

# BATTLEFIELD FOOTSTEPS



## Gettysburg National Military Park

*Preparation Materials for the Courage, Determination,  
and Leadership student programs.*



**U.S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

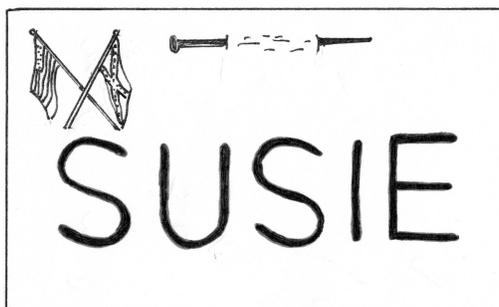
# Battlefield Footsteps Programs

## Teacher and Student Guide



The following lessons have been prepared for you to present over the course of one or two class periods and/or to send home as study guides for your students. They will prepare them for the trip as well as build their anticipation for the program.

Please be sure to have the students wear a nametag with their FIRST NAMES ONLY in large letters so that we can get to know them quickly on Field Trip Day.



**Causes of the American Civil War** *a lesson for all programs* **page 3**

What was the Civil War really fought over? Let the people who lived through this emotional and complex time period tell you what it was like, and why they became involved in a war that would ultimately claim 620,000 lives.

**“Courage and the 9<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Battery”** *July 2, 1863* **page 6**

“Retreat by prolonge, firing!” is the order as your unit is sacrificed to buy time for the infantry to plug the gaps along Cemetery Ridge. Follow in the path and harried activity of this courageous artillery unit.

**“Determination and the 15<sup>th</sup> Alabama Infantry”** *July 2, 1863* **page 10**

Climb Big Round Top and attack Little Round Top after a forced march, and without any water! This program illustrates the strength, stamina and determination of these Confederate infantrymen.

**“Leadership and the 6<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Infantry”** *July 1, 1863* **page 14**

“Align on the Colors” with Lt. Colonel Rufus Dawes, on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1863 as you rush toward an unfinished railroad cut filled with firing Confederate soldiers. Will the cut continue to serve as their cover, or will it become their trap? Leadership will determine the day.

**Field Trip Day Procedures** **page 18**

If your students are participating in one of these programs, please follow these directions.

## ESSENTIAL BACKGROUND

# CAUSES OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

What was the Civil War really fought over? Let the people who lived through this emotional and complex time period tell you what it was like, and why they became involved in a war that would ultimately claim 620,000 lives.

Respond as each author might to the following questions: “What was the cause of the Civil War?”

### POLITICIANS’ VIEWS

**Alexander Stephens**, Vice President of the Confederate States of America, March 1861:

*This was the immediate cause of the late rupture and present revolution. [Our] foundations are laid, its cornerstone rests, upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery, subordination to the superior race is his natural and normal condition.*

**Mississippi Declaration of Secession**, January 1861:

*We must either submit to degradation, and to the loss of property worth four billions of money (the estimated total market value of slaves), or we must secede from the Union framed by our fathers, to secure this as well as every other species of property.*

**President Lincoln’s** “House Divided” Speech, Springfield, Illinois, June 16, 1858:

*A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure, permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved -- I do not expect the house to fall - - but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other.*

**Frederick Douglass**, abolitionist and former-slave, speech delivered on March 26, 1860:

*If slaveholders have ruled the American Government for the last fifty years, let the anti-slavery men rule the nation for the next fifty years. If the South has made the Constitution bend to the purposes of slavery, let the North now make that instrument bend to the cause of freedom and justice. If 350,000 slaveholders have, by devoting their energies to that single end, been able to make slavery the vital and animating spirit of the American Confederacy for the last 72 years, now let the freemen of the North, who have the power in their own hands, and who can make the American Government just what they think fit, resolve to blot out for ever the foul and haggard crime, which is the blight and mildew, the curse and the disgrace of the whole United States.*

Rewrite the excerpted letters in your own words, answering the question:  
“What was the cause of the Civil War?”

### SOLDIERS' VIEWS

(All three soldiers perished from their wounds at the battle of Gettysburg.)

**Sergeant Philip Hamlin** of the First Minnesota Infantry Regiment wrote home on March 1, 1862:

*The example of our nation has been a fountain of light to the people of the old world foreshadowing to the struggling nationalities a future destiny gloriously delivered from the weights and embarrassments of the past which have limited privileges, combated freedom, made the distributions of blessings unequal, and restricted the culture of the mind, and the consequent elevation of man in opposition to a class endowed with special privileges only by arbitrary enactment . . . May God preserve us from ourselves.*

**Private George W. Ervay**, 16<sup>th</sup> Michigan Volunteer Infantry, wrote the following letter excerpt on February 16, 1863, referencing the recent recruitment of African-American soldiers – an action made possible by Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation, but not “endorsed” by soldiers such as Ervay.

