assault would commence. Lee still waited and the bluecoats sensed that they were walking into a trap.<sup>42</sup>

At dawn the next morning, the men were shrouded in a low-lying fog. As the fog dissipated, the Rebels, peering from their positions, must have been startled by the blue field in their front. The silence was shattered by distant firing on Chamberlain's left. He could hear the sounds of Franklin's men going into action. Slowly the glistening bayonets and bright banners of Sumner's Grand Division crept into Chamberlain's view. From his position across the river, Chamberlain witnessed the first assaults upon the formidable Marye's Heights.<sup>43</sup>

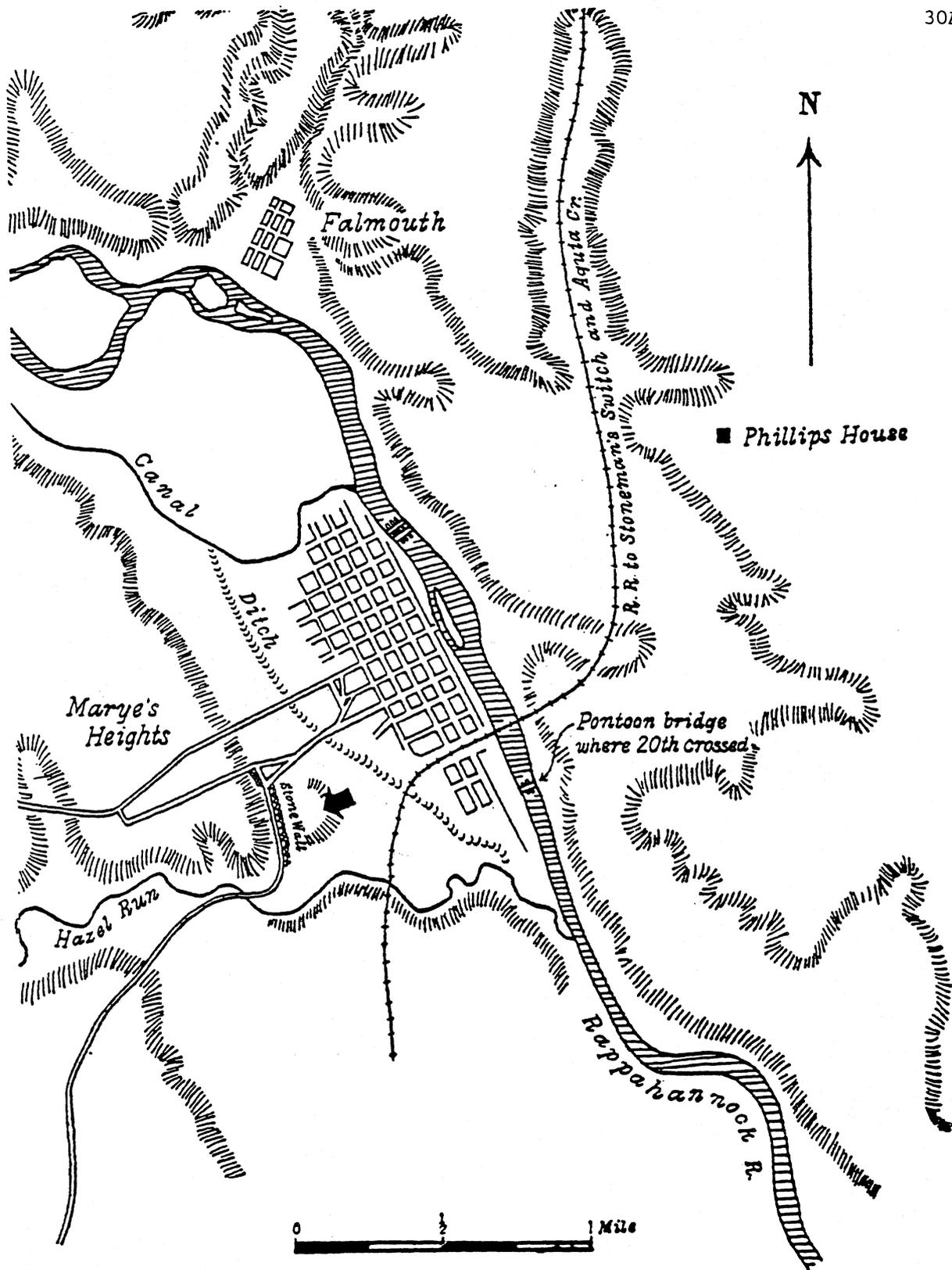
For Sumner's men to attack they had to enter an open plain, exposing themselves to Confederate artillery and rifle fire. To make their way across the plain, the Federals had to cross a ditch that no one had known existed. Two small, crude bridges spanned

the ditch though one had been partially destroyed. Once past the ditch, the men had to file left or right to form into their lines of battle. Then again they proceeded forward. Fortunately, the ground rose slightly before the ditch, so the men were afforded cover while they deployed for battle. Once in formation, they had to leave their cover and march in the open for 400 yards till they would reach the base of Marye's Heights. Telegraph Road stretched along the base of the heights which further added to the difficulty of advancing Union troops. This sunken road had a four foot stone wall along its eastern face. When Sumner's men approached this stone wall, they were greeted with the continuous clap of musket fire from several rows of Georgians and North Carolinians.<sup>44</sup>

From his vantage point on the Federal occupied shore, Chamberlain stood in horror as he watched Sumner's Right Grand Division dissolve amid the withering Rebel fire. He saw the men forgo their last chance at cover near the ditch and then crumble before the stone wall. Chamberlain described the action as he witnessed five separate, futile assaults:

Then, reaching the last slope before and beneath the death-delivering stone wall, suddenly illumined by a sheet of flame, and in an instant the whole line sinking as if swallowed up in earth . . . and only a writhing mass marking that high-tide halt of uttermost manhood and supreme endeavor. Then a slow back-flowing, with despairing effort here and there to bear back broken bodies of the brave glorified by the baptism of blood. Again and again . . . repeated by other troops.<sup>45</sup>

And now Chamberlain remembered painfully what it meant to be kept helplessly in reserve. About one o'clock, the call for the reserves reverberated down the Fifth Corps' line. Griffin's First Division answered the call and took the lead in the corps' column.<sup>46</sup> Chamberlain and the 20th Maine dashed across the pontoon bridge into Fredericksburg. He realized that the Confederate artillerymen knew their ranges perfectly. Chamberlain recalled that "air was thick with the flying, bursting shells;



Fredericksburg, December 13, 1862  
*Arrow shows where the 20th Maine attacked*

Map from Pullen, The Twentieth Maine, p. 45.

whooping solid shot swept lengthwise our narrow bridge . . . the crowding, swerving column set the pontoons swaying, so that the horses reeled and men could scarcely keep their balance." Once over the bridge, the Twentieth was ordered to unslung and pile their knapsacks for the quartermaster since the men did not need their packs where they were going.<sup>47</sup>

The First and Second Brigades were ordered to the right, where Sumner's men had floundered. The Third Brigade, which included Chamberlain, was ordered forward to the left of Sumner's troops. The men struggled to advance through the remains of town. Chamberlain had to leave his horse behind because broken-down fences made it impossible to ride one. (This horse was probably one of the few mounts that survived service with Chamberlain.) All around Chamberlain were crushed bodies and severed limbs, the aftermath of previous advances. When Chamberlain and the 20th Maine reached the edge of the town, the ranks were much thinner. A member of the division turned and watched the approach of the dwindling Maine regiment. They were "coming across the field in line of battle as upon parade . . . the great gaps plainly visible as shot and shell tore through the now tremulous line. It was a grand sight, and a striking example of what discipline will do for *such* material in *such* a battle."<sup>48</sup>

The resplendent Maine line emerged through the hanging smoke and stumbled upon a mass of ground-hugging bluecoats. The Yankees looked upward and told Chamberlain and the 20th Maine, "It's no use boys; we've tried that. Nothing living can stand there; it's only for the dead!" Colonel Ames did not heed the warning; he pushed forward. Suddenly, Chamberlain and Ames spotted a Rebel battery on their right swing into position to sweep their front. A salvo was touched off before the Twentieth could scramble for cover. Ames cried, "God help us now!" He then directed Chamberlain to take the right wing and to continue forward.<sup>49</sup>

Chamberlain, not one to disobey an order, led his right wing up slopes slippery

with blood as darkness rapidly descended upon the battlefield. They stepped into that last 400 yards before the stone wall, lowered their muskets, and split the crisp air with a crackling volley. The Rebels replied with a flash that lit the evening sky. And as Chamberlain's assault failed like all other ones that day, he and his men could do little more than offer an annoying, sporadic fire in the graycoats' direction.<sup>50</sup>

After Chamberlain's assault melted away, the day came to an end. To Chamberlain, the night would be worse than the day. The bitter chill sliced through his thin garments. His coat, he remembered, had been strapped to his horse's saddle. Likewise, the men were freezing since they had piled their knapsacks back and had discarded what they thought was unnecessary equipment. To get some much-needed rest, Chamberlain dropped his body between two dead soldiers while he pulled a third crosswise for a pillow. He then took a corpse's coat and pulled it over his face to keep himself warm. Between the cold air and the damp, blood-soaked ground, the lieutenant-colonel tried to rest. Periodically, Chamberlain would feel a desperate hand lift the dead man's coat from his face as some dazed man searched for a resting place.<sup>51</sup>

Chamberlain could not sleep, for the air was filled with the sounds of the wounded. About midnight, Chamberlain rose from his "bivouac with the dead," sought out his adjutant, and started searching for the wounded. The loudest cries were on his right and rear where the action had been the heaviest. When Chamberlain espied a sufferer, there was little he could actually do to help. Sometimes he would give him water, or compress an artery, and other times he would just listen to him pray to God for life or a speedy death.<sup>52</sup>

Exhausted after his night march, Chamberlain retraced his steps to his macabre bed. Within yards of the stone wall, Chamberlain again tried to sleep, unsuccessfully. The sounds of battle still haunted him. Off in the distance, the flapping of a loosened window-blind in a house on his right caught his attention. In the rhythm of the

flapping and banging, Chamberlain detected the theme of an old song he once knew. The song's lines seemed to fit the atmosphere: "*Never-forever; forever-never!*" In his loneliest hours on a battlefield, Chamberlain would always recall that sad refrain.<sup>53</sup>

The night hours came to an end for Chamberlain when Southern pickets opened an indiscriminate fire. The firing increased until both shot and shell were on Chamberlain's front and flank. The lieutenant-colonel and his men hugged the ground which made it most difficult for them to ram their loads and return any effective rounds.<sup>54</sup> (One soldier insisted that he was only obeying Napoleon's military maxim that an army travels on its belly.) Before too long, Chamberlain saw two to three hundred Johnnies slide from their right of the stone wall into a gully-bank. Once in the gully, the Rebels poured a destructive flank fire into Chamberlain's wing.<sup>55</sup>

Chamberlain instantly grasped his predicament. He ordered his men to build a breastwork from the dead bodies littering the field. The grisly breastwork would provide cover for the exposed flank. The regiment spent the day of the fourteenth listening to the dreadful thud of lead striking rotting flesh. If one ventured his head above the bulwark, he was inviting death. Chamberlain observed one man protrude his head only a few inches and then die with a bullet between the eyes. Chamberlain had to sit and be patient since no relief could possibly reach his dangerous position. Every now and then he spied a staff officer attempting to deliver orders only to see the man's horse shot from under him. Chamberlain was on his own.<sup>56</sup>

It would be another long, distressing day for the Federals. A soldier from Griffin's First Division, positioned slightly to the rear of Chamberlain, described the day's action for him and a buddy. He wrote:

Sunday, all day we lay exposed to the fire of their sharpshooters. Walt and I lay in range of a shed, about twelve feet wide, and some of the boys kept passing by for water, and they (the enemy) put . . . many bullet holes through the side, . . . all of them only a few inches over our heads, and we flat on our backs for fourteen hours. Walt and I had two dead men for a shelter or breast

work, one with his whole back up to his neck scooped out with a solid shot, the other with his leg shot away.<sup>57</sup>

By nightfall on the fourteenth, Chamberlain and the 20th Maine were given some relief. Under the cover of darkness, they began their retreat into the shattered town. Along the way, the regiment dug shallow graves with bayonets, busted rifles, and fragments of shell in which to bury their dead. Crude head boards indicating the deceased's name and home town were made from broken fencerails or musket butts and than driven into the ground. The wounded were carried to shelters near the pontoon bridges to await proper medical care. Through everything, Chamberlain hardly noticed the slight wound he had received on his right cheek. His scrape, on the other hand, paled in comparison to other wounds inflicted upon the Twentieth. The regiment had lost four men killed and thirty-two wounded; eleven of the thirty-six had been hit above the shoulders.<sup>58</sup>

Chamberlain graphically narrated his journey back to Fredericksburg with his regiment. "We had to pick our way over a field strewn with . . . men torn and broken and cut to pieces . . . cannon dismounted, gun-carriages smashed or overturned, ammunition-chests flung wildly about, horses dead and half-dead . . . accouterments of every sort scattered as by whirlwinds." Chamberlain coolly remarked that marches like this one would be unsettling for his nerves.<sup>59</sup>

Once in the Union-occupied town, Chamberlain and the regiment were both amazed and shocked by the wholesale destruction inflicted by Federal Artillery. Trying to make the best of the situation, they spread their blankets upon the sidewalks and rested. The Twentieth soundly slept knowing it had performed well in its first major engagement. Simply stated, these men had not turned and run as some regiments had. That night, Colonel Ames roamed through the ranks congratulating the men for a gallant performance. They rested in the town until late in the next day despite a rumor

buzzing through Fredericksburg that Stonewall Jackson was about to sweep down from the heights and drive the Yankees into the cold Rappahannock. On Monday night, Burnside decided to pull the Federal army off the south bank and return to Stafford Heights. To the dismay of the 20th Maine, they were ordered not to the rear, but back to the menacing front.<sup>60</sup>

Around midnight, the Twentieth and two additional regiments formed a picket-line near the Rebel-held stone wall. Colonel Ames had overall command of the three regiments, thus leaving Chamberlain in sole charge of the Twentieth. The last instruction the lieutenant-colonel received that night was to "hold this ground at all hazards, and to the last!" Chamberlain uneasily thought to himself: "Last of what?"<sup>61</sup>

Chamberlain took the order in stride and began constructing some means of defense so he could "hold it." Gathering a few picks and spades, the men were instructed to throw up a simple earthwork covering their front and right. Chamberlain ordered his men to build their earthworks alone or in pairs to avoid sustaining a heavy loss with a single exploding shell. The men had to dig quietly and spoke only in faint whispers. The extreme darkness caused men to rely on sound and touch for their bearings thus adding to the nervousness of all involved.<sup>62</sup>

Knowing the Confederate rifle-pits were close by, Chamberlain wanted to make sure his regiment's position was properly aligned and secure. Feeling along what he believed to be his own lines, Chamberlain perceived a man feverishly tossing dirt on the side opposite the one that needed defending. With the confident tone of seasoned officer, Chamberlain said, "Throw to the other side, my man; that's where the danger is!" Chamberlain received a bewildered reply: "Golly, don't ye s'pose I know which side them Yanks be? They're right unto us now." Chamberlain kept his wits about him and retorted, "Dig away then, but keep a right sharp lookout!" The confused Confederate continued digging while Chamberlain slipped back into the darkness.<sup>63</sup>

Back within his own lines, Chamberlain breathed a little easier until he heard an unanticipated clamor to his left. A staff officer's voice rocked through the quiet night air with the words, "Where is the commander of these troops? Get yourselves out of this as quick as God will let you! The whole army is across the river!" Unquestionably, the enemy pickets had heard this vital piece of information. Chamberlain firmly asked the officer, "Who are you, sir?" After the offender identified himself, Chamberlain told him to report immediately to his general as under arrest. The man retorted, "You're crazy, you've got all you can do not to be gobbled up as it is!" Hearing this reply, a few of the Twentieth scrambled out of their pits. "Steady as you are, my men, this is a stampeding coward," Chamberlain said. Attempting to effect a ruse, the lieutenant-colonel made his voice audible for all, especially the Confederates, saying, "Arrest this man for a spy, and hold fast your lines." Then Chamberlain escorted the staff officer a few yards to the rear and severely admonished him in the quietest voice he could muster.<sup>64</sup>

Ordered to begin falling back, Chamberlain sought out Colonel Ames and the two devised a plan. Initially, they would staunchly hold their line to make at least an appearance of steadfastness. Then, every even-numbered man would briskly resume his digging while the odd-numbered man would fall back to form a second line of defense. This pattern would alternate every hundred yards until the regiment reached safety near the town's outer limits. Throughout the tactical withdrawal, the men would have to be cautious of curious Rebel pickets discovering their hasty disappearance.<sup>65</sup>

The withdrawal proved to be successful, but not without incident. For most of the night, the men strolled to the rear in a stooping fashion while dragging their fire-arms behind them. The dark night with its intermittent showers shielded them from Southern eyes. Just about to cross their last yards, the Twentieth was illuminated by the moon when a rift appeared in the clouds. The moon glistened off the soldiers' dragging

muskets thus revealing their movement. Several enemy bullets whizzed through the air forcing the regiment to the ground. The Confederates nervously edged forward to investigate, but they did not realize a full-scale Federal retreat was underway.<sup>66</sup>

At dawn on the fifteenth, Chamberlain and the 20th Maine finally reached the pontoon bridge. While they waited for a few moments to allow the wounded to cross first, the regiment finally crossed the bridge after it had been covered with sod and brush to muffle the army's retreat. Once upon the opposite shore, they were shocked to learn that nearly all the army had recrossed the Rappahannock earlier.<sup>67</sup> The Mainers were almost the last to be evacuated. Once over the river, Chamberlain stood on the shore and reflected upon the battle of Fredericksburg. He later wrote:

So we crossed again that bridge we had passed three days before with strange forebodings but unswerving resolution, little dreaming that we should be put to shame, but now little imputing to ourselves the blame. While waiting for the pontoons some of us had frequently ridden along the bank in full view of the Confederates across the river and through field-glasses studied the construction of their works with curious interest and the natural common-sense inference that we would never be called upon to assault just where Lee had prepared for and wished us.<sup>68</sup>

Chamberlain was not pleased with the handling of the Army of the Potomac. While seeking shelter from the incessant rain under a tree, he saw "Fighting Joe" Hooker ride by. Chamberlain thought to himself that he had not seen Hooker during the entire three days of battle. Hooker caught a glimpse of the lieutenant-colonel and greeted him. The general said to Chamberlain, "You've had a hard chance, Colonel; I am glad to see you out of it!" Chamberlain reservedly replied, "It was a chance, General; not much intelligent design there!" Hooker responded in a defensive manner, "God knows I did not put you in!" Chamberlain shot back with words bordering on outright insubordination. He said, "That was the trouble, General. You should have put us in. We were handled in piecemeal, on toasting forks." Hooker silently accepted the criticism and rode on without a reprimand for the insolent and angry Chamberlain.<sup>69</sup>

The more Chamberlain thought about the battle, the angrier he became. It seemed Burnside did live up to his expectations while costing the lives of thousands. The lieutenant-colonel did not realize that there would be another major reshuffling of the army, but he knew Burnside had to go. What was the next move going to be for the army? A prominent Union general wrote in a letter to his wife what he expected: "What will be done next I cannot tell. Burnside, I presume, is a dead cock in the pit, & your friend Joe Hooker (fighting Joe) is the next on the list."<sup>70</sup> Burnside, to everyone's chagrin, was not yet through. Chamberlain must have perhaps thought a choice between Burnside or Hooker was not much of a choice at all.

#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Gerrish, Army Life: A Private's Reminiscences of the Civil War, pp. 16-19; and John Brown to John Hodsdon, 23 September 1862, Maine State Archives.

<sup>2</sup>In Memoriam: Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, circular number 5, Series of 1914, M.O.L.L.U.S. Commandery of the State of Maine, p. 12. Found in Chamberlain's Passing of the Armies, preface.

<sup>3</sup>Gerrish, Army Life: A Private's Reminiscences of the Civil War, p. 19; and Robert Carter, Four Brothers in Blue (Washington, D. C.: Press of Gibson Brothers, 1913; reprint ed. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1978) p. 104.

<sup>4</sup>Gerrish, Army Life: A Private's Reminiscences of the Civil War, pp. 19, 25; William Powell, The Fifth Army Corps (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1896), pp. 261-262, 304; and John Pullen, The Twentieth Maine: A Volunteer Regiment in the Civil War (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1957), p. 16.

<sup>5</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, p. xiii.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. xiv.

<sup>7</sup>Ellis Spear, "Historical Sketch." Found in Maine Gettysburg Commission, Maine at Gettysburg (Portland, Maine: Lakeside Press, 1898), p. 274; and John Brown to John

Hodsdon, 23 September 1862, Maine State Archives.

<sup>8</sup>Theodore Gerrish and John Hutchinson, The Blue and the Gray (Portland, Maine: Hoyt, Fogg, and Donham, 1883), pp. 53-55.

<sup>9</sup>Gerrish, Army Life: A Private's Reminiscences of the Civil War, pp. 30-38; and John Brown to John Hodsdon, 23 September 1862, Maine State Archives.

<sup>10</sup>J.L. Smith, History of the Corn Exchange Regiment 118th Pennsylvania Volunteers (Philadelphia: J. L. Smith, 1888), pp. 54-56; and Carter, Four Brothers in Blue, pp. 127-128.

<sup>11</sup>Pullen, The Twentieth Maine, pp. 28-29; and Carter, Four Brothers in Blue, pp. 127-128.

<sup>12</sup>Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Maine for the Years 1864 and 1865 (Augusta: Stevens & Sayward, 1866), p. 331; and Powell, The Fifth Army Corps, p. 301. A replay of Ball's Bluff was avoided at Shepherdstown in part to the effectiveness of Federal artillery and Hiram Berdan's sharpshooters on the Maryland banks. The 20th Maine suffered only three casualties in the action; one being wounded from the accidental discharge of his own weapon. However, one of the Twentieth's sister regiments from the First Brigade, the 118th Pennsylvania, lost approximately 200 men. See Carter, Four Brothers in Blue, p. 127; John Brown to John Hodsdon, 23 September 1862, Maine State Archives; and J.L. Smith, History of the Corn Exchange Regiment, p. 94r.

<sup>13</sup>W. R. and M. B. Houghton, Two Boys in the Civil War and After (Montgomery, Alabama: The Paragon Press, 1912), p. 208. Both served in the 15th Alabama which charged Chamberlain's position on Little Round Top. Gerald Linderman, Embattled Courage: The Experience of Combat in the Civil War (New York: The Free Press, 1987), pp. 44.

<sup>14</sup>Carter, Four Brothers in Blue, p. 121; Chamberlain, "My Story of Fredericksburg," Cosmopolitan 54 (13 January 1912), p. 148; and Chamberlain, "Abraham Lincoln seen from the field in the War for the Union," M.O.L.L.U.S., pp. 4-5.

<sup>15</sup>Two excellent books that examine Civil War camplife are John Billings, Hardtack and Coffee (Boston: George M. Smith & Company, 1887), pp. 43-249; and James Robertson, Jr., Soldiers Blue and Gray (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press,

1988), pp. 42-189.

<sup>16</sup>Pullen, The Twentieth Maine, p. 36; and Chamberlain to Fanny, 26 October 1862, Chamberlain papers, Library of Congress.

<sup>17</sup>Chamberlain to Fanny, 26 October 1862, Chamberlain papers, Library of Congress.

<sup>18</sup>Pullen, The Twentieth Maine, pp. 37-38. According to Chamberlain, few military men sustained a greater reputation in the army than Colonel Ames. See Chamberlain to Washburn, 11 November 1862, Maine State Archives.

<sup>19</sup>Gerrish and Hutchinson, The Blue and the Gray, pp. 64-65. The two authors claimed that these two youthful officers were the type that "'had a peculiar way of looking sidewise at their shoulder straps, and the red sash around their waists, worn full width (p. 64).'"

<sup>20</sup>Pullen, The Twentieth Maine, p. 37; and Chamberlain to Fanny, 26 October 1862, Chamberlain papers, Library of Congress.

<sup>21</sup>Spear, "Historical Sketch," found in Maine at Gettysburg, p. 275; Charles Smithland to John Hodsdon, 15 October 1862, Maine State Archives; and Gerrish, Army Life: A Private's Reminiscences of the Civil War, p. 48.

<sup>22</sup>Spear, "Historical Sketch," found in Maine at Gettysburg, p. 275.

<sup>23</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, p. 11; Chamberlain to Washburn, 24 September 1861, Maine State Archives; and Robertson, Jr., Soldiers Blue and Gray, p. 101.

<sup>24</sup>Chamberlain to Fanny, 10 October 1862, Chamberlain papers, Library of Congress.

<sup>25</sup>Chamberlain to Fanny, 26 October 1862, Chamberlain papers, Library of Congress.

<sup>26</sup>Stephen Sears, George B. McClellan: The Young Napoleon (New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1988), pp. 336-337.

<sup>27</sup>Chamberlain to Fanny, 3 November 1862, Chamberlain papers, Library of Congress.

<sup>28</sup>Chamberlain to Fanny, 3 and 4 November 1862, Chamberlain papers, Library of Congress.

<sup>29</sup>Sears, George B. McClellan: The Young Napoleon, p. 338.

<sup>30</sup>Chamberlain, "My Story of Fredericksburg," p. 149.

<sup>31</sup>Charles Dana, Recollections of the Civil War (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1898), p. 138.

<sup>32</sup>Powell, The Fifth Army Corps, p. 356.

<sup>33</sup>Powell, The Fifth Army Corps, p. 356; and Erza Warner, Generals in Blue (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1964), pp. 331, 379.

<sup>34</sup>Mark Boatner, III, The Civil War Dictionary, pp. 360-361; Gerrish and Hutchinson, The Blue and Gray, p. 245; Smith, The Corn Exchange Regiment, p. 648; Gerrish, Army Life: A Private's Reminiscences of the Civil War, p. 345-346; and Dumas Malone and Allen Johnson, eds., Dictionary of American Biography vol.4 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928-1936), p. 618. During the battle of the Wilderness, Griffin rode up to Meade's headquarters and demanded to know where his support was. General Rawlins, Grant's chief of staff, considered Griffin's language insubordinate and demanded his immediate arrest. Grant concurred with Rawlins. Grant asked Meade, "Who is this General Gregg? you ought to arrest him!" Meade answered, "It's Griffin, not Gregg; and it's only his way of talking." Meade got Griffin off the hook. See George Agassiz, ed., Meade's Headquarters, 1863-1865: Letters of Colonel Theodore Lyman from the Wilderness to Appomattox (Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1922), p. 91.

<sup>35</sup>Eugene Nash, History of the Forty-fourth Regiment New York Volunteer Infantry (Chicago: R.R. Donnelley & Sons Company, 1911), p. 111; Carter, Four Brothers in Blue, p. 180; and Powell, The Fifth Army Corps, p. 366.

<sup>36</sup>Chamberlain, "My Story of Fredericksburg," pp. 149-150.

<sup>37</sup>Douglas Southall Freeman, Lee: A Biography vol. 2 (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1934-1935), p. 431; James Longstreet, From Manassas to Appomattox (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1896), p. 300; and Longstreet, "The Battle of Fredericksburg," found in Robert U. Johnson and Clarence C. Buel, eds., Battles and Leaders of the Civil War vol. 3 (New York: The Century Company, 1884-1888), p. 79. The Confederate artillery officer was Colonel E.P. Alexander. In his own writings, Alexander did not corroborate or dismiss the quote which was recorded by General James Longstreet. Alexander wrote, "Gen. Longstreet says that I reported to him that a chicken could not find room to scratch where I could not rake the ground. I don't recall it, but very possibly I said something of the sort. It was exaggeration, but the ground was so thoroughly covered that I never thought Burnside would choose that point for attack." See Gary Gallagher, ed. Fighting for the Confederacy: The Personal Recollections of General Edward Porter Alexander (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989), p. 169.

<sup>38</sup>Chamberlain, "My Story of Fredericksburg," p. 150.

<sup>39</sup>Bruce Catton, Glory Road (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1952), p. 41.

<sup>40</sup>Chamberlain, "My Story of Fredericksburg," pp. 150-151.

<sup>41</sup>Augustus Dickert, History of Kershaw's Brigade (Newberry, South Carolina: Elbert H. Hull, 1899), pp. 180-181; and Chamberlain, "My Story of Fredericksburg," p. 150.

<sup>42</sup>O.R., vol. 21, series 1, part 1, p.404; and Nash, History of the Forty-fourth Regiment, p. 114.

<sup>43</sup>Chamberlain, "My Story of Fredericksburg," p. 152.

<sup>44</sup>Catton, Glory Road, p. 50.

<sup>45</sup>Chamberlain, "My Story of Fredericksburg," p.152.

<sup>46</sup>O.R., vol. 21, part 1, series 1, p. 404.

<sup>47</sup>Chamberlain, "My Story of Fredericksburg," p.152.

<sup>48</sup>Chamberlain, "My Story of Fredericksburg," p. 152; and Carter, Four Brothers in Blue, p. 196.

<sup>49</sup>Chamberlain, "My Story of Fredericksburg," p. 153; and Carter, Four Brothers in Blue, p. 196.

<sup>50</sup>Chamberlain, "My Story of Fredericksburg," pp. 153-154.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 154.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 155.

<sup>55</sup>John Ames, "In Front of the Stone Wall at Fredericksburg," found in Battles and Leaders, vol. 3, p. 123.

<sup>56</sup>Chamberlain, "My Story of Fredericksburg," p. 156. One man in the regiment found delight in standing and firing at the Rebels. Several warnings from friends and officers to stop endangering himself and others around him went unheeded. Finally, a Confederate sharpshooter put a bullet through the Mainer's head after he had exposed himself one time too many. See Gerrish, Army Life: A Private's Reminiscences, p.79.

<sup>57</sup>Carter, Four Brothers in Blue, p. 208.

<sup>58</sup>Chamberlain, "My Story of Fredericksburg," p. 156; Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Maine for the Years 1864 and 1865, p. 331; and O.R., vol. 21, part 1, series 1, p. 136.

<sup>59</sup>Chamberlain, "My Story of Fredericksburg," p. 156.

<sup>60</sup>Gerrish, Army Life: A Private's Reminiscences of the Civil War, p. 80; and Chamberlain, "My Story of Fredericksburg," p. 156.

<sup>61</sup>Chamberlain, "My Story of Fredericksburg," p. 156.

<sup>62</sup>Chamberlain, "My Story of Fredericksburg," p. 156; and W. C. King and W. P. Derby, comps., Campfire Sketches and Battlefield Echoes of 61-65 (Springfield, Massachusetts: King, Richardson & Company, 1890), p. 132.

<sup>63</sup>Chamberlain, "My Story of Fredericksburg," pp. 156-157; and King and Derby, comps., Campfire Sketches and Battlefield Echoes, p. 133; and Chamberlain, "My Story of Fredericksburg," p. 157.

<sup>64</sup>King and Derby, comps., Campfire Sketches and Battlefield Echoes, p. 133; and Chamberlain, "My Story of Fredericksburg," p. 157.

<sup>65</sup>Chamberlain, "My Story of Fredericksburg," p. 158; and King and Derby, comps., Campfire Sketches and Battlefield Echoes, p. 134.

<sup>66</sup>Chamberlain, "My Story of Fredericksburg," p. 158; and King and Derby, comps., Campfire Sketches and Battlefield Echoes, p. 134.

<sup>67</sup>Gerrish, Army Life: A Private's Reminiscences of the Civil War, p. 80.

<sup>68</sup>Chamberlain, "My Story of Fredericksburg," p. 158.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

<sup>70</sup>George Gordon Meade to wife, 16 December 1862, found in George Gordon Meade, Jr., ed., The Life and Letters of George Gordon Meade vol.1 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), p. 338.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### *On To Gettysburg*

After the Fredericksburg fiasco, Lieutenant-Colonel Chamberlain and the rest of the Army of the Potomac retired into their camp near Falmouth. The demoralized army needed time to lick wounds, regroup, and refit. The 20th Maine, like other regiments, spent the first few days straightening up its camp, draining cabins and company streets of that dreaded water. On Christmas day, the camp was decorated with a touch of evergreen. Despite these festive fixtures, life was the same as ever; picketing and drilling were daily measures.<sup>1</sup>

Ambrose Burnside was still the commander of the army. He had suffered a barrage of complaints and criticism since the battle. To the general's credit, he did accept all responsibility for the disaster, but that did not quiet his critics. Burnside wanted the opportunity to redeem himself and to restore the army's dignity. Knowing his job was on the line, Burnside started planning another crossing of the Rappahannock River.<sup>2</sup> With a new plan in hand, Burnside hoped to redeem both himself and the Army of the Potomac.

On 20 January, the Federal army began a general march downstream in accordance with Burnside's new scheme. The march got off to a promising start since the ground was frozen, then allowing the army to make excellent progress. It seemed that Burnside would be able to cross the river at Bank's Ford, below General Lee's strong defensive position. With a turning movement, Burnside could then force the

Virginian into the open, thus avoiding another fiasco at Fredericksburg. The Federals covered several miles before halting for the night. During the day, the temperature steadily rose and by nightfall, an act of God occurred. According to one Confederate, the skies opened on the Federals and a heavy rainfall continued for two whole days.<sup>3</sup>

For three days then, the "Richmond-bound" Yankees bluecoats suffered through the infamous "mud march." Any credibility Burnside possibly had left was either swallowed by the mud or drowned by the rain. Chamberlain's fate was slightly different. He and the Third Brigade trudged through mud up to their knees while horses and mules just sunk to their death in the muck. For their counterparts' benefit, the Rebels posted signs that said, "This way to Richmond," or "Shan't we come over and pull you out?"<sup>4</sup>

This "mud march" was Burnside's last action as commander of the Army of the Potomac. He was replaced by Joe Hooker on 26 January 1863. "Fighting Joe" returned something to the army that it desperately needed. He gave it a fiery leader, better morale, and a new reorganization. Hooker discarded the Grand Division structure and returned the corps to its independent status. Major-General George Gordon Meade was now the commander of the Fifth Corps because of Hooker's promotion. In addition to his reorganization, Hooker instituted a system of corps' badges. Chamberlain would proudly wear a red maltese cross for the remainder of the war.<sup>5</sup>

Not everyone, however, was satisfied with Hooker. Chamberlain held reservations about him ever since the general had not properly coordinated the assaults of the Center Grand Division at Fredericksburg. Each individual assault was rarely carried out by more than one brigade at a time. Chamberlain was not the only one who worried about Hooker. President Lincoln, after reviewing Hooker's rejuvenated army and with the Fredericksburg disaster haunting him, had some words of wisdom for both the general and his second-in-command, Major-General Darius Couch. The Chief Executive

said, "Gentlemen, in your next battle *put in all your men.*"<sup>6</sup>

While the Federal army regained its confidence and waited for warmer campaigning weather, Chamberlain kept busy. In his Fifth Corps, he had become acquainted with several bright, young West Pointers. He convinced them to conduct classes during the winter evenings. These classes reviewed military strategy and tactics. Instead of attending a class in French or mathematics, Chamberlain would now attend a class in the art of war. The lieutenant-colonel's thirst for knowledge was difficult to suppress no matter where he was.<sup>7</sup> When Chamberlain was not busy learning about a flanking or wheeling movement, he was spending much of his time caring for the regiment's sick. He had assumed this unappreciated and unwelcomed function after the regimental surgeon had resigned his post.<sup>8</sup>

While Chamberlain studied, Hooker was immersed in the formulation of his own grand strategy. The general chose to split his seven corps army into two wings. The first wing, consisting of three corps under Hooker's personal command, would march in a westerly direction until reaching the confluence of the Rappahannock and Rapidan Rivers. At this point, it would cross the Rappahannock and fall upon General Lee's rear. To hold Lee in Fredericksburg, the second wing, consisting of two corps under Major-General John Sedgewick's command, would demonstrate on Lee's front and right flank. Sedgewick's primary role was to protect Hooker while the pincer movement developed, but if it proved feasible, Sedgewick had the authority to overrun Fredericksburg and pursue the running Rebels. The two remaining corps were to be held in reserve, ready to slide to either flank as the strategy unfolded. The Yankee cavalry would also play a significant role. Under the command of Major-General George Stoneman, the cavalry was dispatched to ramble in the Rebels' rear, disrupting communication and supply lines.<sup>9</sup>

The scheme was very simple and also very similar to Burnside's which ended in

the "mud march." Like Burnside, Hooker sought to force Lee out of Fredericksburg with flanking movements. Moreover the two plans ultimately were akin in that they both failed. Burnside's design failed because of bad weather and poor planning while Hooker's collapsed near Chancellorsville because he encountered Robert E. Lee. The Southern general exhibited the audacity and fortitude that men like Burnside and Hooker lacked and Chamberlain admired.

The Southern commander, with his army already greatly outnumbered, entrusted General Lafayette McLaws' lone division to hold Fredericksburg. With his remaining forces Lee proceeded to meet Hooker, quickly wrestling the initiative away from "Fighting Joe" by pressing the Federals' front. Lee then divided his small army and sent General Stonewall Jackson with over half to outflank Hooker's flankers. Around six p.m. on 2 May, Jackson slammed into former Bowdoin student Major-General O. O. Howard's Eleventh Corps. Outgeneraled, Hooker retired to the Rappahannock. Although Lee had added another name to the growing list of beaten Northern commanders, he could not break the Army of the Potomac.<sup>10</sup>

Lieutenant-Colonel Chamberlain experienced the battle of Chancellorsville from a position he did not particularly appreciate; he was placed in the rear. Chamberlain and his regiment were situated there because of an unfortunate mistake by the Fifth Corps' medical department. When the medical director gave the Maine men their required smallpox vaccinations in mid-April, some of the doses were too strong, subsequently causing an outbreak of the disease. The regiment had been detached from its Third Brigade to serve two weeks isolated on "Quarantine hill."<sup>11</sup>

With the Chancellorsville campaign impending, Chamberlain desperately wanted to leave the quarantined camp to "be permitted to take an honorable part in the battle." Constantly reminded of his predicament by placards declaring "Small Pox" at every entrance to the camp, Chamberlain had voiced his displeasure in a letter to his wife:

"If . . . there is a battle, & I am left here in a pest-house, I shall be desperate with mortification." He had attempted to get a transfer to a general's staff, as Colonel Ames had done, so he could see action. Ames had finagled a position on Major-General Meade's staff consequently leaving Chamberlain in sole command of the Twentieth. Unlike Ames, Chamberlain would have no such luck. He was certain that any possibility of his transfer failed because of the uncertainty that surrounded the Fifth Corps and particularly the quarantined 20th Maine.<sup>12</sup>

Nevertheless Chamberlain was not easily deterred. When he detected the opening sounds of the forthcoming battle, he hastily rode to general headquarters to plead for a chance to fight. His appeals seemed to fall upon deaf ears. Frustrated by the various denials to his requests, Chamberlain sarcastically announced that "if we couldn't do anything else we would give the rebels the small pox." The lieutenant-colonel's witticism did at last attract the attention of Major-General Daniel Butterfield, the chief-of-staff. Butterfield directed Chamberlain and the 20th Maine to patrol the signal and telegraph lines near Banks' and United States' fords on the Rappahannock. Though this duty lacked the glory of a front-line position, Chamberlain was satisfied that at least he would be assisting the Federal offensive in some manner.<sup>13</sup>

Chamberlain's definition of assistance did not lend solely itself to repairing signal wires. While the regiment was occupied, its lieutenant-colonel slipped away across the Rappahannock River and joined his Griffin and his division. Soon enough, Chamberlain became tangled in an assault upon General J. E. B. Stuart's soldiers. During the heated engagement, Chamberlain's horse was wounded by a shell fragment. Hence another animal fell from under the lucky Mainer. When the Federal rout ensued, Chamberlain was again far from his original post. He participated in the rearguard role with the entire Fifth Corps, and on the 5 and 6 May, he labored on the collapsing pontoon bridges across the river until Hooker's army had safely withdrawn.

