

AUGUST 2013 NATIONAL PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTORS PAGE:
The Aftermath of Gettysburg,
Brother against Brother, Friend against Friend The Conflict and an Irony

At the climatic Battle of Gettysburg, occurring in July of 1863 on the fields in Pennsylvania, came many recorded stories of valor and honor on both sides of this unforgettable event. Many of us in The Allied Orders are very familiar with the tactics and statistics of the battle, but perhaps more importantly, we should remember the Sacrifice in body and in soul made by so many of its participants. The Human element that really comprises the meaning of our National Struggle is what still activates us and controls our interest to this day. The names by which we are so familiar, Meade, Lee, Hancock, Longstreet, Chamberlain, Pickett, and so many others are individual people (who are important members of their respected Armies) who all had roles and parts to play, beyond their obvious participation in the fighting. Many, Soldiers on both sides had family and close friends on both sides. There are many letters and reports written after the battle of the difficulty and desperation felt by all. One of the more interesting of these countless stories is the Duty, Honor, and True Camaraderie between Union Major General Winfield Scott Hancock and Confederate General Lewis A Armistead.

The two had known each other since The War with Mexico some 15 years previous. They developed an extremely close friendship, and Armistead, who had been widowed twice, became a close "Brother" to Hancock and his wife Almira. After the Mexican War had ended, the two were posted to duty in California. Lewis Armistead was often a guest at the Hancock Home there. When it was apparent that war would soon break out between the States both men had to choose between their duty to the Country, or to their respective States. Hancock of course sided with the North being from Pennsylvania, and after a difficult time, Armistead chose the South after Virginia seceded. In the spring of 1861, Hancock and Armistead joined together (along with all the officers at the post) for one last evening before leaving California for home to become "enemies" at War. After an evening of Song and Genuine affection, The Men started to leave. The most affected was Armistead (Major US Army at this time) As he was leaving, he put his hands on Hancock's shoulders and said" Hancock, good-by: you can never know what this has cost me, and I hope God will strike me dead if I am ever induced to leave my native soil, should worst come to worst" His meaning was clear to Hancock: he did not want to harm him in any way, or the Nation he knew. He then gave Almira Hancock a small satchel requesting that it not be opened except in the event of Armistead's Death. On The fly Leaf of this (from the Satchel) was an inscription "Lewis A. Armistead. Trust in God and fear nothing".

Two years later at Gettysburg, Hancock and Armistead opposed each other. Winfield Scott Hancock The on field Commander was wounded and refused to be taken to a field hospital until the engagement was decided. Charging up Cemetery Ridge towards the Union Lines Lewis Armistead broke through the Union Defense put his

sword through his hat and told his men: "Give them the Cold Steel Boys". He was soon wounded (Mortally) thereafter. He was attended by Union officers and asked to see General Hancock, but this was not to be as the confusion of The Battle made it impossible. The two Great friends never saw each other again, but in the end that did not matter. Their Courage and Love and Respect for each other had always continued. In retrospect, perhaps this is one reason at the end of The War in 1865, it was possible that former enemies could reconcile and join together to reform the Nation that had come down to us today. While Clearly the Rebellion of the South was wrong, the Human element in it allowed for the Reconciliation to occur once the War had been decided. A lesson for us all today, while we may have our differences, we are all Americans, and we need to go forward together for our Common Welfare and Future.

In Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty,

John W. Bates- National Patriotic

Instructor