

= James Longstreet =

James Longstreet (January 8 , 1821 ? January 2 , 1904) was one of the foremost Confederate generals of the American Civil War and the principal subordinate to General Robert E. Lee , who called him his " Old War Horse . " He served under Lee as a corps commander for many of the famous battles fought by the Army of Northern Virginia in the Eastern Theater , but also with Gen. Braxton Bragg in the Army of Tennessee in the Western Theater . Biographer and historian Jeffry D. Wert wrote that " Longstreet ... was the finest corps commander in the Army of Northern Virginia ; in fact , he was arguably the best corps commander in the conflict on either side . "

Longstreet 's talents as a general made significant contributions to the Confederate victories at Second Bull Run (Second Manassas) , Fredericksburg , and Chickamauga , in both offensive and defensive roles . He also performed strongly during the Seven Days Battles , the Battle of Antietam , and until he was seriously wounded , at the Battle of the Wilderness . His performance in semiautonomous command during the Knoxville Campaign resulted in a Confederate defeat . His most controversial service was at the Battle of Gettysburg , where he openly disagreed with General Lee on the tactics to be employed and reluctantly supervised the disastrous infantry assault known as Pickett 's Charge .

He enjoyed a successful post @-@ war career working for the U.S. government as a diplomat , civil servant , and administrator . However , his conversion to the Republican Party and his cooperation with his old friend , President Ulysses S. Grant , as well as critical comments he wrote in his memoirs about General Lee 's wartime performance , made him anathema to many of his former Confederate colleagues . His reputation in the South further suffered when he led African @-@ American militia against the anti @-@ Reconstruction White League at the Battle of Liberty Place in 1874 . Authors of the Lost Cause movement focused on Longstreet 's actions at Gettysburg as a primary reason for the Confederacy 's loss of the war . His reputation in the South was damaged for over a century and has only recently begun a slow reassessment .

= = Early life and career = =

James Longstreet was born on January 8 , 1821 in Edgefield District , South Carolina , an area that is now part of North Augusta , Edgefield County . He was the fifth child and third son of James Longstreet (1783 @-@ 1833) , of Dutch descent , and Mary Ann Dent (1793 @-@ 1855) of English descent , originally from New Jersey and Maryland respectively , who owned a cotton plantation close to where the village of Gainesville would be founded in northeastern Georgia . James 's ancestor Dirck Stoffels Langestraet immigrated to the Dutch colony of New Netherland in 1657 , but the name became Anglicized over the generations . James 's father was impressed by his son 's " rocklike " character on the rural plantation , giving him the nickname Peter , and he was known as Pete or Old Pete for the rest of his life .

Longstreet 's father decided on a military career for his son , but felt that the local education available to him would not be adequate preparation . At the age of nine , James was sent to live with his aunt and uncle in Augusta , Georgia . His uncle , Augustus Baldwin Longstreet , was a newspaper editor , educator , and a Methodist minister . James spent eight years on his uncle 's plantation , Westover , just outside the city while he attended the Academy of Richmond County . His father died from a cholera epidemic while visiting Augusta in 1833 ; although James 's mother and the rest of the family moved to Somerville , Alabama , following his father 's death , James remained with uncle Augustus .

In 1837 , Augustus attempted to obtain an appointment for James to the United States Military Academy , but the vacancy for his congressional district had already been filled so James was appointed in 1838 by a relative , Reuben Chapman , who represented the First District of Alabama (where Mary Longstreet lived) . James was a poor student academically and a disciplinary problem at West Point , ranking 54th out of 56 cadets when he graduated in 1842 . He was popular with his classmates , however , and befriended a number of men who would become prominent during the Civil War , including George Henry Thomas , William S. Rosecrans (his West Point roommate) ,

John Pope , D.H. Hill , Lafayette McLaws , George Pickett , and Ulysses S. Grant of the class of 1843 . Longstreet was commissioned a brevet second lieutenant in the 4th U.S. Infantry . Longstreet spent his first two years of service at Jefferson Barracks , Missouri , where he was soon joined by his friend , Lieutenant Ulysses Grant .

Soon after , Longstreet met his future first wife Maria Louisa Garland , called Louise by her family . She was the daughter of Longstreet 's regimental commander , Lt. Col. John Garland . They married in March 1848 , after the Mexican @-@ American War . Although their marriage would last for over 40 years and produce 10 children , Longstreet never mentioned Louise in his memoirs and most anecdotes about their relationship came to historians through the writings of his second wife , Helen Dortch Longstreet .