He was among the last of the bluecoats to quit the southern side of the river.<sup>14</sup>

With the two armies again divided by the Rappahannock, Chamberlain and the 20th Maine returned to their all-too-familiar camp near Falmouth. But there were to be several changes. First of all, Colonel Ames was promoted to brigadier-general and transferred to the battered Eleventh Corps. He had so impressed Meade with his "intelligence and zeal" during the Chancellorsville campaign that he was accordingly rewarded for it. Ames's promotion was to become effective on 20 May 1863.<sup>15</sup> Secondly, to fill the void left by Ames's departure, Chamberlain was promoted to the coloncy of the regiment, also effective on 20 May. The advance in rank for Chamberlain did not actually bear him any new responsibilities since he had been the acting commander of the regiment since mid-April following the small pox mishap.

With Chamberlain officially in command of the Twentieth, he presently encountered the problem of obtaining recruits and replacements. During the previous eight months, the regiment's ranks had been so depleted--mostly by sickness--that only about four hundred men were currently present for duty. To make matters worse, only three recruits had arrived from Maine during this period to fill out the regiment's roster. However, to the colonel's relief, he soon received word that his regiment would be bolstered by 120 men. These men were not all raw recruits as Chamberlain expected; they were seasoned veterans from the Second Maine and they had been in the war prior to First Bull Run; and they were also 120 men who did not want to be transferred to the 20th Maine. Apparently, this batch of 2nd Mainers had been misled by a clever recruiting officer into signing three-year enlistment papers while the majority of the regiment had signed only two-year papers. After their presumed two-year stint was completed, the entire 2nd Maine believed it was time to go home. Dumbfounded by the fact that they could not go home, the men who had signed the three-year papers learned they would not only have to continue their military service for another year,

but that it would not be under their old colors, they promptly mutinied, causing their arrest.<sup>16</sup>

These were the men Chamberlain was receiving. When they marched into the 20th Maine's camp, the mutinous Mainers were herded into Colonel Chamberlain's presence under the bayonets of the 118th Pennsylvania. The prisoners appeared defiant, but the colonel had orders from the Fifth Corps' commander himself, General Meade, to make the "recruits" do their duty or "be shot down the moment they refused." Despite the insubordination and rebelliousness of the 2nd Mainers, they were still solid, seasoned bluecoats who deserved a much better fate.<sup>17</sup>

Colonel Chamberlain, however, was in no position to be sympathetic to their plight. So he had to manage the Mainers with a tactful firmness that ruled out shooting them. Besides, Chamberlain would never have his Maine men shooting fellow soldiers, especially ones from Maine.<sup>18</sup> And any shootings would deprive him of his needed replacements. It took the colonel a mere few minutes to decide upon his course of action. He immediately rode to Major-General Meade and obtained authorization to handle the mutineers in his own fashion. Chamberlain rushed back to his prisoners, dismissed their guards, and issued the first food rations to the Mainers that they had had in three days. The colonel then judiciously dispersed the "recruits" throughout the Twentieth's companies with no specific orders to follow. Treated by Chamberlain with the dignity they felt they deserved, the 2nd Mainers, except for one or two recalcitrant men, gave their new commander little trouble.<sup>19</sup>

Notwithstanding the 2nd Mainers' deference to Colonel Chamberlain's authority, they still had a grievance to be heard. As Chamberlain had promised them, he made efforts to have their case reviewed by the authorities. On their behalf, Chamberlain appealed to the governor of Maine, Abner Coburn. The colonel wrote:

The men of the "2nd" are quite unhappy; still feeling that great injustice has been done in holding them in service longer. I have taken a liberal course

with them, because they are nearly all good & true men; but I shall be obliged to carry a firm hand. They are now ordered on duty & these orders must be carried out. They are expecting to hear from you in reply to a communication of theirs & their expectations of this keeps them in an undecided state of mind as to doing duty. I sympathize with these men, but while under my orders, they will be strictly held to obedience.<sup>20</sup>

Colonel Chamberlain's conduct during the 2nd Maine incident emphatically reveals his maturation into an excellent commander. An able officer has to be able to combine good battlefield qualities with his off-the-field skills. In many instances, an officer might be an unequalled field commander but be deficient when face to face with his own men. To effectively command troops in the Civil War, certain precepts had to be met and they were "a sympathetic understanding of the men's grievances; a refusal to condemn their actions; a wide flexibility in the reimposition of discipline; a knowledge of the men's likely reactions; and the invocation of military law only as the final sanction."<sup>21</sup> Chamberlain obviously filled the prescription for an exemplary commander.

Several weeks after the 2nd Maine furor had subsided, Chamberlain described his own prescription writing:

I consider it an officer's first duty to look after the welfare of his men. To this he is bound no less by the responsibility which the arbitrary nature of his power imposes, than by the regard he should have to the interests of the service in which he is engaged. My experiences in several trying campaigns has taught me that the way to ensure this efficiency of the army is to keep the men in the best possible condition, physically & morally.<sup>22</sup>

The 20th Maine was very fortunate to receive its share of replacements. Since the Federal defeat at Chancellorsville, the Army of the Potomac had been under yet another reorganization. Because some regiments had been so thinned by sickness and death, they were disbanded with the remaining men transferred to other units. In the Third Brigade, the 12th and 17th New York regiments suffered this fate. The brigade now consisted only of the 20th Maine, 16th Michigan, 44th New York, and the 83rd

Pennsylvania. The Third Brigade also had a new commander. With the resignation of Colonel Stockton, the post was filled by Colonel Strong Vincent of the 83rd Pennsylvania.<sup>23</sup>

Strong Vincent's name, as one individual said, mirrored the man.<sup>24</sup> Born in 1837 amidst the iron-foundries of Erie, Pennsylvania, Vincent proved to be a hard-driving and calculating soldier. By 1863, at the age of twenty-six, he was the youngest brigade commander in the Federal army. In earlier days, he had bulldozed his way through Harvard University to graduate with a law degree. Not being satisfied with the legal profession, Vincent enlisted in the army as a lowly private when Lincoln issued his first call for volunteers in 1861. After acquiring some military experience in his initial three-month stint, he accepted the position of lieutenant-colonel in the newly recruited 83rd Pennsylvania and promptly assumed the command of the regiment, serving with distinction in that capacity after the death of its colonel at Gaines' Mill. Vincent, a tall and impressive officer, managed his men with an iron-fist, demanding the same perfection from them that he did from himself. Eventually, a fond relationship developed between the regiment and Vincent mainly due to his unquestionable bravery and sacrifice for them. Vincent once said, "I enlisted to fight." He would prove these simple words soon enough.<sup>25</sup>

While all the changes were taking place within the army, Colonel Chamberlain and his regiment found themselves in their routine duty, picketing along the Rappahannock River. In the early days of June, the regiment had shifted its picket duty from near United States Ford to Ellis Ford. The change in scenery did not bring any action. However, picket duty did not seem as routine as it once had. The Twentieth was very anxious, expecting to encounter the enemy in force any day. The regiment had a good reason to be anxious; Southern "bush whackers" were everywhere, not only making the duty hazardous, but giving the feeling that something was brewing.<sup>26</sup>

Something was brewing, but it was on the opposite side of the Rappahannock. The Confederacy, in spite of its recent victory at Chancellorsville, was in desperate straits. In the west, the Mississippi River was in danger of becoming a Federal waterway. The city of Vicksburg, with its garrison under General John Pemberton, was besieged by the tenacious Federal, Major-General Ulysses S. Grant. East of Vicksburg, the graycoats under General Braxton Bragg were being threatened by Major-General William Rosecrans. General Lee had to act since he had the only available supply of men. Against the advice of many, Lee decided to take the war to the North once again. At best, his invasion might reduce the pressure in the Western Confederacy and improve the prospects of foreign intervention for the South. At least, an invasion of the North would rid Virginia's soil of ravaging bluecoats. These were high hopes, but Lee always was a gambler. After Jefferson Davis consented to Lee's bold plan, the move north followed. Lee's endeavor has been often described as a "raid," but it certainly did not constitute a raid in the Federal's mind. On 3 June 1863, Lee began his second invasion of Union soil. This invasion would meet its end near a small, unsuspecting town in Pennsylvania called Gettysburg.<sup>27</sup>

When General Lee started to snake his way through his traditional invasion route of the Shenandoah Valley, "Fighting Joe" Hooker could not immediately determine the Southerner's intention. As more and more information filtered into the Union headquarters, Hooker began to grasp his enemy's strategy. Hooker wanted to exploit the Rebel pull-out by attacking Fredericksburg and then making a run for Richmond. President Lincoln over-ruled any such Federal undertaking; Lee's Army of Northern Virginia was the enemy, not Richmond. Grudgingly gathering himself and his army together, Hooker proceeded northward shadowing Lee's army from the east. The Yankees had a substantial gap to close before they would be able to grapple with the Confederates.

It was not until 13 June that Colonel Joshua Chamberlain and the Fifth Corps were put on the road to Gettysburg. Their march was continually plagued by the extreme heat of the summer season, the accompanying dust that followed every foot soldier, and a lack of drinking water. As well as these common summer hardships, the soldiers endured the "usual suffering,"--sore feet, dry mouths, and straggling.<sup>28</sup> After two days on the double-quick, Chamberlain and his regiment halted near the old Bull Run Battlefield at Manassas Junction. Despite the hard marches, the colonel felt his men were primed for action and ready to take "a little sport by morning." He even imagined himself participating in a "Bull Run 3."<sup>29</sup> Considering Chamberlain had been held in reserve at Antietam, used in a piecemeal fashion at Fredericksburg, and then quarantined during Chancellorsville, his next engagement would be greater than any imaginable Third Bull Run. Little did he realize that a granite spur called Little Round Top would change the course of his career.

For a short spell, it appeared as if Chamberlain might be absent from the developing campaign. After the march had been resumed on 17 June, the Third Brigade struggled for twenty-three miles under one of the hottest suns of the season. By the nineteenth, the brigade had crept only another five miles finally to go into bivouac near Aldie, Virginia.<sup>30</sup> Because of the stifling heat and the hard marching, Colonel Chamberlain suffered heatstroke, and the regiment found itself under the temporary command of Lieutenant-Colonel Freeman Conner of the 44th New York. While Chamberlain rested, the Third Brigade fought in a brief but severe action against General J. E. B. Stuart's cavalry on the twenty-first. The brigade performed well in the battle of Aldie, also called Upperville, under the able command of Colonel Vincent.<sup>31</sup>

Although Stuart's cavalry was bruised slightly by its encounter with the Federals, at least Lee knew of his flamboyant cavalry commander's whereabouts as well as the Union army's. Stuart, in execution of one of Lee's all-too-frequent discretionary

orders, splashed his cavalry across the Potomac River on the twenty-third and rode around the Yankee army again. Stuart's jaunt created some havoc, but it left Lee blind. Without Stuart's reconnaissance reports, the commanding general had no information as to his enemy's location. Several days would pass before Lee would finally learn of their position, but it would not be from Stuart.<sup>32</sup>

While Lee's army wandered northward toward Pennsylvania, a healthy Chamberlain rejoined his regiment only days before the Fifth Corps resumed its strenuous pursuit. It would be one of the most demanding marches the corps had ever experienced. On Friday, 26 June, the corps advanced twenty miles and crossed the Potomac River at Edwards Ferry. Saturday did not offer the corps much of a breather as it marched another twenty miles. On the night of the twenty-seventh, Chamberlain and the corps bedded down outside Frederick, Maryland. Since the next day was Sunday, the Sabbath, the entire corps remained in camp the whole day to enjoy some rest.<sup>33</sup>

Sunday proved to be more than a day of rest for both armies. In the Union camp, Major-General Hooker had previously been complaining to Washington that too many expectations had been placed upon him. If he were to accomplish anything, Hooker contended, more men and supplies were needed. Lincoln detected the faint tones of a McClellan in Hooker's voice and actions. Hooker, like McClellan before him, had seemingly lost the unwavering nerve required to meet and defeat Lee on the battlefield. When Hooker requested to be relieved at once because of Washington's indifference to his demands, Lincoln eagerly consented. After some hasty consultations with a few of his cabinet members, Lincoln selected a new commander of the Army of the Potomac. On 28 June, Major-General George Gordon Meade accepted the post.<sup>34</sup>

Meade's appointment caused mixed feelings among the Federal army. Many of the men wondered if it was wise to swap commanders in the middle of such an important

campaign. On the other hand, the soldiers had full confidence in Meade's competence and ability to lead them.<sup>35</sup> Meade was not an impressive figure, as McClellan and Hooker were, but he had demonstrated his capabilities since the commencement of the war. Though Meade was a tall man, he was prone to stooping which only augmented his already severe demeanor. Meade, often referred to as "Old Four Eyes" or that "old goggled-eyed snapping turtle" by the men, held one trait that these epithets failed to capture; Meade possessed an explosive temper that would, on occasions, color his decisions.<sup>36</sup>

In the Confederate camp on the twenty-eighth, General Lee was introduced to a mysterious, dark, bearded man, wearing prosperous but dusty clothes. The suspicious-looking man was Henry T. Harrison, an industrious spy who occasionally worked for General James Longstreet. Harrison informed Lee that Meade was now in command of the Federal army. Though Meade was an old acquaintance of Lee, the Virginian looked upon his promotion as just one more in a growing list of Federal commanders. But Harrison had something else to add; Meade and his army were across the Potomac River and fast closing on the Rebel army's rear. General Lee calmly acknowledged Harrison's surprising information and probably wondered why General Stuart was not reporting this news himself. Realizing his army was spread out over the Pennsylvania countryside, Lee immediately ordered the concentration of his forces at an easily accessible point. He chose a point near Cashtown and Gettysburg.<sup>37</sup>

While the Confederates sought to concentrate their scattered corps, Meade ordered his army northward to intercept them. About 8:00 a.m. on the twenty-ninth, Chamberlain's camp in Frederick was dismantled and the Fifth Corps took to the road. After marching eighteen exhausting miles, the men were drenched by a heavy rainfall during the night. On the following morning, reveille sounded before daybreak around 4:30 a.m. Chamberlain's own Third Brigade took the lead as it set the pace for the

corps' twenty-three mile saunter. That night, Chamberlain and the Fifth Corps rested comfortably in a meadow outside of Union Mills, Maryland.<sup>38</sup>

On July 1, the Fifth Corps once more undertook its grueling march northward. One foot-soldier described his feelings about these early morning marches. He recalled, "At early dawn . . . it was so dark that the head of the column was indistinct, and munching our hard bread as we moved, washing it down with coffee and sugar which had been allowed to swash in our canteens, we struck out for another day's solid work."<sup>39</sup>

Another solid day's work was finally offering some changes in scenery. By early afternoon, the corps crossed Maryland's northern border into Pennsylvania. For most of the men, it was their first time in a free state since they had enlisted. A feeling of excitement spread through the ranks, but it was especially noticeable in the Pennsylvania regiments. Regimental flags were unfurled and bands played patriotic tunes to honor the free state. However, the men soon remembered why they had marched north from the Rappahannock--to overtake Lee's invading army. In all directions around the jubilant bluecoats were the reminders of the enemy's presence; discarded booty, stripped fences, and dead horses branded with the letters C.S.A.<sup>40</sup>

About 4:00 p.m., the vanguard of the Fifth Corps entered Hanover, Pennsylvania, with its new commander at the helm, Major-General George Sykes. Brigadier-General James Barnes led Chamberlain's First Division into the robust town. Barnes was given temporary command of the division since Griffin had contracted an illness after Chancellorsville. The Third Division, led by Brigadier-General Romeyn Ayres--a stubborn, but able Regular army veteran of the Mexican War--followed closely behind Barnes' division. Brigadier-General Samuel Crawford brought up the rear with his Second Division.<sup>41</sup> As the divisions settled down to bivouac southwest of the town, the men noticed evidence of an earlier, brisk cavalry clash. The fight had been between the unbounded "Jeb" Stuart and elements of Union cavalry commanded by Brigadier-

General Judson Kilpatrick.<sup>42</sup>

Since enemy cavalry had been in the vicinity, the Fifth Corps deployed skirmishers and flankers on Hanover's outlying roads to probe for Lee's army. In the meantime, the Federals went into their bivouac routines. Although they had a toilsome march of twenty miles or so, the men still had enough energy to forage liberally. Fence rails were a favorite target for use as firewood. With the fuel available, the men then scurried about for water so they could make coffee. A few cattle had been slain and were being prepared when a lone horseman rode into camp with news from Gettysburg. Seeing the courier's presence, the resting bluecoats quickly concluded that they would not be able to enjoy their coffee or beef.<sup>43</sup>

The courier's message swept like wild-fire throughout the corps. Lee's advance elements had struck the First and Eleventh Corps of the Army of the Potomac near Gettysburg. Major-General John Reynolds, the fine commander of the First Corps, had been killed by a Rebel sharpshooter while trying to rally his men. The two corps had been driven back through Gettysburg and had currently entrenched themselves on a hillside south of the town. After hastily erecting a defensive line, the Federal corps were holding on but for how long was questionable. The Fifth Corps was ordered to "pack up" and march west to Gettysburg. When it pulled out around 6:00 p.m., there was still a sixteen mile night hike before it would reach the battlefield.<sup>44</sup>

With the forced march underway on the Hanover Road, the corps' staff officers were busy. Their orders went from the corps, down to the division, next to the brigade, and at last to the regiment. -- "To Gettysburg." At a turn of the road, a staff officer sat upon his horse and told each colonel as he passed, "McClellan is to command us on the morrow." Colonel Chamberlain heard a spirited roar rise from the men in response to what would prove to be a misstatement about McClellan's resuming command. After a

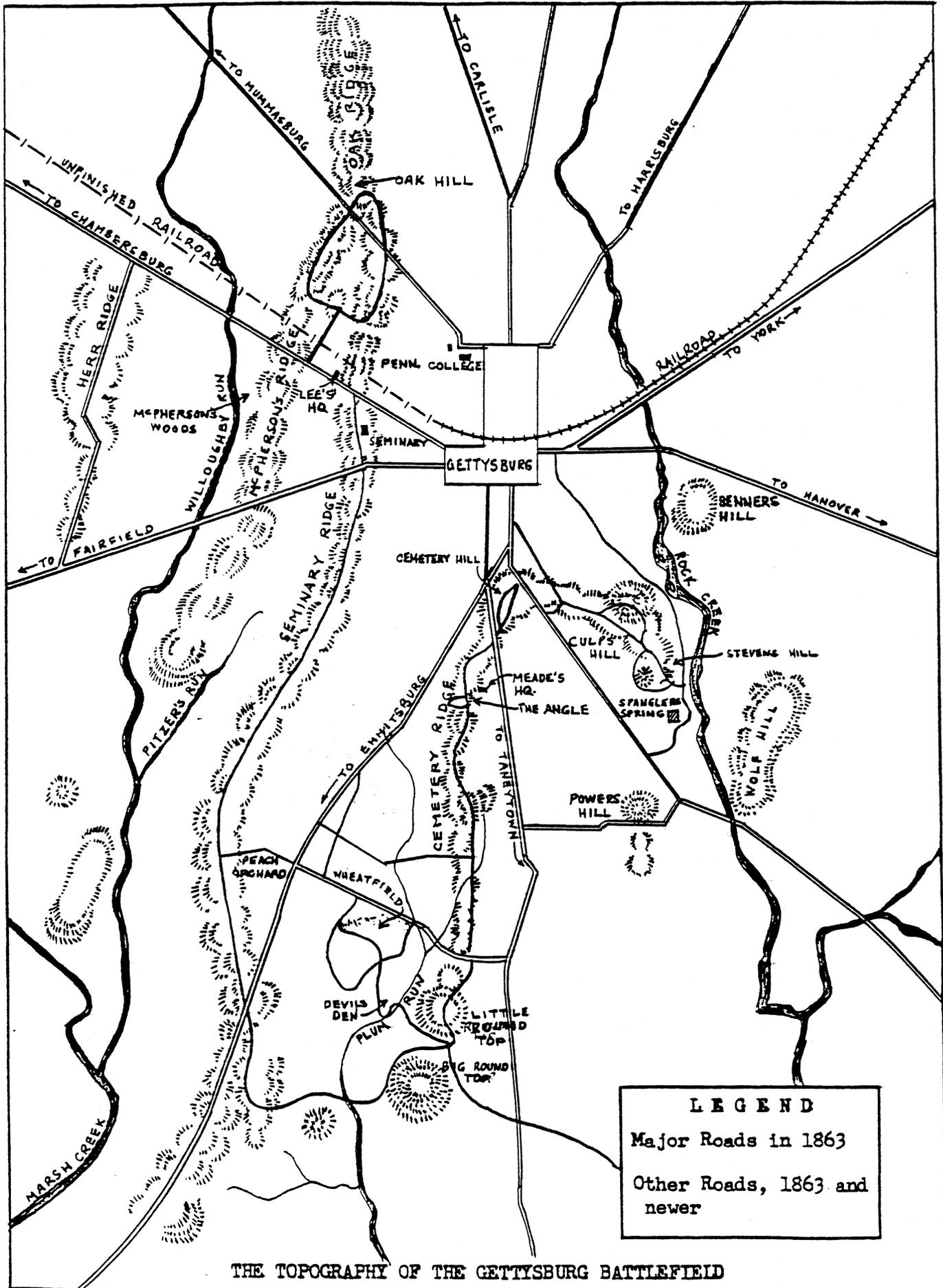
few minutes had passed, the roar subsided as suddenly as it had appeared. More rumors emerged on that night. Some men even believed a rumor that the ghostly figure of George Washington was galloping over the Gettysburg hills. Chamberlain half believed it himself.<sup>45</sup>

Regardless of the excitement in the ranks, the soldiers were oblivious to what was developing in their midst. They understood that there was going to be a great battle on the following day; but they imagined this great battle would be much like Antietam, Fredericksburg, or Chancellorsville. They could not anticipate the magnitude of the coming battle that would become the greatest military clash on American soil. In the meantime, the soldiers kept on marching through the night.<sup>46</sup>

Around 1:00 a.m., the march ended and the men went into bivouac near the town of Bonnaughtown for the night. After only a few scant hours of rest, the Fifth Corps found itself again on the Hanover road heading for Gettysburg. Grabbing an hour or two of sleep along the roadside before daybreak, Chamberlain and his regiment arrived at the heights southeast of the town about 7:00 a.m., 2 July.<sup>47</sup>

After a brief pause for the First Division to gather its stragglers and then mass near Wolf's Hill, Chamberlain and his men were shifted to a position closer to the earlier entrenched Federal lines. Around 10:00 a.m., the First and Second Divisions of the corps were ordered southward along some local farm roads in the direction of the Baltimore Pike. Once the two divisions reached the pike, they turned to their right and marched westward across Rock Creek and into an open field just south of Powers Hill. Taking advantage of their momentary halt, Chamberlain and his regiment grabbed some rest and tried to make the most of their rations before being pressed into action.<sup>48</sup>

Chamberlain's position behind Powers Hill was indeed a strategic one. From this location, he could quickly reinforce any portion of the Federal defensive lines. The Federals, having this advantage of interior defensive lines along the interlocking hills



THE TOPOGRAPHY OF THE GETTYSBURG BATTLEFIELD

Map from Fiebeger, *The Campaign and Battle of Gettysburg*, p. 98.

and ridges, would be able to frustrate any Rebel attempt of a mass, concentrated assault. This Yankee defensive line ran in a fishhook shape that was anchored on the right--the point of the hook--atop Culp's Hill; it then curved along Cemetery Hill and Cemetery Ridge with the left or shank portion of the hook anchored by two rocky heights, Little Round Top and Big Round Top. To the right of Chamberlain's station, Culp's Hill was occupied by Major-General Henry Slocum's Twelfth Corps. Next to Slocum's corps was Major-General Oliver Howard's Eleventh Corps which was followed on the left by the riddled First Corps under the command of Major-General John Newton. The shank portion, to Chamberlain's left, was manned by Major-General Winfield Hancock's Second Corps with Major-General Daniel Sickles' Third Corps filling out the rest of the line to the Round Tops.

Though the Union defenses were formidable and growing stronger by the hour, General Lee elected to keep the initiative and press the attack. During the early morning hours of 2 July, Lee had informed his ranking corps' commander, Lieutenant-General James Longstreet, that "if the enemy is there tomorrow, we must attack him."<sup>49</sup> The assault would be a flanking movement, like the one performed at Chancellorsville, but this time it would be on the Federal's left and without the presence of Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson. Descending upon the bluecoat's left, which rested under the shadows of the Round Tops, Longstreet would then attempt to roll up the Yankees all the way down Cemetery Ridge while also gaining the Union rear.

Longstreet and his First Corps were chosen to implement Lee's plan in spite of Longstreet's consternation over and disapproval of the offensive strategy. However, considering Lee's situation, it is difficult to see another commander who would have been better suited for the task than Longstreet. Generals Richard Ewell and A. P. Hill did not have the experience that Longstreet had in coordinating the movements of an entire corps. The two generals had been only promoted recently to the command of a

corps because of the death of Stonewall Jackson. In addition, their men had suffered heavy losses on the first day of fighting and needed time to recuperate for another assault.

Longstreet's corps was the freshest one available, but it had not yet reached Gettysburg. Longstreet was further dismayed that he would have to perform the movement with only two of his three divisions, those of Major-General Lafayette McLaws and John Hood. The corps' commander would not be able to deploy his third division, led by Major-General George Pickett, since it had been guarding the rear of the Army of Northern Virginia. Longstreet wanted to delay the attack until Pickett arrived. He told Hood on the morning of the second that "the General [Lee] is a little nervous this morning; he wishes me to attack; I do not wish to do so without Pickett. I never like to go into a battle with one boot off."<sup>50</sup>

McLaws and Hood had a difficult march to reach Gettysburg by early morning on the second. On the first, they were delayed in leaving their bivouac at Greenwood till 4:00 p.m. With McLaws' division trailed by Hood's, they were further delayed by Major-General Edward Johnson's division and the wagon train of A.P. Hill's Second Corps.<sup>51</sup> Once the Second Corps cleared the road for McLaws and Hood, the two were ordered by Longstreet to march as fast as possible "without distressing your men and animals." The troops marched all night, stopping only for two hours of rest during the forced march.<sup>52</sup>

After resuming the march, Hood's division seized the lead with McLaws' division trailing closely behind it. When Hood's vanguard finally neared Gettysburg, the hour was about 7:00 or 7:30 a.m. on 2 July. Both divisions were extended along the Cashtown Road and would require time to organize their ranks.<sup>53</sup>

While the two divisions were regrouping, Hood, then McLaws, approached Lee as they entered Gettysburg to ascertain the plan of attack. Lee outlined his tactical plan

which consisted of two phases. First, he wanted to seize the excellent artillery positions at the Peach Orchard and the ground about a mile west of Big Round Top. With this completed, the artillery fire would cover the massing Confederates as they moved into the second phase of the plan. The Rebels would then attack in an oblique formation up the Emmitsburg Road against the Union troops on Cemetery Ridge.<sup>54</sup>

Before the two divisional commanders could mount any attack, they had to await the arrival of one of Hood's units, Brigadier-General E. M. Law's fine brigade. Law, who was one of the ablest brigadiers in the Southern army, had been protecting the right flank of the First Corps, thus he was positioned a few miles south of Greenwood at New Guilford. At 3:00 a.m. on the second, Law received orders from Longstreet to quickly make for Gettysburg. Law covered some twenty-four miles to arrive shortly before noon outside of Gettysburg.<sup>55</sup> Even though Law's men had made excellent time, they were exhausted because of the excessive heat, choking dust, and the lack of water. Once the tired Confederates reached the outskirts of Gettysburg, they remained thirsty because the local farmers' wells had run dry and the brooks and springs were too distant.<sup>56</sup>

With the arrival of Law's brigade, Hood and McLaws began to deploy their divisions, and again they encountered delays. The troops had to be shifted to the extreme right of the Rebel lines while remaining unobserved by a lightly manned signal station on Little Round Top. The tired graycoats marched and countermarched a long, circuitous southern trek until they finally reached their positions. First, McLaws' division took its station opposite the Peach Orchard. Hood, who was on McLaws' right, continued in a southerly direction and formed his line of battle which straddled the Emmitsburg Road. He held the extreme right of the Confederate lines. Hood's division was formed into two lines, with the outermost right brigades, Brigadier-General J. B. Robertson's and Law's, extended across the road.<sup>57</sup> By the time Law's force

was deployed, just before 4:00 p.m., the men had marched a total of twenty-eight miles in eleven hours; it was the best marching exhibited by either army to reach the Gettysburg battlefield.<sup>58</sup>

When Lee planned his flanking maneuver, he had based it upon information received from an early morning reconnaissance. Captain S. R. Johnston and Major J. J. Clarke had been ordered around 5:00 a.m. to reconnoiter the ground to the south of the Federal lines. Johnston climbed to a shoulder on Little Round Top and found no signs of Federal occupation. Rejoining Clarke, the two galloped to the southern tip of Big Round Top. Here they were forced to retreat for fear of being observed by three or four Federal Cavalrymen. When Johnston reported his findings to Lee between 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m., he noted his ascent of Little Round Top and that he had found no enemy troops there. With this information, Lee decided to concentrate his attack slightly north of the Round Tops so he could get astride Cemetery Ridge at its lowest point. Without any natural barrier to anchor a defense, the Army of the Potomac would have to retreat for fear of annihilation.<sup>59</sup>

Lee's plan, once put into action after hours of delay, quickly developed a snag. Throughout the afternoon, Union Major-General Daniel Sickles had advanced his Third Corps from the line of Cemetery Ridge to a position that stretched from the Peach Orchard to Devil's Den. He believed the ground a few hundred yards in his front would be easier to defend if the Rebels mounted an assault. In essence, Sickles' movement accomplished three things. First of all, it caused him to lose contact with Hancock's Second Corps on the right, thus leaving him isolated and Hancock's left flank uncovered. Secondly, it left the Third Corps' left flank unanchored and open to attack since no troops had been placed on Little Round Top. But most importantly, Sickles had unwittingly blocked the path of Lee's flanking maneuver. Sickles had blocked the route by placing Brigadier-General J. H. Hobart Ward's troops on the extreme left near

Devil's Den. Ward then ordered the Second U.S. Sharpshooters, from Colonel Hiram Berdan's famous regiment, to form a skirmish line half a mile in advance which the Confederates soon encountered as they deployed.<sup>60</sup>

Much controversy has arisen over the years concerning Sickles' independent course of action. Major-General George Meade had intended for Sickles to occupy the line on Cemetery Ridge from the left of Hancock's Second Corps to the two Round Tops. Sickles was supposed to have replaced Brigadier-General John Geary's division of the Twelfth Corps which had earlier occupied Little Round Top, but had since been withdrawn. For some reason, Sickles did not bother to occupy Little Round Top. He not only left his own flank open, but that of the entire Army of the Potomac. Meade attempted to have Sickles' corps pulled back into the proper line of battle around 3:30 p.m., but it was too late since a full-engagement was anticipated at any moment. Meade, as well as his chief engineer, Brigadier-General Gouverneur Warren, was concerned for his army's left flank so he dispatched Warren to go to Little Round Top and "examine the condition of affairs."<sup>61</sup>

Warren, like Chamberlain, was about to make a name for himself at Gettysburg. The engineer possessed a fine soldierly, but yet intellectual appearance that impressed most people he met. He was also a very methodical man who did not usually make hasty decisions, but the situation on Little Round Top demanded one such decision. When Warren climbed the unoccupied rocky mountain, he instantly recognized that it was the key to the entire Federal position.<sup>62</sup> If Longstreet's attack could secure Little Round Top, the Rebels then could then enfilade and roll up the Federal lines thus placing Meade in a difficult position. The invading Rebel army would be between the Army of the Potomac and Washington, D.C.

While Warren was on Little Round Top, the Confederate attack commenced. Just before 4:00 p.m., Longstreet's young chief of artillery, Colonel E. P. Alexander, opened

fire with fifty-four of his cannons. Shells rained upon Sickles' exposed men, but they countered with a surprisingly effective artillery fire.<sup>63</sup> Hood's division had begun its movement up the Emmitsburg Road only to incur stiff resistance from the unexpected encounter with a Union corps. Some of Hood's select Texas scouts had observed the position of the Federals and realized the Union Army occupied the line only to the base of the Round Tops. Hood determined that he could easily outflank Sickles by marching around the Round Tops and then rolling him up. Hood requested permission from Longstreet to perform the maneuver, but Longstreet replied, "General Lee's orders are to attack up the Emmetsburg [sic] road." Hood made several requests to Longstreet for permission, but he was denied on each instance.<sup>64</sup>

Hood's advance continued, led by Law's and Robertson's brigades, until these two brigades became confused and entangled by the rocky base of the Round Tops. After reshuffling themselves, the Confederate brigades resumed their march, inching closer to Ward's Second U.S. sharpshooters, the rocks of Devil's Den, and Little Round Top. Six Rebel regiments were approaching; the Fourth and Fifth Texans from Robertson's brigade and the Fourth, Fifteenth, Forty-seventh, and Forty-eighth Alabama regiments of Law's brigade.

Sickles must have been aware of the substantial number of Confederate troops east of the Emmitsburg Road and west of Big Round Top, but Warren was not. Just prior to the Rebel attack, Warren spied an excellent place for an enemy to mass out of sight in a densely wooded area east of the road. Warren ordered Captain James Smith of the New York Light, Fourth Battery, stationed near Devil's Den, to fire a shot into the woods. The effect of the shot proved to most important and startling. In a post-war letter, Warren described the incident:

As the shot went whistling through the air, the sound of it reached the enemies' troops and caused every one to look in the direction of it. The motion revealed to me the glistening gun barrels and bayonets of the enemy's line of battle already formed and far outflanking the position of any of our troops, so

that the line of his advance from his right to Little Round Top was unopposed.<sup>65</sup>

Warren sent his aides off to procure troops for the defense of Little Round Top. One aide, Captain Chauncey Reese, was directed to Meade's headquarters with a request for at least one division.<sup>66</sup> Another aide, Lieutenant Ranald MacKenzie, was dispatched to Sickles to ask for troops. Sickles declined to furnish any troops because he was busy with his own fight. His Third Corps was presently engaged with Longstreet's corps at the Peach Orchard, the Wheat Field, and Devil's Den. Meanwhile MacKenzie proceeded to locate and ask the commander of the Fifth Corps, Major-General George Sykes, for troops. Sykes consented and directed one of his staff officers to order Brigadier-General James Barnes to send at least a brigade from his First Division to Little Round Top.<sup>67</sup> Events were moving quickly and soon enough, Colonel Joshua Chamberlain would be bound for an unoccupied granite spur.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Amos M. Judson, History of the Eighty-Third Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers (Erie, Pennsylvania: B. F. H. Lynn Publishers, 1865), p. 111; and Nash, History of the Forty-Fourth Regiment, p. 118.

<sup>2</sup>T. Harry Williams, Lincoln and His Generals (New York: Grosset & Dunlap Publishers, 1952), pp. 203-205.

<sup>3</sup>E.P. Alexander, Military Memoirs of a Confederate: A Critical Narrative (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907), pp. 314-315; and Smith, History of the Corn Exchange Regiment, pp. 159-161.

<sup>4</sup>Carter, Four Brothers in Blue, p. 225; and Nash, History of the Forty-Fourth Regiment, p. 123.

<sup>5</sup>Carter, Four Brothers in Blue, pp. 229-230; and Billings, Hardtack and Coffee, p. 258.

<sup>6</sup>Darius Couch, "Sumner's 'Right Grand Division'," found in Battles and Leaders, vol. 3, p. 120.

<sup>7</sup>Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, a Sketch, p. 11.

<sup>8</sup>Chamberlain to Abner Coburn, 25 March 1863, Maine State Archives.

<sup>9</sup>Jay Luvass and Harold Nelson, eds., Guide to the Battles of Chancellorsville and Fredericksburg (Carlisle, Pennsylvania: South Mountain Press, 1988), pp. 123-124; and Joseph Mitchell, Decisive Battles of the Civil War (New York: Fawcett Premier, 1955), p. 119.

<sup>10</sup>R.E. Lee to Samuel Cooper, 23 September 1863, in Clifford Dowdey and Louis Manarin, eds., The Wartime Papers of Robert E. Lee (New York: Da Capo Press, 1961), pp. 461-463.

<sup>11</sup>Gerrish, Army Life: A Private's Reminiscences of the Civil War, p. 86; and Chamberlain to Fanny, 24 April 1863, Chamberlain papers, Library of Congress. See also Robertson, Soldiers Blue and Gray, p. 149-150. Robertson discusses the procedures for smallpox vaccinations noting that things often went awry during the administering of the vaccine. Breakouts of the disease among the soldiers were commonplace during the Civil War.

<sup>12</sup>Chamberlain to Fanny, 24 April 1863, Chamberlain papers, Library of Congress; and Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Maine for the Years 1864 and 1865, p. 331.

<sup>13</sup>Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Maine for the Years 1864 and 1865, p. 331; and Chamberlain to Coburn, 25 May 1863, Maine State Archives.

<sup>14</sup>Chamberlain to Coburn, 25 May 1863, Maine State Archives; Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Maine for the Years 1864 and 1865, p. 331; and Wallace, The Soul of the Lion: A Biography of General Joshua L. Chamberlain, p. 67.

<sup>15</sup>William Whitman and Charles True, Maine in the War for the Union (Lewiston, Maine: Nelson Dingley Jr. & Company, Publishers, 1865), p. 492; O.R., vol. 25, part 1, series 1, p. 509; and Boatner, III, The Civil War Dictionary, p. 12.

<sup>16</sup>Pullen, The Twentieth Maine, pp. 77-79; and Joshua Chamberlain, "Through Blood and Fire at Gettysburg," Hearst's Magazine 23 (June, 1913), p. 899.

<sup>17</sup>Chamberlain, "Through Blood and Fire at Gettysburg," pp. 899-900; and Carter, Four Brothers in Blue, pp. 267-268.

<sup>18</sup>Chamberlain to Coburn, 19 September 1863, Maine State Archives.

<sup>19</sup>Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Maine for the Years 1864 and 1865, pp. 331-332; and Chamberlain, "Through Blood and Fire at Gettysburg," p. 900.

<sup>20</sup>Chamberlain to Coburn, 27 May 1863, Maine State Archives. In addition to this letter, Chamberlain wrote another one in support of a falsely accused Second Mainer. This accused man was rightfully absent from regiment during the revolt, Chamberlain contested, and should have been treated in accordance. See Chamberlain to L. Thomas, 21 May 1863, Regimental records of 20th Maine, National Archives.

<sup>21</sup>Linderman, Embattled Courage, p. 56.

<sup>22</sup>Chamberlain to Coburn, 21 July 1863, Maine State Archives.

<sup>23</sup>Powell, The Fifth Army Corps, pp. 501-503; and Nash, History of the Forty-Fourth Regiment, p. 135.

<sup>24</sup>Harry Pfanz, Gettysburg: The Second Day (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1987), p. 209.

<sup>25</sup>Larry Rice, "The Role of Colonel Strong Vincent in Determining the Outcome of the Battle of Little Round Top," Journal of Erie Studies 1 (January, 1973), pp. 38-42; Shelby Foote, The Civil War: A Narrative. Fredericksburg to Meridian (New York: Random House, 1963), p. 503; Oliver Norton, The Attack and Defense of Little Round Top (Dayton, Ohio: Morningside Press, 1983), pp. 281-288; and Judson, History of the 83rd Regiment, pp. 140-141.

<sup>26</sup>Annual Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Maine for the Year Ending December 31, 1863 (Augusta: Stevens & Sayward, Printers to the State, 1863), p. 90; and Gilmore to Hodsdon, 8 June 1863, Maine State Archives.

<sup>27</sup>Freeman, Lee: A Biography, vol. 3, pp. 18-19; and Dowdey and Manarin, eds., The Wartime Papers of Robert E. Lee, p. 473.

<sup>28</sup>Carter, Four Brothers in Blue, p. 284.

<sup>29</sup>Chamberlain to Aunt, 15 June 1863, Chamberlain papers, Library of Congress.

<sup>30</sup>Nash, History of the Forty-fourth Regiment, p. 136; and B.K. Kimberly to Editors of Buffalo Morning Press, 4 July 1863, in Nash, History of the Forty-fourth Regiment, p.324.

<sup>31</sup>O.R., vol. 27, part 1, series 1, p. 615. Colonel Vincent performed so skillfully in the sharp engagement at Aldie that Major-General Meade commented, "I wish he were a brigadier general. I'd put him charge of a division." See Rice, "The Role of Colonel Strong Vincent in Determining the Outcome of the Battle of Little Round Top", p. 42.