*. . . I think that I shall be clear of the war soon for we white soldiers are going to be relieved by the n-----s. last pay day the officers had to pay taxes on the n-----s that are in the army and around Washington and it is in the New York herrild that every private soldier will have to forfeit fifteen percent next pay day that will be three & 1/2 dollars every two monts for the support of the counter bands some say that if they take any money out of their pay that they will desert others say that they will mutenize and I think that if they ever take any of my pay that I shall prefer the former . . .*

**Lieutenant Sidney Carter** was from South Carolina, and had a big enough farm to own a few slaves. This makes his war reasoning in the last line all the more interesting (and perplexing from our modern viewpoint) from this January 1862 letter home.

*. . . One thing I must say I want you to do is if Judson will not ally you in making the negroes know their place, I want you to call on Giles to do it. If you will be prompt when they need whipping, then they will think of this when help is not present . . . I think it would be best not to plant any cotton except enough to keep seeds (and one bale for house use). . . Give my love to all and accept your own part. Kiss the dear little ones for me. If I never see them again, I will try to leave them a free home.*

**Note to teachers:** Primary sources are often difficult for even the best students. Define terms within, choose and/or abbreviate excerpts, and incorporate in the manner most suitable for the age and experience level of your students.

Underlined words or phrases within the student readings above should be explained prior to class reading, if possible. For excerpted post-war sources on the causes of the war, check out the "GETTYSBURG SCHOOLBUS" -- a new blog for educators -- at [www.nps.gov/gett/forteachers](http://www.nps.gov/gett/forteachers).

**Questions for class discussion:**

- Why do you think some contemporaries refer to the U.S. Constitution and some to the Declaration of Independence when referring to the coming of war?
- How were the soldiers' reasons for fighting alike? How were they different?
- How were the soldiers' reasons alike or different from the politicians' views?
- What is the difference between a contemporary and a post-war source? A primary and a secondary source? Which are most reliable, in your opinion?
- Based on these sources, and others you have read, what was the main cause of the Civil War? Support your answer.

# “Courage and the 9<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Battery” July 2, 1863

## What’s YOUR definition of COURAGE?

Step #1: Write the word COURAGE on the board and, as a class, brainstorm every word or phrase that comes to mind.

Step #2. In small groups of 3 to 5, formulate a sentence definition for “courage”, using this word list.

Step #3. Each group can share their definition with the whole class. Then, combine the best parts of the group definitions to create one class definition for the word, or vote on the best small group definition.

Step #4. Remember that you will further explore the meaning of COURAGE on your field trip to Gettysburg when you walk in the footsteps of a group of men who exemplified courage.

*Be prepared to share your class definition with your park ranger.*

## 10 New Words

artillery – branch of the armies trained and in charge of operating the cannon. Artillerymen typically operated with the infantry, working to support their movements before and during battle.

battery – organizational unit of the artillery, consisting in the Union army of six cannon and around 100 men who operated them. Each battery also had about 100 horses that moved the cannon, and its ammunition, on the battlefield.

bugler – soldier who sounded the bugle, a musical instrument that alerted men to the next activity in camp, or to the next movement in the midst of battle.

casualty – soldier who has been killed, wounded or captured by the enemy.

infantry – branch of the armies trained to travel on foot and fight with a musket-rifle; most soldiers were in the infantry.

limber -- a two-wheeled wagon, pulled by six horses, that contained an ammunition chest for the cannon. The cannon was attached to the limber for movement.

prolonge – a strong rope connecting the cannon to the limber, which allowed the cannon to be fired and then moved, backward, during a retreat.