At about the same time as Longstreet began courting Garland , Grant became acquainted with and courted Longstreet 's fourth cousin , Julia Dent , and the couple eventually married . Historians agree that Longstreet attended the Grant wedding on August 22 , 1848 in St. Louis , but his role at the ceremony remains unclear . Grant biographer Jean Edward Smith asserted that Longstreet served as Grant 's best man at the wedding . John Y. Simon , editor of Julia Grant 's memoirs , concluded that Longstreet " may have been a groomsman , " and Longstreet biographer Donald Brigman Sanger called the role of best man " uncertain " while noting that neither Grant nor Longstreet mentioned any such role in either of their memoirs .

= = Mexican @-@ American War = =

Longstreet served with distinction in the Mexican @-@ American War with the 8th U.S. Infantry . Early in the war , he served as a lieutenant in Zachary Taylor 's army at the 1846 Battle of Monterrey . He received brevet promotions to captain for Contreras and Churubusco and to major for Molino del Rey . In the Battle of Chapultepec on September 12 , 1847 , he was wounded in the thigh while charging up the hill with his regimental colors ; falling , he handed the flag to his friend , Lt. George E. Pickett , who was able to reach the summit .

Longstreet was a veteran member of the Aztec Club of 1847 . The Aztec Club was a military society for officers who had served in the Mexican War . Many distinguished officers , both Union and Confederate , who served the American Civil War were members of the Aztec Club .

After the war and his recovery from the Chapultepec wound , Longstreet and his new wife served on frontier duty in Texas , primarily at Fort Martin Scott near Fredericksburg and Fort Bliss in El Paso . He performed scouting missions and also served as major and paymaster for the 8th Infantry from July 1858 . Author Kevin Phillips claims that during this period Longstreet was involved in a plot to draw the Mexican state of Chihuahua into the Union as a slave state .

Longstreet was not enthusiastic about secession from the Union , but he had learned from his uncle Augustus about the doctrine of states ' rights early in his life and had seen his uncle 's passion for it . Although he was born in South Carolina and reared in Georgia , he offered his services to the state of Alabama , which had appointed him to West Point and where his mother still lived . Furthermore , he was the senior West Point graduate from that state , which implied a commensurate rank in the state 's forces would be available . He resigned from the U.S. Army in June 1861 to cast his lot with the Confederacy in the Civil War .

= = American Civil War = =

= = = First Bull Run and the Peninsula = = =

Longstreet arrived in Richmond , Virginia with a commission as a lieutenant colonel in the Confederate States Army . He met with Confederate President Jefferson Davis at the executive mansion on June 22 , 1861 , where he was informed that he had been appointed a brigadier general with date of rank on June 17 , a commission he accepted on June 25 . He was ordered to report to Brig. Gen. P.G.T. Beauregard at Manassas , where he was given command of a brigade of three

Virginia regiments ? the 1st , 11th , and 17th Virginia Infantry regiments .

Longstreet assembled his staff and trained his brigade incessantly . They saw their first action at Blackburn 's Ford on July 18 , resisting a Union Army reconnaissance in force that preceded the First Battle of Bull Run (First Manassas) . When the main attack came at the opposite end of the line on July 21 , the brigade played a relatively minor role , although it endured artillery fire for nine hours . Longstreet was infuriated that his commanders would not allow a vigorous pursuit of the defeated Union Army . His trusted staff officer , Moxley Sorrel , recorded that he was " in a fine rage . He dashed his hat furiously to the ground , stamped , and bitter words escaped him . " He quoted Longstreet as saying , " Retreat ! Hell , the Federal army has broken to pieces . " On October 7 , Longstreet was promoted to major general and assumed command of a division in the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia ? four infantry brigades and Hampton 's Legion .

Tragedy struck the Longstreet family in January 1862 . A scarlet fever epidemic in Richmond claimed the lives of his one @-@ year @-@ old daughter Mary Anne , his four @-@ year @-@ old son James , and eleven @-@ year @-@ old Augustus (" Gus ") , all within a week . His 13 @-@ year @-@ old son Garland almost succumbed . The losses were devastating for Longstreet and he became withdrawn , both personally and socially . In 1861 his headquarters were noted for parties , drinking , and poker games . After he returned from the funeral the headquarters social life became more somber , he rarely drank , and he became a devout Episcopalian .