<sup>32</sup>Dowdey and Manarin, eds., The Wartime Papers of Robert E. Lee, p.478.

<sup>33</sup>Nash, History of the Forty-fourth Regiment, pp. 137-138.

<sup>34</sup>Williams, Lincoln and His Generals, p. 259.

<sup>35</sup>Gerrish, Army Life: A Private's Reminiscences of the Civil War, p.100.

<sup>36</sup>Gerrish and Hutchinson, The Blue and the Gray, pp. 250-251; Horace Porter, Campaigning with Grant (New York: The Century Company, 1897), p.248; and Smith, History of the Corn Exchange Regiment, p. 231.

<sup>37</sup>Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants: A Study in Command, 3 vol. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1942-1944), vol. 3, pp. 60-61; James Longstreet, From Manassas to Appomattox (Philadelphia: J. P. Lippincott, 1896), pp. 346-347; and Moxley Sorrel, Recollections of a Confederate Staff Officer (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1905), p.155. See also James Hall, "A Modern Hunt for a Fabled Agent: The Spy Harrison," 24 Civil War Times Illustrated, (1986), pp. 19-25.

<sup>38</sup>Smith, History of the Corn Exchange Regiment, p. 232; Nash, History of the Forty-fourth Regiment, pp. 140-141; and Carter, Four Brothers in Blue, p. 296.

<sup>39</sup>Carter, Four Brothers in Blue, p. 297.

<sup>40</sup>Judson, History of the Eighty-third Regiment, p. 123; and Smith, History of the Corn Exchange Regiment, p.235.

<sup>41</sup>The Historical Publication Committee of the Hanover Chamber of Commerce, Encounter at Hanover: Prelude to Gettysburg (Hanover: White Mane Publishing Co., Inc., 1962), pp. 124-125; and Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, p.39. The arrival time of the Fifth Corps in Hanover varies in different accounts from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. See O.R., vol. 27, part 1, series 1, p. 621. Bruce Catton politely captured Crawford's ability in one line when he said that the general was a man "who fell a good deal short of being one of the most skillful soldiers in the army." See Bruce Catton, A Stillness at Appomattox (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1953), p. 395.

<sup>42</sup>Carter, Four Brothers in Blue, pp. 297-298.

<sup>43</sup>Chamberlain, "Through Blood and Fire at Gettysburg," pp. 894-896; Historical Publication Committee, Encounter at Hanover, p.125; and Carter, Four Brothers in Blue, p. 298. The messenger was Captain Addison Mason of Meade's staff. He was to tell Sykes of the battle, Reynold's death, and of Major-General Winfield Hancock's assumption of command. Finally, Mason was to instruct Sykes to head for Gettysburg at once. See Pfanz, Gettysburg: The Second Day, p.51.

<sup>44</sup>Carter, Four Brothers in Blue, p. 298; Chamberlain, "Through Blood and Fire at Gettysburg," p. 896; and Maine Gettysburg Commission, Maine at Gettysburg, p. 250.

<sup>45</sup>Gerrish, Army Life: A Private's Reminiscences of the Civil War, p. 101; and Chamberlain, "Through Blood and Fire at Gettysburg," p. 896.

<sup>46</sup>Smith, History of the Corn Exchange Regiment, pp. 237-238.

<sup>47</sup>O.R., vol. 27, part 1, series 1, pp. 595, 621-622.

<sup>48</sup>Pfanz, Gettysburg: The Second Day, pp. 61-62; and O.R., vol. 27, part 1, series 1, p. 622.

<sup>49</sup>Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, vol. 3, p. 108. Much has been written about Lee's decision to attack and Longstreet's contention that the Army of Northern Virginia

should remain on the tactical defensive. What has arisen from the charges and counter-charges is the enduring Lee versus Longstreet controversy. It is not this study's purpose to go into the details of the controversy, since that would entail another study, but only to explain why Longstreet delayed his attack for several hours.

<sup>50</sup>Hood to Longstreet, 28 June 1875, found in John Hood, Advance and Retreat (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1959), p. 57.

<sup>51</sup>Edwin Coddington, The Gettysburg Campaign: A Study in Command (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968), p. 368.

<sup>52</sup>Longstreet, From Manassas to Appomattox, p. 359; and Hood to Longstreet, 28 June 1875, found in Hood, Advance and Retreat, p. 56.

<sup>53</sup>Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, vol. 3, p. 112.

<sup>54</sup>Coddington, The Gettysburg Campaign, p. 377.

<sup>55</sup>Gallagher, ed., Fighting for the Confederacy, pp. 316-317; and E. M. Law, "The Struggle for 'Round Top'," found in Battles and Leaders, vol. 3, p. 319.

<sup>56</sup>Coddington, The Gettysburg Campaign, p. 369.

<sup>57</sup>Law, "The Struggle for 'Round Top'," p. 320.

<sup>58</sup>Longstreet, From Manassas to Appomattox, p. 365.

<sup>59</sup>Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, vol. 3, pp. 112-114. See also Appendix I, pp. 755-756. This appendix examines closely the early morning reconnaissance on the Confederate right, 2 July 1863.

<sup>60</sup>O.R., vol. 27, part 1, series 1, pp. 493-494.

<sup>61</sup>G.K. Warren to Porter Farley, 13 July 1872, found in Oliver Norton, The Attack and Defense of Little Round Top, p. 309. Apparently, Meade and Warren were apprehensive about the Federal lines being, in actuality, anchored by Sickles' corps upon Little Round Top. Warren, in a letter written soon after the battle, said, "I felt so worried at the outlook that I requested General Meade to let me go to Little Round Top and look

after its defense as the key to our left flank. He directed me to do so." See Emerson Gifford Taylor, Gouverneur Kemble Warren: The Life and Letters of an American Soldier, 1830-1882 (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1932), pp. 122-123. For more information on the Meade-Sickles controversy, one should see George Meade, Jr., ed., The Life and Letters of George Gordon Meade, pp. 62-97; and Richard Sauers' informative article, "Gettysburg: The Meade-Sickles Controversy," 26 Civil War History (September, 1980), pp. 197-217.

<sup>62</sup>Edward Longacre, "Gouverneur K. Warren: A Personality Profile," 10 Civil War Times Illustrated (1972), p. 13; and Warren to Farley, 13 July 1872, found in Norton, The Attack and Defense of Little Round Top, p.309.

<sup>63</sup>Gallagher, ed., Fighting for the Confederacy, p. 239.

<sup>64</sup>Hood to Longstreet, 28 June 1875, found in Hood, Advance and Retreat, pp. 57-58.

<sup>65</sup>Warren to Farley, 13 July 1872, found in Norton, The Attack and Defense of Little Round Top, p. 309.

<sup>66</sup>Meade, Jr., ed., The Life and Letters of George Gordon Meade, p. 82. See also Norton, The Attack and Defense of Little Round Top, pp. 309, 330-332. By using the process of elimination, Reese had to be the one directed to Meade's headquarters.

<sup>67</sup>O.R., vol. 27, part 1, series 1, p. 138; and Norton, The Attack and Defense of Little Round Top, pp. 264, 292. Lieutenant Ranald MacKenzie was not an ordinary aide. In the fall of 1864, he was given the command of a brigade at the age of twenty-four. Later he served as a divisional cavalry commander under Major-General Philip Sheridan during the closing days of the war. Mackenzie so impressed Grant that the Lieutenant-General considered him the most promising officer in the army. After the war, Mackenzie served with distinction during the Indian wars. See Boatner, III, Civil War Dictionary, p.499-500; and U. S. Grant, Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant (New York: The Century Company, 1885-1886; reprint ed., New York: Da Capo Press, 1982), p. 583.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### ***"THERE NEVER WERE HARDER FIGHTERS"***

The abruptness of the order roused the First Division of the Fifth Corps to its feet. "Fall in! Fall in! By the right flank! Double-quick! March!"<sup>1</sup> Obeying the order, Colonel Chamberlain's own Third Brigade led the division in a westerly direction, hastening towards the sound of heavy gunfire. Nearing the extreme Federal left, Chamberlain and his regiment made their way through thorn hedges and over stone fences while the roar of the battle heightened. As Chamberlain approached the battlefield, he recalled that Sickles' Third Corps was not where he thought it would be. Instead of being between Hancock's Second Corps on Cemetery Ridge and the Round Tops, Sickles' men were what seemed to be almost a mile forward from the ridge and slightly east of the Emmitsburg Road.<sup>2</sup>

Chamberlain and the division halted momentarily in rear of Sickles' engulfed corps to contemplate their next move. Positioned near the George Weikert house on Cemetery Ridge, about one thousand yards from the peak of Little Round Top, Chamberlain captured a glimpse of the fierce struggle with McLaws' in his front. At any instant, Chamberlain expected to be placed in this action in what would later become known as the Wheat field. And to the Colonel's immediate left, he could see the Third Corps' left flank crumbling under the pressure of Hood's advancing Rebels at Devil's Den. But before Chamberlain entered this melee, he received orders from Colonel Vincent directing the Third Brigade to proceed to the left at the double-quick

for a granite spur called Little Round Top.<sup>3</sup>

Apparently, the staff officer sent by Major-General Sykes with orders for Major-General Barnes to dispatch a brigade to Little Round Top was first stopped by Colonel Vincent. According to an account by Private Oliver Norton, the brigade's standard-bearer, the colonel, sitting on his horse at the head of the First Division, recognized the approaching staff officer as a member of Sykes' staff. Vincent rode ahead and stopped the staff officer and asked:

"Captain, what are your orders?"

The Captain responded, "Where is General Barnes?"

Vincent impetuously replied, "What are your orders? Give me your orders."

The Captain replied, "General Sykes directs General Barnes to send a brigade of his division to occupy that hill yonder." He pointed in the direction of Little Round Top.

Without an instant's hesitation, Vincent said, "I will take the responsibility myself of taking my brigade there."<sup>4</sup>

Norton's account brings to light several major points. First of all, Vincent's decision to occupy Little Round Top without direct orders showed a surprising amount of initiative on his behalf. Though Vincent was risking a court-martial, he was not the type of officer who would sit idly by during a crisis situation. On the other hand, the actions of the divisional commander Major-General Barnes are hazy and controversial. Barnes' official report is riddled with errors and conflicting accounts. It seems Vincent had already moved the Third Brigade while Barnes reconnoitered the ground near the Wheat Field. However, Barnes later asserted that he was present when Warren rode up to Sykes seeking troops for Little Round Top. With Warren's arrival, Barnes claimed he immediately directed Vincent's brigade to the height. There are two problems with Barnes' contention. Why would Sykes dispatch an aide to locate Barnes if the two were together as Barnes claimed? Sykes would have handed him the order. Finally, Warren later wrote that he did not personally have anything to do with Sykes,

Barnes, and the detachment of Vincent's brigade. Warren was completely unaware of the Third Brigade's arrival on Little Round Top.<sup>5</sup>

Before the brigade reached Little Round Top, Colonel Vincent, along with Norton, rode ahead of the troops to reconnoiter the promontory. Vincent left orders for Colonel James Rice of the 44th New York regiment to lead the brigade to the heights. Vincent and Norton then proceeded to climb Little Round Top at an angle upon the east slope.<sup>6</sup> Passing in rear of the Federal signal station so as to be unobservable to Warren, the two rode until they reached the southern end of the hill's crest. Once Vincent and Norton made the crest, they passed about three hundred yards across the slope and discovered a rise created by a spur. The spur, which extended about one hundred yards to the southeast at an elevation twenty feet lower than the south end of the crest, had the effect of doubling the width of Little Round Top's southwest face. Vincent realized that this spur on the hill's southwest face would provide the best position to counter a possible Confederate flanking movement against Sickles' fragile line.<sup>7</sup>

Colonel Vincent, after ordering Norton to seek cover from the Rebel fire, continued his reconnaissance alone and on foot along the southwest spur. As Vincent scrambled across Little Round Top's south slope and spur, he noticed that they were virtually stripped of trees and small vegetation, thereby affording little cover. On the other hand, the ground was strewn with boulders of all sizes that would offer a natural, though irregular, defensive line despite the absence of trees. Vincent, satisfied with his decision of where to place his brigade, finished his reconnaissance and returned to meet his approaching troops.<sup>8</sup>

While Vincent was scouting Little Round Top, Colonel Rice was leading the brigade column to the height. Chamberlain's regiment brought up the rear, trailing in order Rice's own 44th New York, the 16th Michigan, and the 83rd Pennsylvania.<sup>9</sup> Moving at the double-quick, the brigade dashed across the muddy Plum Run over a rude log bridge

to draw near the precipitous mountain along a dusty farm road. After the column was spotted by distant Rebel batteries, Chamberlain described the scene while adding more drama to it: "Shells burst overhead and brought down tree-tops as hissing fragments fell; or glanced along the shelved ridges and launched splinters or rock to multiply their terrors; solid shot swept close above our heads, their compressed, burning breath driving the men's breath like lead to the bottom of their breasts." One solid shot passed so close to Chamberlain and his two brothers, Tom and John, both now serving with the Twentieth, that the Colonel remarked, "Boys, I don't like this. Another such shot might make it hard for mother." Chamberlain then ordered Tom toward the regiment's rear and John to locate a suitable place for the wounded, hopefully far from any action.<sup>10</sup>

Once the brigade reached the southeastern point of Little Round Top, its field officers dismounted and approached Colonel Vincent to receive their instructions. As the officers walked over the ground, Vincent directed Colonel Rice to position his 44th New York on the far right flank near the signal station. With this position on the west slope, Rice, realizing that the 16th Michigan would be posted on his left, asked Vincent if he could position the 44th next to the 83rd Pennsylvania because the two regiments had been fighting side by side since late 1861. The two regiments had such a close relationship that they had been earlier dubbed "Butterfield's Twins." Vincent accommodated Rice's wish and ordered the 16th Michigan under Lieutenant-Colonel Norval Welch to pass the 44th and assume the right flanking position.<sup>11</sup> Thus the line, with the 83rd positioned, formed in a quarter circle along the southwest spur on Little Round Top.

Chamberlain and his Maine regiment were the last to take their positions. Vincent personally directed Chamberlain to the ground that the Twentieth would occupy. The ground was, as Chamberlain described it: "Wrinkled with jagged edges, bearded with mighty boulders; even smooth spots were strewn with fragments of rock . . . ."

Altogether it was a strange and solemn place."<sup>12</sup> To their front and left, the ground gradually sloped until it was difficult to distinguish it as part of Little Round Top. Before Vincent left, he emphatically told Colonel Chamberlain that "This is the left of the Union line. You understand. You are to hold this ground at all costs!" These were to be Vincent's last words to Chamberlain.<sup>13</sup>

As the Maine men moved onto the slope, Chamberlain ordered them to form "on the right by file into line." Though this was an uncommon command to give because of the excessive amount of time it takes to deploy, it would allow the regiment to come into line a few yards from the 83rd's left flank and enable the men to be in a stance facing the enemy. As the Twentieth's line formed, it took full advantage of the "rough, rocky, and stragglingly wooded ground" to create the semblance of a defensive position. The companies that could not yet take their places in line did their best to seek cover from the harassing Rebel artillery that made all movement difficult.<sup>14</sup>

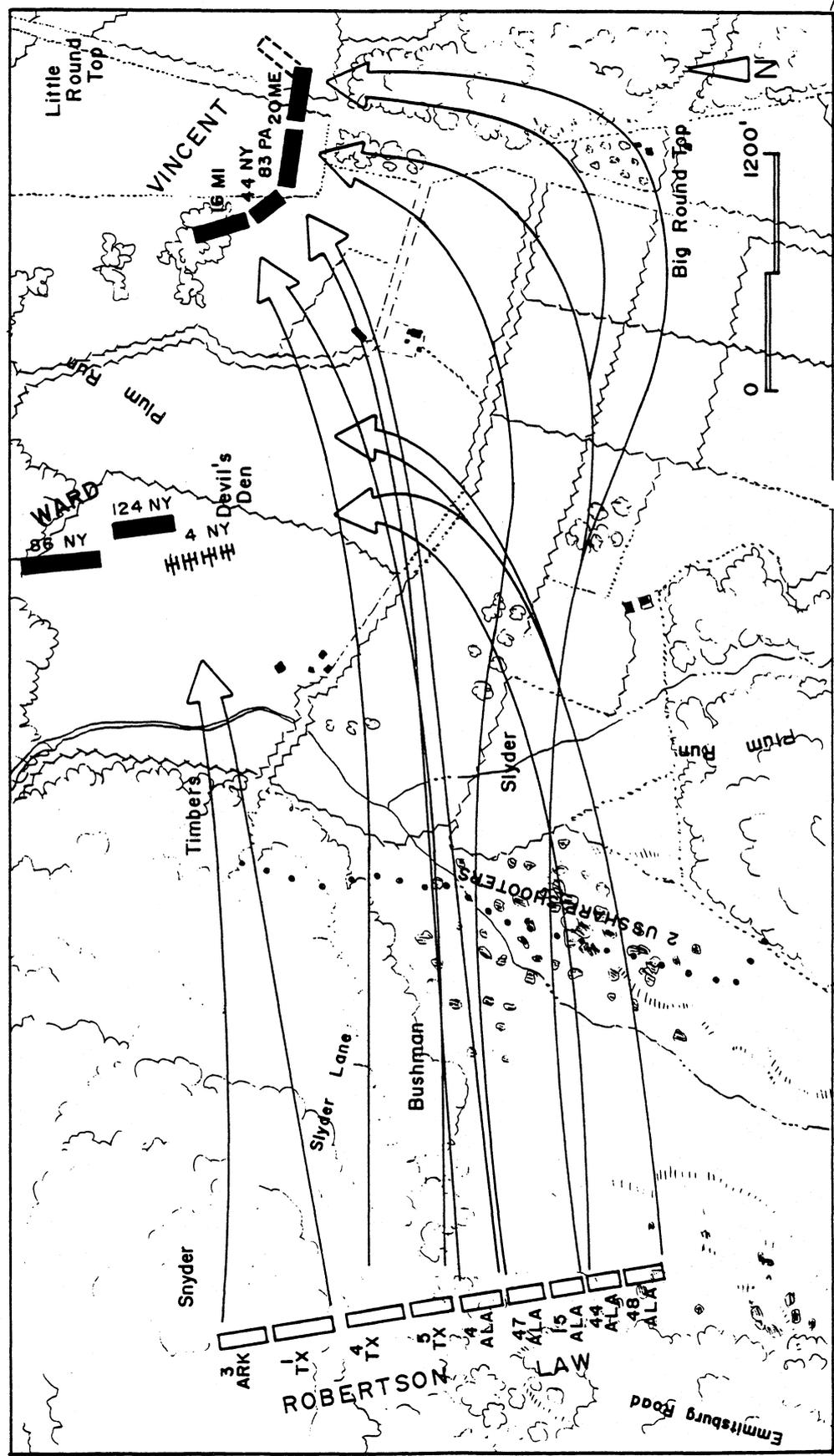
Chamberlain's line of battle faced southwest towards a higher elevated mountain, Sugar Loaf, better known as Round Top. With an elevation of 785 feet, Round Top overshadowed her smaller sister by about 130 feet. Unlike Little Round Top, Round Top had resisted attempts to tame its wilderness so that the flourishing trees and vegetation made maneuvers next to impossible. On the other hand, the dense foliage could conceal a small party of industrious flanking troops. Between these Round Tops, there existed a saddle that could also conceal any force until it would reach the base of Chamberlain's position on the southwest spur. Assessing the potential threat to 20th Maine's flank and rear by the saddle and Round Top, Chamberlain accordingly detached Company B, commanded by the young, promising officer, Captain Walter Morrill. With his fifty men, Morrill extended the Twentieth's left flank a few hundred yards across the saddle and to the eastern base of Round Top. Acting as skirmishers, Company B's role was to detect and prevent any enemy movement upon the regiment's exposed flank and

rear.<sup>15</sup> With only fifty men, Morrill had little chance of repelling a concerted Rebel assault, but with the right opportunity he could be a thorn in its side.

When the 20th Maine went into the line, it mustered 358 men armed, fit, and ready. With twenty-eight officers, the total reached 386 but with Morrill's company detached, the regiment could bring to bear 308 rifles from Little Round Top. Surprisingly, 120 of these rifles were manned by the new "recruits" from the Second Maine. Aware of the importance of holding the line, Chamberlain marshaled everyone available into the line, including the cooks. Only the drummer boys and hospital attendants were exempted from the ranks. Even men who were known to have been sick or footsore from the brutal marches pushed themselves along on "lame and bleeding feet" to secure their position on the line.<sup>16</sup>

All in all, Vincent's Third Brigade, with its strength approaching 1,350 men, stood ready to meet the advancing graycoats. The four Federal regiments, stretching along the spur on the southwest face--later known as Vincent's spur--were loosely connected in a quarter circle position. With the right flank held by the 16th Michigan and the left flank secured by the 20th Maine, the "Butterfield Twins" found themselves sandwiched in between the two. Despite the commanding ground, their site upon Little Round Top was not invulnerable; and in fact, it was very vulnerable.<sup>17</sup>

While the Third Brigade was taking its position on Little Round Top, the Rebels, in spite of the difficult terrain, were nearing the base of the Round Tops. Six Confederate regiments were advancing in order from left to right, the Forty-eighth Alabama, Fourth and Fifth Texas, Fourth Alabama, Forty-Seventh Alabama, and the Fifteenth Alabama. The gray mass, a force of over 2,000 men, encountered its first resistance from the Second U.S. Sharpshooters that had been dispatched by Ward from Devil's Den.<sup>18</sup> The green-clad sharpshooters, consisting of eight companies, were under the command of Major Homer Stoughton. Stoughton and his men put up a stiff resistance,



Map from Pullen, "Effects of Marksmanship," The Gettysburg Magazine, p. 57.

slowly withdrawing while firing, and making their volleys count by wounding several Confederate officers. The companies finally became disjointed under the weight of the Rebel advance and fled, three of them toward Round Top.<sup>19</sup>

Colonel William Oates, the commander of the Fifteenth Alabama and temporarily in charge of the Forty-seventh, decided to move to his right and pursue the sharpshooters up Round Top. Oates had tried to ignore the vexing sharpshooters, but after they delivered a second volley wounding several Alabamians, he felt compelled to rid them from his right and rear. With no protection on his right flank, Oates was leary of leaving any hostile force that might later descend upon his two regiments. Changing direction to the right, the 15th and 47th pursued the green coats up the west slope of Round Top, but they could do little else but chase them. The Rebel fire proved ineffective because the sharpshooters took advantage of the boulders and dense foliage for cover. Oates described his futile chase: "Men had to climb up, catching to the rocks and bushes and crawling over the boulders in the face . . . of the enemy, who kept retreating, taking shelter, and firing . . . from behind the rocks and crags." Because of the strenuous pace maintained by Law's brigade throughout the day, many of the Alabamians fainted from heat, exhaustion, and thirst as they closed upon the peak of Round Top.<sup>20</sup>

Once Oates' men reached the summit of Round Top and had driven off the sharpshooters into the woods, they halted for a moment to catch their breath. Oates quickly detailed two men from each of his eleven companies to fill all empty canteens with water. Before the twenty-two men returned, Oates was ordered to advance by Law's assistant adjutant-general, Captain L. R. Terrell. Terrell informed Oates that Law had taken command of Hood's division because of the latter being severely wounded in the arm while near the Peach Orchard. Surprisingly, Oates, who was deemed by many as "too aggressive and ambitious,"<sup>21</sup> debated with Terrell about turning Round Top into

" a Gibraltar" which he could hold against ten times the number of men that he had. However, after a few minutes, Oates acquiesced to Terrell's demand to press the attack as originally ordered. But to do so immediately would leave him without the twenty-two men he had sent for water; and he was going to need every available man.<sup>22</sup>

While the Fifteenth and Forty-seventh Alabama were halted on Round Top, the Federals were busy first with Little Round Top. Each regiment detached skirmishers to their front and down the slope of the mountain. (Morrill's company, in essence, acted as the skirmishing party for Chamberlain's regiment even though it was sent across the saddle.) As the skirmishers moved down the slope and the men into their places, Colonel Rice paid a visit to Chamberlain and suggested they move to a clearing on the right to observe the actions in the Plum Run valley. Standing in the clearing, Chamberlain recalled seeing though the heavy, black smoke the swirling madness that accompanied all bloody and desperate actions. A tinge of uncertainty overcame him when he spied the Rebel flanking force pushing past Little Round Top, driving into Sickles' corps, and threatening to cut off his own Third Brigade.<sup>23</sup> Chamberlain and Rice promptly returned to their regiments to await the inevitable clash.

It had only taken a few minutes for Chamberlain to post his men, to confer with Rice, and to see the last of Morrill's men disappear through the rocks and trees; then the badgering Rebel artillery suddenly ceased firing, followed immediately by muskets crackling at the base of Little Round Top. The Rebels, pushing up the west slope of the mountain in three columns, easily brushed aside the skirmishers from Vincent's brigade. The Fourth and Fifth Texas, the Fourth Alabama, and seven companies of the Forty-seventh Alabama assailed the point of Vincent's quarter circle, engaging first the Forty-fourth New York then extending the attack upon the Eighty-third Pennsylvania and the Sixteenth Michigan. Seeing the sizeable force thrown against him, Vincent at once sent an aide to Major-General Barnes seeking reinforcements.<sup>24</sup>

Chamberlain and his regiment stood ready. They could sense the Rebels closing although they could not see the action because of the rocks and haze. Suddenly, the assault crashed upon them, hitting Chamberlain's exposed right center and soon unfolding to the right towards the stubborn Pennsylvanians. In a matter of minutes, the onslaught had intensified into a fierce and close struggle along the entire line of the Twentieth. The graycoats, mostly from the Fourth and Forty-seventh Alabama, continued to press their attack upon the Maine men even after failing to dislodge them in their initial thrust.<sup>25</sup>

While the fighting raged on Chamberlain's front, Colonel Oates and his men descended Round Top's north slope and nestled themselves in the saddle. Oates could not believe his eyes when he glanced to his right, less than three hundred yards away rested several Federal ordinance wagons. These wagons were attached to Lieutenant Charles Hazlett's Battery D, Fifth U.S. Artillery. After sending Captain Francis Shaaff and his command, Company A, to capture the wagons, Oates intended to renew his advance. He looked at Little Round Top but did not see any Yankee troops in his front.<sup>26</sup>

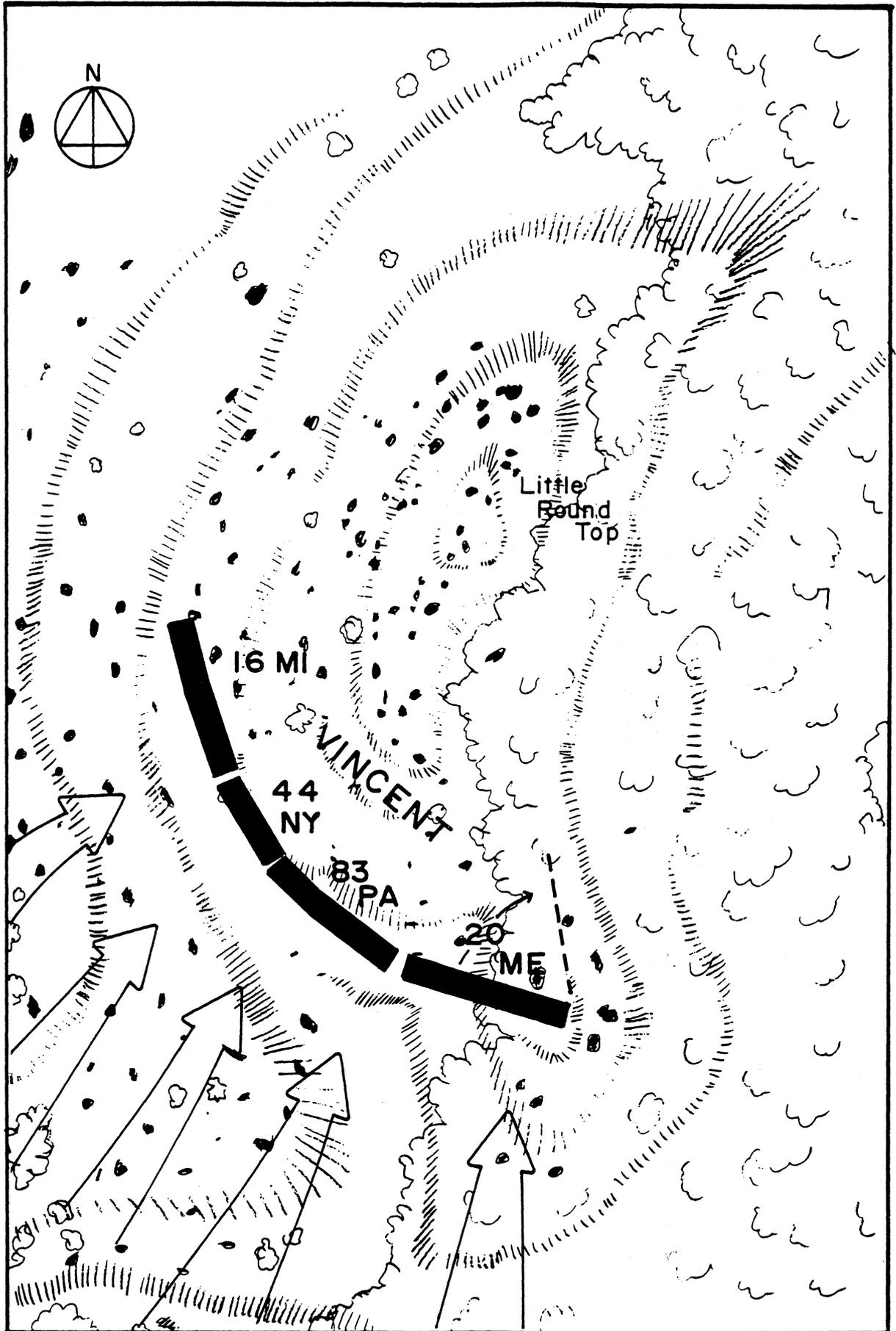
Oates felt confident that he had turned the flank of the bluecoat force on Little Round Top without being observed; he was wrong. While Oates was resting in the saddle, the Maine lieutenant, James Nichols of Company A, dashed to Chamberlain and told him that something odd was developing to the left and rear of the attacking Rebels. Chamberlain climbed atop a rock and saw a sizeable collection of gray sliding between the two Round Tops. If this force, which was substantially larger than Chamberlain's regiment, continued in that direction, it would be able to fall upon the Twentieth's unanchored left flank. Colonel Chamberlain remembered his orders from Vincent; he was to hold this ground at all costs. Somehow and quickly, the Colonel had to make his vulnerable position tenable.<sup>27</sup>

Confronting an imminent flanking assault, the safest decision for Chamberlain

was to change his regiment's entire front so as to face to the left. Facing left, the Twentieth could protect the flank of the brigade while still in contact with the 83rd Pennsylvania. However, Chamberlain quickly realized a flaw in this maneuver. If he changed the front of his regiment to the left, it would have to swing back while ascending the spur several yards thus relinquishing a portion of the high ground to the advancing Confederates. Another problem had to be considered by Chamberlain; how to change his entire front while his men were still being engaged by the graycoats?<sup>28</sup>

Having to rely more upon instinct than experience, Colonel Chamberlain calmly summoned the captains of the nine companies, excluding Morrill's, and explained his plan to them. The Colonel ordered them to extend the Twentieth's front "by taking intervals by the left flank," thereby having some of the companies come into a single rank where the ground offered adequate cover. At the same time, Chamberlain took the regiment's colors with its guard and placed them next to a large boulder; this rock would be the left flank of the Twentieth. From the position held by the colors, Chamberlain refused his end companies so that they would be at a right angle with the rest of the regiment. By this maneuver, the 20th Maine would double the extent of its front while also protecting its left flank.<sup>29</sup>

In later years, Chamberlain recalled that his formation resembled that of a horseshoe. If it did resemble one, the right flank of the shoe, next to the 83rd Pennsylvania, was held by Company E. Continuing from right to left, companies I, K, and D secured the line from the right flank to the boulder. Company F was assigned the point near the boulder thus acting as the bend in the shoe. Completing the line, companies A, H, C, and G made up the refused left wing of the regiment. In the later stages of the struggle, the last two companies in this wing were bent backwards even further by Chamberlain after Captain Ellis Spear, acting field commander for the wing,



Map from James Wright, "Time on Little Round Top," The Gettysburg Magazine, p. 50.

reported to the Colonel that the enemy was moving beyond the Twentieth's left. By the end of the fight, however, the formation was, as one historian noted, was "closer to the shape of a hairpin."<sup>30</sup>

All in all, it took only a few minutes for the 20th Maine to flawlessly execute Chamberlain's difficult plan. To make the plan more difficult, the troops had to persist with a strong, covering fire even though they were under a relentless attack by the Rebels. Considering the regiment's only major battlefield action had been at Fredericksburg, the men were relatively inexperienced, but they performed the maneuver with the precision of seasoned veterans. It was even more incredible considering almost a third of the regiment was formerly in the 2nd Maine and had little to time to drill with its new regiment because of constant marching during June.<sup>31</sup>

Secure in their new posts, the Twentieth peered down the slope and saw Colonel Oates' large flanking force. Oates' Fifteenth Alabama fielded a veteran unit of 644 men, making it was one of the largest regiments in Longstreet's corps. (After having years to reflect upon the battle, Oates felt straggling and detachments had reduced his regiment to only a paltry 400 effectives on 2 July.) In addition, Oates had the service of the Forty-seventh Alabama, numbering between 210 and 290 troops. With these two regiments combined, they outnumbered Chamberlain's 20th Maine by at least three to one.<sup>32</sup>

No matter how many men Oates had stationed in the saddle, their brief glimpse of glory abruptly ended at the hands of the Twentieth. When the Rebels had advanced to about thirty steps of Chamberlain's line, the Yankees unleashed a devastating volley that tore holes in the gray ranks. Most of Oates's killed and wounded were the consequence of this first blast of fire from Chamberlain's hidden regiment.<sup>33</sup> Colonel Chamberlain wrote that "the enemy's flanking column having gained their desired direction, burst upon my left, where they evidently had expected an unguarded

flank."<sup>34</sup> Oates, whose men had been decimated by the most destructive fire he had ever witnessed, attempted to push his Alabamians up the slope, but they were forced by the withering fire to halt. After his men fell back slightly, Colonel Oates could see through the overhanging smoke the 20th Maine readjusting themselves after his initial thrust. Oates then ordered his screaming Rebels to charge the Twentieth, firing on the run. They closed to within twelve yards of Chamberlain's line before the defenders' shattering fire forced Oates's men to retreat down the slope.<sup>35</sup>

Colonel Oates regrouped his men and launched a terrific drive upon Chamberlain's entire line. For over an hour, the relentless fighting continued as the opposing lines buckled and swayed together. The graycoats that pressured the 20th Maine's right had to withstand not only the fire directly in their front, but also an enfilading one from the 83rd Pennsylvania. At points in Chamberlain's line, squads of Confederates broke through only to be driven back by hand-to-hand combat. The mounting dead and wounded, gray and blue, were scattered in the Twentieth's front and rear indicating the tenuous hold Colonel Chamberlain had on Little Round Top. To better secure his line, the Colonel withdrew the companies near the point, or salient, a few yards so as to constrict their front and close any gaps in the line.<sup>36</sup>

Oates concentrated the bulk of his Alabamians in an attempt to overwhelm the Twentieth's point and left wing. Soon Rebel bullets were flying into the rear of the 83rd Pennsylvania which was engaged in its own struggle less than a hundred yards away. The anxious field commander of the 83rd, Captain Orpheus Woodward, dispatched Lieutenant Martin Gifford to ascertain from Colonel Chamberlain if the Confederates were turning the Twentieth's flank. Woodward, believing that Chamberlain's left was going to collapse, pulled the center of his line back ten to fifteen paces so as to prepare for his men an avenue of escape. When Gifford returned to report his findings to Woodward, the Captain was greeted with some disturbing news. Gifford reported that

Chamberlain's left wing had almost folded back upon his right wing, and the Colonel requested a company to be sent to his aid. The 83rd, with itself heavily engaged, could not spare a company, but Woodward did offer some assistance. He informed Chamberlain that if the 20th Maine would shift its right wing towards the left, the 83rd would extend its left to assume part of the Maine line. With less ground to defend for his right wing to defend, Chamberlain could now move some of these men to the left wing.<sup>37</sup>

Maine private Theodore Gerrish, of Company H, was posted with his company on the left wing during the contest. He captured graphically the hour long melee in a postwar book of reminiscences. He wrote:

Rapidly the cartridges were torn from the boxes and stuffed in the smoking muzzles of the guns; how the steel hammers clashed and clanged in the heated barrels; how the men's hands and faces grew grim and black with burning powder; how our little line, baptized with fire, reeled to and fro as it advanced or was pressed back; how our officers bravely encouraged the men to hold on and recklessly exposed themselves to the enemy's fire,--a terrible medley of cries, shouts, cheers, growns, prayers, curses, bursting shells, whizzing rifle bullets and clanging steel . . . the air seemed to be alive with lead. The lines at times were so near each other that the hostile gun barrels almost touched. As the contest continued, the rebels grew desperate that so insignificant a force should so long hold them in check. At one time there was a brief lull in the carnage, and our shattered line was close up, but soon the contest raged again with renewed fierceness.<sup>38</sup>

Company H, like the rest of the Twentieth's companies, was losing men at an appalling rate. One of the first to fall was Sergeant Charles Steele, taking a minie ball in the chest. Staggering over to his company commander, Steele uttered a few last words to him and fell dead.<sup>39</sup> Not too far from where Steele had fallen, another soldier from Company H was struck, Private George Washington Buck. Buck had formerly been a sergeant on the fields of Antietam and Fredericksburg with the regiment, but after Fredericksburg, he became sick and could barely walk. The quartermaster of the

Twentieth, a rather insensitive and bitter man, ordered the ill Buck to cut wood. When Buck explained that his illness had gotten him excused from all duty, the quartermaster became incensed and kicked him to the ground. Days later, the quartermaster pressed insubordination charges against Buck, having his rank reduced to private. Buck's pride made it difficult for him to accept this degradation.<sup>40</sup>

During a slight lull in the action, Chamberlain came upon the dying Private Buck. The colonel bent down to aid the former sergeant and Buck struggled to say something to him. In a whisper, he made a request typical of Civil War soldiers; Buck asked his colonel to let his family know he died doing his duty. Chamberlain, searching for an answer, remembered the incident and the court-martial of Buck. Doing the one thing that should have been done earlier, a field promotion was given to Buck by Chamberlain; he would die a sergeant. One of Chamberlain's first actions after the conflict was to make Sergeant Buck's promotion official.<sup>41</sup>

Only moments before the Buck affair, Colonel Chamberlain was hustling from company to company urging on the men in the wake of vehement enemy charge. For a split second, a rift appeared through the heavy smoke apparently revealing to Chamberlain that the regimental colors were standing alone. Company F, led by Captain Samuel Keene, had held the point with the colors while being subjected to a deadly cross-fire. The company had suffered severe losses with half its men being cut down. Realizing Company F was the key to his line, Chamberlain did not want his colors to fall which might demoralize and jeopardize his entire regiment.<sup>42</sup>

With only Color-sergeant Andrew Tozier holding the color staff next to the boulder, Colonel Chamberlain searched for additional men to plug the gap near the colors. Panic stricken that no men were available, the colonel ordered his brother, Lieutenant Tom Chamberlain to seal the gap. The action along the center grew fiercer as Tom made his way down the slope; Colonel "Lawrence," as Tom had known him, wondered if his

brother would make it alive in that deathtrap. (Chamberlain's attitude had changed since the regiment had moved onto the slopes of Little Round Top. Earlier he worried about his brothers, for his mother's sake, being hit together by a shell, but now he would send Tom into a virtual firestorm.) After Tom disappeared into the smoke, Chamberlain dispatched his orderly, Sergeant Ruel Thomas, to assist Tom. Although the colors themselves were never actually in any danger of falling to the ground, the two momentarily plugged the gap in the center while the Rebel attack dissipated of its own volition.<sup>43</sup>