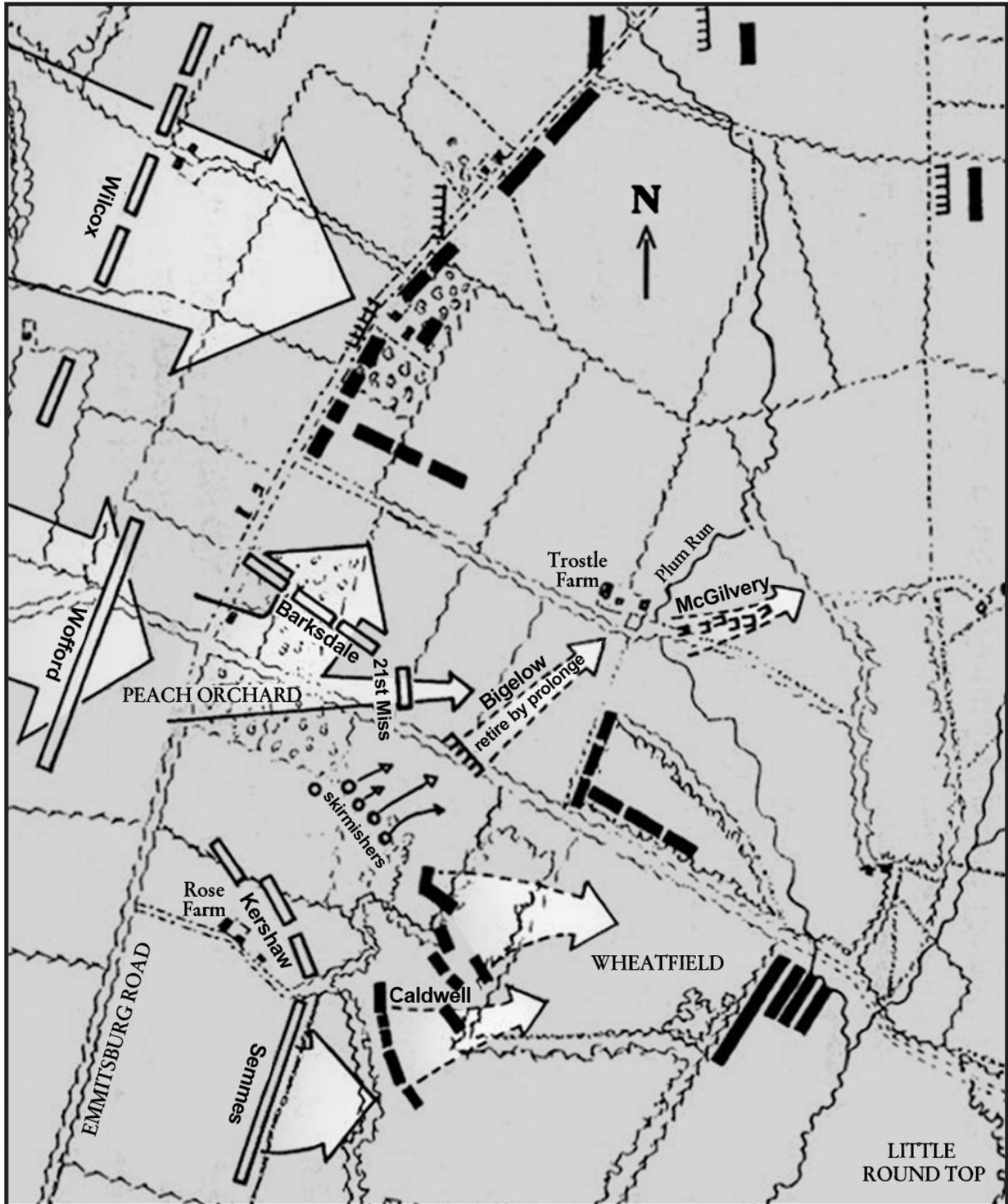
recoil – the backward movement of an artillery piece (cannon), caused by the force of the explosion that hoists the shell forward.

retreat – to move the army or part of the army away from the enemy and the field of battle.

sponge and rammer- the long, wooden implement used to push the artillery shell down into the gun and swab it out after each shot.

# The Battle of Gettysburg and the 9<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Battery

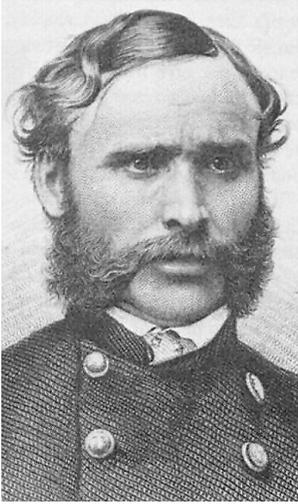
This is the area over which you will walk in the footsteps of the 9<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Battery from the second day of the battle of Gettysburg -- July 2, 1863.



Circle Bigelow's Battery;  
Trace Plum Run in blue;  
Put a box around the Trostle farm;  
Outline the Wheatfield in brown;

Outline the Peach Orchard in green;  
Identify the Confederate Regiment that is the biggest threat to Bigelow and his men.

## Three Courageous Men



*“10 men well disciplined under the control of an energetic bold leader will easily vanquish 20 in the loose & unrestrained character of a mob, & so of Thousands & tens of thousands.”*

**Lieutenant Colonel Freeman McGilvery** believed in bold leadership, and his leadership skills were tested at the battle of Gettysburg. Thirty-seven years old when the war began, McGilvery had already traveled the world as a sea captain for 20 years. Raising and then commanding a battery at the battles of Cedar Mountain, Second Manassas, South Mountain and Antietam, he was more than ready to command a full brigade (consisting of 4 batteries) when he was promoted in May of 1863. He was described by the chief of the army’s artillery as a “cool and clear headed officer”. In contrast to his vast experience, one battery in his brigade, the 9<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Battery, had never been tested in battle. At Gettysburg, McGilvery was compelled to place them in the hottest and most dangerous location on the field.

*“He is worse than any regular that ever breathed. . . he has been ordering eight roll calls a day . . .”*

**Captain John Bigelow** believed in discipline, and when he reported for command of the 9<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Battery, discipline was exactly what they needed. The men in the battery had been poorly led, had never seen battle, and thought they would be spending the whole war merely on guard duty. Bigelow had seen battle, and knew what it would take to get these men in shape to fight. Until the war began in 1861, his life was filled with another kind of discipline – study at Harvard College. But three months before graduation, he left to become a soldier. Quickly rising through the ranks, he fired his first shots one year and one day prior to the battle of Gettysburg, and was wounded there. Discipline had made him rather unpopular when he took over command of the battery, but at the battle of Gettysburg, it saved the day and the army from the brink of disaster.