Longstreet turned in a mixed performance in the Peninsula Campaign that spring . He executed well as a rear guard commander at Yorktown and Williamsburg , delaying the advance of Union Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan 's army toward Richmond . During the Battle of Seven Pines he marched his men in the wrong direction down the wrong road , causing congestion and confusion with other Confederate units , diluting the effect of the massive Confederate counterattack against McClellan . His report unfairly blamed fellow Maj. Gen. Benjamin Huger for the mishaps . Gen. Joseph E. Johnston was wounded during the battle and he was replaced in command of the Army of Northern Virginia by Gen. Robert E. Lee .

During the Seven Days Battles that followed in late June , Longstreet had operational command of nearly half of Lee 's army ? 15 brigades ? as it drove McClellan back down the Peninsula . Longstreet performed aggressively and well in his new , larger command , particularly at Gaines ' Mill and Glendale . Lee 's army in general suffered from weak performances by Longstreet 's peers , including , uncharacteristically , Maj. Gen. Thomas J. " Stonewall " Jackson , and was unable to destroy the Union Army . Moxley Sorrel wrote of Longstreet 's confidence and calmness in battle : " He was like a rock in steadiness when sometimes in battle the world seemed flying to pieces . " Gen. Lee said , " Longstreet was the staff in my right hand . " He had been established as Lee 's principal lieutenant .

= = = Second Bull Run , Maryland , and Fredericksburg = = =

The military reputations of Lee 's corps commanders are often characterized as Stonewall Jackson representing the audacious , offensive component of Lee 's army , whereas Longstreet more typically advocated and executed defensive strategies and tactics . Jackson has been described as the army 's hammer , Longstreet its anvil . In the Northern Virginia Campaign of August 1862 , this stereotype did not hold true . Longstreet commanded the Right Wing (later to become known as the First Corps) and Jackson commanded the Left Wing . Jackson started the campaign under Lee 's orders with a sweeping flanking maneuver that placed his corps into the rear of Union Maj. Gen. John Pope 's Army of Virginia , but he then took up a defensive position and effectively invited Pope to assault him . On August 28 and August 29 , the start of the Second Battle of Bull Run (Second Manassas) , Pope pounded Jackson as Longstreet and the remainder of the army marched north to reach the battlefield . Postwar criticism of Longstreet claimed that he marched his men too slowly , leaving Jackson to bear the brunt of the fighting for two days , but they covered roughly 30 miles (50 km) in a little over 24 hours and Gen. Lee did not attempt to get his army concentrated any faster .

When Longstreet 's men arrived around midday on August 29 , Lee planned a flanking attack on the

Union Army , which was concentrating its attention on Jackson . Longstreet demurred against three suggestions from Lee , urging him to attack , recommending instead that a reconnaissance in force be conducted to survey the ground in front of him . By 6 : 30 p.m. the division of Brig. Gen. John Bell Hood moved forward against the troops of the Union V Corps , and Longstreet withdrew them at 8 : 30 p.m. , having a better idea of the terrain and enemy soldiers in the area . On the next day , Longstreet 's preparations paid dividends , as his artillery was a major factor in helping Jackson resist the V Corps attack , and he capitalized on Federal confusion by launching an attack of his own , anticipating an order from Lee that had not yet arrived . Despite the smashing victory that followed , Longstreet 's performance at the battle was criticized by postbellum advocates of the Lost Cause , claiming that his slowness , reluctance to attack , and disobedience to Gen. Lee were a harbinger of his controversial performance to come on July 2 , 1863 , at the Battle of Gettysburg . Lee 's biographer , Douglas Southall Freeman , wrote : " The seeds of much of the disaster at Gettysburg were sown in that instant ? when Lee yielded to Longstreet and Longstreet discovered that he would . "

Despite this criticism , the following day , August 30 , was one of Longstreet 's finest performances of the war . Pope came to believe that Jackson was starting to retreat and Longstreet took advantage of this by launching a massive assault on the Union army 's left flank with over 25 @, @ 000 men . For over four hours they " pounded like a giant hammer " with Longstreet actively directing artillery fire and sending brigades into the fray . Longstreet and Lee were together during the assault and both of them came under Union artillery fire . Although the Union troops put up a furious defense , Pope 's army was forced to retreat in a manner similar to the embarrassing Union defeat at First Bull Run (First Manassas) , fought on roughly the same battleground . Longstreet gave all of the credit for the victory to Lee , describing the campaign as " clever and brilliant . " It established a strategic model he believed to be ideal ? the use of defensive tactics within a strategic offensive .