Fate did prove to be on Chamberlain's side on that eventful 2 July. As early evening approached, the Colonel had come into the gunsight of one particular soldier from the Fifteenth Alabama. Placing himself between two rocks, the grayclad Alabamian rested his rifle on a rock and drew his aim. Chamberlain was easy to distinguish by his actions and uniform which indicated he was an officer of some importance. At the moment he was about to jerk the trigger, the soldier stopped because of a "queer notion." Feeling ashamed by his failure to shoot, the Rebel marksman drew his aim again, but with the same result; he failed to pull the trigger. Colonel Chamberlain learned many years later of the incident in a letter he received from the sharpshooter.<sup>44</sup> Chamberlain, however, did not remain unscathed during the battle. He was struck twice,--one tearing a cut in his right instep from a shell fragment or a rock splinter, and another badly bruising his left thigh when a minie ball hit his scabbard bending it against his leg.<sup>45</sup>

Chamberlain's counterpart, Colonel Oates, also shared in the horror of the fierce struggle. In one of his several forays up the slopes, Oates was so close and entangled with the Maine line that he discharged his pistol within a few feet of the Yankees. As his Rebel line was slowly driven back down the slope "like a man trying to walk against a strong wind," Oates noticed he was about ten feet from his own regimental colors and

the boulder representing the Maine center. At that instant, a bluecoat lunged forward to seize the staff-colors, but the staff-bearer, John Archibald, stepped back and Sergeant Pat O'Conner drove his bayonet into the Yankee's head.<sup>46</sup>

Being the aggressor in the battle, Colonel Oates seemed to invite death for those around him. In one instance when the Colonel shouted orders to move forward, Captain James Ellison of Company C, who was only a few feet away, cupped his ear to decipher the command. Ellison, a close friend of Oates', finally directed his men forward only to be struck by a bullet in the head. The captain, falling to the ground, tightened his fists, quivered, and then died. Ellison's company, disregarding its orders, rushed to his side while Oates stood by helpless.<sup>47</sup>

All the death and suffering around Oates was taking its toll on him; two deaths particularly affected him. When Oates was feeling his way up the slope, a private, William Holloway, remarked to him that he could not see the enemy. Oates advised him to look under the hovering smoke. As Holloway took his rifle from his shoulder to get under the smoke, a bullet hit him in the head. The private reeled back into Oates' arms and died. Enraged, Oates grabbed the dead man's weapon and fired a few rounds in the direction of the Federal line. The second death touched Oates' own family. Like Chamberlain, Colonel Oates had his own brother, Lieutenant John Oates, fighting for him. Unlike Chamberlain, the colonel lost his brother after he was struck by several bullets.<sup>48</sup>

Colonel Oates began to feel victory slipping away from him. Remaining unsupported on the Southern army's right flank, he could not sustain such heavy losses much longer and be expected to overwhelm the Union left flank. But the colonel was not ready to concede defeat. When Captain DeBernie Waddell, the Fifteenth's adjutant, approached Oates and asked if he could slip some men well beyond the Twentieth's left flank to enfilade its line, the colonel readily agreed. With about fifty

men. Waddell moved to the left and posted the men behind a ledge. Their fire was annoying, but not heavy enough to alter the outcome. While on this posting far to the right, a couple of officers saw Federal troops moving in the distance. By the time Oates had this information, the few Federals had grown into a whole brigade.<sup>49</sup>

While Oates' chances at success against the Colonel Vincent's left flank were fading, a Rebel breakthrough was developing on Vincent's right. Colonel Chamberlain became aware of something gone awry when bullets began crashing into his rear. The Sixteenth Michigan, which was the weakest link in Vincent's quarter circle line, was crumbling under the pressure of the Fourth and Fifth Texas' regiments on the Federal right. The hardnosed Texans, after Devil's Den had fallen into Rebel hands, were advancing their way onto the Wolverines' vulnerable flank and were threatening to overrun Little Round Top. The Michigan commander, Colonel Norval Welch, was making a bad situation worse when he fled with his three companies on the right after they had failed to readjust themselves in front of the Texans. Colonel Vincent, in an effort to rally his collapsing right regiment, was fatally shot.<sup>50</sup>

Only moments before, Brigadier-General Warren, who still did not know Vincent's brigade was on Little Round Top, saw Lieutenant Charles Hazlett struggling to mount the slope while dragging his battery of rifled cannon. Feeling Hazlett would be able to do little this late with his artillery, Warren descended the slopes to grab some reinforcements from an approaching brigade; it was Brigadier-General Stephen Weed's Third Brigade from the Fifth Corps' Second Division. Reaching the column which was headed to Sickles' aid, Warren redirected its last regiment, the 140th New York, to Little Round Top.<sup>51</sup>

The 140th New York, led by the brilliant, young officer, Colonel Patrick O'Rorke, quickly proceeded up the rocky slope of Little Round Top taking no time to load rifles nor fix bayonets. Upon reaching the hill's crown, Colonel O'Rorke viewed the Texans

flooding upon the base of Little Round Top and reacted without hesitation. He led his men in a furious charge, halting the Texan breakthrough with the sheer weight of his regiment's body--a body of over 500 men. As one historian noted, it was "as strange a counter-attack as the army ever saw . . . they [140th] simply ran at their foes." With the right flank secured for the moment, the 140th New York reinforced the Wolverines' line while also extending Vincent's quarter circle northward. However, Colonel O'Rorke was no longer giving any commands; a Texan bullet had ripped through his neck, killing him instantly at the head of his charging column.<sup>52</sup>

Despite O'Rorke's success on the right flank, Colonel Chamberlain still had no idea what was developing in his rear. All Chamberlain knew was that his force had dwindled to about 200 effectives; and they were running dangerously low on ammunition since their allotted sixty rounds had been easily spent. Considering the men fired their sixty rounds each, their struggle likely lasted considerably longer than an hour. Growing desperate, the men snatched cartridges from their fallen comrades while others prepared to wield their rifles as deadly clubs. Chamberlain surely believed that in a hand-to-hand fight the Twentieth would not be able to blunt Oates' two regiments. Watching the enemy regrouping at the bottom of the saddle, Chamberlain sensed that they were preparing for another assault. Chamberlain knew he had to keep the initiative from slipping to the enemy; undoubtedly, he realized one of the old military adages that the enemy is just as afraid as you are. Left with only one option in his mind, Colonel Chamberlain decided to charge.<sup>53</sup>

Colonel Chamberlain communicated his decision directly to Captain Spear. Spear, the commander of the refused left flank, would lead a right wheel charge down the slope, thus realigning the 20th Maine into a straight line. As Chamberlain turned away from Spear, the young Lieutenant Holman Melcher approached. Melcher, a member of the hard-hit Company F on the point, asked the colonel if he could take a detachment to

retrieve some of the wounded in his front. Colonel Chamberlain answered Melcher, "Yes, sir. Take your place with your company. I am about to order a 'right wheel forward' of the whole regiment."<sup>54</sup>

While Chamberlain conceived this plan, Colonel Oates was contemplating his next move. Oates decided upon a somewhat different course of action than his Yankee counterpart. For Oates and his men, their fight was gone. Without reinforcements, his exhausted Alabamians did not stand a chance to seize the coveted spur. Oates wrote, "my dead and wounded were then nearly as great in number as those still on duty. They literally covered the ground. The blood stood in puddles in some places on the rocks; the ground was soaked with blood." Seeing little hope, especially with the rumors of an approaching Union brigade, Oates sent orders to his company commanders that the men, at a given signal, were to retreat to their original position on Round Top and then reform.<sup>55</sup>

Colonel Chamberlain would not wait for the Rebels to leave his front voluntarily. Staring down the slope at the enemy, Chamberlain felt the time had arrived; he cried, "Fix bayonets!" Down the line, the order passed from company to company. But before Chamberlain could order the charge, Lieutenant Melcher dashed down the slope, sword in hand, leading the center of the line and shouting, "Come on! Come on!" The middle companies and a limping Chamberlain chased Melcher to join in a mighty surge against the Rebels, only ninety feet away.<sup>56</sup>

The Confederates tried to hold, but when Captain Spear wheeled rightward with his left wing, the first line of graycoats tossed down their weapons and surrendered. One Southern officer had a peculiar way of surrendering; he pointed and fired a revolver at Chamberlain's head with one hand while presenting his sword with the other. The wave of bluecoats swept forward disintegrating a second Alabamian defensive line under the weight of its charge. The Rebels attempted to make a stand by a stone wall,

but from behind this stone wall emerged Captain Morrill and Company B. Though once thought captured, Morrill, with the assistance of twelve to fifteen stray sharpshooters from Stoughton's Second U.S. Sharpshooters, poured a demoralizing volley into the Rebel's rear.<sup>57</sup>

Colonel Oates finally ordered a retreat although his men had already taken the initiative and fled. "We ran like a herd of wild cattle," wrote Oates. And the Colonel was running right along with his men. One graycoat, Private John Keels, caught and passed Oates while making an impression upon the colonel that he would never forget. Keels' windpipe had been slashed by a bullet and his panting caused blood to splatter upon his colonel. Oates did not stop running until he neared the crown on Round Top; then only to faint because of the heat and excessive exertion. Two Alabamians carried Oates to safety, thereby avoiding capture.<sup>58</sup>

Colonel Chamberlain and his regiment swept through the saddle and spilled into the Plum Run valley like a giant reaper. The colonel had a difficult time stopping the charge; he did not want his men to over extend themselves, thus becoming susceptible to a Rebel counter-attack. His only job was to hold the extreme left on Little Round Top, not to win the war. Some of his men thought they might win the war, claiming they were on the elusive road to Richmond. Chamberlain finally stopped the charge just short of the 44th New York's front. From here, Chamberlain returned his 20th Maine to its original defensive posture on Little Round Top's southwest slope to await further orders. As the regiment settled into its familiar post about 6:30 p.m., it must have seemed odd that only a few hours ago, it had been resting behind Powers Hill.<sup>59</sup>

When Colonel Chamberlain checked his regimental numbers, he counted about 200 of the 386 officers and men with whom he had opened the engagement. Company F, which had held the point, suffered the heaviest casualties with ten killed and thirteen wounded. From Company F to Company G at the end of the left wing, the casualties were

heavy. The lightest hit companies stretched to the right of the salient reaching the 83rd Pennsylvania. In all, the Twentieth had suffered 130 casualties, with forty killed or mortally wounded. Chamberlain placed the number of Confederate dead and wounded in his front at a hundred. In addition, the 20th Maine captured 200 Rebels including six officers. (Colonel Oates claimed his losses, in a postwar letter, were "37 men killed, about 83 wounded, and a like number captured.")<sup>60</sup>

"We are fighting gloriously. Our loss is terrible, but we are beating the Rebels as they were never beaten before. The 20th has immortalized itself." Colonel Chamberlain wrote these few words to his wife while the battle was still fresh in his mind. Chamberlain even received a brief, congratulatory note from his former colonel, now Brigadier-General Adelbert Ames. It read. "God bless you and the dear old Regiment!" Despite the euphoria felt by Chamberlain and the Twentieth, there was still a lot of work to do. And around them, things had changed. Vincent was dying; Colonel Rice now commanded the Third Brigade. O'Rorke was dead. And his brigade commander, Brigadier-General Stephen Weed, had brought his men to the embattled slopes to finally secured Vincent's right flank. Weed paid for it with his life. Lieutenant Hazlett, who had struggled to get his battery to the peak, was killed instantly when he kneeled over the dying Weed. When the dead were finally counted and the thinning ranks pulled close, Chamberlain and his regiment had indeed immortalized themselves upon Little Round Top.<sup>61</sup>

In this small-unit action on the extreme left, Chamberlain secured a place in history for himself and his regiment. If Chamberlain's line would have wavered and fallen, the Federal army's position along Cemetery Ridge might have possibly collapsed like a row of dominos. But Chamberlain did not waver; his brilliant use of tactics, with the determination of his men, parried all the blows against his line. Finally, his

attributes as a volunteer officer had coalesced during his action upon Little Round Top. When it was all over, Colonel Oates said it best that "there never were harder fighters than the Twentieth Maine men and their gallant Colonel. His skill and persistancy and the great bravery of his men saved Little Round Top and the Army of the Potomac from defeat. Great events sometimes turn on comparatively small affairs."<sup>62</sup>

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Gerrish, Army Life: A Private's Reminiscences of the Civil War, p.106.

<sup>2</sup>Chamberlain, "Through Blood and Fire at Gettysburg," p.898.

<sup>3</sup>Pfanz, Gettysburg: The Second Day, pp. 208, 229; O.R., vol. 27, part 1, series 1, pp. 622-623; and Chamberlain, "Through Blood and Fire at Gettysburg," p. 898. The rest of the First Division, consisting of Colonel Jacob Sweitzer's Second Brigade and Colonel William Tilton's First Brigade, did file into the Wheat field. When the division was shifted to the left, the brigades reversed numerically bringing Vincent's to the front trailed by Sweitzer's and Tilton's. Thereby Tilton's brigade was deprived of the opportunity to defend Little Round Top. Smith, History of the Corn Exchange Regiment, p. 240.

<sup>4</sup>Oliver Norton to Frank Huntington, 28 September 1888, found in James Wright, ed., "A Letter of Oliver W. Norton," Gettysburg: Historical Articles of Lasting Interest (July, 1989), p. 42. Norton continued to defend his story throughout his life. His dedicated research led to the publishing of his book in 1913, The Attack and Defense of Little Round Top. He wrote many letters to people involved with the battle in a quest to gain new information and substantiate his claims. He even wrote to Chamberlain. See Norton to Chamberlain, 8 May 1901, Maine Historical Society. See also Norton's book, Strong Vincent and his Brigade at Gettysburg, July 2, 1863 (Chicago, 1909).

<sup>5</sup>Roy Stonesifer, "The Little Round Top Controversy--Gouverneur Warren, Strong Vincent, and George Sykes," 35 Pennsylvania State History (1968), pp. 228-229; Norton, The Attack and Defense of Little Round Top, pp. 189, 240-241; and Warren to Farley, 13 and 24 July 1872, found in Norton, The Attack and Defense of Little Round Top, pp. 308-312.

<sup>6</sup>Norton, The Attack and Defense of Little Round Top, p. 264.

<sup>7</sup>Pfanz, Gettysburg: The Second Day, p.209; and Norton, The Attack and Defense of Little Round Top, pp. 264-265.

<sup>8</sup>Norton, The Attack and Defense of Little Round Top, p.265; and Pfanz, Gettysburg: The Second Day, pp. 211-212. Little Round Top was basically stripped of trees, thus making it an ideal defensive stopgate. Round Top, on the other hand, was overgrown with trees and brush causing the movement of troops to be practically impossible.

<sup>9</sup>Norton to Huntington, 28 September 1888, found in James Wright, ed., "A Letter of Oliver W. Norton," p. 43.

<sup>10</sup>Chamberlain, "Through Blood and Fire at Gettysburg," p. 899.

<sup>11</sup>Norton, The Attack and Defense of Little Round Top, p. 265. It was probably a mistake to let the 16th Michigan pass the 44th New York and take the right flanking post. The Wolverine regiment was the smallest in the brigade and it had the poorest commanding officer, Colonel Norval Welch. If placed in its original position, it would have been protected on by the stronger regiments, the 83rd Pennsylvania and the 44th New York.

<sup>12</sup>Chamberlain, "Through Blood and Fire at Gettysburg," pp. 898-899.

<sup>13</sup>Chamberlain, "Through Blood and Fire at Gettysburg," p. 899; O.R., vol. 27, part 1, series 1, p. 623; and Maine Gettysburg Commission, Maine at Gettysburg, p. 254.

<sup>14</sup>Chamberlain, "Through Blood and Fire at Gettysburg," p. 899; O.R., vol. 27, part 1, series 1, p. 623; and Maine Gettysburg Commission, Maine at Gettysburg, p. 254.

<sup>15</sup>Chamberlain, "Through Blood and Fire at Gettysburg," p. 899; and O.R., vol. 27, series 1, part 1, p. 623. Captain Morrill would later earn the medal of honor for gallantly leading a group of Maine volunteers in a night raid at Rappahannock Station, 7 November 1863.

<sup>16</sup>Chamberlain, "Through Blood and Fire at Gettysburg," pp. 899-900; and O.R., vol. 27, series 1, part 1., p. 626.

<sup>17</sup>Coddington, The Gettysburg Campaign, p. 741, footnote #25. Vincent's line was

vulnerable since both flanks were unsupported. Chamberlain's position was surprisingly close to the floor of the saddle, being only a few yards from it. He held the lowest part of the southwest spur.

<sup>18</sup>This figure is an educated guess since no exact figures are available. By using the known figures of some of the regiments' manpower and the average size of a Confederate regiment in 1863, the figure of 2,000 was used. See Pfanz, Gettysburg: The Second Day, p. 159; and Coddington, The Gettysburg Campaign, p. 743, footnote #42.

<sup>19</sup>O.R., vol. 27, series 1, part 1, p. 518; Norton, The Attack and Defense of Little Round Top, pp. 174, 234-235; and C. A. Stevens, Berdan's United States Sharpshooters in the Army of the Potomac, 1861-1865 (St. Paul, Minnesota: The Price-McGill Company, 1892), pp. 325-326.

<sup>20</sup>William Oates to Homer Stoughton, 22 November 1888, found in Stevens, Berdan's United States Sharpshooters in the Army of the Potomac, 1861-1865, pp. 326-328; and William Oates, The War Between the Union and the Confederacy and its Lost Opportunities (New York: The Neale Publishing Company, 1905), p. 211.

<sup>21</sup>W. R. and M. B. Houghton, Two Boys in the Civil War and After, p. 54.

<sup>22</sup>Oates, The War Between the Union and the Confederacy, pp. 211-212. The twenty-two men were probably later captured by Adjutant S. F. Norton of the Second U.S. Sharpshooters. See O.R., vol. 27, series 1, part 1, p. 518.

<sup>23</sup>Chamberlain, "Through Blood and Fire at Gettysburg," p. 900.

<sup>24</sup>O.R., vol. 27, series 1, part 1, pp. 617, 623; and Judson, History of the Eighty-third Regiment, p. 126.

<sup>25</sup>Chamberlain, "Through Blood and Fire at Gettysburg," pp. 901-902; and O.R., vol. 27, series 1, part 1, p. 623.

<sup>26</sup>Coddington, The Gettysburg Campaign, p. 392; and Oates, The War Between the Union and the Confederacy, pp. 213-214. Oates claimed the regiment in his front, the 20th Maine, had piled rocks from boulder to boulder to conceal themselves. See Oates, p. 214.

<sup>27</sup>Chamberlain, "Through Blood and Fire at Gettysburg," p. 902; and O.R., vol. 27,

series 1, part 1, p. 623.

<sup>28</sup>Pullen, The Twentieth Maine, p. 117.

<sup>29</sup>O.R., vol. 27, series 1, part 1, p. 623; Maine Gettysburg Commission, Maine at Gettysburg, p. 255; and Chamberlain, "Through Blood and Fire at Gettysburg," p. 902.

<sup>30</sup>Maine Gettysburg Commission, Maine at Gettysburg, p. 254; Ellis Spear to Chamberlain, 22 May 1895, Chamberlain papers, Library of Congress; and Pfanz, Gettysburg: The Second Day, p. 232.

<sup>31</sup>Chamberlain, "Through Blood and Fire at Gettysburg," p. 902; and Pfanz, Gettysburg: The Second Day, p. 232.

<sup>32</sup>Coddington, The Gettysburg Campaign, p. 393, 743, footnote #42.

<sup>33</sup>F. A Dearborn to Chamberlain, 13 March 1903, Maine Historical Society. Dearborn related the battle experiences of DeBernie Waddell, the adjutant of the 15th Alabama, to Chamberlain.

<sup>34</sup>O.R., vol. 27, series 1, part 1, p. 623.

<sup>35</sup>Oates, The War Between the Union and the Confederacy, p. 214; and O.R., vol. 27, series 1, part 1, pp. 623-624.

<sup>36</sup>O.R., vol. 27, series 1, part 1, p. 624; Maine Gettysburg Commission, Maine at Gettysburg, p. 256; and Ellis Spear, "The Left at Gettysburg," National Tribune (12 June 1913).

<sup>37</sup>Judson, History of the Eighty-third Regiment, p. 129.

<sup>38</sup>Gerrish, Army Life: A Private's Reminiscences of the Civil War, pp. 108-109.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.

<sup>41</sup>Chamberlain, "Through Blood and Fire at Gettysburg," p. 905.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Chamberlain, "Through Blood and Fire at Gettysburg," p. 905; Maine Gettysburg Commission, Maine at Gettysburg, p. 256; and W. T. Livermore to Chamberlain, 22 May 1897, Maine Historical Society. Livermore, a member of the color-guard on Little Round Top, said the colors were never in danger of falling into the enemy's hands despite Chamberlain's claim to the contrary.

<sup>44</sup>Chamberlain, "Through Blood and Fire at Gettysburg," p. 905.

<sup>45</sup>Maine Gettysburg Commission, Maine at Gettysburg, p. 261.

<sup>46</sup>Oates, The War Between the Union and the Confederacy, pp. 218-219.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., pp. 612-613.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., pp. 688, 226. Oates and Chamberlain shared an interesting postwar career; they both became governors of their respective states. Oates would later serve as a brigadier-general in the Spanish-American War.

<sup>49</sup>Oates, The War Between the Union and the Confederacy, p. 221; and Dearborn to Chamberlain, 13 March 1903, Maine Historical Society.

<sup>50</sup>Brian Bennett, The Supreme Event in Its Existence: The Defense of Little Round Top by the 140th New York Volunteer Infantry, Gettysburg, July 2, 1863 (140th N.Y.V.I. Living History Organization).

<sup>51</sup>Warren to Farley, 13 July 1872, found in Norton, The Attack and Defense of Little Round Top, p. 310.

<sup>52</sup>Catton, Glory Road, p. 294; and Bennett, The Supreme Event in Its Existence. See also Harry Maihafer, "The Decision of Paddy O'Rourke," 46 Military Review (January, 1966), pp. 68-76.

<sup>53</sup>Maine Gettysburg Commission, Maine at Gettysburg, pp. 261-262; Chamberlain, "Through Blood and Fire at Gettysburg," p. 905; and O.R., vol. 27, series 1, part 1, p. 624.

<sup>54</sup>Chamberlain, "Through Blood and Fire at Gettysburg," pp. 905-906; and Maine Gettysburg Commission, Maine at Gettysburg, p. 257.

<sup>55</sup>Oates, The War Between the Union and the Confederacy, pp. 219-220.

<sup>56</sup>Maine Gettysburg Commission, Maine at Gettysburg, p. 257; Chamberlain, "Through Blood and Fire at Gettysburg," p. 906; Gerrish, Army Life: A Private's Reminiscences of the Civil War, p. 110; and O.R., vol. 27, series 1, part 1, p. 624. Many historians have contended that the charge was ordered by Chamberlain and initiated by Spear's left wing. Apparently, the charge originated in the center only to spread to the left. The extreme right companies held their position next to the 83rd Pennsylvania. See Livermore to Chamberlain, 22 May 1897, Maine Historical Society; and Spear, "The Left at Gettysburg."

<sup>57</sup>Chamberlain, "Through Blood and Fire at Gettysburg," pp. 907-908; Maine Gettysburg Commission, Maine at Gettysburg, p. 258; Gerrish, Army Life: A Private's Reminiscences of the Civil War, pp. 110-111; and O.R., vol. 27, series 1, part 1, p. 624.

<sup>58</sup>Oates, The War Between the Union and the Confederacy, pp. 220-222. For another account of Oates' retreat by a member of the 15th Alabama, see William Jordan, Some Events and Incidents During the Civil War (Montgomery, Alabama: The Paragon Press, 1909), pp. 43-45.

<sup>59</sup>O.R., vol. 27, series 1, part 1, p. 625; Chamberlain, "Through Blood and Fire at Gettysburg," p. 908; and Maine Gettysburg Commission, Maine at Gettysburg, p. 258.

<sup>60</sup>Maine Gettysburg Commission, Maine at Gettysburg, pp. 270-272; Chamberlain to Fanny, 4 July 1863, Chamberlain papers, Library of Congress; and Oates to Elihu Root, 2 June 1903, Chamberlain papers, Library of Congress.

<sup>61</sup>Chamberlain to Fanny, 4 July 1863, Chamberlain papers, Library of Congress; and Adelbert Ames to Chamberlain, 3 July 1863, Chamberlain file, National Archives.

<sup>62</sup>Oates, The War Between the Union and the Confederacy, p. 219.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### ***DESPERATE, DEADLY BUSINESS***

By nightfall of the second, the state of affairs near the Round Tops was far from settled despite the Rebel retreat. Colonel Chamberlain, aware that the Federal situation upon Little Round Top was chaotic and confused because of heavy losses among the officers, grew apprehensive as the night wore on. And he had a good reason to be concerned. Sooner or later, Chamberlain believed, the Confederates, if they were given time to regroup, would renew their efforts at gaining the Union left flank. The colonel knew that he had just "baffled but far from beaten" the crack veterans of Hood's division. And with the remnants of Law's brigade occupying Round Top, they were in an excellent position to mask their movements, strengthen themselves, and then resume the offensive. Possibly, a Rebel attack might be launched at daybreak or even before, under the cover of darkness.<sup>1</sup>

Colonel Rice, now in command of the Third Brigade, grasped the importance of seizing Round Top. After conferring with Colonel Joseph Fisher, who had come up in support with a brigade of Pennsylvania Reserves from Crawford's Third Division, Rice decided upon a joint operation to take the dominating peak. This joint venture, like most performed at night during the Civil War, broke down before it ever got moving. As the plan was sketched out, Fisher would place two of his regiments across the saddle, thus shielding the Federal left flank, and then ascend Round Top with his other two regiments. Since little remained of Chamberlain's 20th Maine holding the flank, it

would lead Fisher's ascent deployed as skirmishers.<sup>2</sup>

When the advance was to begin, for some reason, Colonel Fisher did not participate in it. Rice then promptly ordered Colonel Chamberlain and the Twentieth to proceed and seize Round Top. Although his command had been whittled to a skeleton force of two hundred men short of ammunition, Chamberlain audaciously ordered them to fix bayonets and move out. It was close to 9:00 p.m. Advancing in an extended order, the regiment pressed blindly up the mountainside, struggling through the blackness and over the rocky terrain. Chamberlain ordered his men to refrain from firing so they would expose neither their movement nor their paltry numbers. Despite this measure, an uneasiness haunted Chamberlain; the enemy could hear his advance and was slowly withdrawing upon the crest. With Chamberlain's men approaching the summit, they received a desperate volley from the fleeing Rebels. Unable to withstand another volley, the Twentieth stormed the crest, capturing two officers with one from General Law's staff, and a half-dozen enlisted men.<sup>3</sup>

Upon reaching the peak, Chamberlain quickly consolidated his gains, reconnoitered the ground, and situated his men among the rocks. With his men secure for the moment, the colonel sent a request to Rice for ammunition and support. Colonel Chamberlain was worried about his position, and especially his right flank. It was so close to the enemy, mostly men from Colonel Oates' 15th and 47th Alabama regiments, that Chamberlain could hear conversation.<sup>4</sup>

A half-hour after the 20th Maine reached the crest, the two regiments of Fisher's command now decided to ascend the slopes. Utilizing a wood road up the mountain, Fisher's reserves approached Chamberlain's right flank only to fall in disorder and chaos. With the lost officers and men calling back and forth to each other, it has been said that the Confederates must have retreated, believing all the racket emanated from nothing less than an entire corps. But Chamberlain was not about to be taken by

surprise by any movement on his right quarter. Preparing to receive a possible enemy thrust, the colonel quickly tried to form the supporting troops on his right. Before he could, however, Colonel Oates had his Alabamians open fire on the confused reserves which sent them fleeing down the slope. In his report, Chamberlain complacently remarked that the Rebel musketry "disheartened the supports themselves, so that I saw no more of them that night."<sup>5</sup>

Despite Chamberlain's latter lighthearted comment, the situation, at the moment, was critical. Fearing the enemy might fall upon his unsupported right flank, the colonel divided his regiment in two, leaving half on the present line while withdrawing the other half slightly down the slope to secure his right rear. Having lost faith in the Pennsylvania Reserves, Chamberlain sent a request to Rice for the 83rd Pennsylvania to come to his support. Colonel Rice delivered not only the 83rd and ammunition to Chamberlain, he also sent the 44th New York. Somewhat relieved about the status of his right flank, Chamberlain reunited his regiment at the summit of Round Top.<sup>6</sup>

Even though it was getting late, Chamberlain would not rest. He sent a strong picket line down the northwest face of the mountain while the remainder of the regiment tried to catch some sleep. The advanced line was relieved every two hours with reports given to the colonel every half-hour. Growing venturesome, the pickets gradually descended the slope until they almost reached the mountain's foot. Near the base of Round Top, the pickets stumbled upon Confederate camp fires and soldiers. The pickets, fearing detection, fled immediately, but several of the Rebels, from the 4th and 5th Texas, heard them and set out to investigate. When the curious Texans confronted a Maine picket, they commanded him to identify himself, the Mainer answered, "friend." Before the Rebels realized what was happening, they were confronted with Federal rifles. The Maine pickets carried on this sly ploy for most of the night, capturing

twenty-five Texans. The peaceful exchange might have continued except someone on the left opened fire, alerting the unsuspecting Southerners. Ultimately, just before daylight, sporadic gunfire ended the late night forays.<sup>7</sup>

By nine in the morning on 3 July, Fisher's troops finally came up in support of the exhausted Maine regiment. To his relief, Colonel Chamberlain received orders to withdraw and take his place with the battered remains of Rice's Third Brigade, sitting in reserve to the right of Little Round Top. From this position, the brigade would support the Union left-center on Cemetery Ridge. For most of the day, Chamberlain and his men had to endure the incredible artillery exchange preceding General Lee's last-gasp effort, Pickett's futile charge. During the charge, Chamberlain and the brigade did not become actively engaged; instead they acted as spectators knowing they had done their share of the fighting.<sup>8</sup>

On the next morning, 4 July, Chamberlain and the Third Brigade set out in a drizzling rain to reconnoiter their front. They pushed toward the Rebel lines, eventually approaching Willoughby Run, and then withdrew without an encounter. Once Chamberlain returned to his lines, he took his regiment to Little Round Top to bury its dead. The Maine men buried their dead on the southern side of the mountain's crest, behind their line of battle. Headboards made of discarded ammunition boxes designated each grave; the soldier's name and home were carved into them, serving as the only memorial to their ultimate sacrifice. Later the bodies were removed to the National Cemetery, where many of them now bear the mark, "unknown." Chamberlain made sure that the Rebel dead in his area, about fifty of them, were also put to earth. With the dead from both sides buried, the colonel then went to care for his wounded, whom he had put in houses near Little Round Top.<sup>9</sup>

On Sunday morning, the Third Brigade again advanced toward Lee's lines while it rained. To its surprise, the brigade discovered the Rebel lines abandoned. General Lee

had pulled out. Chamberlain returned with his brigade and rejoined the Fifth Corps, which at 5:00 p.m., started down the Emmitsburg Road in pursuit of the Army of Northern Virginia.<sup>10</sup> Major-General Meade, to the dismay of President Lincoln, did not press Lee's wounded army with the utmost alacrity. Meade was correct in his estimate that Lee was still a dangerous foe, but; on the other hand, Lee's army was badly in need of rest and supplies. And with the heavy rainfall, the Potomac River would be a major obstacle for Lee to cross, especially if he was being pressed by a larger force. Although Meade's advantages are clear in hindsight, one must recall that he was new to this command and had just lost over 20,000 men in three days, an enormous figure considering he was on the defensive. Meade could only imagine how many more men he would lose if he threw them against fixed Rebel works.

Despite the Army of the Potomac's passive pursuit from 5 July to the 10th, Meade finally approached Lee's army near the Antietam battleground. Expecting a major battle to erupt at any moment, Federal skirmishers were despatched to feel out the Confederate defenses. On the tenth, Colonel Chamberlain became engaged in a severe skirmish for control of the Sharpsburg Pike. The engagement, known as Jones' Crossroads, the crossroads being the Hagerstown and Sharpsburg Pikes, saw Chamberlain lead an advance to regain the pike from a heavy Rebel skirmish line. In all, Chamberlain lost eight men killed and wounded.<sup>11</sup>

For several days, most of the action between the opposing armies was a series of running and protracted skirmishes. All General Lee could do was wait in Williamsport for the Potomac River to recede; all Meade did was wait. On the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth, the Army of the Potomac advanced in battle order, only to be halted before bringing on a major action. On the fourteenth, the Federals prepared again to move upon the Rebel lines; but this time, Lee's army was gone. Over the night of the thirteenth, the cagey Lee floated his army across the river into Virginia.<sup>12</sup> For

Chamberlain, he perhaps had the opportunity to end the war where it had started for him, near Antietam.

As they had done after the battle of Antietam, Chamberlain and the Twentieth found themselves crossing the Potomac into Virginia, shadowing Lee's army. Throughout late July and early August, Chamberlain and his men shifted from one small town to another. And for a couple of days in July, Chamberlain commanded the Third Brigade because Colonel Rice was under arrest. He had been arrested for leniency with his troops after allowing some men of the brigade to sleep upon bundles of wheat. Chamberlain's tenure as brigade commander was shortlived and before long, he was ordered to guard Beverly Ford on the Rappahannock River.<sup>13</sup> At the least, Chamberlain and his regiment were not picketing near Falmouth as they had done for weeks prior to Lee's second invasion of the North.

In early August, Colonel Chamberlain became ill with malaria, a common sickness among the army during the hot and damp month. The colonel was given sick leave for about two weeks, going home to Maine and his family to recuperate. But when he returned to Virginia in late August, he discovered some changes in the command structure of his Third Brigade. First of all, General Griffin had resumed command of Chamberlain's First Division, replacing James Barnes. In addition, General Rice had been promoted to brigadier-general, and reassigned to the Second Brigade, First Division, First Corps. With a vacancy in his division, Griffin had only one officer with whom he wanted to replace Rice; it was Joshua Chamberlain. Other officers were recommended for the vacant post, but Griffin insisted upon with Chamberlain. Once back at the front, Colonel Chamberlain assumed field command of the Third Brigade.<sup>14</sup>

Although he commanded a brigade, Chamberlain still only possessed a colonel's insignia. On his behalf, Chamberlain's friends, for most of the late summer and early fall of 1863, lobbied for his promotion to brigadier-general. Generals Ames, Griffin,

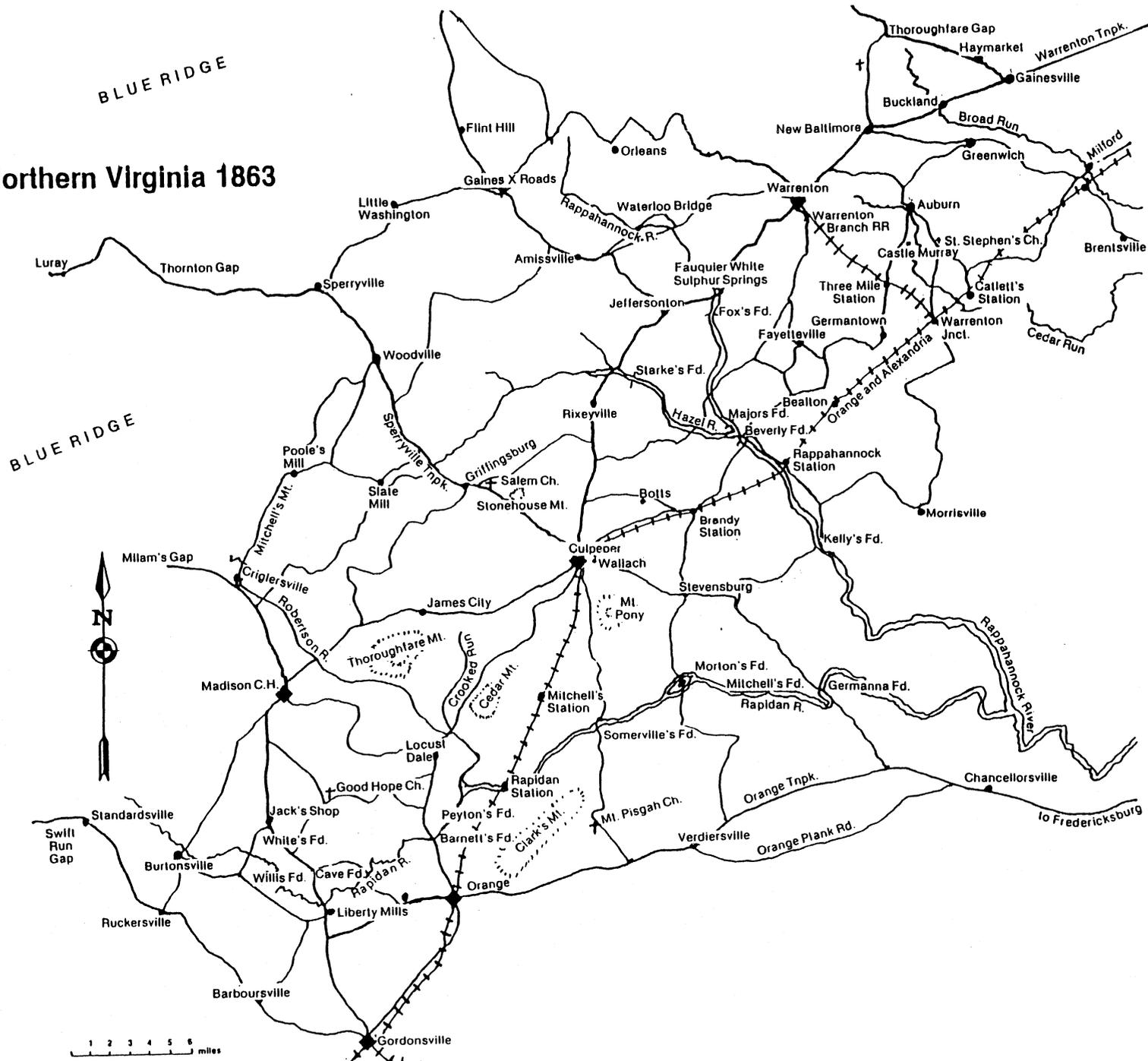
Barnes, and Rice petitioned the likes of Secretary of War Stanton and Senator William Fessenden of Maine for Chamberlain's promotion. With regard to the colonel's exploits at Gettysburg, Rice wrote to Fessenden that "History will give credit to the bravery and unflinching fortitude of the 20th Maine Volunteers more than any other equal body of men. . . . [their] conduct which, as an eye-witness, I do not hesitate to say, had its inspiration and great success from the moral power and personal heroism of Col. Chamberlain." Despite their glowing accolades and protestations, Chamberlain's superiors could not secure him any general's stripes.<sup>15</sup>

Not much seemed to be happening with Chamberlain's promotion nor with the war in the east. For most of September, Meade kept his army bewildered, shifting from point to point west of the Rappahannock River with no apparent strategy. One observant officer did detect some sort of logic in Meade's movements. The officer wrote that the Union army had to "follow his [Lee] movements, so as, 1st, to catch him if possible in a good corner; or, 2d, to prevent his catching us in a bad corner; also 3d, to cover Washington and Maryland, which, for us, is more important than for him to come to Richmond. Thus we have to watch him and shift as he shifts, like two fencers."<sup>16</sup>

The Virginia fencer decided to make a move, signaling the opening of the Bristoe Campaign. On 12 October, General Lee crossed the Rappahannock River, placing his army on Meade's right flank. Not completely sure of Lee's intentions, Meade quickly withdrew north of the river to Catlett's Station on the thirteenth. Meade fell back even farther, retreating to Centerville on the fourteenth while ordering the Third, Fifth, and Second Corps not to lose contact with Lee's army. About midday on the fourteenth, Griffin's First Division, posted near Bristoe Station, came under artillery fire from the west. Sensing an engagement, Colonel Chamberlain itched to test his worth as a brigade commander, but he would have to wait. Griffin received orders to avoid a pitched battle and to continue withdrawing easterly toward Manassas. General

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Map from Henderson, The Road to Bristoe Station, appendix.