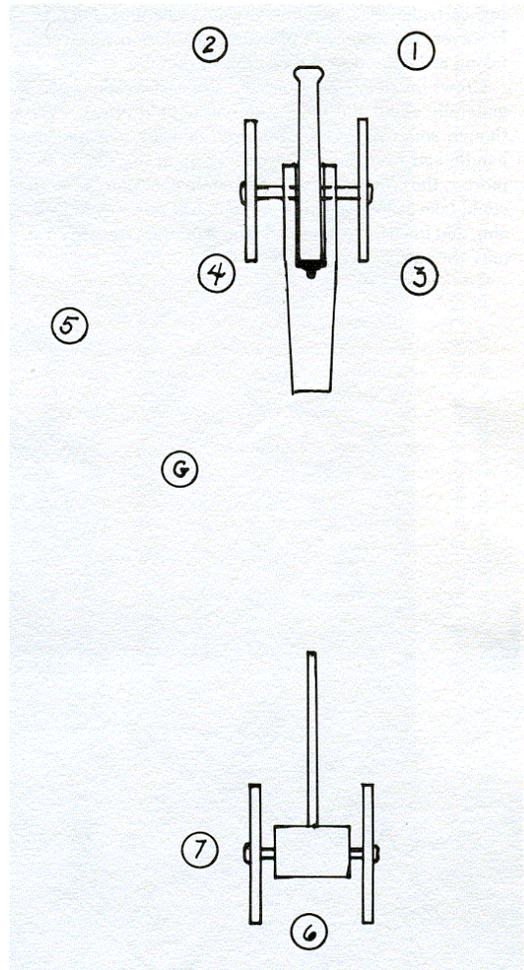
*“When I entered the Battery I did not know a single Artillery call but now know most of them by heart. I have been highly complimented on my playing. . . I am going to take a sketch of the Camp . . . I only wish I had good material to draw it on.”*



**Bugler Charles Wellington Reed** would not have considered himself a leader like McGilvery, nor disciplined like Bigelow . . . art and music were his talents. He enlisted in the 9<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Battery in 1862 as its bugler, sounding a different series of notes for every move the men made. There was a call for breakfast, a call to break camp, and a call for lights out. More importantly, there were calls to heed in battle, and Reed knew every one. When not sounding the bugle, he spent his time sketching as much as he could about army life. He filled several sketch books throughout the war, and illustrated his letters home with drawings too. At the battle of Gettysburg, he would not have much time for drawing, as the men of his battery relied on his calls to guide them, and his captain would rely on him for far more . . . as you’ll see on Field Trip Day!

## Become an Artilleryman

Designate a large object, such as a piece of playground equipment, to serve as your cannon, assign a gunner and Numbers 1 – 7, and line up per the diagram below. Have students act out the loading and firing drill of an artillery gun crew as you read the process aloud.



At the command “Commence firing,” the gunner ordered “Load.” Number 1 sponged the tube. Number 2 took a round from Number 5 and placed it in the muzzle. Number 1 rammed the round home, while Number 3 held his thumb on the vent. The gunner sighted the cannon. When the gun was loaded, 3 moved to the trail and moved it left or right with the trailspike as directed by the gunner. Number 5 got another round from Number 6 or 7 at the limber where 6 cut fuses (if needed) for shell and/or case. The gunner stepped clear to the side of the piece to observe the effect of the fire, and gave the command “Ready.” Numbers 1 and 2 stepped clear. Number 3 punctured the cartridge box with the vent pick. Number 4 attached the lanyard to a friction primer and inserted the primer in the vent. Number 3 covered the vent with his left hand while 4 moved to the rear. At the gunner’s command “Fire,” 3 stepped clear of the wheel. Number 4 yanked the lanyard. The gunner ordered the cannon run back up and the process was repeated until the command “Cease firing.”

From “Cannons: An Introduction to Civil War Artillery” by Dean S. Thomas

# “Determination and the 15<sup>th</sup> Alabama Infantry” July 2, 1863

## What’s YOUR definition of DETERMINATION?

Step #1: Write the word DETERMINATION on the board and, as a class, brainstorm every word or phrase that comes to mind.

Step #2. In small groups of 3 to 5, formulate a sentence definition for “determination”, using this word list.

Step #3. Each group can share their definition with the whole class. Then, combine the best parts of the group definitions to create one class definition for the word, or vote on the best small group definition.

Step #4. Remember that you will further explore the meaning of DETERMINATION on your field trip to Gettysburg when you walk in the footsteps of a group of men who exemplified determination.

*Be prepared to share your class definition with your park ranger.*

## 10 New Words

accouterments – the equipment of a soldier – including cap and cartridge boxes, bayonet, canteen, haversack and bedroll – carried along on the march.

boulder – a very large rock. There are many boulders in the fields surrounding Gettysburg.

canteen – a container for water with a long strap thrown overhead, enabling the soldier to carry the canteen resting on his left hip during the march.

casualty – soldier who has been killed, wounded or captured by the enemy.

flank – the end of a line of soldiers; each army had a left and right flank, and these were considered weak points in the line as they could be attacked, and then pushed in to expose the entire army.

formation – an arrangement or positioning of soldiers. Battle formation meant two long rows of soldiers – one row (or rank) behind another – ready to move against the enemy or defend their position.