Longstreet 's actions in the final two major Confederate defensive battles of 1862 would be the proving grounds for his development of dominant defensive tactics . In the Maryland Campaign of September , at the Battle of Antietam , Longstreet held his part of the Confederate defensive line against Union forces twice as numerous . After the delaying action Longstreet 's corps fought at South Mountain , he retired to Sharpsburg to join Stonewall Jackson , and prepared to fight a defensive battle . Using terrain to his advantage , Longstreet validated his idea that the tactical defense was now vastly superior to the exposed offense . While the offense dominated in the time of Napoleon , the technological advancements had overturned this . Lt. Col. Harold M. Knudsen claims that Longstreet was one of the few Civil War officers truly aware of this . At the end of that bloodiest day of the Civil War , Lee greeted his subordinate by saying , " Ah ! Here is Longstreet ; here 's my old war @-@ horse ! " On October 9 , a few weeks after Antietam , Longstreet was promoted to lieutenant general . Lee arranged for Longstreet 's promotion to be dated one day earlier than Jackson 's , making the Old War @-@ Horse the senior lieutenant general in the entire Confederate Army . In an army reorganization in November , Longstreet 's command , now designated the First Corps , consisted of five divisions , approximately 41 @, @ 000 men .

In December , Longstreet 's First Corps played the decisive role in the Battle of Fredericksburg . Since Lee moved Longstreet to Fredericksburg early , it allowed Longstreet to take the time to dig in portions of his line , methodically site artillery , and set up a kill zone over the axis of advance he thought the Union attack would come . Remembering the slaughter at Antietam , in which the Confederates did not construct defensive works , Longstreet ordered trenches , abatis , and fieldworks to be constructed , which would set a precedent for future defensive battles of the Army of Northern Virginia . Additionally , Longstreet positioned his men behind a stone wall at the foot of Marye 's Heights and held off fourteen assaults by Union forces . The Union army suffered almost 8 @, @ 000 casualties at Marye 's Heights , Longstreet only 1 @, @ 000 . His great defensive success was not based entirely on the advantage of terrain ; this time it was the combination of terrain , defensive works , and a centralized coordination of artillery .

= = = Suffolk = = =

In the early spring of 1863 , Longstreet suggested to Lee that his corps be detached from the Army of Northern Virginia and sent to reinforce the Army of Tennessee , where Gen. Braxton Bragg was being challenged in Middle Tennessee by Union Maj. Gen. William S. Rosecrans , Longstreet 's roommate at West Point . It is possible that Longstreet believed that an independent command in the West offered better opportunities for advancement than a corps under Lee 's shadow . Lee did detach two divisions from the First Corps , but ordered them to Richmond , not Tennessee . Seaborne movements of the Union IX Corps potentially threatened vital ports on the mid @-@ Atlantic coast . The division of George Pickett started for the capital in mid @-@ February , was followed by John Hood 's , and then Longstreet himself was told to take command of the detached divisions and the Departments of North Carolina and Southern Virginia .

In April , Longstreet besieged Union forces in the city of Suffolk , Virginia , a minor operation , but one that was very important to Lee 's army , still stationed in war @-@ devastated central Virginia . It enabled Confederate authorities to collect huge amounts of provisions that had been under Union control . However , this operation caused Longstreet and 15 @,@ 000 men of the First Corps to be absent from the Battle of Chancellorsville in May . Despite Lee 's brilliant victory at Chancellorsville , Longstreet once again came under criticism , claiming that he could have marched his men back from Suffolk in time to join Lee . However , from the Chancellorsville and Suffolk scenario , Longstreet brought forward the beginnings of a new Confederate strategy . These events proved that the Army of Northern Virginia could manage with fewer troops for periods of time , and units could be shifted to create windows of opportunity in other theaters . Longstreet advocated the first strategic movements to utilize rail , interior lines , and create temporary numerical advantages in Mississippi or Tennessee prior to Gettysburg .