Gouverneur Warren, now in command of the Second Corps, was left alone to fight what turned out to be Lee's entire army. Apparently, Meade, retreating faster than Lee could advance, left him to attack the rear-guard of the Army of the Potomac, the Second Corps. In spite of the odds against him, Warren surprisingly held the field. When Meade realized the situation, he still did not want to commit his army, leaving Warren to his own means. Finally Lee broke off the engagement.<sup>17</sup>

All the marching without anything conclusive dealing with Lee's Army of Northern Virginia irritated Colonel Chamberlain. From the fourteenth to the sixteenth, Chamberlain marched and countermarched his Third Brigade five times between Centerville and Fairfax Court House. Marching on the night of the sixteenth in a cold rain, Chamberlain detailed some of his staff to tighten his straggling column struggling through the mud. A group of mounted men approached the colonel and asked:

"What command is this?"

Chamberlain barked, "Third Brigade, First Division, Fifth Corps!"

A voice answered, "Colonel, your men are strung along the way for a mile back. You could not assemble them for any purpose."

"Sir," Chamberlain replied, "I can conceive of no 'purpose' governing this move, but this bugle-call would bring my men through Hell!"

"Sir," came the rejoinder, "do you know that I am General Sykes?"

"I know General Sykes," said Chamberlain, "and he would thank me for showing him through this muddle."

Sykes responded, "You are a little sharp on compliments, but I think you will get your men up."<sup>18</sup>

After harassing Meade and irritating Chamberlain north of the Rappahannock, General Lee chose to retire toward the river. Lee still held a bridgehead at Rappahannock Station, with a brigade of Louisiana Tigers and some North Carolinians guarding the north bank. Meade resolved to disturb Lee's bridgehead while forcing a crossing himself. On 7 November, Major-General John Sedgewick and his Sixth Corps

descended upon Lee's Tigers, with Chamberlain and his Fifth Corps acting in close support. Greatly outnumbered, the Southerners gave a valiant showing before scurrying across the river to safety. In the fierce action, which included one of the war's rarely effective bayonet charges, Chamberlain did little actual fighting, but he did manage to lose another horse while reconnoitering the ground to his front.<sup>19</sup>

During the battle of Rappahannock Station, Chamberlain suffered a relapse of malaria. Somehow the colonel avoided the sick roster which had been growing steadily over the weeks. However, on the night of the eighth, an early snow hit the unprepared camps and Chamberlain, susceptible to the elements, carelessly slept on the ground. The reoccurrence of malaria took a sudden and violent turn for the worse and was probably complicated by a case of pneumonia. Colonel Chamberlain soon collapsed into unconsciousness and was shipped off on a freight train to Washington, D. C., by order of General Bartlett, who had been acting as divisional commander because Griffin himself was ill.<sup>20</sup>

Colonel Chamberlain was placed in the Officers Hospital at Georgetown Seminary. With his life in jeopardy, Chamberlain's wife, Fanny, traveled to the hospital to be at his side. Progress was slow, but by January 1864, he had gained sufficient strength to allow for light duty. Since the army was in winter quarters, Chamberlain was appointed to a general court martial which reviewed cases in Washington, D. C., and Trenton, New Jersey. Even though he was healthier, he occasionally fell ill with bouts of malaria during his court martial duty. For most of the time, his wife shuttled back and forth with him, trying to care for him.<sup>21</sup>

As the weather became warmer, Colonel Chamberlain was growing anxious to take part in the new campaign season. He knew President Lincoln had given over-all command to the hard-edged westerner, Lieutenant-General Ulysses S. Grant. The name Grant meant one thing to Chamberlain, and that was action. There would be no more

indecisive moves by the Union army as under McClellan, Burnside, Hooker, and Meade. (Meade, unlike his predecessors, retained his command of the Army of the Potomac after Grant's appointment.) Colonel Chamberlain described Grant as being "like Thor, the hammerer; striking blow after blow, intent on his purpose to beat his way through, somewhat reckless of the cost."<sup>22</sup>

At first, Chamberlain thought he would soon be rejoining his brigade prior to its first engagement. But as April passed into May, the colonel feared he might not be returning to active duty. Upon reading about Grant's crossing of the Rapidan River and the ensuing eruption in the Wilderness, the benched colonel wrote to the Adjutant General's Office again, on 9 May, clarifying his case. He wrote that "at the time I was placed on this duty, I was under medical treatment . . . My health, in my opinion, permits my resuming active duty; and never before having been absent from my command in time of an active campaign, my anxiety to be in the field is very great."<sup>23</sup> In a matter of days, Colonel Chamberlain was on his way back to Virginia.

Once in the Old Dominion, Chamberlain must have noticed a huge difference in the way this campaign was being fought in comparison to Hooker's a year ago. Unlike before when the Army of the Potomac was beaten or merely checked, Grant advanced instead of falling back to the Rappahannock River. Each of Grant's swings to the left was countered by General Lee's slides to the right. In the meantime, casualties mounted incredibly for both sides, in what seemed to be an endless string of engagements at every crossroads.

When Chamberlain reported to Major-General Warren, who had replaced Sykes as commander of the Fifth Corps, the Federal army was entangled with Lee near Spotsylvania. Since it was in the middle of a battle, Chamberlain did not immediately resume charge of his Third Brigade. Bartlett continued to direct the brigade and Colonel Chamberlain returned to his former post with the 20th Maine. Regardless of

the slight demotion, he was delighted to be rid of his court martial service and back at the front lines. On 18 May, Chamberlain scrawled a note to the governor of Maine from the front line, mentioning his difficulty in leaving court duty and describing his present situation. "We advanced our lines half a mile last evening with little loss. I write this as we are lying in line of battle . . . not more than 600 or 800 yards from the enemy's works. . . . The artillery fire is very hot now. Shells are bursting over us every second. The Brigade is losing men fast. Lee is holding us stiffly."<sup>24</sup> Chamberlain seemed to be satisfied with his deadly predicament.

Since Lee was holding stiffly at Spotsylvania, Grant decided it was time for another flank movement. When the Fifth Corps pulled out on the morning of 21 May, the Third Brigade held the point with Colonel Chamberlain in command. Oddly enough, Bartlett had become ill a few days prior to the movement, enabling Chamberlain to recoup his brigade. In the meantime, the Fifth Corps turned southward on the twenty-second, heading towards Hanover Station on the North Anna River. Although there were rumors of an all-out Rebel retreat to Richmond before them, Chamberlain and the veterans of the Third Brigade paid little attention to the hearsay. The increasing number of Confederate stragglers and discarded accoutrements indicated Lee's rearguard was near. And around noon, they overcame the Virginian's rearguard; the result was a spirited little affair at Pole Cat Creek.<sup>25</sup>

In this curious, impromptu action, Colonel Chamberlain's ability as a quick-minded and courageous officer was clearly evident. Throughout the day's march, Chamberlain had been in advance of his column, accompanied by a few scouts and skirmishers. Anticipating a Rebel attack, the colonel scouted the terrain, searching for every advantage the enemy might gain, possibly from a twist in the road, a patch of woods, or a hill. Suddenly, a cannon boomed from off in the distance; its shot tore into the Corn Exchange Regiment, 118th Pennsylvania. Observing a puff of white smoke, Colonel

Chamberlain pinpointed the culprit on a wooded hill. With a plan already sketched in his mind, Chamberlain promptly halted the First Division, conferred with Griffin, and set out in motion. The colonel instructed part of his brigade to assault the hill frontally; and the remainder would slip through a field on the right, he hoped, to fall upon the enemy's left flank. Chamberlain ordered each of his wings to first shoot the horses; thus making sure of the battery's capture.<sup>26</sup>

Sometimes, even the best laid plans do not succeed; and this was one of those times. As the flanking party moved undetected, nearly up to the woods concealing the battery, it stopped at the foot of a small, but deep and muddy stream, Pole Cat Creek. Confounded at the delay, Chamberlain spotted a fence nearby the creek and shouted, "Take the fence along with you . . . throw it in, and yourselves after it!" As one soldier recalled, "It was done with a will: one jump to mid-stream, with the planks for a pontoon, and we were over." Nevertheless, the tumult and splashing forewarned the graycoats; so they wheeled part of the battery around, discharging a round of canister into the Federals. But not risking a second salvo, the artillerymen hitched up their guns and rode off.<sup>27</sup>

Notwithstanding the battery's narrow escape, Chamberlain had at least dislodged it and cleared the road for his corps. However, there was still one curious incident left. As the flanking party began to regroup, one of its officers sighted a Confederate major, sitting upon his horse and cupping his hand to his ear, listening searchingly for foes or friends. Evidently, the major's hearing was poor for he was oblivious to the encircling Union officer and approaching soldiers. The Federal officer crept behind the major so that the Rebel sat between him and the closing Yankees. Chamberlain, at the head of the regrouping men, gestured to them for silence. Then the Union officer, with pistol drawn, startled the Confederate and demanded his surrender.<sup>28</sup>

"Not so, sir," said the Southern officer, reaching for a carbine at his side; "you are my prisoner." Annoyed by the major's defiance, the Union officer threatened, "Touch

that and you die." When the major slid out from his saddle, he was surprised to see so many Yankees in his midst. Because he was more embarrassed than anything else, the Confederate major defiantly broke his sword at the hilt before he handed it over to the Union officer. When the corps' march was resumed, the soldiers could not help but tell the story of the captured major for most of the day.<sup>29</sup>

On the following day, the twenty-third, the Fifth Corps crossed the North Anna River at Jericho Ford. But as things had been since early May, one had a fight on his hands if he were crossing a river in Lee's Virginia. Hence Colonel Chamberlain was to serve as a link between two divisions, protecting their flanks while they crossed the river. Chamberlain, at a time when Union generals were dying daily, was becoming reckless in regard to his own personal safety. Only a week before, Chamberlain's former brigadier commander, James Rice, had been killed at the head of a charge. Under heavy fire, the colonel stood far ahead of his men whom he had instructed to keep low. When his junior officer beseeched him to seek cover, Chamberlain claimed that he was in no more danger than anyone else and it was imperative for him to be where he was in order to determine and meet any arising exigencies.<sup>30</sup>

With the coming of June, Grant's army continued to grapple with Lee's firm, stubborn veterans. On 1 June, Chamberlain, with Griffin's First Division, participated in a counterattack near Bethesda Church, pushing back elements of General Jubal Early's Third Corps. Because the Fifth Corps was posted slightly north of the road junction at Cold Harbor, it did not partake in the regrettable charge of 3 June. In a span of less than fifteen minutes, the Second, Sixth, and Eighteenth Corps suffered around 7,000 casualties; and Lee had not even budged from his line. Seemingly, Grant's strategy had reached its limits.<sup>31</sup>

Although the opposing armies remained fixed in their positions near Cold Harbor for nearly ten days, there was some encouraging news for Colonel Chamberlain. Since

the return of Bartlett would create a problem with the Third Brigade's command structure, Chamberlain was given a new duty. After Warren reshuffled his Fifth Corps, the colonel was appointed, on 6 June, to command the new First Brigade of Griffin's division. This brigade consisted of six Pennsylvania regiments, of which five, the 121st, 142nd, 143rd, 149th, and 150th, were veterans and one was recruited recently, the 187th. Henceforth the brigade became known as the Keystone Brigade.<sup>32</sup>

But Warren felt Chamberlain should obtain more than a new post; he, along with Griffin, Bartlett, and Barnes, started lobbying again for his promotion. Warren said, "Col. Chamberlain is one whose services and sufferings entitle him to the promotion and I am sure his appointment would add to my strength even more than the reinforcement of a thousand men." Surprisingly, the strongest praise Chamberlain, who was only a volunteer, received came from regular army generals, all of whom attended West Point. Despite the efforts of such notable officers, especially Warren, a promotion for Chamberlain appeared unlikely.<sup>33</sup>

In the meantime, Grant and the army could ill afford to wait for Lee to leave his entrenchments. Besides, the pressure emanating from the capital over the long casualty lists was becoming almost unbearable, forcing Grant to make a move. Realizing he could not remain in his current position, near the swampy, malaria infested region of the Chickahominy River, Grant chose to sidestep Lee once again. Only this time, Grant would pull out at night and cross two rivers, the Chickahominy and the James, thus striking at Richmond from the south by way of Petersburg. If Petersburg, the key to Virginia's supply and communication lines, could be taken, Richmond would wither and die.<sup>34</sup>

On 12 June, the Federal army disengaged itself from Lee's lines and slipped into the night. Grant had succeeded beyond his expectations, stealing a day's march on the crafty Lee. Now if he could only reach Petersburg before Lee, a Union triumph in the

East would be almost assured. There was one minor obstacle confronting Grant and it was merely a few thousand Rebels under General P.G.T. Beauregard, manning the Petersburg defenses. Unfortunately, the advanced Union forces, once across the James River, were so surprised by Lee's absence, that they chose to halt and await fresh reinforcements. Because of delays in the reinforcements' arrival, Lee had time to rush his tired army into the trenches; and these defenses were more formidable and sophisticated than any seen by a Federal army since Fredericksburg.

By the time Colonel Chamberlain and the Fifth Corps arrived outside Petersburg on 17 June, the advantage provided by the stolen march had disappeared. Beauregard presented a much stiffer defensive line than expected; and because of his actions, there would be a furious fight for the town. Knowing that Lee's troops were filtering into the defense network, a Federal push had to be made before it would be too late. Accordingly, early in the morning of the eighteenth, the Fifth Corps advanced over difficult ground broken by several ravines and the Norfolk Railroad cut. Griffin's division had the privilege of opening the corps' attack, the burden of it falling mostly upon Chamberlain's First Brigade and Brigadier-General Jacob Sweitzer's Second Brigade. Their goal was the enemy's main works, at a point called Rives' Salient. Before an assault could be launched against the salient, an advanced Rebel battery had to be silenced.<sup>35</sup>

This forward battery, situated upon a crest, had hounded the First Division from the very moment it began drawing up for the assault. The battery had an unobstructed killing zone over the sloping, brush and grass-covered terrain, while the deep railroad cut thwarted any possible frontal charge. But as the battery trained its sights on the division, Chamberlain crossed the railroad south of the deep cut, gained a cluster of trees on the battery's flank unsuspected, and then charged it. The clash proved to be fast and furious; Chamberlain carrying the crest despite the loss of his horse and much of

his staff to one well-directed shell. But in a few short moments after settling into its new position, the colonel's brigade was pummeled with shot and shell from Rives' Salient, losing more men now than it had in the struggle for the guns. In such a perilous position, Chamberlain drew his men back under the shelter of the crest and deployed them in expectation of a Confederate counterattack.<sup>36</sup>

To determine his next move, Colonel Chamberlain considered his limited options. First of all, his position upon the crest was vulnerable since all the guns at Rives' Salient were trained on him. The salient's battery, about three or four hundred yards to his front, consisted of twelve or fifteen pieces secured among earthworks. In addition to the salient's guns, Chamberlain noticed a fort to his left front, also mounted with heavy guns, which could easily enfilade any move upon the salient. (This fort was Fort Mahone, later renamed by the Federals, "Fort Damnation." The crest that Chamberlain held would later become Fort Sedgewick, probably better known as "Fort Hell.") Between these two formidable works there rested an entrenched line of around three thousand graycoats, mostly North Carolinians. After completing his examination, Colonel Chamberlain prepared to take care of himself.<sup>37</sup>

Aiming to take care, the colonel ordered up three batteries entrusted to him. Chamberlain instructed the gunners to sink their weapons' platform into the ground of the slope, thus allowing the barrel to rest upon the grass. From this sunken level, the gunners would have the advantage of reloading their cannons out of the enemy's view. Aside from having the benefit of artillery, Colonel Chamberlain saw little blessing in his position; he was, after all, not quite a mile away from the rest of the army. Nevertheless, Chamberlain felt he should maintain possession of the crest as a starting point for a large-scale Union assault.<sup>38</sup>

After placing his men and batteries, Colonel Chamberlain received an unbelievable order from a staff officer unknown to him. The officer delivered a verbal

call for an immediate movement upon the salient. Stunned by the order, Chamberlain knew his single brigade could not seize the enemy's works. Willing to risk censure to himself, but not the lives of his men, Chamberlain sent back a written statement. It read:

I have just received a verbal order not through the usual channels, but by a staff officer unknown to me, purporting to come from the General commanding the army, directing me to assault the main works of the enemy in my front. Circumstances lead me to believe the General cannot be aware of my situation, which has greatly changed within the last hour.

I have just carried an advanced position held by the enemy's infantry and artillery. I am advanced a mile beyond our own lines, and in an isolated position. On my right is a deep railroad cut; my left flank is in the air, with no support whatever. In front of me at close range is a strongly entrenched line of infantry and artillery with projecting salients right and left, such that my advance would be swept by a cross-fire, while a large fort on my left enfilades my entire advance, as I experienced in carrying this position. Along my front close up to the enemy's works appears to be bad ground, swampy, and boggy, where my men would be held at a great disadvantage under a severe fire.

I have got up three batteries, and am placing them on the reverse slope of this crest, to enable me to hold against an expected attack. To leave these guns behind me unsupported, their retreat cut off by the railroad cut,--would expose them to loss in case of our being repulsed.

Fully aware of the responsibility I take, I beg to be assured that the order to attack with my single Brigade is with the General's full understanding. I have here a veteran Brigade of six regiments, and my responsibility for the welfare of these men seems to warrant me in wishing assurance that no mistake in communicating orders compels me to sacrifice them.

From what I can see of the enemy's lines, it is my opinion that if an assault is to be made, it should be by nothing less than the whole army.<sup>39</sup>

Despite Chamberlain's clear and concise statement of the situation, the words fell upon deaf ears. Seemingly, by afternoon of the eighteenth, no major officer in the Federal army was willing to delay or suspend any attack on the Rebel lines, no matter

what the reason may be. Grant, who had been growing tired of missed opportunities over the past few days, demanded a coordinated assault from the Army of the Potomac. Not being able to produce one for Grant, a frustrated Major-General Meade informed his corp commanders that he deemed it useless to even attempt a full-scale attack; therefore each general was instructed to attack when capable of doing so. His plea thus denied, Colonel Chamberlain went ahead with preparations for the assault with only the faint hope of support from Sweitzer's brigade to the right.<sup>40</sup>

Obeying his orders, Chamberlain prepared to move against the enemy's works shortly after 3:00 p.m. The colonel ordered his battery section, under the command of Major John Bigelow, to concentrate its fire upon the Rebel guns in a vain effort to silence them. As Bigelow carried out his instructions, Chamberlain formed the brigade into two lines, with the 150th Pennsylvania constituting the skirmish line. The 187th Pennsylvania, the largest and greenest regiment in the Keystone Brigade, would guide the first column, followed by the rest of the brigade in the second. Chamberlain ordered the men not to stop and fire since this would needlessly expose them to enemy fire longer. If the brigade were going to take Rives' Salient, it would have to be at the point of a bayonet. Realizing that this was "desperate, deadly business," Chamberlain--not one to let his men go it alone--would lead the charge on foot. The soldiers, responding to their commander's resolution and fearlessness, leapt forward with an "enthusiasm hardly ever witnessed in battle."<sup>41</sup>

Plunging into a hellish nightmare, the Pennsylvanians swept down the slope with a dashing cheer. But in only a matter of minutes, the cheers were transformed into anguished cries as the brigade "began to melt away under the merciless storm of iron and lead." Although raked by round shot, grape, canister, and musketry on three sides, the men still pressed blindly toward the Confederate guns. To encourage his troops visually since the roar of battle smothered all voices, Chamberlain scooped up the

brigade's flag--a red maltese cross on a field of white--from the dead color-bearer at his side, and spurred them forward. Now speedily approaching a muddy creek at the base of the Rebel occupied slope, Chamberlain, fearing his men might become bogged down in this quagmire, glanced back at his troops with his flag and sabre waving, motioning them to oblique to the left.<sup>42</sup>

Suddenly, it happened. With his side still turned toward the salient, a minie ball smashed into his right hip, ripping through his mid-section, and coming out behind the left hip. Dropping the colors, Chamberlain drove his sabre into the ground and valiantly balanced himself upon its hilt; all the while, urging his men onward to the left. The brigade, unaware of his condition, advanced despite the hopelessness of the situation. Even a few of the men made it to within twenty feet of the main works. The colonel, unable to stand any longer because of his diminishing strength and the realization that the assault had failed, fell to his knees and then collapsed to the ground.<sup>43</sup>

Chamberlain, laying on ground soaked with his sweat and blood, still worried about the direction of the battle. When two of his aides, Lieutenants West Funk and Benjamin Walters, spotted him through the hanging smoke, they rushed to his side. Although the two wanted to bear the colonel back to the Union lines, he had something more important for them to do. After the aides removed him to a place safe from capture, Chamberlain told one lieutenant to order the senior colonel to take over the brigade, while he instructed the other aide to rush support to Bigelow's battery, which was endangered by an imminent Rebel counter-attack.<sup>44</sup>

A few moments later, the graycoats emerged from their works to counter-attack, confident they could finish off the withdrawing, crippled Federal brigade. Though Chamberlain's men were not able to seize the salient, they were not going to relinquish the advanced position that they had gained with blood. After repulsing the Rebels, the

First Brigade fell back to the cover of its batteries upon the crest. During this lull, Major Bigelow saw the wounded Chamberlain and ordered a group of his men to retrieve the colonel. The colonel, half-buried by up-torn earth for an hour, asked the men to remove others worse off than he. Since everyone was still under enemy fire, Bigelow's men ignored Chamberlain's request and removed him beyond the crest. By nightfall, he had been taken to the field hospital three miles to the rear.<sup>45</sup>

After the regular surgeon examined Colonel Chamberlain's severe wound, the doctor deemed the case as hopeless. Considering the effects of a relatively slow moving .57 caliber bullet upon flesh and bone, the doctor must have been surprised that the colonel was still alive. The bullet had entered Chamberlain's right hip, passed through his lower abdomen, severed an artery, punctured his bladder, and fractured the pelvic bones. The colonel's brother, Tom, rushed to be at his side after he heard the tragic news. Disgruntled by the regular surgeon's reluctance to operate on his brother, Tom left to recruit the assistance of two excellent surgeons from the colonel's former Third Brigade, Drs. A. O. Shaw of the 20th Maine and M. W. Townsend of the 44th New York. The diligence of Shaw and Townsend was rewarded after a long night of surgery. Through their efforts, the two had reconnected the severed parts, thus keeping Chamberlain alive and allowing for the "possibility of recovery." But the doctors were by no means certain of saving his life. However, the performance of the surgeons on Chamberlain was so impressive that it drew recognition from the official medical and surgical history of the war.<sup>46</sup>

News of Chamberlain's serious condition and his pending death spread throughout the Federal army. During the night of the eighteenth, Generals Griffin and Warren visited the colonel, believing that they were seeing him for the last time. Although the two could provide Chamberlain with little physical comfort, they felt that could give him the deserved honor of a promotion before his death. Too many times during the

war, mortally wounded officers would receive promotions for bravery too late--usually because of the time-consuming process for congressional approval--to be enjoyed in life. Griffin and Warren did not want this to be the case with Chamberlain so they pressed vigorously for his promotion to brigadier-general. After delivering a verbal appeal to Major-General Meade on Chamberlain's behalf, Warren submitted it the next day in writing to his superior. The appeal mentioned the colonel's presumed mortal wound and the numerous previous recommendations for promotion for "gallant and efficient conduct." Warren closed the appeal, noting that "He [Colonel Chamberlain] expresses the wish that he may receive the recognition of his service by promotion before he dies for the gratification of his family and friends, and I beg that if possible it may be done."<sup>47</sup>

Notwithstanding Warren's efforts, Lieutenant-General Grant had already made a decision to intervene and support Chamberlain's promotion. In his personal memoirs, Grant wrote:

Colonel J. L. Chamberlain, of the 20th Maine, was wounded on the 18th. He was gallantly leading his brigade at the time, as he had been in the habit of doing in all the engagements in which he had previously been engaged. He had several times been recommended for a brigadier-generalcy for gallant and meritorious conduct. On this occasion, however, I promoted him on the spot, and forwarded a copy of my order to the War Department, asking that my act might be confirmed without delay. This was done, and at last a gallant and meritorious officer received partial justice at the hands of his government, which he had served so faithfully and so well.<sup>48</sup>

On 20 June, Grant issued Special Order #39, promoting Joshua Chamberlain to the rank of brigadier-general. In accordance with the order, Grant sent a dispatch to Secretary of War Stanton, asking that his special order be quickly approved by President Lincoln and confirmed by the Senate. Chamberlain learned of the immediate promotion by Grant before he left the Petersburg field hospital. It was not until Chamberlain had been carried several miles to City Point on the James River and then

transported to the Naval Academy hospital at Annapolis before he received official notice of his new rank. This field promotion by Grant, as he later informed Chamberlain, was the only one he ever gave during the war.<sup>49</sup>

Although Chamberlain was assured of his general's stripes, many believed he would never have the opportunity to exercise his rank. Three weeks after the life-preserving surgery, the doctors in Annapolis felt there was only a slim chance of survival for Chamberlain. Since the bullet had severed his urethra so close to the bladder, it was impossible to remove all of his urine without some of it passing through the wound on his right hip. The doctors feared an infection, ulcers, or both would form in his abdominal area and kill him. If he, somehow, did live, he would surely never be able to fight again, and he would probably remain an invalid for the rest of his life.<sup>50</sup>

But Chamberlain was a strong and stubborn man when faced with seemingly insurmountable obstacles. For two months in Annapolis, he lay in a state between life and death, suffering through extreme chills and high fever. By the end of August, though, he slowly began to show signs of recovery. He was now able to sit up for most of the day, causing him to believe that time was the necessary ingredient for a complete restoration of health. Astonishingly, the brigadier-general started to entertain thoughts of returning to the front.<sup>51</sup>

Not able to fight from his hospital bed, Chamberlain desperately searched for the means to assist the Union war effort. The war in the east, ever since that fateful assault on 18 June, had become a stalemate with Grant drawing siege lines around Lee in Petersburg. And with the 1864 presidential election approaching, Lincoln's pledge to prosecute the war until final victory proved unpopular among some sections of the country; hence his reelection was not assured. Chamberlain, being a good Maine Republican, threw all of his support to Lincoln, a man that he greatly admired.

Speaking about Lincoln, Chamberlain said, "his inherent and potential greatness was his power of reason and sense of rights, and a magnanimity which regarded the large and long interests of man more than the near and small of self." For this man, Chamberlain encouraged his fellow wounded who were with the President and the country's cause to go home, if possible, and vote. As for himself, unable to go home to Maine, Chamberlain pledged to do "all he can to keep old Maine steady in the front rank of Patriots."<sup>52</sup> To the Mainer's satisfaction, Lincoln was reelected and the commitment to complete victory was secured; however, success would come with a heavy toll.

#### **ENDNOTES**

<sup>1</sup>O.R., vol. 27, series 1, part 1, p. 625; and Chamberlain, "Through Blood and Fire at Gettysburg," p. 901. For a detailed description of the reigning confusion upon Little Round Top, one should see Pfanz, Gettysburg: The Second Day, p. 402.

<sup>2</sup>Pfanz, Gettysburg: The Second Day, p. 402.

<sup>3</sup>O.R., vol. 27, series 1, part 1, pp. 618, 625; and Maine Gettysburg Commission, Maine at Gettysburg, pp. 259-260.

<sup>4</sup>O.R., vol. 27, series 1, part 1, p. 625; and Maine Gettysburg Commission, Maine at Gettysburg, p. 259.

<sup>5</sup>Maine Gettysburg Commission, Maine at Gettysburg, p. 260; John Nicholson, ed., Pennsylvania at Gettysburg, 2 vols. (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: William Stanley Ray, State Printer, 1904), vol. 1, p. 296; and O.R., vol. 27, series 1, part 1, p. 625.

<sup>6</sup>O.R., vol. 27, series 1, part 1, p. 625; and Maine Gettysburg Commission, Maine at Gettysburg, p. 260.

<sup>7</sup>O.R., vol. 27, series 1, part 1, p. 625; and Maine Gettysburg Commission, Maine at Gettysburg, p. 260.

<sup>8</sup>Maine Gettysburg Commission, Maine at Gettysburg, p. 261; and O.R., vol. 27, series 1, part 1, p. 626.

<sup>9</sup>Maine Gettysburg Commission, Maine at Gettysburg, p. 262; and O.R., vol. 27, series 1, part 1, p. 626.

<sup>10</sup>Nash, History of the Forty-fourth Regiment, p. 159.

<sup>11</sup>Nash, History of the Forty-fourth Regiment, pp. 160-161; Judson, History of the Eighty-third Regiment, pp. 144-145; and Chamberlain to Hodsdon, 7 July 1863, Maine Historical Society.

<sup>12</sup>Nash, History of the Forty-fourth Regiment, pp. 160-161; and Judson, History of the Eighty-third Regiment, pp. 146-147.

<sup>13</sup>Nash, History of the Forty-fourth Regiment, pp. 161-163.

<sup>14</sup>Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Maine for the Years 1864 and 1865, p. 332.

<sup>15</sup>Gilmore to Coburn, 8 October 1863, Maine Historical Society. See Ames to Stanton, 21 September 1863; Griffin to Williams, AADG, 7 October 1863; Barnes to Chamberlain, 14 September 1863; and Rice to Fessenden, 8 September 1863, Chamberlain file, National Archives.

<sup>16</sup>Aggassiz, ed., Meade's Headquarters, 1863-1865, p. 31.

<sup>17</sup>Wallace, Soul of the Lion: A Biography of General Joshua L. Chamberlain, p. 118. For details of the jockeying for position in Virginia, one should refer to William Henderson, The Road to Bristoe Station: Campaigning With Lee and Meade, August 1 - October 20, 1863 (Lynchburg, Virginia: H. E. Howard, Inc., 1987).

<sup>18</sup>Nash, History of the Forty-fourth Regiment, pp. 168-169.

<sup>19</sup>Terry Jones, Lee's Tigers: The Louisiana Infantry in the Army of Northern Virginia (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), pp. 181-187; O.R., vol. 29, series 1, part 1, p. 582; and the Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Maine for the Years 1864 and 1865, p. 332.

<sup>20</sup>Judson, History of the Eighty-third Regiment, p. 158; Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Maine for the Years 1864 and 1865, pp. 332-333; and William

Donnell to Fanny Chamberlain, 16 November 1863, Chamberlain papers, Library of Congress.

<sup>21</sup>Wallace, Soul of the Lion: A Biography of General Joshua L. Chamberlain, pp. 120-121; and Fanny to Aunt, no date, Maine Historical Society.

<sup>22</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, p. 29.

<sup>23</sup>Fanny to Cousin "D", 14 April 1864, Maine Historical Society; and Chamberlain to Townsend, 9 May 1864, Chamberlain file, National Archives.

<sup>24</sup>Chamberlain to Cony, 18 May 1864, Maine Historical Society.

<sup>25</sup>Smith, History of the Corn Exchange Regiment, p. 435; and Judson, History of the Eighty-third Regiment, p. 206.

<sup>26</sup>Smith, History of the Corn Exchange Regiment, p. 436; and Judson, History of the Eighty-third Regiment, p. 206. Since the Wilderness, the 118th Pennsylvania, 1st Michigan, and 18th Massachusetts regiments had joined the Third Brigade.

<sup>27</sup>Smith, History of the Corn Exchange Regiment, pp. 436-437. The Rebel battery that eluded Chamberlain's capture would return to harass the Fifth Corps' column about a mile down the road. To finish off the annoying Rebels, Griffin ordered a battery of Parrott guns to unlimber and fire into the enemy's position. After a few precisely delivered rounds from Griffin's guns, the Confederates fled and did not attempt to return. See Judson, History of the Eighty-third Regiment, pp. 206-207.

<sup>28</sup>Smith, History of the Corn Exchange Regiment, pp. 437-438.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 438.

<sup>30</sup>Wallace, Soul of the Lion: A Biography of General Joshua L. Chamberlain, p. 125.

<sup>31</sup>Grant, Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant, pp. 444-445.

<sup>32</sup>Thomas Chamberlin, History of the One Hundred and Fiftieth Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers (Philadelphia: F. McManus, Jr. & Company, Printers, 1905), p. 258.

<sup>33</sup>Wallace, Soul of the Lion: A Biography of General Joshua L. Chamberlain, p. 126; and Griffin and Warren to Adjutant General, 5 and 6 June 1864, Chamberlain file, National Archives.

<sup>34</sup>Grant, Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant, pp. 446-448.

<sup>35</sup>Smith, History of the Corn Exchange Regiment, p. 478.

<sup>36</sup>Chamberlain, "Reminiscences of Petersburg and Appomattox: October, 1903," War Papers: M.O.L.L.U.S. (Maine, 1908), vol. 3, p. 171; and R. DeLacy to Chamberlain, 15 January 1904, Chamberlain papers, Library of Congress.

<sup>37</sup>Chamberlain, "Reminiscences of Petersburg and Appomattox," pp. 171-172.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 172.

<sup>39</sup>Chamberlain's communication of 18 June 1864, copy in Maine Historical Society.

<sup>40</sup>Bruce Catton, Grant Takes Command (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1968), p. 293; and Chamberlain, "Reminiscences of Petersburg and Appomattox," p. 172. For an account of the increasing friction between Meade and Warren, one should examine Taylor, Gouverneur Kemble Warren, pp. 169-188.

<sup>41</sup>Chamberlin, History of the One Hundred and Fiftieth Regiment, p. 261; Chamberlain, "Reminiscences of Petersburg and Appomattox," p. 172; and Thomas Howe, The Petersburg Campaign: Wasted Valor, June 15-18, 1864 (Lynchburg, Virginia: H. E. Howard, Inc., 1988), p. 128. Prior to leading the assault upon the salient, Chamberlain gave a brief speech to his men. Though Chamberlain never mentioned the speech, an officer in the 143rd Pennsylvania recalled it about forty years later. The Colonel supposedly said, "Comrades, we have now before us a great duty for our country to perform, and who knows but the way in which we acquit ourselves in this perilous undertaking may depend the ultimate success of the preservation of our grand republic. We know that some must fall, it may be any of you or I; but I feel that you will all go in manfully and make such a record as will make all our loyal American people forever grateful. I can but feel that our action in this crisis is momentous, and who can know but in the providence of God our action to day may be one thing needful to break and destroy this unholy rebellion." See DeLacy to Chamberlain, 15 January 1904.

Chamberlain papers, Library of Congress.

<sup>42</sup>Chamberlin, History of the One Hundred and Fiftieth Regiment, p. 261; James Gibbs, comp., History of the First Battalion Pennsylvania Six Months Volunteers and the 187th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Central Printing and Publishing House, 1905), p. 95; and DeLacy to Chamberlain, 15 January 1904, Chamberlain papers, Library of Congress.

<sup>43</sup>Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Maine for the Years 1864 and 1865, p. 333; Chamberlain, "Reminiscences of Petersburg and Appomattox," p. 173; and West Funk to the Maine Legislature, no date, Chamberlain papers, Library of Congress.

<sup>44</sup>Chamberlain, "Reminiscences of Petersburg and Appomattox," p. 173; and Funk to Maine Legislature, no date, Chamberlain papers, Library of Congress.

<sup>45</sup>Gibbs, comp., History of the 187th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry, p. 95; and Chamberlain, "Reminiscences of Petersburg and Appomattox," p. 173. For additional information, one should read the narratives of Wallace, Soul of the Lion: A Biography of General Joshua L. Chamberlain, pp. 131-135, and Pullen, The Twentieth Maine, pp. 211-212.

<sup>46</sup>In Memoriam: Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, pp. 5-6; Nash, History of the Forty-fourth Regiment, p. 201; and Medical and Surgical History of the War of the Rebellion 2 vols. (Washington, D. C., 1870-1888), vol. 2, part 2, p. 363. From reading the report in the official records, one would be led to believe that Chamberlain never fought again or even functioned in normal manner. The report of a pension examiner in 1873 said, "the ball entered the right hip in front of and a little below the right trochanter major, passed diagonally backward, and made exit above and posteriorly to the left great trochanter. The bladder was involved in the wound at some portion, as the subsequent history of escape of urine from the track of the wound and its extravasation testified. He very often suffers severe pain in the pelvic region. The chief disability resulting indirectly from the wound is the existence of a fistulous opening of the uretha, half an inch or more in length, just anterior to the scrotum; this often becomes inflamed. The greater part of the urine is voided through the fistula, the fistula itself resulting from the too long continuous wearing of a catheter. No change has resulted since the last examination; disability total.' This invalid was paid to June 4, 1873, at \$30 a month."

<sup>47</sup>Unknown author to Chamberlain, 5 September 1910, Maine Historical Society;

and Warren to Meade, 19 June 1864, Chamberlain papers, Library of Congress.

<sup>48</sup>Grant, Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant, p. 457.

<sup>49</sup>Special Order #39, 20 June 1864, Chamberlain papers, Library of Congress; Grant to Stanton, 20 June 1864, Chamberlain papers, Library of Congress; Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Maine for the Years 1864 and 1865, p. 334; and Chamberlin, History of the One Hundred and Fiftieth Regiment, p. 264.

<sup>50</sup>Gilmore to Hodsdon, 5 July 1864, Maine Historical Society.

<sup>51</sup>Chamberlain to Cony, 31 August 1864, Maine Historical Society; and Wallace, Soul of the Lion: A Biography of General Joshua L. Chamberlain, p. 137.

<sup>52</sup>Chamberlain, "Abraham Lincoln seen from the field in the War for the Union," p. 5; and Chamberlain to Cony, 31 August 1864, Maine Historical Society.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### *SOUL OF THE LION*

It was that time of the year again. It was the time that soldiers had grown to dread, the time of year when the earth begins to thaw and the troops begin to march in search of war. Spring was fast arriving and along with it traveled its fateful companion, the campaigning season. But there was something different about this season of war. The blue-clad veterans -- survivors of the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, and Cold Harbor, and believers in Grant -- did not envision themselves being humbled by General Lee as they had been so many times before. Sitting outside the besieged city of Petersburg, the Union army began to coil for the final strike, feeling confident that Lee's thinning army could not stop it. Their voices, though aged by four years of war, echoed with a developing confidence that the end of their Civil War was finally approaching.

Only two years earlier, in the scorching months that followed the battle of Gettysburg, Chamberlain had believed the war's conclusion was only a few months away. In a letter to his wife, the former professor wrote, "This war, I suppose you can see, is rapidly coming to a close issue and the heavy fighting is nearly over. We may see one or two battles more like Gettysburg, though many doubt even that." But there would be no more epic battles like Gettysburg by the turn of 1865; only the type of battle where chivalry and glory had vanished to be replaced by simple grit and perseverance. Gettysburg was now a fond memory for the troops entrenched around

Petersburg. When discussing the differences between the two battles, Chamberlain said incisively that "There [Gettysburg], action concentrated, intense, decisive; here [Petersburg], struggle long-drawn, persistent, indecisive; there, the might stake, the destinies of nations determined by . . . an hour; here, stubborn patience, tireless fortitude, unflinching gaze at . . . death days and nights and months together."<sup>1</sup> This was the kind of war that had molded and shaped Chamberlain's army of 1865.

Brandishing his newly acquired brigadier-general's stripes and recovering from his hip wound, Chamberlain recognized the emerging confidence of the Union army outside Petersburg. This nascent spirit would ultimately put an end to the war. But it was not just a buoyant confidence, the kind that had been shattered at First Bull Run, but the stern, resourceful confidence that is developed by surviving one adversity after another.<sup>2</sup> Chamberlain reflected upon this theme when he wrote:

Is this identity a thing of substance, or spirit, or of name only? Is this the army which bright as its colors thronged the bridges of the Rapidan on that May morning less than a year before, and vanished into the murk of the Wilderness? Or is it scarcely the half of them; stern-faced by realities, saddened and perchance also strengthened by visions of the lost, the places of these filled by fresh youth's vicarious offering, united as one by the comradeship of arms and strong with the contagion of soul?<sup>3</sup>

But with victory in sight and new confidence in the army, the ailing Chamberlain had to take leave of his comrades. Earlier, to everyone's surprise, the general had returned to the front in November 1864 after only five months of rehabilitation from his severe wound. He resumed command of his refitted First Brigade despite the fact that he could not yet mount a horse or walk a hundred yards. Stationed with his Fifth Corps on the left of the Union siege lines, Chamberlain saw action in Grant's excursions directed upon the Confederates' lines of communications, namely Weldon Railroad. After Chamberlain participated in a December raid, his wound grew so painful and unbearable because of the extreme cold and snow that he was persuaded by friends to

leave the Petersburg lines and head to Philadelphia for hospitalization. Once in Philadelphia, Chamberlain was strongly advised by his surgeons not to resume active duty, but to settle for a less strenuous occupation in private life. Several enticing offers floated Chamberlain's way, yet he declined all of them. He wanted to return to the military and after several weeks, Chamberlain's condition had so improved in his mind that he left the hospital and returned to his command in late February.<sup>4</sup>

Chamberlain, the hero of Little Round Top and Rives' Salient, did not have to return to the front. He could have easily turned his back on the war's carnage and rejoined his family in Maine. However, he chose to remain in the service of his country. Why did he? Chamberlain's reasons for returning to the army can be found in his personality. The general, a minister in his pre-war days, was a product of Victorian culture, a culture which greatly emphasized the morality of man. In an address for the dedication of the Maine monuments at Gettysburg, Chamberlain spoke about this morality. "We fought no better, perhaps, than they. We exhibited, perhaps no higher individual qualities. But the cause for which we fought was higher; our thought was wider."<sup>5</sup> To Chamberlain, the moral forces had a greater importance than any material factors.<sup>6</sup> Chamberlain, in essence, believed God was on his side; therefore he must fight as an instrument of His will until the war was settled.