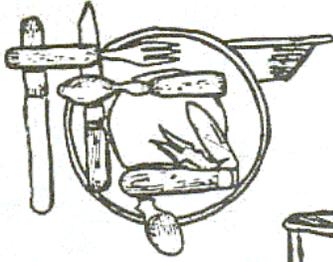
infantry – branch of the armies trained to travel on foot and fight with a musket-rifle; most soldiers were in the infantry.

regiment – a group of soldiers led by a Colonel. At Gettysburg, a regiment usually consisted of between 300 and 500 soldiers. The 15<sup>th</sup> Alabama Infantry Regiment consisted of 500 men, and they were led by Colonel William C. Oates.

sharpshooters – crack shots, sent out in advance of the main body of soldiers to pester and hold back the enemy’s advance.

water detail – a small detachment of men sent to the rear to fill up everyone’s canteen while the main body of soldiers awaited orders.

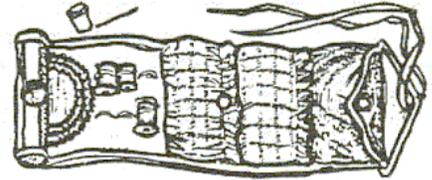
# Infantry Soldier Equipment



eating utensils  
(1 pound)



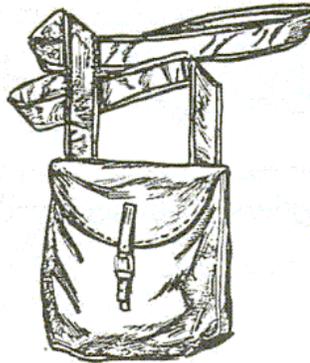
canteen  
(4 pounds)



soldier's housewife  
(.25 pound)



coffee and hardtack  
(3.5 pounds)



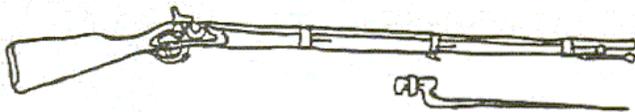
haversack  
(5 pounds)



blanket  
(5 pounds)



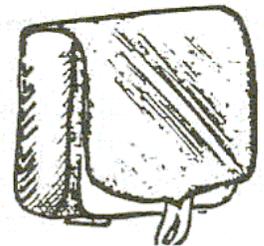
cap pouch  
(.5 pound)



musket and bayonet  
(9.5 pounds)



knapsack  
(20 pounds)



cartridge box  
(9 pounds)

Calculate the total weight of all of these items? Find equipment of similar weights around your house or school. Do you think the items felt lighter or heavier after marching for 15 miles or more? Which item might you leave behind if you must lighten your load? Why?

## Two *Determined* Men and Their Regiments



**Colonel William C. Oates** commanded the 15<sup>th</sup> Alabama Infantry Regiment at Gettysburg. In his youth, he might have been described as brash, ambitious but aggressive. For example, he was known for his “hair-trigger temper”, had run-ins with the law, and ran away from home when he was just 16. But by the time of the Civil War, he had turned his energy around – from brashness to determination. He had worked as a teacher, published a newspaper, and passed the exam to become a lawyer after just 4 months of study.

Oates was determined to make a difference in the world in any and every way that he could. Joining the army at the age of 29, he was well-matched with the 15<sup>th</sup> Alabama Infantry. By the time of the battle of Gettysburg, they were one of the most battle-hardened regiments in the Army of Northern Virginia . . . in fact, they had never known defeat. At Gettysburg, it would take a combination of their experiences and sense of determination to overcome obstacle after obstacle in their front, starting with a forced march of over 25 miles just to get to this place called Gettysburg.