= = = Gettysburg = = =

= = = = Campaign plans = = = =

Following Chancellorsville and the death of Stonewall Jackson , Longstreet and Lee met in mid @-@ May to discuss options for the army 's summer campaign . Longstreet advocated , once again , detachment of all or part of his corps to be sent to Tennessee . The justification for this course of action was becoming more urgent as Union Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant was advancing on the critical Confederate stronghold on the Mississippi River , Vicksburg . Longstreet argued that a reinforced army under Bragg could defeat Rosecrans and drive toward the Ohio River , which would compel Grant to break his hold on Vicksburg . Lee was opposed to a division of his army and instead advocated a large @-@ scale offensive or raid into Pennsylvania . In his memoirs , Longstreet described his reaction to Lee 's proposal :

His plan or wishes announced , it became useless and improper to offer suggestions leading to a different course . All that I could ask was that the policy of the campaign should be one of defensive tactics ; that we should work so as to force the enemy to attack us , in such good position as we might find in our own country , so well adapted to that purpose ? which might assure us of a grand triumph . To this he readily assented as an important and material adjunct to his general plan .

This was written years after the campaign and is affected by hindsight , both of the results of the battle and of the postbellum criticism of the Lost Cause authors . In letters of the time Longstreet made no reference to such a bargain with Lee . In April 1868 , Lee said that he " had never made any such promise , and had never thought of doing any such thing . " Yet in his post @-@ battle report , Lee wrote , " It had not been intended to fight a general battle at such a distance from our base , unless attacked by the enemy . "

The Army of Northern Virginia was reorganized after Jackson 's death . Two division commanders , Richard S. Ewell and A.P. Hill , were promoted to lieutenant general and assumed command of the Second and the newly created Third Corps respectively . Longstreet 's First Corps gave up the division of Maj. Gen. Richard H. Anderson during the reorganization , leaving him with the divisions

of Lafayette McLaws , George Pickett , and John Hood .

In the initial movements of the campaign , Longstreet 's corps followed Ewell 's through the Shenandoah Valley . A spy he had hired , Henry Thomas Harrison who went by just " Harrison " , was instrumental in warning the Confederates that the Union Army of the Potomac was advancing north to meet them more quickly than they had anticipated , prompting Lee to order the immediate concentration of his army near Gettysburg , Pennsylvania .

= = = Battle of Gettysburg = = =

Longstreet 's actions at the Battle of Gettysburg would be the centerpiece of the controversy that surrounded him for over a century . Ahead of his troops he arrived on the battlefield late in the afternoon of the first day , July 1 , 1863 . By then , two Union corps had been driven by Ewell and Hill back through the town into defensive positions on Cemetery Hill . Lee had not intended to fight before his army was fully concentrated , but chance and questionable decisions by A.P. Hill brought on the battle , which- on the first day- was an impressive Confederate victory . Meeting with Lee , Longstreet was concerned about the strength of the Union defensive position and advocated a strategic movement around the left flank of the enemy , to " secure good ground between him and his capital , " which would presumably compel the Union commander , Maj. Gen. George G. Meade , to attack defensive positions erected by the Confederates . Instead , Lee exclaimed , " If the enemy is there tomorrow , we must attack him . "

Lee 's plan for July 2 called for Longstreet to attack the Union 's left flank , which would be followed up by Hill 's attack on Cemetery Ridge near the center , while Ewell demonstrated on the Union right . Longstreet was not ready to attack as early as Lee envisioned . He received permission from Lee to wait for Brig. Gen. Evander M. Law 's brigade (Hood 's division) to reach the field before he advanced any of his other brigades ; Law marched his men quickly , but did not arrive until noon . Three of Longstreet 's brigades were still in march column , and some distance from the attack positions they would need to reach . All of Longstreet 's divisions were forced to take a long detour while approaching the enemy position , misled by inadequate reconnaissance that failed to identify a completely concealed route .

