

# Leadership Under Fire: Lessons From the Battle of Gettysburg

## Overview:

The turning-point battle of the American Civil War was fought in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania in 1863. More than 165,000 men of the Union Army of the Potomac and the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia were engaged in fighting around this central Pennsylvania town. The battle took place during the first three days of July and resulted in an estimated 51,000 casualties. In human terms, this battle was the most costly single engagement of the four-year war. President Lincoln's *Gettysburg Address*, offered on November 19, 1863 during the dedication of the Soldiers' National Cemetery, is remembered as one of the most notable orations ever offered in the English language.

A study of the Gettysburg campaign produces notable examples of strategic leadership models and significant actions, both negative and positive, that were driven by tactical leadership decisions. There are stunning examples of both leadership successes and failures. They provide vivid and consequential illustrations of effective and ineffective leadership initiatives at both the personal and organizational levels.

## Logistics:

This seminar is offered on the battlefield of the Gettysburg National Military Park, as either a half-day (3.5 hours) or a full-day (6 hours) experience for participants. The seminar begins with an overview of the campaign and battle. The full-day seminar is divided into a morning and an afternoon segment, and the half-day seminar is offered during the morning or afternoon. Both options include stops at specific locations on the battlefield, such as McPherson's Ridge, Eternal Light Peace Memorial, Seminary Ridge, Little Round Top, Culp's Hill, Cemetery Ridge, High Water Mark, and Soldiers' National Cemetery. At each stop, there is short-distance walking. Groups provide their own transportation when on the battlefield. This seminar operates out of a host facility in the heart of historic Gettysburg, where group lunch options are available.

The Gettysburg leadership experience can also be offered at any site of your choosing that can support a MAC PowerPoint enhancement. With the aid of historic and contemporary photographs and illustration, this seminar can be brought to life for your group as a keynote presentation, a breakout session, or an extended seminar.

## Summary of Topics:

### ARC Leadership

Seminars and keynote presentations in the *Leadership Under Fire* series, each offer their own distinctive leadership lessons and insights. Those lessons and insights are based on specific historical events, occurrences, and trends. They are discussed and unified as they relate to three

critical attributes common among great leaders—Accessibility, Reliability, and Commitment. When brought together, those attributes are the basis of an ARC leadership model.

### Gettysburg Lessons & Insights

Gettysburg was a crucible in which 19<sup>th</sup>-century political, military, and interpersonal leadership were tested in the intense heat of battle. Today, it remains an incomparable venue for studying leadership lessons that are as vivid and powerful as they are timelessly applicable. These lessons provide relevant and compelling leadership insights worthy of emulation at both the personal and organizational levels. Examples of these captivating and historically-based lessons include:

1. Committed leaders hold steadfast to strategic goals to fulfill an organizational mission with committed personal dedication.
2. Mindful leaders continually expand and strengthen leadership capacity.
3. Empathetic leaders are guided by their moral compass.
4. Conscientious leaders engage in a diligent and continual decision-making process.
5. Cognizant leaders know how to build consensus, how to be decisive, and when each is most appropriate.
6. Purposeful leaders understand the power of words, and they choose their words wisely and prudently.

### Participant Feedback:

Anyone who is part of a leadership team owes it to that team to experience the work of Dr. Michael McGough. His seminars are wonderfully prepared, considerate of the participants with whom he's working, and grounded in his experience as an educator. His storytelling, his keen understanding of the work leaders do, and his knowledge of history captivates participants. He astutely draws participants into his seminars, creating an interactive experience focused on practical application of the lessons shared.

Dr. Eric Eshbach, Executive Director  
Pennsylvania Principals Association

Dr. McGough possesses a unique insight and understanding of leadership. He takes a thoughtful and comprehensive approach to the study of historical events, which he purposefully relates to contemporary leadership demands and opportunities. When engaged with my teams, he worked with diverse, multigenerational groups. He was consistently able to enhance our leadership skills, while at the same time building increased cohesion among our team members.

Charles "Chip" Duncan  
Fire Chief  
Carlsbad, California

Dr. McGough's seminars have been an annual highpoint for the visiting Fellows in our International Fellowship program. His knowledge, expertise, and presentation style provide real world examples as Fellows seek to employ his strategies and techniques directly into their personal and professional journeys.

Dr. Leila Bradaschia  
Director of International Programs  
Pennsylvania State University  
State College, Pennsylvania