Back at the front, General Chamberlain again took command of his somewhat altered First Brigade. Chamberlain's brigade consisted of two newly formed regiments, the 198th Pennsylvania and the 185th New York. The 198th fell under the command of a capable, veteran officer, Brigadier-General Horatio G. Sickel. Sickel had personally organized the regiment in the fall of 1864 and later found himself in command of the First Brigade during Chamberlain's absence.<sup>7</sup> Chamberlain highly regarded the skills of Sickel. The 185th, the smaller of the two regiments, was commanded by the able Colonel Gustave Sniper. When the numbers were totaled, Chamberlain's Brigade had

1,750 men present for duty. Though the two regiments were short about 450 of their normal strength, they still were much larger than the older regiments in the army.<sup>8</sup>

Two additional brigades, besides Chamberlain's, also served with him in Griffin's First Division. The Second Brigade, commanded by Colonel Edgar M. Gregory, could field about 1,750 soldiers. Three New York regiments, the 187th, 188th, and 189th, made up the brigade. The final brigade, the Third, was Chamberlain's old brigade. It was still commanded by the ostentatious, though brave Brigadier-General Joseph Bartlett. Bartlett had been placed in command of eight war-torn veteran units with their numbers having been bolstered by a few raw recruits so as to give the companies the appearance of a regiment. The Third Brigade consisted of some of the most famous regiments of the Army of the Potomac, the First and 16th Michigan, the 32nd Massachusetts, the 20th Maine, and the 83rd, 91st, 118th, and 155th Pennsylvania Regiments. These eight regiments could barely field 3,000 men. As of 29 March 1865, Griffin had at his disposal 6,547 men in his First Division, nearly 4,000 men short of its full ranks.<sup>9</sup>

The Fifth Corps had two more divisions to fill out its numbers. Brigadier-General Romeyn Ayres commanded the Second Division and the Third Division was entrusted to Brigadier-General Samuel Crawford. Crawford was probably the weakest divisional commander in Warren's Fifth Corps, in spite of his long war service. Chamberlain politely referred to Crawford's inabilities as "peculiarities."<sup>10</sup>

At the top command post for the Fifth Corps sat Major-General Warren. Warren had, at one time, been the darling of the service after his exploits on Little Round Top, and he even gained the hard-earned admiration of the common soldier. But the distinguished looking Warren was gradually losing his favored position. Grant once thought of Warren as the ideal replacement for Meade, but the idea had been dismissed after Warren's molasses-like maneuvers at Spotsylvania. Warren, an engineer by

training, was not the man to strike quickly and decisively. He and his type were obsolete; they belonged in the world of the Ambrose Burnside, likable but rather ineffective. There would be no place for Warren in a world of Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan.<sup>11</sup>

Grant, with his calm demeanor, continued to apply pressure to Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. With sizeable battalions behind him, Grant extended his lines over sixteen miles in an attempt to stretch Lee's army thin. Occasional Federal excursions severed several of Lee's communication lines, but Lee still clung to Petersburg, the last Rebel defense before Richmond. While Grant hogtied Lee to Petersburg, he gave his trusted subordinate, Major-General William T. Sherman, a free reign through Georgia and the Carolinas. Sherman's legions, once they reached North Carolina, further tightened the vice around Lee since his flank and rear both were now vulnerable to attack by Sherman's rugged Western soldiers.

Rumors drifted through picket lines that Joseph Johnston's ragtag bunch in North Carolina would march north and attack the Federals' rear and flank. Chamberlain worried little about Johnston's movements since Sherman practically had destroyed the Army of Tennessee, but Lee's actions did concern him. If Lee could shake loose from Grant's grip and join Johnston in North Carolina, the gray-bearded Virginian could possibly defeat Sherman and then turn on Grant, defeating both in a piecemeal fashion.<sup>12</sup>

But Lee would have to avoid Grant's pesky cavalry commander, Major-General Philip Sheridan, if he planned to snatch a victory from the Federals. "Little Phil" Sheridan, wearing his usually dirty uniform and a hat that was too small for his large head, had become a character of almost mythic proportions after his escapades in the Shenandoah Valley. After his famous ride and the destruction of Jubal Early's army, Sheridan proceeded to make an ashheap of the valley. Chamberlain felt a certain

"admiration and awe" for the pint-sized commander, though he would later question Sheridan's fateful future decisions.<sup>13</sup>

In the meantime, Chamberlain witnessed the gradual demoralization in the Rebel ranks. Throughout the month, Confederate soldiers deserted their lines and either went home or into the Yankee picket lines. At times, one tired grayback would toss down his weapon and surrender, and at other times, a dozen or more would desert. These deserters discussed rumors about Sheridan in the valley and Sherman in Georgia with their Yankee captors. The Rebels did not know if they should believe these rumors, but they did know one thing; they were hungry. Rations were down to an ounce of meat per day with no sign of improvement. The Confederates were so demoralized that they were believed to have suffered a thousand desertions every day. One talkative Rebel said the number would be higher if the Federals did not fire upon them while they deserted.<sup>14</sup>

As the total of deserting Confederates grew at an alarming rate, Lee's precarious position called for one more drastic measure. Lee gave Major-General John B. Gordon, a Hotspur in a gray uniform, the challenge of breaking through Grant's tightening ring. Gordon chose the Federal Fort Stedman as his target. With a surprise attack, he could possibly get into the rear of the Union lines and thereby divide the Yankees. If Gordon could succeed, he could force the Federals to shorten their front, and Lee's men would have shorter lines to defend; then troops possibly could be sent to the aid of Johnston in North Carolina.<sup>15</sup>

Just before daybreak on 25 March, Gordon launched his attack. Though the attack showed some initial success, it quickly bogged down. In the end, the Union troops rallied and killed hundreds of desperate Rebels and captured thousands. The whole incident had two effects; it demonstrated that the "demoralized" Confederates would still fight, and it also caused Chamberlain to stir from his quarters. Soon after Gordon's

attack, Chamberlain's First Brigade was marched on the double-quick to its right for two miles. From here, it was to reinforce Ambrose Burnside's engaged Ninth Corps. Burnside did not need the assistance of Chamberlain's brigade, so it trudged about a mile back to its left and positioned itself to the rear of the Second and Fifth Corps. After all the marching, Chamberlain and his men exchanged a few rounds with some Alabama troops until the Rebels retired. With the line secured, Chamberlain and his brigade returned to their camp and settled in for a quiet evening.<sup>16</sup>

For the next two days, only minor actions broke the silence as both sides merely probed for the strengths and weaknesses of enemy fortifications. While this was going on, Chamberlain recognized something developing on a much grander scale. Meetings were being held with many important and powerful men in attendance. Lincoln had traveled to the Petersburg front to meet with Grant and later, Sherman arrived from North Carolina while Sheridan, returning from a raid, rolled in after the western commander. One Union officer rather succinctly put these meetings in proper perspective when he wrote, "Something is up!"<sup>17</sup>

Something was up. Grant had summoned Sherman and Sheridan to his headquarters so that he could coordinate the converging Federal moves that would end the war. Grant developed his plans for the final campaign and decided that they would go into effect on 29 March.<sup>18</sup> Grant's strategy to end the war was not very complicated or even new. He was going to side step Lee's army to the left, as he had done at the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, and Cold Harbor. Only this time, Grant would stretch Lee's defenses so taut that they would have to snap. At the least, Grant wanted to force Lee to evacuate his solidly entrenched position and shift to the open ground. In open ground, Lee would be helpless in the face of Grant's overwhelming numbers.

The Fifth and Second Corps, which held the extreme left of the Union lines, were to move further to the left, stretching Lee's line, and outflanking the Rebels. Sheridan,

with his mobile force of 10,000 horsemen, was to extend beyond the Fifth Corps' left and then strike northward in an attempt to lure the Confederates out of their trenches. If Sheridan could not lure the Rebels out of their strong entrenchments, he was to destroy the vital Southside Railroad. And if possible, the ambitious cavalry commander would also try to destroy the Richmond and Danville Railroad. These were the only two remaining railroads to which Lee had access. In his orders, Grant had given Sheridan a tremendous amount of leeway in the execution of the plan in regards to the command structure of the Fifth Corps.<sup>19</sup> To replace these shifting troops, Major-General E.O.C Ord with his Army of the James was ordered to quietly withdraw from the Bermuda Hundred peninsula and assume the evacuated positions of the Fifth and Second Corps.<sup>20</sup>

Not much ever escaped the eyes of General Lee; and certainly this Union movement did not escape either. Intelligence reports had filtered their way up to Lee indicating that a large scale Federal movement was in the works. Lee calculated that Grant would marshal his forces against the right of his line, which was covered by the meandering stream, Hatcher's Run. Between Hatcher's Run and the Appomattox River, which both flow in a westerly direction, lay the all important Confederate supply and communication route, the Southside Railroad. If Lee wanted to fight another day, the railroad had to remain in his hands.<sup>21</sup>

General Lee undoubtedly knew that Grant's main objective would be the Southside Railroad. To reach the railroad, Lee felt that the Federals would have to cross Hatcher's Run at a point safe from Rebel fire. Therefore, Grant's men would have to retire in a southerly direction, then turn to their right and march westward beyond the Confederate right flank. Lee, after studying his maps, must have been encouraged somewhat when he realized the type of terrain in which the bluecoats would have to maneuver.<sup>22</sup>

The Federals were in for a difficult march. The terrain, as described by an

historian, was "flat, covered with timber and underbrush, seamed by swampy creeks and rivers, a bad place to march in, a worse place to make a bivouac and apparently a wholly impossible place for a battle." To make matters worse, drainage was very poor in this region. Rain could transform one of the many small creeks into a raging, unfordable stream in a short amount of time. The soil itself was a mixture of clay and sand and with the application of water, it would adopt the characteristic of a sticky mire or quicksand. Hence the roads, if they were to be utilized by soldiers, wagons, and horses, first had to be corduroyed. A difficult task indeed was ahead for the bluecoats.<sup>23</sup>

Taking the terrain into consideration, Lee decided Grant would cross Rowanty Creek at Monk's Neck Bridge. The creek was formed by the confluence of Gravelly and Hatcher's Runs. Once across the creek, Lee sensed the Federals would head for the Southside Railroad by way of Dinwiddie Court House and Five Forks. Fifteen miles had to be covered by foot, a job that would encompass a full day and one half, considering the condition of the roads. Although Five Forks was only four miles from his established right flank, Lee just could not stretch his line anymore. By this time, of the twenty-seven and one half miles held by his infantry, Lee could muster around 1,140 soldiers per mile. Grant's continual pounding of the withered Army of Northern Virginia had taken its toll.<sup>24</sup>

With Lee stretched to the breaking point, it was time for Grant to make his move. Grant directed the fiery tempered commander of the Army of the Potomac, Major-General Meade, to issue his directives to open the campaign. Warren received his orders for the Fifth Corps on 28 March, even though the orders had been written on the previous day. Meade had ordered Warren to move out from his camp near Hatcher's Run at 3:00 a.m. on the twenty-ninth. The corps' objective would be to occupy a westward position near the Dinwiddie Courthouse. To carry out the assigned movement, Warren, ever the paper-pushing Easterner, issued orders that coordinated and detailed

all the movements of his corps. Special orders were even given to the musicians specifying the times they should play or not.<sup>25</sup>

Chamberlain was ecstatic when he received his orders. The orders only announced another leftward movement, but it was different this time. Chamberlain captured his feelings about the movement on paper when he wrote:

It woke new courage and inspired confidence . . . It seemed to take us all into confidential relations with the commander; the whole object and plan set fourth in a manner clear, circumstantial, and complete, so that each subordinate knew the part he was expected to take. The colonels . . . felt that they were appreciated, and they were quickened in soldierly pride and many resolution. And the younger generals, who had become veterans in experience . . . took new assurance that permission was expressly given that when they got the enemy to "going," they might "push things" at their discretion.<sup>26</sup>

After the bugles sounded "lights out" on that damp Tuesday night, 28 March, little sleep was to be had among the ranks of the Fifth Corps. The men were either making last minute preparations or just too anxious to sleep. Chamberlain, like his men, did not get much sleep that night. He was deep in thought, praying that he would not hear another bugle cry "lights out" until "the nights of the tremendous tragedy were over; that whatever of him or his should be of the returning, never would return that awful, long repeated scene: two armies, battered, broken, blood-bathed from brow to foot, but still face to face in unconquerable resolve."<sup>27</sup> But now, the general could sense that the end was near.

To reach the Confederate flank, many roads had to be transversed. The main road heading out westerly from Petersburg was the Boydton Plank Road. For its first ten miles, the road ran nearly parallel to the Appomattox River. Gradually the road angled itself into a southwesterly direction. Both the road and the river were split by Lee's lifeline, the Southside Railroad. Southeast of the Boydton Plank Road lay the Vaughan Road. The Vaughan Road, with its first part in the rear of the Union entrenchments,

also wound in a southwesterly direction, having been only two miles east of Dinwiddie Courthouse. Five miles east of the Courthouse, one encountered the Quaker Road. This road, called the Military Road by some, cuts the Vaughan Road in the south and the Boydton Plank Road in the north. Where the Quaker Road bisects the Boydton Plank Road, the point lay in the middle between Gravelly Run and Hatcher's Run, both of which were branches of the Rowanty Creek.<sup>28</sup>

A mile north of the intersection of the Quaker Road and the Boydton Plank Road was the White Oak Road. This road--which Lee had to hold since it was the only one by which he could send a force westward to stop Sheridan-- led off from the Boydton Plank Road at a right angle westerly. It wound along the ridges between the streams and branches that form the headwaters of Gravelly and Hatcher's Runs. If one traveled about six miles westerly upon the White Oak Road, he would find himself at an intersection aptly named Five Forks. From this important confluence of roads, it was only a short trek northward to a station on the Southside Railroad.<sup>29</sup>

Lee's line of entrenchments west from Petersburg protected the key Boydton Plank Road, but only as far as Hatcher's Run. From Burgess' Mill on the run, the Confederate lines jumped the run and extended two miles down the White Oak Road. After two miles, the fortification angled northward along the Claiborne Road, which led to Sutherland Station on the Southside Railroad, a point ten miles from Petersburg. The defensive perimeter stopped after a mile when Hatcher's Run was reached. This was the extreme right of Lee's line.<sup>30</sup>

Finally, Wednesday, the twenty-ninth, arrived. At 3:00 a.m., the Fifth Corps fell in formation to march with Ayres' Second Division in the lead. Griffin's First Division followed with Chamberlain's brigade in the advance. Crawford, as would be expected, brought up the rear with his Third Division. As they plodded down the Old Stage Road and through Arthur's Swamp, Ayres' vanguard approached old man Perkins' House

near the Rowanty Creek around 4:45 a.m. To Ayres' dismay, the bridge he wanted to use, Monk's Neck Bridge, had been destroyed. On the other side of the creek, a few observant Rebels fired several shots at Ayres' scouts fleeing. Supported by fallen trees and the bridge's remains, Ayres' infantry struggled across the creek and secured a foothold on the opposite bank. Hurriedly, a company of the 50th New York Engineers laid a canvas pontoon bridge, and the corps was on the move again.<sup>31</sup>

The advance was slowed considerably because the retreating Rebels had felled a number of trees in the road. But by 8:00 a.m., the lead elements of the Fifth Corps reached the junction of the Old Stage and the Vaughan Roads. At this point, Warren deployed his corps. Ayres was to proceed down to the Vaughan Road until he reached the intersection with the Quaker Road. Griffin's division was posted on the high ground dividing the headquarters of the Great and the Little Cattail Runs with Chamberlain's brigades posted near the Chapple farmhouse. Crawford's Division was directed to cover a country road leading to the Boydton Plank Road.<sup>32</sup> Still, there was no sign of a major Confederate force in the vicinity.

While Warren contemplated his next move, the Second Corps, commanded by the proficient Major-General Andrew Humphreys, was also edging westward in accordance with Grant's strategy. Warren's right flank had not yet made any contact with Humphrey's leading units which caused some concern among the commanders. At noon, Warren received a dispatch from Meade's headquarters ordering him to march north on Quaker Road, across Gravelly Run, and to establish contact with General Humphreys. With this done, Warren could focus his efforts on holding and covering the important Boydton Plank Road.<sup>33</sup>

As if roused by the dispatch from Meade's headquarters, Warren directed a staff officer to inform Griffin of a move. Leaving his camp near the Great and Little Cattail Runs, Griffin was to push his division up the Quaker Road and establish contact with

Humphreys. Crawford was ordered to move out his division after Griffin's to serve as support if needed. Shortly after noon, the Federal column was trudging its way northward on the Quaker Road with Chamberlain and his brigade in the lead.<sup>34</sup>

Lee had not been idle while the Federals moved westward. Suspicious of Grant's intentions, Lee had sent Lieutenant-General Richard "Dick" Anderson's corps, with Major-General Bushrod Johnson's division and Brigadier-General Henry Wise's brigade, to the extreme right of their entrenchments along the White Oak Road. In addition, Lee had also ordered Major-General George Pickett's division to the far right. Earlier, Pickett had been stationed near the Bermuda Hundred line, which was the far left of the Confederate defenses. However, once Lee was informed of the Union advances on the twenty-ninth, he viewed the situation with desperation. Brigadier-General Samuel McGowan's brigade of Major-General Cadmus M. Wilcox's division quickly removed itself from the defense lines on the east side of Hatcher's Run and rushed to the right flank. A division of cavalry, commanded by Lee's nephew, Major-General Fitzhugh Lee, was also dispatched to the threatened flank.<sup>35</sup>

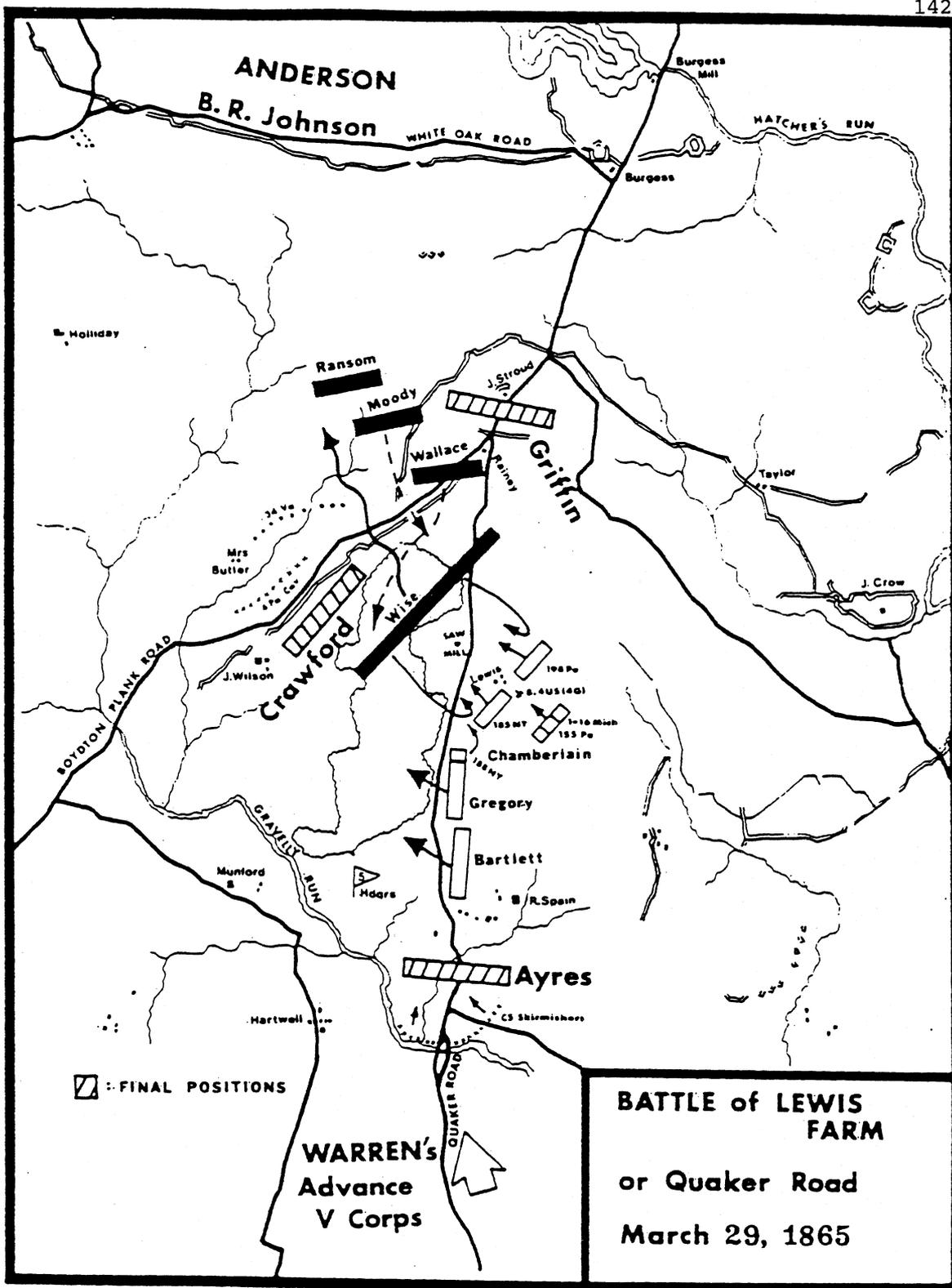
When General Bushrod Johnson's scouts discovered Griffin's advancing columns on the Quaker Road, he informed his superior, General Dick Anderson. Anderson then ordered Johnson to deploy his veteran division and drive the Yankees back to Vaughan Road. When Johnson's division moved from its position on the White Oak Road, General Henry Wise's brigade was at its helm. Heading in a southerly direction down Quaker Road, Wise divided and deployed his all-Virginian brigade. The 34th and 46th regiments were placed on the right of the road, with the 34th's flank close to the Boydton Plank Road; and the 26th and 59th regiments situated themselves on the left side of the road. To the right flank and rear of his brigade, Wise was trailed by the brigades of Brigadier-Generals William Wallace, Young M. Moody, and Matthew Ransom. The four brigades continued down the road beyond the fork of the Boydton Plank Road. Once

beyond the fork, Wise's brigade drew fire from advancing Yankee skirmishers.<sup>36</sup> The battle of Quaker Road had begun.

The advancing Yankee skirmishers were from Chamberlain's brigade. Chamberlain pushed the rest of his command forward till it approached Gravelly Run. The Confederates, as at Monk Neck's Bridge, had demolished the span over the narrow stream. To make the situation worse, the general observed enemy soldiers on the north bank, perched behind their hastily constructed defenses, just waiting for his advance. Chamberlain remarked that he soon found the road more entitled to a military name than its Quaker appellation.<sup>37</sup>

Chamberlain, though perplexed for a moment, quickly devised a plan which he relayed to his superior, General Griffin. Seeing no alternative, Griffin acquiesced to Chamberlain's plan. The plan would place General Sickel, with eight companies of the 198th regiment, on the right, slightly below the ruins of the destroyed bridge. Major E. A. Glenn, with the second battalion of the 198th, would wade the waist-deep stream and function as skirmishers. Sickel was to support Glenn's movement with a heavy, blanketing fire. Once Glenn made it across the stream, Chamberlain would follow close behind while leading Colonel Sniper's 185th regiment. To assist Chamberlain in his endeavors, Griffin directed General Gregory's Second Brigade to be placed on the extreme left for support purposes. Also, General Bartlett, with his Third Brigade, would be available if the situation required his services.<sup>38</sup>

Major Glenn, undaunted, splashed into the stream with his six companies, dashed across, and assaulted the Rebel's breastworks front and flank. Chamberlain swiftly dove into the muddy waters ahead of his brigade and joined Glenn's hot fight. The General angled his attack obliquely so as to crash into the Confederate's right flank. The furious, frantic fighting was close quartered with many of the men using their hands as weapons and their rifles as clubs, but Chamberlain steadily pounded and



Map from Calkins and Bearss, Battle of Five Forks, p. 15.

pushed forward. Finally, the entire brigade had come together once again as it drove on like a wave. Chamberlain continued to press the enemy through the woods and underbrush for about a mile until he reached the Lewis' farm. Near the farm, the running Rebels were reinforced which rallied them to stand and fight. Though they poured a deadly volley into Chamberlain's ranks, the General was not discouraged. To counter the Confederate stand, he extended his line of battle and enveloped the enemy. Chamberlain resumed his drive and pushed the graycoats to the edge of a thick woods. Beyond the woods, a large body of Confederates had massed behind a strong breastwork of earth and logs. Chamberlain wisely halted and waited for the rest of the First Division to arrive.<sup>39</sup>

Chamberlain, for the most part, had engaged only a portion of General Wise's brigade. But once his advance reached beyond the Lewis' farm and neared the fork of the Quaker and Boydton Plank Roads, the Rebel numbers swelled with the better part of Johnson's division present. When the Confederates saw Chamberlain halt, they abandoned their defense and sprang to the offensive. A "withering volley" poured into Chamberlain's scattered brigade and then the Rebels charged. The brigade recoiled; its left flank turned in the face of the of the enemy's increasing numbers. The numbers grew as General Wallace's brigade arrived on the field to reinforce Wise. After struggling with the graycoats for about a half hour, Chamberlain finally rallied his men and repelled the Rebels' attack. With the field cleared, Chamberlain withdrew to the Lewis' farm to reform and consider his next move. In all, the general's brigade captured about a hundred men from Wise's and Wallace's brigades. The Rebel prisoners, somewhat boisterous, said more men were arriving and that they would hold this fork, the vital point in the defense of the White Oak and Boydton Plank Roads.<sup>40</sup>

While Chamberlain nervously rested, he wondered where the rest of the First Division was. He knew General Gregory was to be in support on his left so why did he

not attack? Apparently, after Chamberlain's brigade dashed across Gravelly Run, the rest of the division fell prey to Confederate delaying tactics. The bluecoats had to wait for a bridge to be built over the run before they could cross. The bridge would not sustain the weight of artillery so they had to wait for a second bridge to be erected. Once over the run, the Federals found the road cluttered with felled trees. Felled timber would not stop infantry, but it would artillery. On the other hand, Griffin's division had advanced farther than Humphrey's corps on the right. The Fifth Corps at least had a road; the Second Corps had to work its way through the densely wooded ground between the Quaker Road and Hatcher's Run.<sup>41</sup>

By himself, General Griffin weaved his way to Chamberlain's delicate position. Griffin immediately wanted to carry the Rebel works before they could become more formidable. When Chamberlain peered across the field to the enemy's earthworks, he could not have been encouraged by what he saw. An open field was in his front, encompassing about a thousand square yards, with the enemy stationed at the edge of a woods. Their line was centered around a pile of sawdust where an old sawmill stood. The open field was flanked by woods on both sides which were teeming with Confederate sharpshooters.<sup>42</sup>

Despite the apparent difficulties, Chamberlain prepared to assault the Confederate line. Since the Quaker Road split the open field, Chamberlain would use it as a guide. He placed Sickel's 198th regiment on the right of it and Sniper's 185th regiment on the left. Chamberlain, with his penchant for charges, would lead Major Glenn and his six companies directly up the road. His objective was the center of the Rebel line, the sawmill. Chamberlain ordered his men not to return any fire so as not to waste time and give the Confederates' easy targets. If possible, Chamberlain wanted his men to use their bayonets once in close-quartered action.<sup>43</sup>

On a given signal, Chamberlain and his brigade fearlessly charged the enemy in a

cavalry fashion. The Rebels, behind their breastworks, delivered a devastating volley into Federal ranks, causing them to stagger. Bluecoats littered the field, but Chamberlain pressed forward. The flanking Rebel sharpshooters then entered the fray with an accurate fire, but Chamberlain still pressed ahead. As the brigade converged on the sawmill, it returned the Confederate musket fire with a volley of its own. No one was giving any ground. The Johnnies, being difficult to see since they had been ordered to lie flat and shoot from a rest on the elbows, continued to fire into Chamberlain's battered brigade. Chamberlain knew he had only one option: press the attack.<sup>44</sup>

As the pitch of battle intensified, Chamberlain's horse, Charlemagne, bolted ahead of the brigade's column towards the sawmill. Chamberlain pulled the reign to check him, but the horse cavilled and a minie ball tore through its neck to strike Chamberlain slightly below his heart. The bullet, after passing through the horse's large neck muscle, ripped Chamberlain's sleeve and painfully bruised his bridle arm, before hitting his chest. A leather case of field orders and a brass-mounted hand mirror in his breast pocket deflected the speeding bullet and probably saved his life. The deflection of the bullet sent it around two ribs to exit through the back seam of his coat. Not yet finished, the bullet destroyed the holstered pistol of one of the general's aides and knocked him from his saddle.<sup>45</sup>

Chamberlain, stunned and bewildered, regained his senses after a short lapse. The first words Chamberlain heard were from his divisional commander, General Griffin. Griffin soothingly said, "My dear General, you are gone." As Griffin placed a steadying arm around Chamberlain's waist, the wounded general regained his senses and heard that chilling, high pitched screech made only by Southern soldiers, the rebel yell. The yell stirred the bloodied general to lift his head and as he did, he caught the sight of his broken right line retreating before the enemy. Chamberlain then turned to Griffin

and replied, "Yes, General, I am gone," as he got up and spurred away on his wounded horse, Charlemagne.<sup>46</sup>

Covered with his own blood and that of the horse, Chamberlain was thought to have been "gone." He must have appeared to be an apparition with general's stripes. The general knew his appearance was ghastly and later wrote, "I must have been a queer spectacle as I rose in the saddle tattered and battered, bareheaded and blood-smeared." But Chamberlain did not have time to waste grooming himself. He galloped to the right to rally his crumbling line. When he entered the ranks of the 198th, officers and men gasped at their commander. Since Chamberlain looked close to death, someone even sent a wire to the New York morning papers announcing his death.<sup>47</sup>

Finally gathering his senses after the wounding, Chamberlain rallied his men from the swirling vortex. The 198th turned with a determination to stem the gray tide. Sickel, at the extreme right of the regiment, had rallied his men prior to Chamberlain's arrival. But Sickel's work on the right was threatened when he took a minie ball, shattering his arm. Chamberlain galloped to Sickel's aid, but before he could get there, Sickel's talented young major, Charles I. McEuen, was shot dead in his saddle. The 198th, infuriated by the loss of Sickel and McEuen, unleashed a furious assault and forced the Rebels back to their breastworks. With the situation now much improved on the right, Chamberlain then returned to his original position, the center near the sawmill. As he passed along the lines, he was astonished that both armies, blue and gray, cheered him. The general hardly knew in what world he was.<sup>48</sup>

When Chamberlain had made his way back to the sawmill, the exhausted Charlemagne could no longer keep his head up. Chamberlain climbed off his wounded horse and assumed the role of an infantryman. Glenn, still endeavoring to take the sawmill, was having much difficulty. As Chamberlain made his way forward to evaluate the situation, a sudden shift in the lines left the general surrounded by

graycoats. The Rebels leveled their rifles and locked their bayonets around him.<sup>49</sup>

Chamberlain was in a quandary; but the graycoats did not know whom they had surrounded. All the Rebels could see was a hatless foot soldier in a dingy uniform beyond recognition. Having nothing to lose, Chamberlain cordially spoke with a Southern drawl and said, "Surrender? What's the matter with you? What do you take me for? Don't you see these Yanks right on to us? Come along with me and let us break 'em" With a motioning of his sword, Chamberlain induced the confused Confederates to follow his lead. The crafty general, reflecting on the incident, wrote, "They did follow me like brave fellows,--most of them too far; for they were a long time getting back."<sup>50</sup>

Once Chamberlain deposited his gray-clad followers to the rear, there was a short lull in the action near the sawmill. During the lull, Colonel Ellis Spear, from Chamberlain's old 20th Maine, appeared out of the hazy mist. Reaching into his breast pocket, Spear withdrew a flask for himself and his former commander. The flask, Spear assured Chamberlain, contained some choice wine. Chamberlain, forgetting his pious, Victorian background, tilted the Jamaica-ginger bottle to his mouth and guzzled down the wine. Spear, somewhat shocked by Chamberlain's indulgence, in later years, would never let the general forget his actions.<sup>51</sup>

The wine may have invigorated him but so did the Rebel charge on his left flank. Sniper and his 185th regiment had earlier pushed to the enemy's works, but they were now slowly falling back. The onslaught of the Confederates pressed Sniper's line back perpendicular to its original position, parallel to the Quaker Road. Meanwhile, Chamberlain apprehended an awkward, pallid horse, mounted it, and rode to help the beleaguered Sniper.<sup>52</sup>

As the minutes passed, Chamberlain's left flank had become more and more endangered. Colonel Sniper was holding his regiment together at the seams while throngs of graycoats entered the fracas to tear at him. In a perilous position,

Chamberlain dispatched a staff-officer to locate General Gregory's brigade to have it attack the Rebels. Gregory should have already been on the field and in position to enfilade the enemy's right. Griffin, beaming with confidence, told his brigade commander to hold on for ten more minutes and he would bring a battery to the First Brigade's rescue. Guns and Griffin had put the spirit back into Chamberlain.

Observing an eminence to his rear which he had intended to use as a base to reform his line, he decided upon a new plan. The elevation would give the artillery a commanding view of the field. The bluecoats now must push ahead and sacrifice blood for time until the guns could reach the height. Chamberlain shouted to Sniper, "Once more! Try the steel! Hell for ten minutes and we are out of it!"<sup>53</sup>

Sniper switched to the offensive and dashed across the open field. Minutes ticked by as Chamberlain anxiously awaited the battery's arrival. Griffin came through. Battery B of the 4th U.S. Artillery, commanded by Lieutenant John Mitchell, was moving with "headlong speed, horses smoking, battery thundering with jolt and rattle, wheeling into action front . . . while the earth flew beneath the wheels,-- magnificent the shining, terrible Napoleons."<sup>54</sup>

Though excited, Chamberlain kept his composure. He asked Mitchell, "Do you think you can put solid shot or percussion into those woods close over the Rebels' heads, without hurting my men?" Mitchell answered, "Yes, Sir! if they will keep where they are." Chamberlain replied, "Well then, give it to them the best you know. But stop quick at my signal, and fire clear of my men when they charge."<sup>55</sup>

Mitchell commenced a devastating fire; the shells ripped through the woods, sending splinters in all directions. The shrill voices of wounded men filled the air as Mitchell fired a blast of canister. Wise's Rebel brigade could not stand it alone. General Moody's Alabaman brigade formed on Wise's left and charged the four-gun battery. The fighting around the battery was at a feverish pitch. Mitchell and four of his men

were cut down, but the battery continued to hold on as the Confederates crept to within thirty feet in three separate assaults. The Federals could not hold out much longer.<sup>56</sup>

When the battle was slipping away on Chamberlain's left flank, Griffin promptly returned to the battle trailed by four regiments. The 188th New York regiment, from Gregory's brigade, joined the fight on Chamberlain's right flank. Three regiments from Bartlett's brigade, the 1st and 16th Michigan and the 155th Pennsylvania, were also thrown into the struggle. Chamberlain deployed the 1st and 16th on Sniper's right. The 155th, with their colorful Zouave uniforms, did not even take the time to deploy; they pushed straight ahead, led by Brigadier-General Alfred Pearson, who grasped the regimental colors and charged towards the center of the Rebel line. Major Glenn was glad to be joined in the fight that he had carried alone for so long a time.<sup>57</sup>

After the news of Federal reinforcements reached Confederate General Dick Anderson, he ordered General Johnson to recall his division. Moody's, Wallace's, and Wise's brigades were to be pulled out of the breastworks north of Lewis' Farm. Ransom's brigade provided the rear guard action for the withdrawal back to the White Oak Road. The battle was finally coming to a close.<sup>58</sup>

The battle of the Quaker Road, sometimes referred to as the battle of Lewis' Farm, ended for Chamberlain soon after the reinforcements took the field. Sniper's 185th was drawn back to guard Griffin's prized battery. The 198th was ordered to gather near the farm buildings and catch its breath. The rest of the division drove forward while nipping at the rear of the scurrying Rebels. Word reached Chamberlain that the Second Corps was close on his right. Obviously, Humphreys' corps had had an arduous journey through the dense forests which had caused them to miss the battle.<sup>59</sup>

On that cool, wet Wednesday, Chamberlain's journey was finally coming to completion. He had performed brilliantly on the field and was lauded by his superiors.

During the whole engagement, the general seemed omnipresent; he had constantly encouraged and rallied his brave soldiers in one crisis after another despite his brush with death. The men responded readily to the general as their commander and as a fellow foot soldier. If his men were asked to risk their lives, Chamberlain felt it was his duty to be with them, no matter what the cost may be. All in all, the battle lasted nearly two hours for Chamberlain's brigade.

Although Chamberlain performed brilliantly, he could not stop the killing. In the engagement, around fifty men of the First Brigade were killed with another three hundred wounded. This was about twenty percent of Chamberlain's entire brigade. Somehow the brigade managed to capture over two hundred prisoners during the battle. Amazingly, the General had engaged four Confederate brigades numbering over six thousand effectives. General Warren congratulated Chamberlain and said, "General, you have done splendid work. I am telegraphing the President. You will hear from it." Soon afterwards, Chamberlain received a brevet commission of Major-General for "conspicuous gallantry in action on the Quaker Road, March 29, 1865."<sup>60</sup> Chamberlain would always be especially proud of this honor because he had been opposed by a much larger force than his own.

But the work was not yet over. When the clouds opened on the two opposing armies late in the afternoon, nature, with all her might, could not wash away the remains of the fearful battle. In the aftermath, Chamberlain rode over the open field to the abandoned Rebel lines; a field strewn with the dead, and was overcome with remorse and sadness. That afternoon, he helped bury over one hundred fifty Confederates along with his own dead. It did not make any sense to the somewhat disillusioned Chamberlain. Tired of the war, the general wondered why "men made in the image of God; marred by the hand of man, and must we say in the name of God? And where is the reckoning for such things? And who is answerable?"<sup>61</sup>

As the sun set over the battlefield, Chamberlain spent the night wandering, unable to find the glory in war, while trying to put a meaning on the day's events. He visited the wounded and gave them what comfort he could. Finally, the General's visitations brought him to the side of the courageous General Sickel. Chamberlain fondly remembered Sickel's heroic actions during the fight. Sickel, with his shattered arm lying by his side, looked into Chamberlain's face and said, "General, you have the soul of the lion and the heart of a woman." Somehow Sickel had noticed that Chamberlain needed the comfort, not him. The general parted and returned to the Lewis' farm to get out of the rain. Chamberlain slumped his aching body into a corner and wrote a letter to the McEuen family explaining their son's death.<sup>62</sup> For Chamberlain, there would be much more to explain and understand before the war was over.

#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Chamberlain to Fanny, 12 September 1863, Chamberlain papers, Library of Congress; and Chamberlain, "Reminiscences of Petersburg and Appomattox," p. 167.

<sup>2</sup>Gerald Linderman, Embattled Courage: The Experience of Combat in the Civil War, pp. 1-3. Linderman has examined a similar theme throughout his excellent book.

<sup>3</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup>In Memoriam: Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, p. 6; and Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Maine for the Years 1864 and 1865, p. 334.

