

Civil War Roundtable Gettysburg, PA trip – April 19-21, 2013.

While having visited the Gettysburg Battlefield several times in the past, this was our first trip with the Civil War Roundtable. This trip gave us a more in-depth picture of the history and personal stories behind the events that happened in this historic place. Several things stand out from this trip.

The visit to the Seminary Ridge Museum was really interesting and getting to go up in the cupola to view the landscape from that vantage point was enlightening. It gave us a much better understanding of how the battle in that area unfolded and how desperate the situation was for the few Federal troops holding that line until reinforcements came up.



Driving down the Confederate line and staring across the field to the Union line was also educational. It seemed so close together in a way since you could clearly see the other position. It wasn't until we had walked the line of Pickett's charge with Scott Britton in the evening that we really understood that it was a long way to go when one was under fire and going on foot. Where did their courage to keep going come from? The fields are not level and as we went up and down as we walked, one minute we would have been relatively safe from fire and the next we were fully exposed.



The many sculptures placed around the battlefield do help tell the story. One of the more moving ones was of General Armistead after he had been mortally wounded near the Angle at the end of Pickett's charge. This is located near the National Cemetery and shows Union Captain Bingham coming to the aid of the wounded General. It is called the Friend to Friend Monument.



While it is hard to pick out these isolated events from this trip, they are moments that stood out. The overall impression that we came home with was that the leaders of the Civil War Roundtable were trying to educate us to the more personal side of the war and help us understand the sacrifice and struggle that took place in any of the battles of the Civil War no matter where they were fought. The readings from diaries and other papers really helped to underscore the personal side of these engagements.