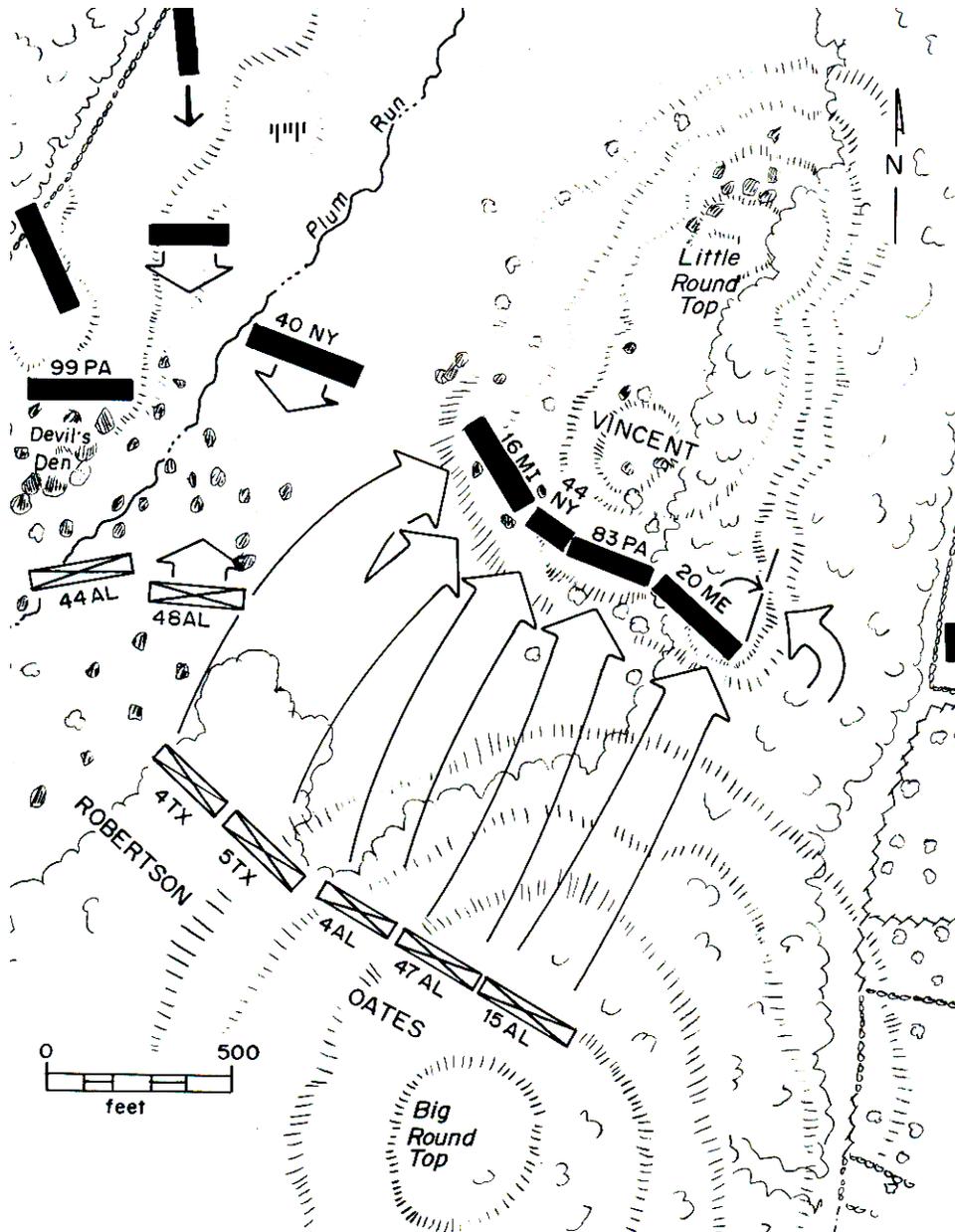
**Colonel Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain** commanded the 20<sup>th</sup> Maine Infantry Regiment at Gettysburg, a job he took over just before the battle. He already had the respect of his men after serving beside them for two years as their Lieutenant Colonel or second in command, and also because they knew of and admired his intelligence. Before the war, Chamberlain had been a professor of speech and rhetoric at a college in Maine, and he could speak at least 10 different languages fluently. None of this, of course, would help him in battle command – and he knew it.

Studying was the life he knew, and so he often stayed up very late into the night inside his tent, studying military books by candlelight. His long hours of study and his determination to be the best possible commander for his men, landed him sick with heat exhaustion in the weeks before the battle. When he returned to his men, they were on their way to Gettysburg. There he would be told to defend the extreme left of the Union line . . . no matter what! Would his studiousness and intelligence be enough to counter the bold and experienced fighting men from Alabama?



## The Battle of Gettysburg and the 15<sup>th</sup> Alabama Infantry

This is part of the area over which you will walk in the footsteps of the 15<sup>th</sup> Alabama Infantry from the second day of the battle of Gettysburg -- July 2, 1863.



Circle the 15<sup>th</sup> Alabama Infantry.

Color in their path from Big Round Top to Little Round Top.

What do the circular hash markings mean, underneath the arrow marking their path?

Toward which regiment are they headed?

Who is protecting the flanks of these two regiments?

How would you describe the type of fighting that must take place when they meet?

# “Leadership and the 6<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Infantry” July 1, 1863

## What’s YOUR definition of LEADERSHIP?

Step #1: Write the word LEADERSHIP on the board and, as a class, brainstorm every word or phrase that comes to mind.

Step #2. In small groups of 3 to 5, formulate a sentence definition for “leadership”, using this word list.

Step #3. Each group can share their definition with the whole class. Then, combine the best parts of the group definitions to create one class definition for the word, or vote on the best small group definition.

Step #4. Remember that you will further explore the meaning of LEADERSHIP on your field trip to Gettysburg when you walk in the footsteps of a group of men and their leader, Lt. Colonel Rufus Dawes.