<sup>5</sup>Chamberlain, "Address of Gen. Joshua L. Chamberlain at the Dedication of the Maine Monuments on the Battlefield of Gettysburg, October 3, 1893," (Augusta: Lakeside Press, 1898), p. 551.

<sup>6</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, p. 11.

<sup>7</sup>E. M. Woodward, History of the 198th Pennsylvania Volunteers (Trenton, New Jersey, 1884), pp. 2,13.

<sup>8</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, p.11.

<sup>9</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, p. 39; and Gerrish and Hutchinson, The Blue and the Gray, p. 405.

<sup>10</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, p. 168.

<sup>11</sup>Porter, Campaigning with Grant, p. 108; Grant, Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant, p. 534; Catton, Grant Takes Command, p. 444; and Smith, History of the Corn Exchange Regiment, pp. 655-656.

<sup>12</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, pp. 31-33.

<sup>13</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, p. 38; Porter, Campaigning with Grant, p. 24; Gerrish, Army Life: A Private's Reminiscences of the Civil War, pp. 248-249; and Boatner, III, The Civil War Dictionary, p. 748.

<sup>14</sup>O.R., vol. 46, series 1, part 2, pp. 889,904; and O.R., vol. 46, series 1, part 3, pp. 753. Also see J. F. J. Caldwell, The History of a Brigade of South Carolinians Known First as "Gregg's" and subsequently as "McGowan's Brigade" (Philadelphia: King and Baird, Printers, 1866), pp. 247-257. Caldwell provides an informative description of the Confederate army's plight in early 1865.

<sup>15</sup>John B. Gordon, Reminiscences of the Civil War (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904), pp. 397-404; Freeman, Lee: A Biography, vol.4, pp. 14-15; and Dowdey and Manarin, The Wartime Papers of Robert E. Lee, p. 917.

<sup>16</sup>E. M. Woodward, History of the 198th Pennsylvania Volunteers (Trenton, New Jersey, no publisher or date), p. 35; and O.R., vol. 46, series 1, part 1, pp. 267-268.

<sup>17</sup>Robert McAllister to Ellen McAllister, 27 March 1865, found in James Robertson, ed., The Civil War Letters of General Robert McAllister (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1965), p. 599.

<sup>18</sup>Grant, Personal Memoirs, pp. 527-529.

<sup>19</sup>Sheridan had been given authorization by Grant to use Warren's Fifth Corps if he felt any need for them. Grant, Personal Memoirs, pp. 529-530; William Powell, The Fifth Army Corps, pp. 774-775; Andrew Humphreys, The Virginia Campaign of '64 and

<sup>165</sup>(New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1883), p. 324; and Chris Calkins and Ed Bearss, Battle of Five Forks (Lynchburg, Virginia: H. E. Howard, Inc., 1988), pp. 1-3.

<sup>20</sup>Bernarr Cresap, Appomattox Commander: The Story of E.O.C. Ord (New York: A. S. Barnes & Company, Inc., 1981), pp. 177-196. Cresap's book provides a good narrative concerning the moves of the Fifth Corps in conjunction with the Army of the James.

<sup>21</sup>Freeman, Lee: A Biography, p. 22.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

<sup>23</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, p. 40; Catton, Grant Takes Command, p. 440; and Grant, Personal Memoirs, p. 531-532.

<sup>24</sup>Freeman, Lee: A Biography, pp. 23-24; and Calkins and Bearss, Battle of Five Forks, p. 8.

<sup>25</sup>O.R., vol. 46, series 1, part 1, pp. 797-798.

<sup>26</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, pp. 33-34.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 34-35.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 40-41.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup>O.R., vol. 46, series 1, part 1, p. 799; and Smith, History of the Corn Exchange Regiment, pp. 561-562.

<sup>32</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, p. 42; O.R. vol. 46, series 1, part 1, p. 799; and Calkins and Bearss, Battle of Five Forks, p. 17.

<sup>33</sup>O.R., vol. 46, series 1, part 1, pp. 799-800; Francis Walker, History of the Second Corps (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1891), p. 657; and Humphreys, Virginia Campaign, pp. 284-285.

<sup>34</sup>O.R., vol. 46, series 1, part 1, pp. 799-800, 845; and Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, p. 42.

<sup>35</sup>Freeman, Lee: A Biography, pp. 27-28; Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, vol. 3, pp. 656-658; and Humphreys, Virginia Campaign, p. 326.

<sup>36</sup>O.R., vol. 46, series 1, part 1, pp. 1286-1287; Calkins and Bearss, Battle of Five Forks, pp. 22-23; and John Cutchins, A Famous Command: The Richmond Light Infantry Blues (Richmond: Garret & Masters, Printers, 1934), p. 159.

<sup>37</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, p. 42.

<sup>38</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, pp. 42-43; and O.R., vol. 46, series 1, part 1, p. 847.

<sup>39</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, pp. 42-43; O.R., vol. 46, series 1, part 1, p. 847; and Calkins and Bearss, Battle of Five Forks, p. 23.

<sup>40</sup>Cutchins, A Famous Command, p. 159; Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, pp. 43-44; and O.R., vol. 46, series 1, part 1, pp. 847-848.

<sup>41</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, pp. 44-45; O.R., vol. 46, series 1, part 1, p. 800; and Calkins and Bearss, Battle of Five Forks, p. 23.

<sup>42</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, pp. 44-45; and Woodward, History of the 198th, p. 36.

<sup>43</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, p. 45.

<sup>44</sup>Cutchins, A Famous Command, p. 159; and Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, p. 45.

<sup>45</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, pp. 45-46; and Wallace, Soul of the Lion: A Biography of General Joshua L. Chamberlain, p. 144.

<sup>46</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, p. 46.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., pp. 46-47.

<sup>48</sup>Woodward, History of the 198th, p. 37; and Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, pp. 47-48.

<sup>49</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, p. 48.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., pp. 48-49.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., pp. 49-50.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., pp. 50-51.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., pp. 51-52.

<sup>56</sup>O.R., vol. 46, series 1, part 1, pp. 848, 899, 1287; Cutchins, A Famous Command, p. 159; Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, p. 52; and Calkins and Bearss, Battle of Five Forks, pp. 25, 123.

<sup>57</sup>O.R., vol. 46, series 1, part 1, pp. 846, 848, 854, 858, 862; Under the Maltese Cross: Campaigns, 155th Pennsylvania Regiment (Pittsburg: 155th Regimental Association, 1910), p. 343; Calkins and Bearss, Battle of Five Forks, p. 25; and Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, pp. 52-53.

<sup>58</sup>O.R., vol. 46, series 1, part 1, p. 1287.

<sup>59</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, p. 53.

<sup>60</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, pp. 53-54; O.R., vol. 46, series 1, part 1, p. 848; and Calkins and Bearss, Battle of Five Forks, p. 123.

<sup>61</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, pp. 54-55; and O.R., vol. 46, series 1, part 1, pp. 848-849.

<sup>62</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, pp. 57-59.

## CHAPTER SIX

### *THE PASSING OF THE DEAD*

In a dispatch to Sheridan on the twenty-ninth, Grant wrote, "I feel now like ending the matter." Things had decidedly changed for the Federal army, and for that matter, the Army of Northern Virginia, following the movements of the Fifth Corps, the Second Corps, and Sheridan's cavalry. Grant was no longer concerned with cutting Lee's supply and communication lines; the westerner wanted to strike the Confederate army head on and crush it.<sup>1</sup> But first, the heavy rains would have to stop before any large scale movement by the Union army could proceed. In the meantime, Brigadier-General Chamberlain and his corps spent their time after the action at Quaker Road resting until they were ordered to creep closer to Lee's main defensive line stretching along White Oak Road.

Throughout the following day, 30 March, Chamberlain and Griffin's division were positioned so near the enemy's lines that they could observe the shifting of Confederate soldiers down White Oak Road to the west. These Rebel troops--two divisions under Pickett's command--were moving toward Five Forks to join the remnants of Lee's cavalry in a last ditch effort to smash Sheridan's threatening marauders. Despite all the shuffling of forces, Grant wired the Fifth Corps to hold its ground and not force its way across the the road and block the Rebel movement until a break occurred in the weather.<sup>2</sup>

While Chamberlain sat tight with his division, Brigadier-General Ayres pushed his

Second Division, posted on the extreme left of the corps' line, nearer to White Oak Road. Whereas Chamberlain encountered a formidable string of slashed timber and *abatis*, Ayres discovered only an enemy skirmish line and no entrenchments. Although Ayres did not realize it at the time, he was slightly west to the end of Lee's east-west defensive line covering Petersburg. It was at this point in Lee's line--the "return"--that it veered northward stretching along Claiborne Road. With this information at hand, Warren received orders to shift the rest of the corps to the left and, if possible, seize White Oak Road.<sup>3</sup>

By daylight of the thirty-first, the Fifth Corps had completed its shift to the left with Humphrey's Second Corps filling the vacancy. Ayres' Second Division massed near W. Dabney's house about 600 yards south of White Oak Road; Griffin's division rested in the vicinity of Mrs. Butler's house just below Gravelly Run and about a mile from the road, and Crawford's Third Division sat between the two at the Holliday House. The three divisions were posted in a north-to-south formation so as to protect the Union army's flank.<sup>4</sup>

Chamberlain tried to enjoy the day the best he could despite rumors of a Rebel attack. Griffin, during the night before, had shared a dispatch with him in which Grant had warned Sheridan of an impending Confederate thrust against Warren's left flank. If need be, Sheridan was instructed to push northeasterly from his position near Dinwiddie Court House to assist the Fifth Corps. The threat of attack was not new to Chamberlain so he went about his morning reclining on a heap of straw, trying to soothe both his aching hip and most recent wounds from his latest action.<sup>5</sup>

However, Warren was not about to let his entire corps sit by idly for the day. At 9:40 a.m., Warren informed Meade that he had directed his lead division, Ayres' second, to push forward and sweep away the Confederate skirmishers. If possible, Ayres was also to determine the strength of the Rebels holding White Oak Road. About one hour

later, Meade responded to Warren's message and told the corps commander to secure White Oak Road despite previously issued orders suspending any major operations for the thirty-first.<sup>6</sup>

While Ayres deployed his division with Crawford's in close support, General Lee himself was not about to suspend any Confederate operations. Realizing his army's ability to fight had practically vanished, Lee drew what troops he could and made plans to cripple the Federal left flank in addition to protecting Pickett's division at Dinwiddie Court House. Personally directing what was to be the Army of Northern Virginia's last offensive movement, General Lee shifted four of his brigades--Generals Wise, Archibald Gracie, Eppa Hutton, and Samuel McGowan's men--to the right beyond the Federal flank. From this position, the Rebels were to press into the Fifth Corps' exposed flank.<sup>7</sup>

When the four Confederate brigades began their own advance, they unexpectedly encountered Ayres' probing division. Before either side had taken the situation in hand, a Rebel lieutenant ended any possible deliberations by leading his own company in a charge which inspired his and the other three brigades to attack. Assaulted on his flanks and center, Ayres' stunned division fell back steadily though presenting stiff resistance at every thicket or slight elevation in the terrain. But the Rebel advance could not be contained, outflanking all Ayres' attempts at a defensive line, and finally driving the Second Division into Crawford's supporting troops. Crawford's Third Division panicked at the sight of fleeing bluecoats and charging graycoats so it also turned and fled. What had begun as a relatively secure advance by Ayres' division had by now evolved into a full-scale retreat for two-thirds of the Fifth Corps.<sup>9</sup>

Soon the roar of gunfire had become audible to the final third of the corps, Griffin's lounging First Division. As the sound of heavy musketry grew louder, General Griffin ordered his command to grab its rifles and fall in. Griffin moved his division

toward the sound of gunfire, reaching the rise that overlooked Gravelly Run. From this elevated position, Griffin and his men saw two Federal divisions in utter chaos, fleeing without any semblance of order or honor. As Ayres' and then Crawford's soldiers dove into the murky waters and approached Griffin's line, the angered general was heard to shout: "For God's sake, let them through, or they will break our line." While Griffin's line did its best to hold its formation as the fleeing Yankees filed through, the advanced elements of the Rebel force appeared on the opposite side of the bank. For a moment, it seemed as if the charging Confederates were going to force a crossing of Gravelly Run despite Griffin's strong position, but the Rebels wavered and fell back after being raked by the First Division and one of its artillery batteries.<sup>10</sup>

By the time Lee's troops reached Gravelly Run, they already had spent themselves chasing the Federals. Realizing his men were exhausted, General Lee personally reconnoitered the Federal position on the south bank of Gravelly Run and directed General Bushrod Johnson to hold the advanced position while waiting for reinforcements. However, reinforcements were difficult to find in the Confederate army and anyway, time was the immediate enemy since Ayres' and Crawford's demoralized divisions were regrouping behind Griffin's unbreachable line. Though the Rebels possessed the confidence to push forward, they began constructing a series of defensive works stretching back to White Oak Road.<sup>11</sup> The tide of battle was about to change.

In early afternoon, General Warren, now recovered from the Rebel offensive, began preparing a counterattack. Warren, along with Griffin, rode to the left of the First Division's position to confer with General Chamberlain. Griffin, his usual taste for colorful expressions undiminished, exclaimed, "General Chamberlain, the Fifth Corps is eternally damned." In an attempt to lighten the conversation, Chamberlain replied, "Not till you are in heaven." But Griffin had not come to Chamberlain to



exchange pleasantries; he had come looking for a general who would fight. Griffin explained to Chamberlain, "I tell Warren you will wipe out this disgrace, and that's what we're here for." Warren, silent up to his point, interrupted: "General Chamberlain, will you save the honor of the Fifth Corps? That's all there is about it."<sup>12</sup>

As Chamberlain recalled, Warren's desperate appeal required a chivalrous response. Honor and the Fifth Corps meant a lot to Chamberlain. On the other hand, his answer was not that of a dodging soldier, but one of a tired and concerned officer. His wounds, old and new, were aching and his thinned brigade had borne the brunt of the fighting at Quaker Road. Also, he was expecting an attack by the Confederates upon his exposed left flank. Bartlett's veteran fresh brigade, Chamberlain insisted, would be better suited to save the corps' honor. The general received his reply from Griffin and Warren, "We have come to you; you know what that means." Chamberlain said, "I'll try it," then he added with a touch of frustration building from over the past year, "only don't let anybody stop me except the enemy."<sup>13</sup>

One obstacle did stand between General Chamberlain and the enemy: Gravelly Run. Looking at the run, about sixty feet wide and four to five feet deep, Warren--always the engineer--told Chamberlain that he would have a bridge constructed across the run in less than an hour since no troops could get through it in any kind of order. In an hour, though, Chamberlain knew the Rebels would have plenty of time to entrench themselves solidly upon the opposite bank. If he waited an hour, the toll taken on his brigade might be critical. Weighing the benefits of building a bridge, Chamberlain told Warren, "It may do to come back on, General [but] it will not do to stop for that now. My men will go straight through."<sup>14</sup>

Plunging into the shoulder-high waters holding their cartridge boxes above their heads, General Chamberlain and the 198th Pennsylvania splashed onto the opposite shore and cleared it of enemy skirmishers. Once Chamberlain's entire First Brigade

was across Gravelly Run, Colonel Gregory followed with his Second Brigade and placed it on the First Brigade's right. General Bartlett brought up his veteran Third Brigade and positioned it on Chamberlain's left rear. Ayres' and Crawford's reformed divisions were to guard the First Division's left and right flanks respectively while elements of the Second Corps advanced to the far right of Warren's corps. With the Fifth Corps now in position, all of its movements were to be guided by Chamberlain's brigade.<sup>15</sup>

Resuming his advance, Chamberlain and his brigade pushed back the Rebels with surprising ease for about a mile through woods and open land. However, after emerging into a field, his troops were greeted with heavy fire from a strongly entrenched enemy supported by breastworks. Apparently, the Confederates had taken advantage of the delay in Warren's counterattack and turned the trenches that Ayres' troops had dug earlier into their own stronghold. While Chamberlain's right wing was being hit hard with Rebel volleys, the general decided it was better to charge than endure his current situation. Before Chamberlain could order an assault, he received orders from Warren to halt his command and prepare to defend his position.<sup>16</sup>

Frustrated by this order from Warren, General Chamberlain rode back to find the corps' commander and explain his position. As if it were not enough to have his advance halted by his own superior rather than the enemy, Chamberlain and his brigade could not possibly hold their position long under such a heavy fire. Once he found Generals Warren and Griffin, Chamberlain informed them of the futility of defending his position or even withdrawing since the main objective was to seize White Oak Road. Chamberlain quickly sketched a plan of attack; he proposed to place Gregory's brigade in a patch of woods on the right so as to mask its thrust against the enemy's left flank. Once Gregory was engaged, Chamberlain would lead his own brigade across the open field. When Chamberlain told Griffin that the "enemy's position might be carried with no greater loss than it would cost us merely to hold our

ground, and the men were eager to charge," Griffin accepted Chamberlain's plan.<sup>17</sup>

With his plan approved, Chamberlain informed Gregory of his job. The Second Brigade was to fall on the enemy's flank through the woods, opening the action with a full volley. Once he could hear Gregory's demonstrations, Chamberlain would lead his own brigade in a charge over the field, covering a distance of about three hundred yards. Chamberlain instructed his officers to have the men advance in broken ranks so as to reduce the effectiveness of the enemy's rifle-fire. General Chamberlain had realized that close-order assaults were a thing of the past. Despite his sense of composure, Chamberlain later wrote that "had I known of the fact that General Lee himself was personally directing affairs in our front, I might not have been so rash, or thought myself so cool."<sup>18</sup>

When the roar of Gregory's opening rounds reached Chamberlain, the general ordered the First Brigade to charge over the open field. The 185th New York fell upon the Rebel's right while the 198th Pennsylvania swarmed upon the enemy's left. For a few minutes, there was a "seething wave of countercurrents, then rolling back leaving a fringe of wrecks." The 198th's historian described the dash with "every color flying, officers leading, . . . leaping the breastworks, a confused struggle of firing, thrusting, cutting, a tremendous surge of force, both moral and physical, on the enemy's breaking lines." Even the commander of the Rebel stronghold, General Hutton, was impressed by Chamberlain and his brigade's assault, conceding that "it was one of the most gallant things I had ever seen."<sup>19</sup>

The force of Chamberlain's attack pushed the Rebel defenders beyond White Oak Road, slightly below the junction with Claiborne Road. Thus Chamberlain had secured White Oak Road, despite the earlier fiasco of Ayres' and Crawford's fleeing divisions. Now Confederate communications with General Pickett's troops near Five Forks were severely disrupted, forcing Rebel messengers to cover ten miles over difficult terrain to

reach Lee's main body of troops. For this hard-fought victory, Chamberlain's brigade suffered about seventy-five casualties with Griffin's entire division losing nearly a hundred forty-five officers and men.<sup>20</sup>

While Chamberlain was succeeding in the battle for White Oak Road, he could hear trouble brewing off in the distance near Dinwiddie Court House. General Sheridan and his cavalry found themselves engaged with Rebel cavalry as well as infantry. By early evening on the thirty-first, the Fifth Corps had trained its ears on the distant battle, knowing that if Sheridan could drive the Confederates before him, he would then be able to aid the Fifth Corps by smashing into the Rebel's right flank, driving the enemy back into Petersburg. Unfortunately, the battle was proving troublesome for Sheridan.

During the evening, General Warren approached Chamberlain to discuss Sheridan's predicament. With Warren and Chamberlain both concluding by the sound of receding gunfire that Sheridan's force was withdrawing, the two now had to decide if the Fifth Corps should send aid to the cavalry without any specific orders from General Grant. Understanding that any withdrawal by Sheridan would expose the left flank of the corps to the Confederates, Warren decided to assist Sheridan. Immediately, Warren asked Chamberlain, "Well, will you go?" Realizing the strategic value of White Oak Road, Chamberlain replied, "Certainly, General, if you think best; but surely you do not want me to abandon this position." With this thought in mind, Warren, along with Griffin, chose to detach Bartlett's Third Brigade so as to threaten the rear of the Rebel force bearing upon Sheridan.<sup>21</sup>

After Bartlett's brigade departed down a narrow trail, General Chamberlain extended his picket line around his left and rear to White Oak Road. It was an anxious evening for Chamberlain and his men since a Rebel force was in their front while another was operating freely in the distant darkness. On the picket line throughout the night, Chamberlain kept alert, not knowing what to expect. But as the evening

grew later, news finally reached Chamberlain and the corps that Sheridan had indeed been attacked and driven back into Dinwiddie by Fitzhugh Lee's cavalry and Pickett's infantry. Now Chamberlain was certain that the Fifth Corps would have to leave the White Oak Road and struggle nearly five miles to the rear through mud and darkness to save Sheridan from defeat.<sup>22</sup>

When Grant received word that Sheridan was in trouble, he decided the Fifth Corps would have to go to the cavalry's aid. However, this decision revealed a major weakness in the Army of the Potomac's command structure; there were too many generals involved in the planning of operations. Grant, who was the overall commander of the Union forces, made his headquarters with General Meade, commander of the Army of the Potomac. In the meantime, Sheridan had authority to use the Fifth Corps but none of the responsibility of reporting directly to Meade. And at the bottom of the list was General Warren, who received contradicting orders from all levels of command.

When Warren began receiving these orders, the instructions for him seemed rather simple; he was to disengage the Fifth Corps from its entanglement with the Confederates on White Oak Road. Once disengaged, the corps was to cover the five or six miles backward through the mud and darkness to rescue Sheridan. However, the corps, once on the move, subsequently was divided into divisions and brigades with each following its own orders. Considering the difficulty in marching in complete darkness over unknown terrain, any chance at a skillful withdrawal proved to be impossible. To add to the difficulties, Gravelly Run's waters were running so high that one division had to tear down a house to build a forty-foot bridge in the middle of the night.<sup>23</sup>

For the men still along White Oak Road, the situation was very precarious. The men were in such close proximity to the enemy that Federal officers and enlisted men had to shuffle from unit to unit whispering orders. Ominously, the Confederates began extinguishing their fires as if they were preparing to attack the rear of the shifting

Fifth Corps. Somewhat anxiously, General Chamberlain did not begin to withdraw his brigade--the last to do so in Griffin's division--until just before dawn on 1 April. So as to supervise the last phases of the corps tricky disengagement, General Warren remained behind near the road. As Chamberlain's brigade began to move, it proceeded down the same narrow trail as Bartlett's Third Brigade, and in a short span of time, Chamberlain's men met Bartlett's brigade marching back. Bartlett and his disgruntled brigade, which included the 20th Maine, now was forced to turn around and follow Chamberlain back down a path which they were covering for a third time.<sup>24</sup>

Moving cautiously at the head of his advanced column, General Chamberlain expected to encounter Rebels at any moment. Approaching the position held by Bartlett's brigade before its countermarch, Chamberlain observed the glittering appurtenances of advancing cavalry about a mile away. Quickly the general made his dispositions for an imminent attack, but as the distance shortened, he realized the force wore Union blue. Advancing to meet the Federal cavalry, Chamberlain came face to face with General Sheridan himself. Awed and somewhat intimidated by the hard-riding commander, Chamberlain saluted: "I report to you, General, with the head of Griffin's division."<sup>25</sup>

Sheridan replied with a salute and a series of questions: "Why did you not come before? Where is Warren?" Chamberlain answered: "He is at the rear of the column, sir." Sheridan, who had regarded Warren with disfavor since Spotsylvania, sarcastically said, "That is where I expected to find him. What is he doing there?" Trying to hold his patience, Chamberlain remarked that "we are withdrawing from the White Oak Road, where we fought all day. General Warren is bringing off his last division, expecting an attack." By this time, General Griffin rode up to relieve Chamberlain of the unenviable task of reporting to a dissatisfied Sheridan.<sup>26</sup>

After Griffin finished conferring with Sheridan, he later discussed the developing

situation with Chamberlain. Griffin told Chamberlain that Sheridan, obviously unhappy with the Fifth Corps' delay in coming to the cavalry's aid, had the authority to remove Warren from command if it were deemed necessary. Putting into perspective the unfolding events, Chamberlain commented that all shall "see lively times before the day was over."<sup>27</sup>

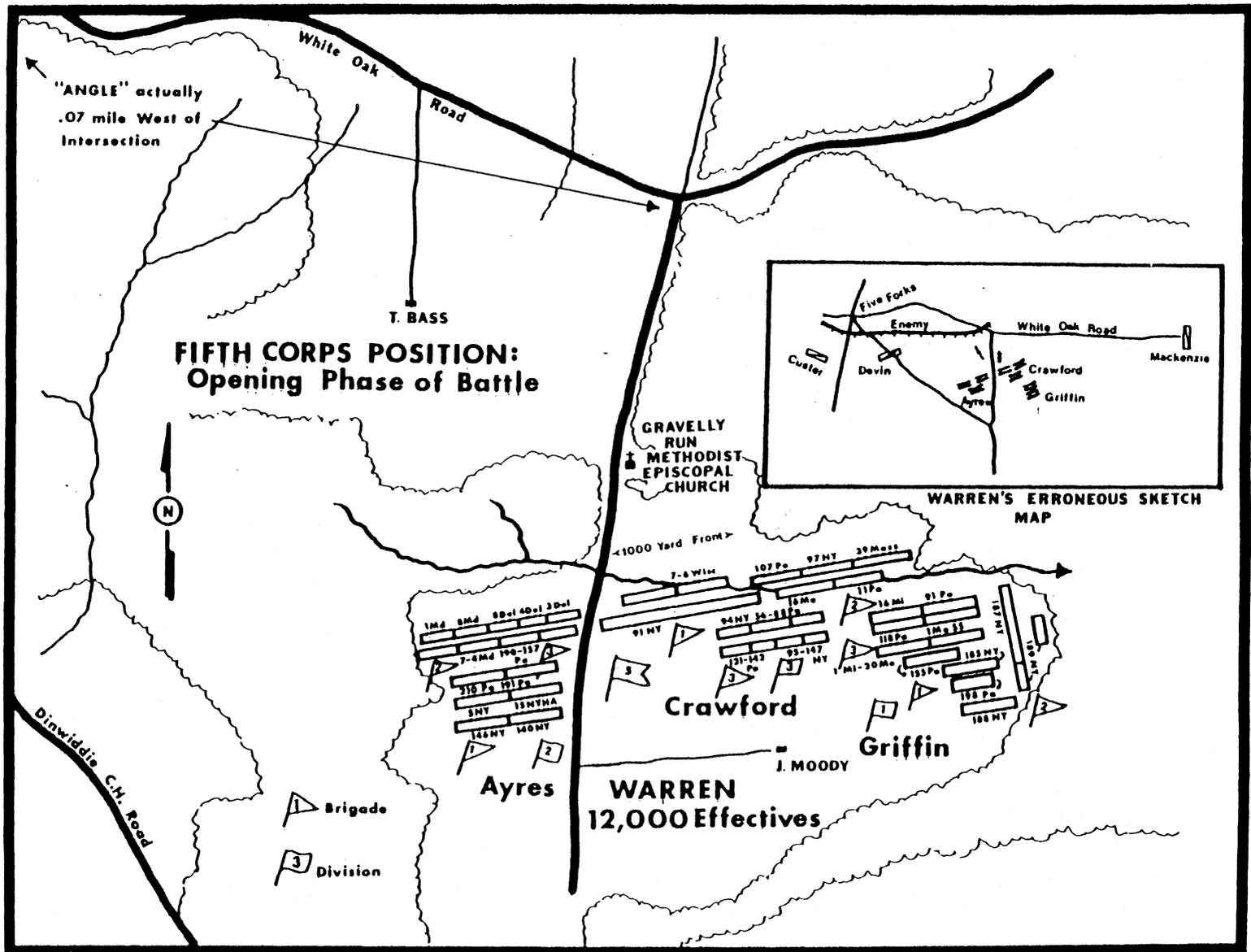
Despite the bitter animosities that were surfacing on the morning of the first, April Fool's Day, there was one bit of fortunate news. The Confederates, believing that Bartlett's confused brigade struggling in the darkness was the vanguard of the entire Fifth Corps, had withdrawn from Sheridan's front. Through all their marching and countermarching in the enemy's rear, Bartlett's weary troops had forced Fitzhugh Lee and Pickett to retire to the strategic crossroads, Five Forks. As the hours passed, Sheridan's cavalry reconnaissance brought back reports of Rebel breastworks stretching along White Oak Road, bending back on the east end to create an angle and return. The reconnaissance reports also indicated that a large body of Confederate infantry, Pickett's veteran division, manned the strong defenses.<sup>28</sup>

Aiming to settle the score because of his failure at Dinwiddie Court House, Sheridan marched northward with his combined force of blue cavalry and infantry. Adding to his dismay, Sheridan had to wait until noon before he could move with the entire Fifth Corps, which was extremely sluggish. Fortunately for Chamberlain and his brigade, they had enjoyed a few hours of rest before receiving the order to move northward. After about two hours struggling along a torn-up road, Chamberlain's troops reached open ground next to a thin patch of woods near the Gravelly Run Church. General Warren, always meticulous when preparing for action, did not please Sheridan when he advised that the Fifth Corps would not be ready for action until 4:00 p.m. By this time, Sheridan's patience had worn thin and even Chamberlain's men seemed "a little ruffled."<sup>29</sup>

At 4:00 p.m., just before Sheridan lost patience, Warren informed him that the Fifth Corps was ready to attack. In accordance with Sheridan's plan of attack, the Yankee cavalry would make a feint on the Rebel's right flank, thus diverting Pickett's attention, while attempting to break through the enemy's center. With the Confederates occupied by Sheridan's cavalry, the Fifth Corps would simultaneously drive upon the Confederate left flank with one crushing blow, thereby avoiding a series of costly piecemeal assaults. Sheridan himself sketched the plan for the corps' officers, using his sabre to draw a rough diagram in the soil. Ayres' division would strike the return near the intersection of the White Oak and Gravelly Run Church Roads. Crawford's division, followed closely by Griffin's division, would pass Ayres' right flank and plunge into the enemy's rear, enfilading its main line. It was, Chamberlain believed, a "perfectly clear . . . splendid piece of tactics, cyclone- and Sheridan-like, promising that our success was to be quick and certain."<sup>30</sup>

After the corps formed with Ayres on the left of the Gravelly Run Church Road and Crawford and Griffin on the right, a diagram of the proposed movement arrived from General Warren. Chamberlain recalled being confused by this new diagram; it showed the corps being drawn up to the road oblique instead of parallel as in Sheridan's sketch. By adhering to Warren's diagram, Ayres would encounter the center defenses of the Confederates prior to reaching White Oak Road, while Crawford and Griffin would descend not upon the enemy's rear, but its right. To further confuse Chamberlain, Warren's written orders were similar in design to Sheridan's original intentions. Concerned with the differing diagrams, Chamberlain rode to General Griffin to obtain an explanation. The hardened veteran told Chamberlain: "We will not worry ourselves about diagrams. We are to follow Crawford. Circumstances will soon develop our duty." Chamberlain returned to his and Colonel Gregory's Second Brigade, both now under his command--and quieted himself with the knowledge that the enemy would be discovered

Map from Calkins and Bears, Battle of Five Forks, p. 74.



despite any differences in diagrams and understandings.<sup>31</sup>

Finally the corps was underway, moving northward along Gravelly Run Church Road, shortly reaching White Oak Road. Surprisingly, it did not assail the enemy's return or angle. Apparently, Sheridan's earlier reconnaissance was inaccurate. In the meantime, Crawford's and Griffin's commands compounded the problem by drifting east, away from Rebel works, continuing off into the heavy woods north of the road. All the while, they were moving away from Sheridan's cavalry, now battling it alone. To make matters worse, Crawford quickly took up a brisk fight with Colonel T. T. Munford's dismounted Virginian cavalry. It was enough of a fight to convince the unexceptionable Crawford that he had stumbled onto the enemy's main works. Unfortunately, Griffin's division, by obeying its orders, continued to follow Crawford's lead, distancing itself from the main battle about a mile to the west. But General Ayres was not so easily fooled. Encountering heavy gunfire off to his left, Ayres had pivoted his division at a right angle, marched a few hundred yards, and attacked what proved to be his main objective, the Confederate angle and return.<sup>32</sup>

With the Confederates farther to the west than previously believed and the Fifth Corps farther east than planned, the entire scene had the makings for a real disaster. To salvage the situation, Warren, after observing Ayres' veterans attack the Rebel angle, went to search for his two lost divisions, Crawford's and Griffin's. Meanwhile, General Chamberlain had made the discovery on his own. Managing to get beyond Crawford's left rear, Chamberlain rode to an elevated clearing from which he could see Ayres' troops in a swirling maelstrom to the southwest. Realizing something was "all wrong" because of the great distance between Crawford's skirmishing and Ayres' full-fledged battle, Chamberlain became anxious about his duty. Seizing the initiative, Chamberlain informed Bartlett and then took his First Brigade and Gregory's out of the woods by the left flank to Ayres' aid. Moving rapidly toward the main action,

Chamberlain was met by General Griffin, who with a quick glance, acknowledged his shifting of the two brigades to the left.<sup>33</sup>

After Griffin waved him on, Chamberlain formed a line of battle at the head of a gully with the Rebel rear on the other side of a steep. Once over the steep, Chamberlain's men were in close quarters with the surprised Rebels. After several point-blank volleys were exchanged, the blue and gray lines struck each other "like shutting jaws." To meet the Rebel fire, Chamberlain tossed his battalions into the fray by right half-wheels, all the while gaining ground to his left. Gregory's brigade extended Chamberlain's wheeling movement even farther to the right, causing the North Carolinians defending the return to feel "penned in like rats in a hole."<sup>34</sup>

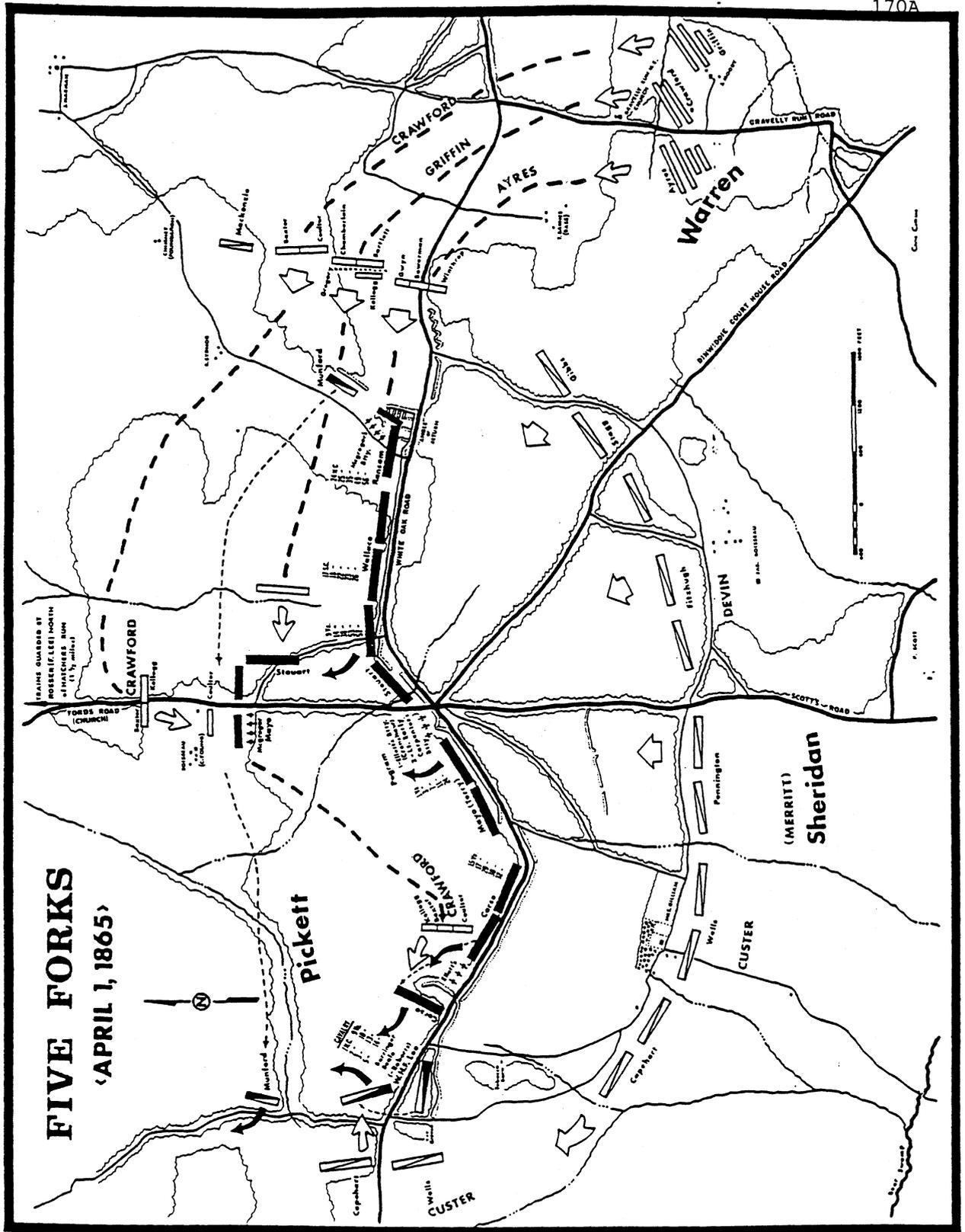
Once engaged with the Confederates, Chamberlain rode toward the return to confer with General Ayres. Before finding Ayres, Chamberlain met a heated Sheridan. Expecting to be censured, Chamberlain escaped the general's wrath, instead, receiving praise. "By God, that's what I want to see!" Sheridan shouted. "General officers at the front. Where are your general officers?" Chamberlain answered that Warren was to the north, and after seeing Ayres in a tight spot, he himself had rushed to his aid by Griffin's order. With frustration building in his voice, Sheridan howled, "Then you take command of all the infantry round here, and break this damn \_\_\_\_."<sup>35</sup>

Not waiting to hear anymore, General Chamberlain spurred his horse and started rounding up several bands of flustered bluecoats. The general came upon one soldier hiding behind a stump, cringing as bullets ripped around him. Chamberlain called to him: "Look here, my good fellow, don't you know you'll be killed here in less than two minutes? This is no place for you. Go Forward!" The soldier cried, "But what can I do? I can't stand up against all this alone?" Replying to him, Chamberlain said, "No, that's just it. We're forming here. I want you for guide center. Up and forward!" With this man as a guide, a "queer line" of about two hundred bluecoats, as Chamberlain

described it, was gathered and honorably led into action by a staff officer.<sup>36</sup>

Not waiting to see these men go into battle, Chamberlain turned around only to see Ayres' bewildered Third Brigade coming out of the woods in his rear. Commanded by the Irish-born General James Gwyn, the Third Brigade seemed ready for a fight but its officers were not sure where to go. Taking charge, Chamberlain galloped up to Gwyn and asked if the brigade was acting under any specific orders from Ayres. General Gwyn answered, "No, General, I have lost Ayres. I have no orders. I don't know what to do." Recalling Sheridan's verbal orders, Chamberlain said, "Then come with me. I will take the responsibility. You shall have all the credit. Let me take your brigade for a moment." Gwyn acquiesced and Chamberlain led the brigade into the contest, placing it between his own men and the rest of Ayres' division, now linking the two forces.<sup>37</sup>

As Ayres continued to roll up the Rebel's return and drive in its left flank, his division's volleys were falling dangerously close to Chamberlain's left. Riding over to meet Ayres so as to prevent the converging forces from firing at one another, Chamberlain was suddenly accosted by General Sheridan barking, "You are firing into my cavalry!" Not about to concede anything to Sheridan, Chamberlain replied, "Then the cavalry have got into the rebel's place. One of us will have to get out of the way. What will you have us do, General?" Sheridan, not at all concerned with Chamberlain's question, shouted, "Don't you fire into my cavalry, I tell you!" Fortunately for Chamberlain, Ayres rode up and Sheridan immediately focused his anger on the division commander crying, "I tell you again, General Ayres, you are firing into my cavalry." With his reputation as a stubborn, hard-nosed regular challenged, Ayres responded: "We are firing at the people who are firing at us! These are not carbine shot. They are minie-balls. I ought to know." Despite the running argument between the generals, Ayres and Chamberlain adjusted their firing so that they would be firing



Map from Calkins and Bearss, Battle of Five Forks, appendix.

only at the enemy.<sup>38</sup>

Griffin joined the threesome and the cavalry commander's mood quickly changed. With a smile, Sheridan exulted, "We flanked them gloriously!" But Griffin did not have time to waste over praise and after a minute he rode off, leaving Chamberlain alone with Sheridan. Realizing the deadly spot he was in with bullets whizzing by, Chamberlain thought it would be better for Sheridan to leave at once and allow the other officers to take care of things. Sheridan gave Chamberlain a "comical look, and answered with a peculiar twist in toss of his head, that seemed to say he didn't care much for himself, or perhaps me [Chamberlain]." Showing little regard for his safety, Sheridan spurred his horse and rode into the same crossfire about which he had just admonished Chamberlain and Ayres.<sup>39</sup>

After Sheridan rode off, Chamberlain returned to his struggling brigade. Somehow the general had to shift his troops to the right so as to avoid clashing with Ayres' advancing division. By now, however, confusion ruled the field with every direction being front and every way being flank. Along portions of Chamberlain's battle line, the melee had turned into a brawl with much of the fighting being hand-to-hand. On the other hand, many of the graycoats saw the hopelessness of the situation, throwing down their arms, and surrendering even though Chamberlain could not possibly take charge of them in the midst of the battle.<sup>40</sup>

News reached Chamberlain that General Bartlett finally had joined the fight on his right only to face severe resistance. Three of Bartlett's regiments--the 20th Maine, 1st Michigan, and the 155th Pennsylvania--were engaged in a brutal contest with rifle butts and bayonets being wielded with deadly results. With Bartlett's brigade bordering on collapse thereupon leaving the Federal infantry vulnerable to a heavy counterattack, Chamberlain hurried two of his regiments, the 185th and 188th New York, to its aid. Encouraged by the sight of the New Yorkers, Bartlett's troops rallied

and pressed ahead with the reinforcements to secure their right flank.<sup>41</sup>

After dispatching a portion of his command to Bartlett's assistance, Chamberlain faced a crisis to his left center where Major Glenn was struggling to hold on with a battalion from the 198th Pennsylvania. To inspire the men, Chamberlain promised Glenn a colonelcy if he could seize the Rebel breastworks in his front. Glenn turned to his men and asked, "Boys, will you follow me?" Glenn's battalion rose to the task and dashed ahead through a storm of lead reaching the enemy's works. A bitter affray ensued with the outcome swaying with each blow until finally, the battalion's blood-stained flag flew over the defenses. Seeking to congratulate Glenn, Chamberlain came across two men carrying Glenn's mortally wounded body. For a moment, Chamberlain was choked with the thought that he personally had tempted fate by inducing Glenn to lead the charge. The general sadly wrote, "It was as if another bullet had cut me through."<sup>42</sup>

There was some good news, Confederate resistance was finally crumbling with thousands of Rebels surrendering or fleeing capture. But there was one sour note that disturbed General Chamberlain. Captain Robert Brinton of Griffin's staff approached Chamberlain and inquired if he knew that General Griffin now commanded the Fifth Corps. Brinton informed Chamberlain that Warren had finally snared Crawford and his wandering division and turned them towards the battle, and by sheer coincidence, Crawford's division had fallen upon the path of the retreating Rebels, near Ford's Road, capturing hundreds. But when Warren's chief of staff told Sheridan about Crawford's situation and Warren's efforts to bring him into the action, the cavalry commander declared, "By God, sir, tell General Warren he wasn't in the fight!" Later spying General Griffin, Sheridan utilized the authority Grant had given him earlier in the campaign and announced, "I put you in command of the Fifth Corps!"<sup>43</sup>

Moments later, Chamberlain found himself side-by-side with his new corps

commander, Griffin, and a maddened General Sheridan. Yelling at some idle Yankees nearby, Sheridan declared, "I want you men to understand we have a record to make before the sun goes down, that will make hell tremble!--I want you there!" The general then leapt his horse over a breastwork and Griffin followed suit. Choosing a lower place in the breastworks, Chamberlain's horse leapt and then was struck in the leg by a bullet but kept going.<sup>44</sup>

By now, with darkness approaching, the Fifth Corps was beyond Five Forks, but the victory was not yet complete. With the arrival of Ayres, Griffin and Chamberlain were discussing Warren's fate when Sheridan rode up interrupting them and saying, "Get together all the men you can and drive on while you can see your hand before you!" With the First Division scattered, Griffin ordered Chamberlain to assemble it along White Oak Road. As the bugler called the brigade together, General Warren appeared riding slowly on his horse. Chamberlain explained his actions to Warren and the distraught general replied, "You are doing just right, but I am not in command of the Corps."<sup>45</sup>

With the First Division massed, Griffin brought it to bear upon the refused Rebel line near Five Forks. Checked by the stubborn graycoats, the division seemed to be at a standstill. To break the Rebel line, Griffin ordered one of Crawford's colonels to advance and when he did so, General Warren grabbed the Fifth Corps' colors and charged along side the colonel. The sight of these two officers going over the enemy's breastworks broke the deadlock as the division poured into the breach. The Confederate stand at Five Forks collapsed with this last charge, and about five thousand prisoners were taken. Chamberlain and his men alone snared about a thousand Rebels along with four battle flags.<sup>46</sup>

Despite the overwhelming Federal victory, General Warren could not share any of the glory. With barely enough sunlight to see, Warren read a brief field order:

"Major-General Warren, commanding the Fifth Army Corps, is relieved from duty and will at once report for orders to Lieutenant-General Grant, commanding Armies of the United States. By command of Major-General Sheridan." His honor shaken, Warren approached Sheridan and asked if he would reconsider the order. A furious Sheridan answered, "Reconsider. Hell! I don't reconsider my decisions. Obey the order!"<sup>47</sup> It was a sad occasion for Warren and the Fifth Corps. The controversy over Warren's dismissal would go on for years, culminating in a military court of inquiry which reluctantly reached a decision after two years of testimony in 1882, exonerating him of all Sheridan's imputations, although the damage done to Warren's career. Warren did not have the satisfaction of his exoneration for he died in 1882.

