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# Business as battle: The lessons of war

Companies glean leadership insights at Gettysburg and other battlefields

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Instead of spending the day in front of a computer as usual, a group of technology professionals gamely followed their boss across the battlefields of Gettysburg to where a pivotal skirmish was fought nearly 150 years ago.

At the summit of Little Round Top, Rocky Cintron, chief executive of Force 3, a Crofton-based consulting firm, read the words of a Union commander who rallied his troops even as they ran out of ammunition.

"If you look at history you'll see men fight for pay, or women, or some other kind of loot," Cintron read from the speech by Union Col. Joshua Chamberlain, who led the 20th Maine volunteer infantry regiment to defend the hill. "But we're here for something new. This hasn't happened much in the history of the world. We're an army going out to set other men free."

Welcome to a new kind of leadership training, one that uses the lessons of the battlefield to illustrate the challenges of the corporate world. Force 3's Gettysburg visit was part of a joint pilot program by the University of Maryland, College Park's business school and

the Gettysburg Foundation. The university is now looking to expand that program to more companies and individuals.

While leadership lessons from the battlefield have been part of military training for centuries, applying battlefield lessons to the business world is a modern-day phenomenon. Some programs also come with a contemporary price tag: as much as thousands of dollars a day.

Boeing, Microsoft, Lockheed Martin, Trader Joe's, Crayola and Sherwin-Williams are among the dozens of companies that have sent their executives to Gettysburg, where a number of institutions put on programs, for exposure to strategic thinking beyond the classroom and cubicle.

"The war kind of turned on what he did and how he inspired his troops," Cintron said of Chamberlain, who played a key role in July 1863 on the second day of the Battle of Gettysburg, a turning point in the Civil War. "Chamberlain got these guys to fight with no ammo. They just held [the Confederates] off.

"That hit home with all my guys," Cintron said about his employees.

The University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School has taken business students to the Gettysburg battlefields

for leadership lessons as well. In the South, the business school at the University of Tennessee in Chattanooga offers a leadership seminar using lessons from the Civil War Battle of Chickamauga, which saw the most significant Union defeat in the western theater of the Civil War.

Antietam, the Maryland Civil War site in Sharpsburg, and the Montana location of the 1876 Battle of Little Big Horn, also known as Custer's Last Stand, have been used for corporate leadership expeditions, too.

Tours of European battle sites also figure in the burgeoning leadership development field. World War II's Battle of Normandy, which launched the Allied invasion of Nazi-controlled Europe, is one example. Another is the site of the 1815 Battle of Waterloo, the showdown lost by Napoleon that ended his rule of France.

The New York-based Conference Board, a nonprofit business membership and research organization, runs its own program at Gettysburg and conducts leadership programs based on significant battles in European history. The group is now going beyond the battlefield, with plans for a leadership seminar in Houston tied to the Apollo space program and the race to the moon.