*Be prepared to share your class definition with your park ranger.*

## 10 New Words

advance – to move forward upon the enemy line; a movement that gets soldiers closer to the enemy.

align – to form, or bring into a line. To “align on the colors” is to line up with the colors (flag).

casualty – soldier who has been killed, wounded or captured by the enemy.

charge – to attack vigorously, with little attention to maintaining battle formation.

colors – the regimental, state and/or country flags, carried into battle to guide the movements of the men.

double-quick – a command for the soldiers to pick up the pace and jog while maintaining formation.

file – in battle formation of two horizontal rows, a file is a column of two – a front man, and the man directly behind him. Men were sometimes ordered to “fire by file”, down the row, one file after another, like dominos.

railroad cut – a dugout passage of ground, in preparation for the laying of tracks for a train line.

ridge – a long narrow elevation of land. At Gettysburg, ridgelines were often named after the farmer or organization on whose property it began. Examples: Seminary Ridge or Houck’s Ridge.

volley – the simultaneous discharge of a line of rifles.

## **One Leader and His Men**

### **Lt. Colonel Rufus Dawes and the 6<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Infantry**



Rufus R. Dawes began his military career in 1861. A twenty-two year old college graduate, Dawes was immediately caught up in the “war fever” that swept the north after the firing upon Fort Sumter, South Carolina. "What seemed to most concern our patriotic and ambitious young men was the fear that some one else would get ahead and crush the rebellion before they got there," Dawes wrote. Gathering support, he and several other young men raised a company of volunteers for state service, to which Dawes was elected captain. Like many other volunteer officers in 1861, Dawes had no formal military training and "worked like a beaver" to get his new company, "The Lemonweir Minute Men", into shape and into state service. They were eventually assigned to the 6th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry as Company K. Dawes saw extensive service with the regiment at the battles of Second Bull Run, South Mountain, Antietam, Fredericksburg, and Chancellorsville. He rose to the rank of major and lieutenant colonel to replace promoted officers. On July 1st, 1863, Lt. Colonel Dawes led his 6th Wisconsin Infantry of the famous "Iron Brigade" onto the field of Gettysburg.

*I should have responded sooner to your question: "Are you going?" If [God] and President Lincoln will permit, I am. I esteem it an honor, worth a better life than mine, to be permitted to lead them in this glorious struggle.*

-- May 4, 1861

*What do you think of trudging along all day in soaking rain, getting as wet as a drowned rat, taking supper on hard tack and salt pork, and then wrapping up in a wet woolen blanket and lying down for a sleep, but waked up during the night three or four times to receive and attend to orders and finally turning out at three o'clock in the morning to get the regiment ready to march? Well – that is soldiering.*

-- June 27, 1863

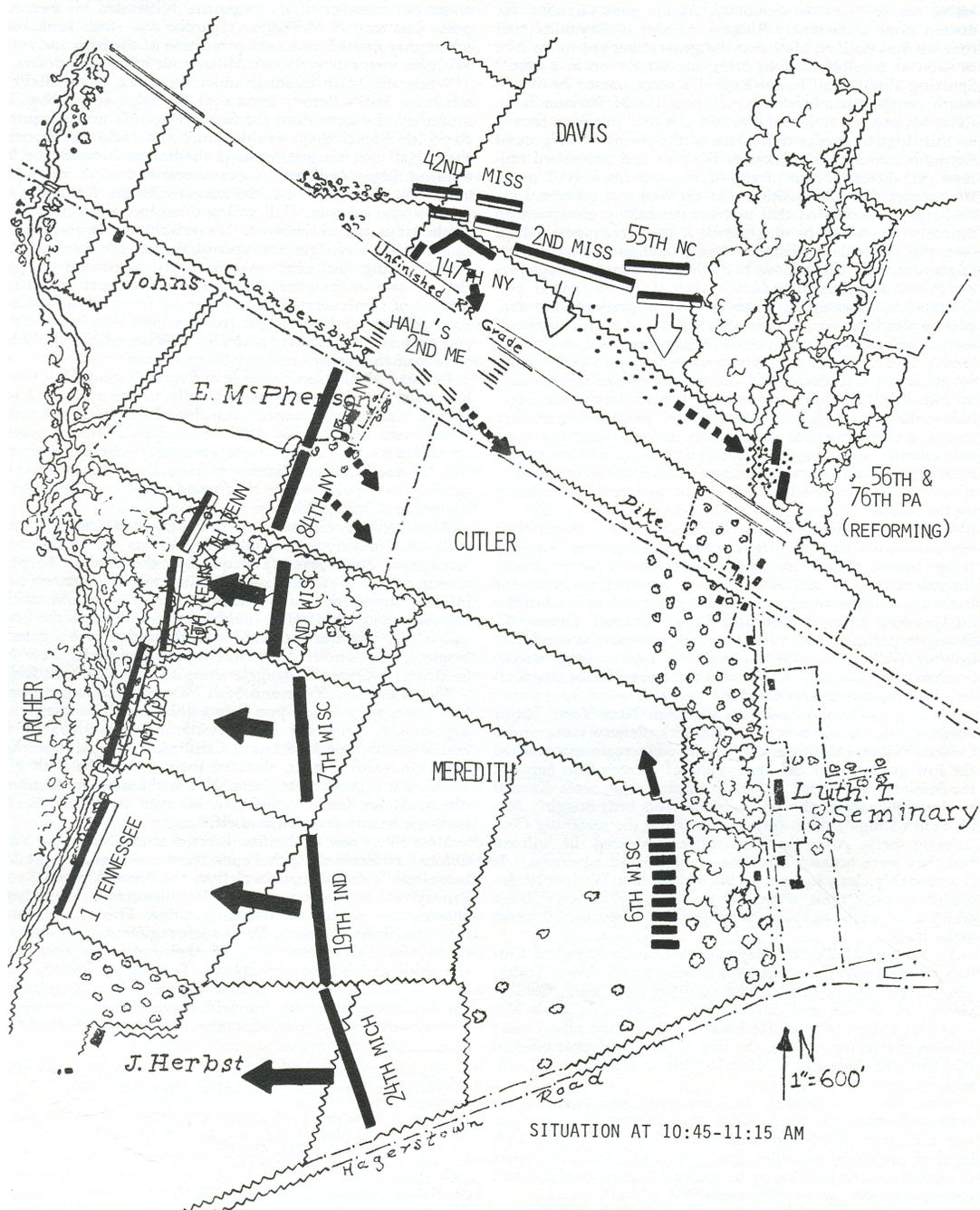
*Years afterward I found the distance passed over to be one hundred and seventy-five paces. Every officer proved brave, true, and heroic in encouraging the men to breast the deadly storm, but the real impetus was the eager and determined valor of our men who carried muskets in the ranks.*