Postbellum criticism of Longstreet claims that he was ordered by Lee to attack in the early morning and that his delays were a significant contributor to the loss of the battle . However , Lee agreed to the delays for arriving troops and did not issue his formal order for the attack until 11 a.m. Although Longstreet 's motivations have long been clouded by the vitriol of the Lost Cause partisans (see Legacy) , many historians agree that Longstreet did not aggressively pursue Lee 's orders to launch an attack as early as possible . Biographer Jeffry D. Wert wrote , " Longstreet deserves censure for his performance on the morning of July 2 . He allowed his disagreement with Lee 's decision to affect his conduct . Once the commanding general determined to assail the enemy , duty required Longstreet to comply with the vigor and thoroughness that had previously characterized his generalship . The concern for detail , the regard for timely information , and the need for preparation were absent . " Military historians Herman Hattaway and Archer Jones wrote , " Unenthusiastic about the attack , Longstreet consumed so much time in properly assembling and aligning the corps that the assault did not commence until 4 p.m. During all the time that passed , Meade continued to move in troops to bring about a more and more complete concentration ; by 6 p.m. he had achieved numerical superiority and had his left well covered . " Campaign historian Edwin Coddington presents a lengthy description of the approach march , which he described as " a comedy of errors such as one might expect of inexperienced commanders and raw militia , but not of Lee 's " War Horse " and his veteran troops . " He called the episode " a dark moment in Longstreet 's career as a general . " Gettysburg historian Harry Pfanz concluded that " Longstreet 's angry dissidence had resulted in further wasted time and delay . " David L. Callihan , in a 2002 reassessment of Longstreet 's legacy , wrote , " It is appalling that a field commander of Longstreet 's experience and caliber would so cavalierly and ineptly march and prepare his men for battle . " An alternative view has been expressed by John Lott , " General Longstreet did all that could be expected on the 2nd day and any allegations of failing to exercise his duty by ordering a morning assault can be

repudiated . It would have been impossible to have commenced an attack much earlier than it occurred , and it is doubtful that the Confederacy could have placed the attack in any more secure hands than General Longstreet . " But Longstreet 's command of the operation had for the most part , been reasonable , since taking the route he should have would have alerted the whole Union army of his assault . Regardless of the controversy regarding the preparations , however , once the assault began around 4 p.m. , Longstreet pressed the assault by McLaws and Hood (Pickett 's division had not yet arrived) competently against fierce Union resistance , but it was largely unsuccessful , with significant casualties .

On the night of July 2 , Longstreet did not follow his usual custom of meeting Gen. Lee at his headquarters to discuss the day 's battle , claiming that he was too fatigued to make the ride . Instead , he spent part of the night planning for a movement around Big Round Top that would allow him to attack the enemy 's flank and rear . (Longstreet , despite his use of scouting parties , was apparently unaware that a considerable body of troops from the Union VI Corps was in position to block this move .) Shortly after issuing orders for the attack , around sunrise , Longstreet was joined at his headquarters by Lee , who was dismayed at this turn of events . The commanding general had intended for Longstreet to attack the Union left early in the morning in a manner similar to the attack of July 2 , using Pickett 's newly arrived division , in concert with a resumed attack by Ewell on Culp 's Hill . What Lee found was that no one had ordered Pickett 's division forward from its bivouac in the rear and that Longstreet had been planning an independent operation without consulting with him . Lee wrote with some restraint in his after @-@ battle report that Longstreet 's " dispositions were not completed as early as was expected . "

Since his plans for an early @-@ morning coordinated attack were now infeasible , Lee instead ordered Longstreet to coordinate a massive assault on the center of the Union line , employing the division of George Pickett and brigades from A.P. Hill 's corps . Longstreet knew this assault had little chance of success . The Union Army was in a position reminiscent of the one Longstreet had taken at Fredericksburg to defeat Burnside 's assault . The Confederates would have to cover almost a mile of open ground and spend time negotiating sturdy fences under fire . The lessons of Fredericksburg and Malvern Hill were lost to Lee on this day . In his memoirs , Longstreet claims to have told Lee that he believed the attack on the Union center would fail :

General , I have been a soldier all my life . I have been with soldiers engaged in fights by couples , by squads , companies , regiments , divisions , and armies , and should know , as well as any one , what soldiers can do . It is my opinion that no fifteen thousand men ever arranged for battle can take that position .

During the artillery barrage that preceded the infantry assault , Longstreet began to agonize over an assault that was going to cost dearly . He attempted to pass the responsibility for launching Pickett 's division to his artillery chief , Col. Edward Porter Alexander . When the time came to actually order Pickett forward , Longstreet could only nod in assent , unable to verbalize the order . The assault , known as Pickett 's Charge , suffered the heavy casualties that Longstreet anticipated . It was the decisive point in the Confederate loss at Gettysburg and Lee ordered a retreat back to Virginia the following day .

