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## Introduction

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# Introduction

The Confederate attack on Cemetery Hill on the evening of July 2 has been the subject of innumerable articles and even books. Yet nearly all of these have focused on the attack itself, far fewer on the defense. In nearly all of the former one finds the comment that the assault was not properly supported. Why not? In this issue's initial article Robert Wynstra seeks to answer this question by examining the role of units in Maj. Gen. Robert Rodes's division who were expected to provide that support.

Our second article also centers on another episode that has received only occasional treatment, the defense of Blocher's Knoll. In most treatments of the battle this phase is usually passed over with the general comment that it was a Union rout. Using sources from both sides, and especially new Eleventh Corps voices, James S. Pula pursues a more in depth understanding of what actually happened.

Brandy Station is usually considered a turning point in the war for the Army of the Potomac's cavalry force. This was of course a process that did not occur all at once. Charles W. Morrison examines the role of the horsemen in blue throughout the campaign, making liberal use of primary sources and presenting his analysis within the context of both Union and Confederate activities.

Success in combat is normally difficult without some planning and structural support. Charles Norville addresses this issue in a detailed analysis of the organizational structure of the Army of the Potomac. Covering all of the arms—infantry, artillery, and cavalry—his conclusions shed new light on how the army's configuration influenced its operations and efficiency—both positively and negatively.

This insightful analysis will be followed by his similar examination of the Army of Northern Virginia structure in the January 2018 issue.

One of the most long-standing controversies of Gettysburg was who was in charge of the Federal forces as they rallied on Cemetery Hill on July 1. Was it Maj. Gen. Oliver Otis Howard or Maj. Gen. Winfield Scott Hancock? When did Hancock arrive? What happened when he did? Was there an argument? Paul E. Bretzger uses eyewitness accounts to make the case for Hancock, wading through a wealth of sometimes conflicting testimony while trying to recreate the critical moments and decisions as the sun set that evening.

When all is said and done, it was individual people who fought the battle and individual people who later recorded it. Robert W. Sledge provides a portrait of Sgt. James Gambrell who claimed to have fired the first shot of the battle and to have the last shot taken *at* him. Another interesting personal story was that penned by 1st Lt. Albert Wallber of the 26th Wisconsin who left a very interesting account of what it was like to be a prisoner of the rebels just behind Pickett's division on Seminary Hill before and after the grand assault on July 3. Sonny Fulks uses his "If You Want to Go" piece to illuminate the life and work of historical artist John Paul Strain whose work on the Civil War is some of the most sought-after by collectors and hobbyists alike.

As always, we encourage our readers to submit their own research to *Gettysburg Magazine*, along with any comments or suggestions they might have.

—James S. Pula