

SSCF program experiences Gettysburg leadership

Defense Acquisition University

The 2016 Senior Service College Fellowship, or SSCF, cohort of 20 fellows from Aberdeen Proving Ground; Huntsville, Alabama; and Warren, Michigan, along with Defense Acquisition University, or DAU, program directors converged on Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, from May 18, through May 20, 2015 where they participated in a capstone leadership experience.

The Gettysburg staff ride was led by Dr. Paul Jussel, faculty member and lead historian at the U.S. Army War College. Throughout the Gettysburg experience, presentations, thought-provoking questions, and facilitated dialog focused on leadership topics that included leading and managing change, understanding intent, vision development, decision making, succession planning, acquisition, logistical considerations, and the impact of technology on the battlefield. Jussel framed each topic and posed questions that enabled the fellows to consider the multi-faceted dimensions of leadership, each of which is applicable in today's environment.

The Gettysburg experience began May 18, with a strategic overview presentation delivered by Jussel at the DAU-APG facility. Jussel's presentation provided the historical context for the Confederacy's invasion of the North and described the significance of the battle of Gettysburg. Afterwards, the fellows re-positioned to Gettysburg.

On May 19, Jussel started the morning with a stop at McPherson Ridge which was where the Battle of Gettysburg began on July 1, 1863. Subsequent stops in the morning included Oak Hill, Seminary Ridge, and the Peach Orchard where the discussion focused on the role of leaders, their subordinates, and the significant actions that occurred as a result of key decisions made by senior leaders.

After a brief lunch break at the histor-



Photo by Mike Roche, DAU

Members of the 2016 SSCF Enterprise gather on "Little Round Top" near the Devil's Den during a visit to the Gettysburg National Military Park, May 19.

ic Dobbin House, the staff ride resumed with visits to Devil's Den, Little Round Top; and near the center of the Union line which is marked with a monument to the First Regiment of the Minnesota Volunteers. The Soldiers of the First Minnesota stopped the final surge of Lt. Gen. James Longstreet's assault on July 2, 1863. Significantly, each of these stops were marked by close quarter combat and most importantly where crucial decisions were made by leaders, often with minimal information, and that led to a positive outcome for the Union forces.

Moving over to Seminary Ridge, the

fellows learned about the events that occurred on July 3, 1863 which was the third and final day of the battle. Near the center of the Confederate line on Seminary Ridge, the fellows discussed flexibility and agility in decision making, assessing the environment, contemplated the importance of planning, and reflected upon the responsibilities of leadership.

Afterwards, the fellows walked the route taken by the 12,000 soldiers from a multitude of Confederate units to include those from Maj. Gen. George Pickett's division. During the walk, punctuated by multiple stops, the fellows reflect-

ed upon the impact of actions and decisions made by senior leaders in an earlier era and considered their impending roles as future leaders within the acquisition workforce.

The final stop of the staff ride occurred at the Gettysburg National Military Cemetery where Jussel recited President Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg address and discussed the many National Policy outcomes associated with his comments. The Gettysburg staff ride represented the culmination of the past ten months of leadership and acquisition training as well as provided the fellows with one final opportunity to meet as a cohort.