Criticism of Longstreet after the war was based not only on his reputed conduct at the Battle of Gettysburg , but also intemperate remarks he made about Robert E. Lee and his strategies , such as :

That he [Lee] was excited and off his balance was evident on the afternoon of the 1st , and he labored under that oppression until enough blood was shed to appease him .

For years after the war Longstreet 's reputation suffered and was blamed for the failed attack even though Lee ordered the advance after Longstreet 's repeated advice to cancel the attack .

= = = Tennessee = = =

In mid @-@ August 1863 , Longstreet resumed his attempts to be transferred to the Western Theater . He wrote a private letter to Secretary of War James Seddon , requesting that he be transferred to serve under his old friend Gen. Joseph E. Johnston . He followed this up in

conversations with his congressional ally , Senator Louis Wigfall , who had long considered Longstreet a suitable replacement for Braxton Bragg . Since Bragg 's army was under increasing pressure from Rosecrans outside of Chattanooga , Lee and President Davis agreed to the request on September 5 . In one of the most daunting logistical efforts of the Confederacy , Longstreet , with the divisions of Lafayette McLaws and John Hood , a brigade from George Pickett 's division , and Porter Alexander 's 26 @-@ gun artillery battalion , traveled over 16 railroads on a 775 @-@ mile (1 @,@ 247 km) route through the Carolinas to reach Bragg in northern Georgia . Although the entire operation would take over three weeks , Longstreet and lead elements of his corps arrived on September 17 .

The First Corps veterans arrived in the early stages of the Battle of Chickamauga . Bragg had already begun an unsuccessful attempt to interpose his army between Rosecrans and Chattanooga before the arrival of Longstreet 's corps . When the two met at Bragg 's headquarters in the evening , Bragg placed Longstreet in command of the Left Wing of his army ; Lt. Gen. Leonidas Polk commanded the Right . On September 20 , 1863 , Longstreet lined up eight brigades in a deep column against a narrow front , an attack very similar to future German tank tactics in World War II . By chance , a mistaken order from General Rosecrans caused a gap to appear in the Union line and Longstreet took additional advantage of it to increase his chances of success . The organization of the attack was well suited to the terrain and would have penetrated the Union line regardless . The Union right collapsed and Rosecrans fled the field , as units began to retreat in panic . Maj. Gen. George H. Thomas managed to rally the retreating units and solidify a defensive position on Snodgrass Hill . He held that position against repeated afternoon attacks by Longstreet , who was not adequately supported by the Confederate right wing . Once night fell , the battle was over , and Thomas was able to extricate the units under his control to Chattanooga . Bragg 's failure to coordinate the right wing and cavalry to further envelop Thomas prevented a total rout of the Union Army . Bragg also neglected to pursue the retreating Federals aggressively , resulting in the futile siege of Chattanooga . Nevertheless , Chickamauga was the greatest Confederate victory in the Western Theater and Longstreet deserved a good portion of the credit .

Longstreet soon clashed with Bragg and became leader of the group of senior commanders of the army who conspired to have him removed . Bragg 's subordinates had long been dissatisfied with his leadership and abrasive personality ; the arrival of Longstreet (the senior lieutenant general in the Army) and his officers , added credibility to the earlier claims , and was a catalyst toward action . Longstreet wrote to Seddon , " I am convinced that nothing but the hand of God can save us or help us as long as we have our present commander . " The situation became so grave that President Davis was forced to intercede in person . What followed was one of the most bizarre scenes of the war , with Bragg sitting red faced as a procession of his commanders condemned him . Longstreet stated that Bragg " was incompetent to manage an army or put men into a fight " and that he " knew nothing of the business . " Davis sided with Bragg and did nothing to resolve the conflict .