-- just after battle of Gettysburg

***Identify a trait of personal character as revealed by each of the Dawes' quotes above.***

## The Battle of Gettysburg and the 6<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Infantry

This is the area over which you will walk in the footsteps of the 6<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Infantry from the first day of the battle of Gettysburg -- July 1, 1863.



Circle 6<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Infantry.

Trace the Chambersburg Pike in brown.

Trace the unfinished railroad cut.

Identify which Union regiments are moving into new positions at this time.

Guess the end position for the 6<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin, and the units they will face there.

## Regimental (Class) Drill

*Outside or in an open area, line your class up in two rows, called ranks, shoulder-to-shoulder. This is called battle formation. Then, practice some of the following commands to begin to understand how well, and how quickly, the 6<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin could move as a group . . . and therefore how well they were trained and led.*

### Battle Formation



COMPANY. . . RIGHT FACE (quarter-turn to the right). *Now the class is in column formation. This is how they would have marched toward Gettysburg on their way to battle.*

COMPANY. . . LEFT FACE (quarter-turn to the left)

COMPANY. . . FORWARD MARCH (move forward, maintaining formation)

COMPANY. . . HALT (stop, but remain at attention)

COMPANY. . . RIGHT – DRESS! (turn heads to the right and straighten lines)  
FRONT (snap heads back to the front, after the RIGHT-DRESS command)

COMPANY. . . AT EASE (relax, but stay in place)

COMPANY. . . ATTENTION (stand tall, face forward, silence)

COMPANY. . . ABOUT FACE (half-turn)

DOUBLE-QUICK, MARCH! (slowly jog/trot forward, maintaining battle formation)

*At Gettysburg, you will learn how to execute more complicated commands, such as LEFT HALF WHEEL, FIRE BY FILE, and CHARGE!*

# Field Trip Day Procedures



If your students are participating in a Battlefield Program, please follow these directions:

1. Report to the **Bus Parking Lot at the Gettysburg National Military Park Visitor Center, 1195 Baltimore Pike**, Gettysburg, PA 17325 on or before the scheduled time, with your bus or vehicle and all students ready to go.
2. Your program ranger will meet you there, and ride on the bus with you to the program starting point. Your bus is necessary in the transport of your students to the program site. Any further directions necessary will be given to the bus driver by the student program ranger at this meeting point.
3. Have the students remain on the bus at this time, and remind them that once they arrive at the program site they should keep all unnecessary personal items on the bus (hats, cameras, lunch etc.) so that they are free to actively participate.
4. If the weather appears bad and you are enroute, contact the Education office at (717) 338-4422. An indoor program (possibly abbreviated, however) will be offered if we cannot stay outside.

**TO GET THE FULL BENEFITS OF THE PROGRAM, IT IS IMPORTANT TO ARRIVE ON OR BEFORE YOUR SCHEDULED STARTING TIME. RANGERS RESERVE THE RIGHT TO CANCEL PROGRAMS OF GROUPS ARRIVING MORE THAN 15 MINUTES LATE!**

WARNING!!! We would like to remind those participating in our student programs, that they are designed to take place outside in the natural environment. The weather therefore will play a great factor in the comfort of the students. Be prepared, as the students could be subjected to heat, cold, rain, winds, muddy fields and trails, as well as ticks and stinging insects for extended periods of time. Proper clothing and preparation is a must.