

## AFTER ACTION REPORT; GETTYSBURG THE 2ND DAY (13 May 2006)

By Kevin Anastas



Photo by George Evans

On Saturday 13 May the BRCWRT made history. For the first time in over 100 years a group of great Americans were able to see the same views as the soldiers who fought at Gettysburg on 2 July 1863. Thanks to the recent efforts of the park staff to cut the trees back to their wartime configuration, we were able to study terrain that no human has seen since the National Battlefield Park was established in the 1890s. It was a great day!

Our group was made up of forty-five members and guests. We gathered at the Visitor's Center parking lot at 0900 and spent the entire day studying the major actions of the second day.

The morning stops focused on the overall Confederate plan of attack and the maneuvers of Hood's division as he attacked the Devil's Den and Little Round Top. We followed the general path of the 1<sup>st</sup> Texas infantry from their line of departure, past the Bushman house (where Hood was wounded) and across the triangular field. We then spent some time on Houck's ridge discussing attacks and counterattacks around the boulders of the Devil's Den. We concluded the morning tour by hiking up Little Round Top. We skipped the well worn path to the site of the 20<sup>th</sup> Maine's fight and focused instead on key actions of some other less well known leaders. These included Vincent, O'Rorke, Weed and Hazlett.

After lunch we reconvened the tour in The Wheatfield in time for a short spring shower. Thirty some hard corps members stuck it out as we toured the site of the bloodiest fighting of the day. We made short stops at the 4<sup>th</sup> MI, 17<sup>th</sup> ME and Irish Brigade monuments to get a sense of the action in this part of the field. Enroute to the Peach Orchard we crossed the area where hundreds of men from Kershaw's South Carolina brigade were hit by artillery and rifle fire when they responded to a false order and exposed their flank to the Federal batteries along the Wheatfield Road. We then stood on the site of the Wentz house and discussed the attacks of Barksdale and Woford's brigades as they crushed the ill advised salient occupied

by Dan Sickles' 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps.

From the Peach Orchard Maureen Quinn expertly guided us along the path of Bigelow's battery as they conducted their famous "retreat by recoil" to the vicinity of the Trostle house. There the unit was essentially destroyed as they delayed the Confederate attack long enough for LTC McGilvery to establish a new artillery line along Cemetery Ridge.

The last part of the tour was the most strenuous but perhaps the most rewarding. We hiked north along the west side of Plum Run in the area of the Codori-Trostle thicket. The mature trees have all been cut down exposing the entire panorama to our view. We were able to see all the way from the original line of departure where we started in the morning to the site where Barksdale and Wilcox's brigades were finally stopped by Federal counterattacks. The scene is spectacular and well worth the effort. We carefully picked our way to the marker where COL Willard of the "Harper's Ferry Cowards" was killed after leading his brigade in a counterattack against Barksdale's exhausted brigade.

Special thanks to Maureen Quinn for leading the tour at two of the stops. I'd also like to thank Jerry Froelke for helping me with the maps and to Dale Maschino for bringing the name-tags. Thanks to Janet Greentree and George Evans for the great pictures.

Once again we accomplished our mission on time and under budget. See you in the fall when the Round Table returns to Antietam!



Photo by Janet Greentree  
Tour Participants

*Kevin Anastas, Michael Block, Dom Bumbaca, Effie Bumbaca, Doug Cox, Sandra Cox, John DePue, Tim Duskin, Ray Eichleberger, George Evans, Jerry Froelke, Janet Greentree, Ken Jones, Mike Jones, Toni Jones, Andy Kapfer, Mark Knowles, Harlan Lenius, Sharon Lenius, Lyle Loveall, Cindi Loveall, Dan Lundeen, Dale Maschino, John McAnaw, Randy Moller, Rose Nelson, Dan Paterson, Bud Porter, Phil Pruna, Maureen Quinn, Bev Regeimbal, Alexander Rice, Charles Rice, Chuck Rice, Ken Rice, Lois Rice, Mike Rumsey, Fred Schmidtman, Mike Shannon, Jim Squier, Andy Wartell, Patricia Wartell, Ed Wenzel, Patty Wheeler, Keith Young.*