General Chamberlain did not approve of Sheridan's rough and impulsive handling of Warren, but he did admire the pesky cavalry general's brand of combat. Chamberlain recognized that, throughout the course of the war, the Army of the Potomac had formed habits of combat. It fought with "dogged resolution," devoid of show or flare, the type of methodical warfare witnessed on the fields of Fredericksburg, Gettysburg, Cold Harbor, and Petersburg. But Sheridan did not fight this way for he "pushes on, carrying flank and rear with him,--rushing, flashing, smashing. He shows the power of a commander,--inspiring both confidence and fear." Yet, the Fifth Corps' commanders were usually "men of brains rather than of magnetism," wholly unsuited for Sheridan's slashing style of war.<sup>48</sup> Warren, being one of these men of brains, no longer had a place in Grant's army. It was Sheridan, and not Warren, who had given General Grant the breakthrough victory at Five Forks.

Sheridan, along with the Fifth Corps, had inflicted a mortal wound upon the Army of Northern Virginia, forcing General Lee to reconsider his defense of Petersburg and Richmond. Ultimately, to save his army, Lee opted to abandon the two cities by withdrawing his troops, shifting them westerly to join Joseph Johnston in North

Carolina. Trying to take advantage of Lee's broken right flank, Grant ordered a general assault along the lines at daybreak on 2 April. Lee, realizing he could not hold off Grant's men for long, pulled out of Petersburg that night. Now all knew the collapse of the Confederacy was imminent.

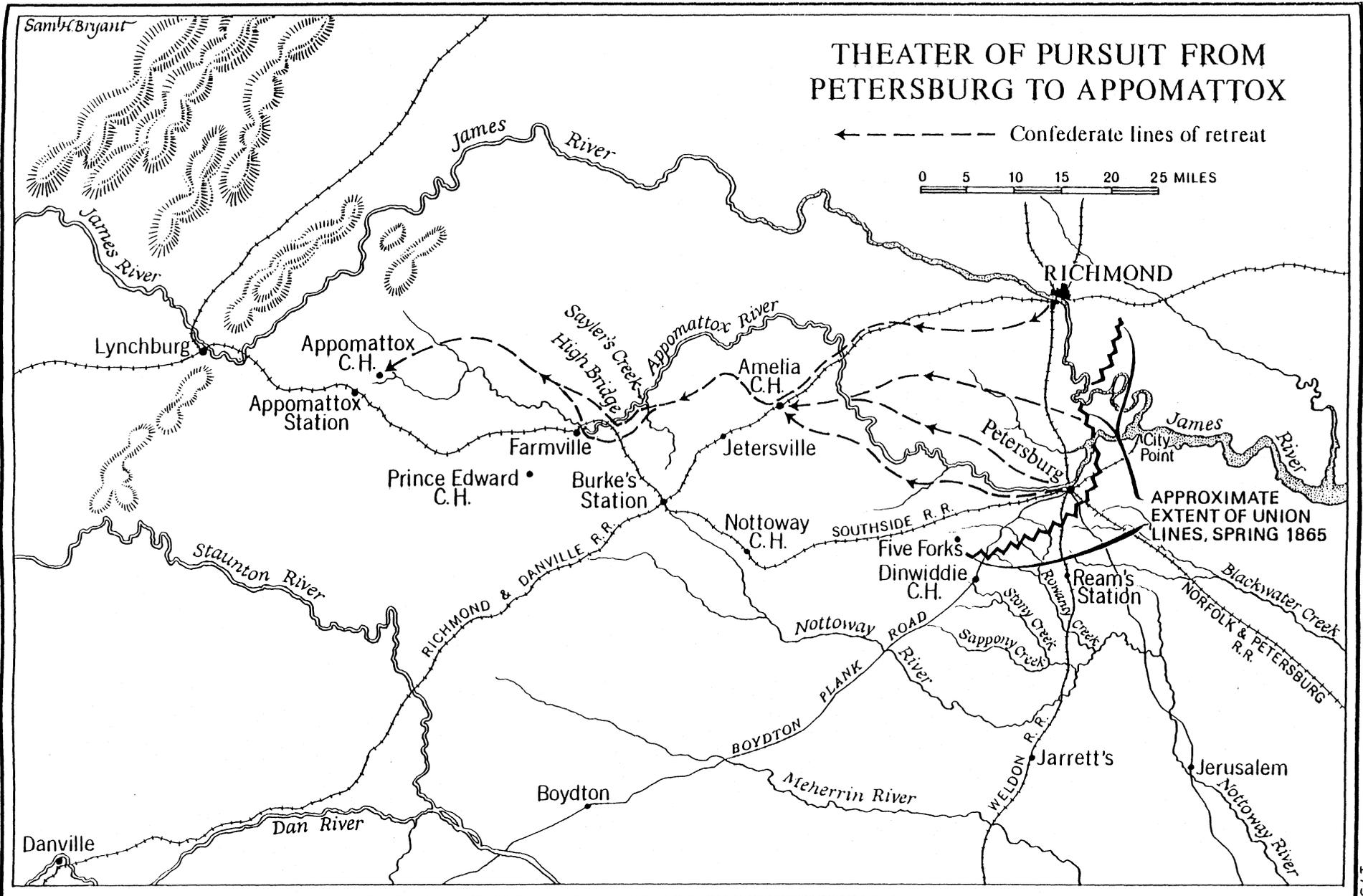
A war of attrition had developed quickly into a desperate race between two armies. From the second to the ninth, Lee's skeleton force, numbering less than 35,000, tried to distance itself from Grant's combined forces, the Army of the Potomac and Ord's Army of the James, totaling over 100,000 effectives. For a week, the two armies pushed themselves to the brink of exhaustion, marching roughly parallel to the Appomattox River, an average of thirty miles a day. Thousands of Lee's men, traveling on empty stomachs, surrendered or just went home rather than prolong their agony. While the Rebel's kept going because of pride and loyalty, the Federals pushed harder and harder since the end could be over the next rise.<sup>49</sup>

In the game of flight and pursuit, General Chamberlain played a significant part. After advancing across the Southside Railroad on 2 April, Chamberlain and his men captured one of the last trains leaving Petersburg. Then General Bartlett, who now commanded the First Division, directed Chamberlain to take his own and Gregory's brigade and force back a sizeable contingent of dismounted Rebel cavalry. With the Confederates occupied, the rest of the corps would destroy the railroad's track and ties. On the third, the day Richmond fell into Union hands, Chamberlain and the corps marched west on the south side of the Appomattox River, hoping to cut off Lee's retreat. The fourth proved to be another long day of marching as the army reached the Danville Railroad near Jetersville. On the fifth, the Second and Sixth Corps trailed Lee's heels while Chamberlain and the Fifth slid south to cut off a possible retreat in that direction. Since his path was now to the south, Chamberlain missed the slicing Federal victory at Saylor's Creek on the sixth. The next day, the seventh, was spent like the

# THEATER OF PURSUIT FROM PETERSBURG TO APPOMATTOX

← - - - - Confederate lines of retreat

0 5 10 15 20 25 MILES



Map from Catton, Grant Takes Command, p. 457.

previous one in endless marching.<sup>50</sup>

On the eighth, the pursuit had reached a feverish pace. The Fifth Corps, still struggling to stay within supporting distance of Sheridan's leading cavalry, was suddenly ordered to halt. For some unknown reason, perhaps political or personal, the corps was stopped so as to give General Ord's Army of the James the advance on the road. Strangely enough, Ord's men were so thoroughly exhausted by their effort to overtake the Fifth Corps that they began to straggle and obstruct the corps' progress. After twenty-nine miles of incessant and infuriating delays, Chamberlain bivouacked his troops along a roadside not far from Appomattox Station soon after midnight.<sup>51</sup>

Asleep for what must have seemed only a matter of minutes, General Chamberlain was stirred by a sentry: "Orders, sir, I think." The general struck a match and read the note sent by Sheridan: "I have cut across the enemy at Appomattox Station, and captured three of his trains. If you can possibly push your infantry up here tonight, we will have great results in the morning." Quickly bugles sounded and the men rose to their feet, assembling on the road. It was sunrise when Chamberlain reached Appomattox Station, and he could already hear the crack of cavalry carbines and returning musket fire. Ord's troops were racing to Sheridan's aid, followed by Ayres' division with the veteran Third Brigade trailing both of them. Chamberlain was next with his own brigade and Gregory's; and at the rear of the column, lagging somewhat behind, was Crawford's Third Division.<sup>52</sup>

Unexpectedly a cavalry staff officer emerged from a wood road to the right and confronted the Chamberlain. "General, you command this column?" Chamberlain responded, "Two brigades of it, sir; about half the First Division, Fifth Corps." The staff officer retorted, "Sir, General Sheridan wishes you to break off from this column and come to his support. The rebel infantry is pressing him hard. Our men are falling back. Don't wait for orders through the regular channels, but act on this at once."

Obeing the directive, Chamberlain led his two brigades through the woods after sending word to General Griffin to have Crawford press down the road with the main column.<sup>53</sup>

Coming into an open field, General Chamberlain deployed his men into double lines of battle and then proceeded forward, pressing past Sheridan and General Thomas Devin. Devin's cavalry was struggling to contain "Stonewall" Jackson's old corps, now led by the determined General Gordon. The appearance of blue infantry dashed any hopes Gordon had about escaping the shutting trap. To the rear of Gordon, the Second and Sixth Corps were punishing Longstreet's withered corps, and off in the distance, Chamberlain spied Ord posting his army across the Lynchburg Pike. Chamberlain also saw Ayres and Bartlett taking the field to Ord's right, thus sealing Lee's army in a bottle. Gordon contemplated testing Chamberlain's skirmish line, but a few well placed shells stopped any further such developments.<sup>54</sup>

As Chamberlain directed his artillery, Griffin approached him and said, "General, I want you to go back and bring up Crawford's Division. He is acting in the same old fashion that got Warren into trouble at Five Forks. He should have been up here long ago [and] he deserves to be relieved of his command." So as not to be relieved of his own command for accepting what a staff officer could readily accomplish, Chamberlain balked at Griffin's request. The corps commander interjected, "I mean to put you in command of that division; I will publish an order to that effect." Chamberlain hesitated at the thought of replacing General Crawford, noting to Griffin that the general, with his connections in Washington, could make trouble for all those involved in the decision. And besides, Chamberlain was not the corps next senior officer in line. Luckily for Chamberlain and Crawford's sake, the Third Division finally appeared on the field, settling in between Gregory and Bartlett on the left.<sup>55</sup>

With the entire Fifth Corp in position, Chamberlain prepared to mount his two

brigades upon a bluff. Just then, he received an order from Ord: "Don't expose your lines upon that crest. The enemy have massed their guns to give it a raking fire the moment you set foot there." Thinking of a Grant or Sheridan in this predicament, Chamberlain chose to push things so he advanced his men upon the crest. As forewarned, one artillery shell sailed past, and then abruptly, the Rebel guns fell silent.<sup>56</sup>

By ascending the bluff, Chamberlain and his troops were offered a glimpse of something they never dreamed they would see. General Chamberlain poignantly wrote:

For there burst upon our vision a mighty scene, fit cadence of the story of tumultuous years. Encompassed by the cordon of steel that crowned the heights about the Court House, on the slopes of the valley formed by the . . . Appomattox, lay the remnants of that far-famed counterpart and companion of our own in momentous history,--the Army of Northern Virginia--Lee's army! . . . On the several confronting slopes before us dusky masses of infantry suddenly resting in place; blocks of artillery, standing fast in column; . . . clouds of cavalry small and great, slowly moving, in simple restlessness;--all without apparent attempt at offense or defense, or even military order.<sup>57</sup>

Reclaiming his thoughts, General Chamberlain led the descent into the Appomattox valley. To the general's front and left, he observed Sheridan's cavalry slashing its way through the Rebel's ragged lines capturing hundreds. Chamberlain continued his advance, although slightly concerned for his unprotected right flank. Probably weeks ago, Chamberlain would have made an attempt to secure his right flank, but the situation was different now. The Army of Northern Virginia was only a shadow of its former self, seemingly incapable of striking an exposed flank. Chamberlain pushed on and passed through the town of Appomattox, coming to open ground. And off in the distance about a mile away Chamberlain saw the Confederate main line of battle and suddenly he felt anxious for his right; he must have remembered that it was still Lee's

army across the field. But there was little Chamberlain could do to secure since the Federal cavalry was busy with its own work.<sup>58</sup>

Staring across the field, General Chamberlain caught sight of a single horseman riding out between the lines. Joined by another, the two rode toward Chamberlain's position, but he lost sight of them along the broken ground. Then one of the riders reappeared close in the general's front--it was a Confederate staff officer. Chamberlain's eye turned to the gray rider's white flag and for a moment, the general wondered where anyone possibly could have found a towel, let alone a white one. The young officer approached Chamberlain and dismounted: "Sir, I am from General Gordon. General Lee desires a cessation of hostilities until he can hear from General Grant as to the proposed surrender." Gathering his emotion, Chamberlain calmly answered the messenger, "Sir, that matter exceeds my authority. I will send to my superior. General Lee is right. He can do no more."<sup>59</sup>

There was still some sporadic firing along the lines, but the word quickly spread. The bluecoats were overcome with joy and relief; men climbed on fences, haystacks, and chimneys to toss their hats in the air and see what was happening. Gregory galloped up to Chamberlain to inquire about the sudden departure of military discipline. "Only that Lee wants time to surrender," he replied. "Glory to God," Gregory roared.<sup>60</sup> The end was finally within grasp.

A truce was agreed upon until 1:00 p.m. During the breather, many of the high ranking officers from both sides mingled on the steps of the court house, exchanging pleasantries. Chamberlain joined this gathering that included such luminaries as Generals Sheridan, George Crook, John Gibbon, Griffin, Wesley Merritt, Ayres, Bartlett, James Forsyth, and Peter Michie. On the Confederate side were Generals Longstreet, Gordon, Henry Heth, Cadmus Wilcox, and a few other officers. Ayres supplied a bottle of whiskey that made its way around the group with men toasting each other. Sheridan,

Chamberlain recalled, did not enjoy the festivities since he wanted to settle any questions about surrender on the battlefield. Unconditional surrender was the only thing Sheridan wanted to hear.<sup>61</sup>

Sheridan seemed to be getting his wish. One o'clock had come with no answer from Lee. The officers shook hands and departed, readying to resume hostilities. Griffin turned to Chamberlain and said in a low voice, "Prepare to make, or receive an attack in ten minutes." Chamberlain rode to his troops and got them into formation. After mounting his horse, a strong feeling had come over Chamberlain. He described it:

Disquieted, I turned about, and there behind me, riding in between my lines, appeared a commanding form, superbly mounted, richly accoutred, of imposing bearing, noble countenance, with expression of deep sadness overmastered by deeper strength. It is no other than Robert E. Lee! And seen by me for the first time within my own lines. I sat immovable, with a certain awe and admiration.

Not long after, by another inleading road, appeared another form, plain, unassuming, simple, and familiar to our eyes, but to the thought as much inspiring awe as Lee in his splendor and his sadness. It is Grant! . . . Slouched with hat without cord; common soldier's blouse, unbuttoned, on which, however, the four stars; high boots, mud-splashed to the top; trousers tucked inside; no sword, but the sword-hand deep in the pocket; sitting his saddle with the ease of a born master, taking no notice of anything, all his faculties gathered into intense thought and mighty calm. He seemed greater than I had ever seen him.<sup>62</sup>

About 4:00 p.m. on 9 April, Palm Sunday, Lee and Grant sat down in Wilmer McLean's house and agreed on surrender terms. Four years of brutal war had come to a close. And the word spread quickly, "Lee surrenders!" Despite the Rebels' worn and famished condition, Chamberlain could not help but admire his old antagonists. But they were no longer his enemy, only Americans like him who needed a hand. That night, Chamberlain shared his food with those men across the field, forgetting about

Andersonville and Belle Isle. He was not in Virginia, the heart of the Confederacy, anymore.<sup>63</sup>

Around midnight on the tenth, General Chamberlain received a summons to division headquarters. Griffin, along with Generals Gibbon and Merritt, had been appointed by Grant to arrange the details of the formal surrender of arms. Grant had stressed that the surrender of Rebel arms and colors must be before a portion of the Federal Army, thereby confirming its supremacy. And Chamberlain, Griffin said, had been chosen to command this representative portion of Union troops, the Fifth Corps. Griffin added that Grant insisted the "ceremony be as simple as possible, and that nothing should be done to humiliate the manhood of the Southern soldiers."<sup>64</sup>

Chamberlain greatly appreciated the honor he had been given and he accepted it for the entire Army of the Potomac, not just the Fifth Corps. However, the general was puzzled to the reasons why he received such an honor except that he had always performed his duties without trying to obtain undue recognition. He had known he was not "socially popular among the 'high boys'," and he was not regular army. The reason for the honor probably lies most with General Griffin, who was always in Chamberlain's corner, trying to get him recognition and promotions. And Grant himself, with whom Griffin conferred many times, had liked Chamberlain ever since Rives' Salient.<sup>65</sup>

Chamberlain did have one request. He asked for a transfer back to the Third Brigade to be with the remnants of the old First Division. Some of these regiments--the 20th Maine, 16th Michigan, and the 83rd, 118th, and 155th Pennsylvania were among his oldest friends. With their ranks thinned before Grant ever arrived east, by Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg, this brigade deserved the honor most of accepting the surrender of their gray foes.<sup>66</sup>

It had poured throughout the tenth and eleventh, but on 12 April, the rains held

up. It was a gloomy morning, warm and cloudy. Many recalled that it was four years ago to the day that Fort Sumter had been attacked and the rebellion commenced. But now, Chamberlain sat on his mount, awaiting Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. Behind him stood the First Division with its Maltese Cross waving in the wind. Chamberlain movingly captured the procession with words. He wrote:

The momentous meaning of this occasion impressed me deeply. I resolved to mark it by some token of recognition, which could be no other than a salute of arms. Well aware of the responsibility assumed, and of the criticisms that would follow . . . nothing of that kind could move me in the least. The act could be defended, if needful, by the suggestion that such a salute was not to the cause for which the flag of the Confederacy stood, but to its going down before the flag of the Union. My main reason, however, was one for which I sought no authority nor asked forgiveness. Before us in proud humiliation stood the embodiment of manhood: men whom neither toils and sufferings, nor the fact of death, nor disaster, nor hopelessness could bend from their resolve; standing before us now, thin, worn, and famished, but erect, and with eyes looking level into ours, waking memories that bound us together as no other bond;--was not such manhood to be welcomed back into a Union so tested and assured?

Instructions had been given; and when the head of each division column comes opposite our group, our bugle sounds the signal and instantly our whole line from right to left, regiment by regiment in succession, gives the soldier's salutation, from the "order arms" to the old "carry"--the marching salute. Gordon at the head of the column, riding with heavy spirit and downcast face, catches the sound of shifting arms, looks up, and, taking the meaning, wheels superbly, making with himself and his horse one uplifted figure, with profound salutation as he drops the point of his sword to the boot toe; then facing to his own command, gives word for his successive brigades to pass us with the same position of the manual,--honor answering honor. On our part not a sound of trumpet more, nor roll of drum; not a cheer, nor word nor whisper of vain-glorying, nor motion of man standing again at the order, but an awed stillness rather, and breath-holding, as it it were the passing of the dead!<sup>67</sup>

Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain had served his country with a rare combination of courage, honor, and forgiveness. After the stacking of arms, it was time to go home.

For the general, that was Maine, but he knew something inside of him died along with the Confederacy, for later he wrote, "I am not of Virginia blood; she is of mine."<sup>68</sup>

## **ENDNOTES**

<sup>1</sup>Grant to Sheridan, 29 March 1865, found in John Simon, ed., The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant vol. 1 (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1985), p. 253.

<sup>2</sup>Smith, History of the Corn Exchange Regiment, p. 567; and Calkins and Bearss, Battle of Five Forks, p. 48.

<sup>3</sup>Charles Porter, "Operations of the Fifth Corps on the Left, March 29 to Nightfall, March 31, 1865," The Shenandoah Campaigns of 1862 and 1864 and the Appomattox Campaign of 1865 (Boston: Military Historical Society of Massachusetts, 1907), pp. 218-219.

<sup>4</sup>Powell, The Fifth Army Corps, pp. 780-781.

<sup>5</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, p. 67; and Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Maine for the Years 1864 and 1865, p. 335.

<sup>6</sup>O.R., vol. 46, series 1, part 1, p. 813.

<sup>7</sup>Caldwell, The History of a Brigade of South Carolinians, pp. 270-271.

<sup>8</sup>Proceedings, Findings, and Opinions of the Court of Inquiry in the Case of Gouverneur K. Warren part 1 (Washington, D.C: Government Printing Office, 1883), p. 623.

<sup>9</sup>Caldwell, The History of a Brigade of South Carolinians, pp. 272-273; and Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, pp. 70-71.

<sup>10</sup>Smith, History of the Corn Exchange Regiment, p. 569; and O.R., vol. 46, series 1, part 1, pp. 814-815.

<sup>11</sup>Calkins and Bearss, Battle of Five Forks, p. 64.

<sup>12</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, p. 72.

- <sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp. 72-73.
- <sup>14</sup>Proceedings, Findings and Opinions of the Court of Inquiry in the Case of Gouverneur K. Warren part 1, p. 717; and Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, p. 73.
- <sup>15</sup>Calkins and Bearss, Battle of Five Forks, p. 70.
- <sup>16</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, pp. 74-75.
- <sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 75; and O.R., vol. 46, series 1, part 1, p. 849.
- <sup>18</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, pp. 75-76.
- <sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 77; Woodward, History of the 198th, p. 41; and Proceedings, Findings and Opinions of the Court of Inquiry in the Case of Gouverneur K. Warren, p. 625.
- <sup>20</sup>Porter, "Operations of the Fifth Corps on the Left, March 29 to Nightfall, March 31, 1865," pp. 230-231; O.R., vol. 46, series 1, part 1, p. 849; and Calkins and Bearss, Battle of Five Forks, p. 127.
- <sup>21</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, pp. 88-89.
- <sup>22</sup>Ibid., pp. 89-90.
- <sup>23</sup>Pullen, The Twentieth Maine, pp. 249-250.
- <sup>24</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, p. 103.
- <sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 104.
- <sup>26</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>27</sup>Ibid., pp. 118-119.
- <sup>28</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, p. 105, and Pullen, The Twentieth Maine, p. 251.
- <sup>29</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, pp. 120-121; and P. H. Sheridan, Personal

Memoirs of P. H. Sheridan vol. 2 (New York: Charles L. Webster & Company, 1888), pp. 160-161.

<sup>30</sup>Sheridan, Personal Memoirs of P. H. Sheridan, p. 159; Calkins and Bearss, Battle of Five Forks, p. 87; and Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, pp. 122-127.

<sup>31</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, pp. 124-126; and O.R., vol. 46, series 1, part 1, p. 850.

<sup>32</sup>Calkins and Bearss, Battle of Five Forks, p. 93; and Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, pp. 125-127. When Ayres was asked why Crawford had not yet joined him in battle as planned, the general stated that "[it was] nothing new. The same old story, Crawford had gone off and left me to fight alone." See Calkins and Bearss, Battle of Five Forks, p. 96.

<sup>33</sup>O.R., vol. 46, series 1, part 1, p. 833; and Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, pp. 128-129.

<sup>34</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, pp. 129-130; and Walter Clark, Histories of the Several Regiments and Battalions from North Carolina in the Great War 1861-1865 (Raleigh and Goldsboro, 1901), p. 147.

<sup>35</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, p. 130.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 130-131.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 131-132.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 132-133.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 133-134.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 134-135.

<sup>41</sup>Pullen, The Twentieth Maine, p. 255; Calkins and Bearss, Battle of Five Forks, p. 100; and Smith, History of the Corn Exchange Regiment, p. 578.

<sup>42</sup>Woodward, History of the 198th, p. 45; and Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, pp. 138-140.

<sup>43</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, pp. 141-142.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., pp. 143-144.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., pp. 148-149.

<sup>46</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, pp. 150-151; and O.R., vol. 46, series 1, part 1, p. 851.

<sup>47</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, p. 151.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., pp. 153-154. For a detailed description of the Sheridan-Warren controversy, one should examine Bruce Catton's article, "Sheridan at Five Forks," 21 Journal of Southern History (August 1955): pp. 305-315. Catton is very critical of Warren's conduct, claiming the general fought in traditional McClellan fashion of never going all-out in combat and securing total victory.

<sup>49</sup>Pullen, The Twentieth Maine, pp. 259-261.

<sup>50</sup>Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Maine for the Years 1864 and 1865, pp. 335-336; O.R., vol. 1, series 1, part 1, pp. 851-852; and Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, pp. 193-221.

<sup>51</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, pp. 226-229.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., pp. 231-232.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., pp. 232-233; and Chris Calkins, The Battles of Appomattox Station and Appomattox Court House, April 8-9, 1865 (Lynchburg, Virginia: H. E. Howard, Inc., 1987), pp. 97-100.

<sup>54</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, pp. 234-235.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., pp. 235-236.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., pp. 236-237.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 237.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., pp. 238-239.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., p. 240.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., pp. 242-243.

<sup>61</sup>Frank Cauble, The Surrender Proceedings: April 9, 1865, Appomattox Court House (Lynchburg, Virginia: H. E. Howard, Inc., 1987), pp. 43-44.

<sup>62</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, pp. 245-247.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., pp. 247-248.

<sup>64</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, pp. 248-249; and Cauble, The Surrender Proceedings, p. 93.

<sup>65</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, pp. 254-257.

<sup>66</sup>Chamberlain to Sister Sarah, 13 April 1865, Chamberlain papers, Maine Historical Society.

<sup>67</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, pp. 260-261.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

## EPILOGUE

### *SOMETHING WHICH COULD NOT DIE*

In the last weeks of May 1865, General Chamberlain, with his wounds aching him, made camp outside Washington, impatiently waiting for the grand review of the Federal Army to commence. Sadly enough, the review was not to be for the eyes of Abraham Lincoln who had been killed weeks earlier by the assassin John Wilkes Booth. Finally, on 23 May, the Army of the Potomac paraded down Pennsylvania Avenue as its new commander-in-chief. President Andrew Johnson looked on. When the Fifth Corps passed the reviewing stand, Chamberlain wheeled his horse, Charlemagne, toward the grandstand and raised his sword in salutation. It was a proud moment for the general, especially since he shared it with his hand-picked staff which included his brother Tom and Colonel Ellis Spear, both from the 20th Maine. Chamberlain was asked to dismount by the President so as to join him and his cabinet on the stand. As he stood watching the troops roll past, General Chamberlain could not help but remember many of them who had fallen--Strong Vincent, James Rice, Paddy O'Rorke, E. A. Glenn--and the countless, nameless faces.<sup>1</sup>

It was time now to honor the dead and to praise the living. On the twenty-second, the night before the review, the Fifth Corps decided to have a ceremony honoring its own members. Chamberlain, on behalf of the officers of the First Division, presented General Griffin with a miniature Red Maltese Cross--the division's colors---and then spoke a few words of appreciation. Griffin, in his reply to the division, said to

Chamberlain: "You . . . General, a youthful subordinate when I first took command of this division, now through so many deep experiences risen to be its tested, trusted, and beloved commander,--you are an example of what experiences of loyalty and fortitude, of change and constancy, have marked the career of this honored division."<sup>2</sup>

Though he accepted the praise from Griffin with high regards, Chamberlain probably received his greatest tribute from a pair of generals years after the war ended. General Grant, in the waning years of his life, struggled to write his memoirs, still considered one of the greatest military works ever published. However, toward the end of his venture, Grant's mind roamed back through his career, causing him to jot down paragraphs about past battles and men. On the back of the last page, he scrawled a two-sentence reference to the way Colonel Joshua Chamberlain was wounded at Petersburg. So impressed by the colonel's valor in action, Grant had promoted him to brigadier general on the spot. Having made sure that he extolled a fitting tribute to a brave and deserving soldier, Grant put his pen down. Within forty-eight hours, Grant was dead, 23 July 1885.<sup>3</sup>

The second general that paid lasting tribute to Chamberlain was John B. Gordon. By the end of the Civil War, Gordon had become one of Lee's most trusted and revered generals. A fierce fighter, Gordon had been given the difficult tasks of attacking Fort Stedman and providing the rear-guard defense during Lee's withdrawal from Petersburg. And it was Gordon who had led the Army of Northern Virginia in its last march, surrendering its arms at Appomattox. In the years that followed the war, Gordon traveled the South giving lectures about the Confederacy's final days. When closing these lectures, Gordon would end with Chamberlain's unforgettable salute during the surrender, calling it a "token of respect from Americans to Americans, a final and fitting tribute from Northern to Southern chivalry." To Gordon, Chamberlain was one of the "knightliest soldiers in the Federal army."<sup>4</sup>

Undoubtedly, Joshua Chamberlain deserved the glowing accolades bestowed upon him. He fought in innumerable reconnaissances and skirmishes, and in twenty-four battles from Antietam to Appomattox. During his service, Chamberlain and his troops captured 2,700 prisoners and eight battle flags of which no portion could be claimed by any other command. Attesting to his own courage, the general had at least five horses shot from under him and he himself was struck six times by shot or shell, barely escaping with his life at Rives' Salient and Quaker Road. In addition, Chamberlain survived bouts of malaria and pneumonia, both of which killed more than any Rebel army ever did. No one could have imagined that this former minister and professor from Maine had the combination of skill, bravery, intellect, and luck to become one of the Union army's most renowned soldiers.<sup>5</sup>

With the rebellion over, Chamberlain returned home to his family in Maine. Picking up where he had left off, the general resumed the life of a professor at Bowdoin. The classroom did not compare to fighting in Virginia, and gradually Chamberlain became disinterested in the life of an intellectual. The only exciting field left for him was politics. More and more he found himself immersed in the heated debates surrounding reconstruction of the Union. With his impeccable reputation, Chamberlain seemed to be a certain candidate for the governor's seat in 1866. Seizing the opportunity, the Maine Republican party selected the former war hero to run against a War Democrat. But for a brief moment, the Republicans were in danger of losing their prospect to the regular army. General Warren, who was assisting in the reorganization of the army, wrote to Chamberlain stating that he wanted to offer his name to Grant as one of six Volunteer officers needed for positions in new regiments. Chamberlain, grateful that his name headed the list, declined the colonelcy of a regiment because of his health.<sup>6</sup> Politics would be more accommodating to his painful hip.

Chamberlain was elected by the largest majority in a Maine gubernatorial race up to that point in time. He served as governor from 1866 to 1871, being reelected three times. His service to the state did not end when he left office. In 1876, he was elected major general of the state militia, serving as its commander until his resignation in 1879. Before he did resign, Chamberlain exercised his powers to keep the peace in the winter of 1878-79 when a political feud between the aligned Democratic and Greenback parties against the Republicans almost erupted into violent clashes for the state legislature. General Chamberlain kept the peace until the supreme court settled the political embroilment, and once done, he resigned his post.<sup>7</sup>

Most of Chamberlain's time, after he left the governor's seat, was spent in the field of education. From 1871 to 1883, he served as president of Bowdoin. In addition, he was professor of mental and moral philosophy and lecturer on political science and law from 1874 to 1879, though he continued to lecture on these latter subjects until 1885. In 1878, Chamberlain was appointed by President Rutherford Hayes to attend the Universal Exposition in Paris, with the mission of examining the European systems of education.<sup>8</sup>

Despite his political and educational endeavors, Chamberlain never dismissed his affection for his fellow veterans from the Civil War. He traveled the states extensively, attending reunions of regiments that had been under his command. Also, he had become a much-sought-after speaker, lecturing on topics from Little Round Top, Lee's surrender, to the meaning of loyalty. Many of these lectures eventually found their way into articles and finally into his book about the last days of the war, Passing of the Armies. This book had grown out of a project chronicling the Fifth Corps' service, but William Powell published his own book first about the Fifth Corps. And as most former soldiers did, Chamberlain joined the Grand Army of the Republic, and he was briefly president of the Society of the Army of the Potomac in the late 1880's. Believing that

the grandeur of the war and its enduring mystique would never fade, he wrote that "Every man felt that he gave himself to, and belonged to, something beyond time and above place,--something which could not die."<sup>9</sup>

Chamberlain's last days were consumed with the war as he continued to both write and lecture about it despite his failing health. On 24 February 1914, Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain died of complications from the hip wound he had received not quite fifty years before at Rives' Salient. Years later when Chamberlain's granddaughter was asked what she remembered about her grandfather, she answered:

I think of Grandfather as a scholar, a teacher, a person of great breadth of interest and concern for his fellow beings, rather than as a fighter. I am sure he fought only because he felt it was his duty to fight to save the Union with all that that entailed.

Bravery, modesty, affection, are things I remember about my grandfather. I do not associate him with battle and killing.<sup>10</sup>

It had taken men like Joshua Chamberlain, who came forward out a sense of loyalty and duty to their country, to fight and kill so as no American would ever lift a sword again against his brethren.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Chamberlain, Passing of the Armies, pp. 338-359.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 322-324.

<sup>3</sup>Bruce Catton, U. S. Grant and the American Military Tradition (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1954), p. 89.

<sup>4</sup>L. S. Merrick to Chamberlain, 7 February 1902, Chamberlain papers, Maine Historical Society; and Gordon, Reminiscences of the Civil War, pp. 444-445.

<sup>5</sup>Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Maine for the Years 1864 and 1865, p. 336; Whitman and True, Maine in the War for the Union, pp. 626-627; Wallace, Soul of the Lion: A Biography of General Joshua L. Chamberlain, pp. 200-201.

<sup>6</sup>Wallace, Soul of the Lion: A Biography of General Joshua L. Chamberlain, pp. 204-206.

<sup>7</sup>Wallace, Soul of the Lion: A Biography of General Joshua L. Chamberlain, p. 206; and Cleaveland, History of Bowdoin College, p. 672; and Johnson and Malone, eds., Dictionary of American Biography vol. 3, p. 598.

<sup>8</sup>Johnson and Malone, eds., Dictionary of American Biography vol. 3, p. 598.

<sup>9</sup>In Memoriam: Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, pp. 10-12; and Chamberlain, "Address of Gen. Joshua L. Chamberlain at the Dedication of the Maine Monuments on the Battlefield of Gettysburg, October 3, 1893," p. 553.

<sup>10</sup>Rosamond Allen to editors of Blue & Gray Magazine, December/January 1983-1984, in Blue & Gray Magazine 1 (December/January 1983-1984): p. 16.

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