

# The battle of Gettysburg lessons in leadership

*Robert D. Martin, USAWC PAO*

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Basic Strategic Art Program students use the battlefield of Gettysburg as an outdoor classroom in order to gaining insight on leadership challenges and lessons in strategic and operational thinking from the Battle of Gettysburg, Sep. 16.



“The discussion among the students, Dr. Matheny, and the other instructors did not necessarily change my strategic view of war, but certainly better informed it,” said BSAP student Maj. Geoff Heiple, referring to the BSAP instructor who selected points on the battle field to make points on strategy. “The preparatory reading and selected stands during the staff ride enabled me to grasp that nexus of policy, strategy, and plans.”

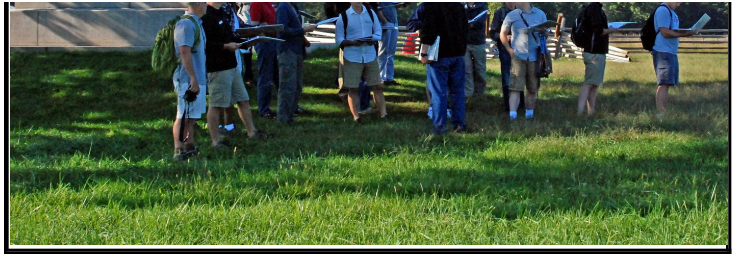
**Dr. Mike Matheny discusses with BSAP students the failure of Pickett’s Charge on the third day of the Battle of Gettysburg**

“The battle’s implications have echoed ever since for strategic planners and it was so important that we study the strategic aspects of the Gettysburg battle specifically, and allow that understanding to inform us in crafting strategic approaches generally,” he said

Basic Strategic Art Program is the basic qualification course for Functional Area 59, Army Strategists. The course's six modules explore strategic theory, strategic art, Joint and Army Systems, national security



decision-making, contemporary strategic challenges and land power. In many cases the modules are presented as case studies that challenge the students to dissect and discuss the strategic aspects of the example.



**Dr. Matheny and BSAP students stand under the statue of Maj. Gen. John Fulton Reynolds as Matheny describes the beginning of the Battle of Gettysburg from McPherson Ridge.**

“We believe that strategists must be able to think, communicate, and lead,” said Shekleton.

“Visiting battlefields is a very worthwhile endeavor. It serves to remind me that any strategic plan or policy eventually must be executed at the operational and tactical level,” said David Spencer, strategy branch chief at U.S. Army Africom. “It is critically important to get the overarching strategy correct, because no amount of operational or tactical brilliance can correct a flawed strategy. Once the strategy is established, you have to ensure your operations and tactics are in synch with the strategy.”

This rigorous graduate level 14-week course is run three times a year, graduating an average of 16 strategists per course. These officers will spend the rest of their careers serving as strategists on high level army, joint, and interagency staff. US army War College is the army lead for education strategy

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