Bragg retained his position , relieving or reassigning the generals who had testified against him , and retaliated against Longstreet by reducing his command to only those units that he brought with him from Virginia . Despite the dysfunctional command climate under Bragg , and the lack of support from the War Department and President Davis concerning Bragg 's removal , Longstreet did the best he could to continue to seek options in the Chattanooga Campaign . While Bragg resigned himself and his army to the siege of the Union Army of the Cumberland in Chattanooga , Longstreet devised a strategy to prevent reinforcement and a lifting of the siege by Grant . He knew this Union reaction was underway , and that the nearest railhead was Bridgeport , Alabama , where portions of two Union corps would soon arrive . After sending his artillery commander , Porter Alexander , to reconnoiter the Union @-@ occupied town , he devised a plan to shift most of the Army of Tennessee away from the siege , setting up logistical support in Rome , Georgia , to go after Bridgeport to take the railhead , possibly catching Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker and arriving Union troops from the Eastern Theater in a disadvantageous position . The plan was well received and approved by President Davis , but it was disapproved by Bragg , who objected to the significant logistical challenges it posed . Longstreet accepted Bragg 's arguments and agreed to a plan in

which he and his men were dispatched to East Tennessee to deal with an advance by Union Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside . Longstreet was selected for this assignment partially due to enmity on Bragg 's part , but also because the War Department intended for Longstreet 's men to return to Lee 's army and this movement was in that direction .

Longstreet was criticized for the slow pace of his advance toward Knoxville in November and some of his troops began using the nickname " Peter the Slow " to describe him . Burnside evaded him at the Battle of Campbell 's Station and settled into entrenchments around the city , which Longstreet besieged unsuccessfully . The Battle of Fort Sanders failed to bring a Confederate breakthrough . When Bragg was defeated by Grant at Chattanooga on November 25 , Longstreet was ordered to join forces with the Army of Tennessee in northern Georgia . He demurred and began to move back to Virginia , soon pursued by Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman in early December . The armies went into winter quarters and the First Corps rejoined the Army of Northern Virginia in the spring . The only real effect of the minor campaign was to deprive Bragg of troops he sorely needed in Chattanooga . Longstreet 's second independent command (after Suffolk) was a failure and his self @-@ confidence was damaged . He reacted to the failure of the campaign by blaming others , as he had done at Seven Pines . He relieved Lafayette McLaws from command and requested the court martial of Brig. Gens . Jerome B. Robertson and Evander M. Law . He also submitted a letter of resignation to Adjutant General Samuel Cooper on December 30 , 1863 , but his request to be relieved was denied .

His corps suffered through a severe winter in Eastern Tennessee with inadequate shelter and provisions . Writing to Georgia 's Quartermaster General , Ira Roe Foster on January 24 , 1864 , Longstreet noted : " There are five Georgia Brigades in this Army ? Wofford 's , G.T. Anderson 's , Bryan 's , Benning 's , and Crews ' cavalry brigade . They are all alike in excessive need of shoes , clothing of all kinds , and blankets . All that you can send will be thankfully received . " Meanwhile , Longstreet again developed strategic plans . He called for an offensive through Tennessee into Kentucky in which his command would be bolstered by P.G.T. Beauregard and 20 @,@ 000 men . Although he had the concurrence of Gen. Lee , Longstreet was unable to convince President Davis or his newly appointed military advisor , Braxton Bragg .

= = = Wilderness to Appomattox = = =

Finding out that his old friend Ulysses Grant was in command of the Union Army , he told his fellow officers that " he will fight us every day and every hour until the end of the war . " Longstreet helped save the Confederate Army from defeat in his first battle back with Lee 's army , the Battle of the Wilderness in May 1864 , in which he launched a powerful flanking attack along the Orange Plank Road against the Union II Corps and nearly drove it from the field . Once again he developed innovative tactics to deal with difficult terrain , ordering the advance of six brigades by heavy skirmish lines , which allowed his men to deliver a continuous fire into the enemy , while proving to be elusive targets themselves . Wilderness historian Edward Steere attributed much of the success of the Army to " the display of tactical genius by Longstreet which more than redressed his disparity in numerical strength . " After the war , the Union II Corps commander that day , Maj. Gen. Winfield S. Hancock , said to Longstreet of this flanking maneuver : " You rolled me up like a wet blanket . "

Longstreet was wounded during the assault ? accidentally shot by his own men only about 4 miles (6 @.@ 4 km) away from the place where Jackson suffered the same fate a year earlier . A bullet passed through his shoulder , severing nerves , and tearing a gash in his throat . Micah Jenkins , who was riding with Longstreet , was also shot and died from his wounds . The momentum of the attack subsided . As he was taken from the field , Longstreet urged Lee to press the attack . Instead , Lee delayed further movement until units could be realigned , giving the Union defenders adequate time to reorganize . The subsequent attack was a failure . E.P. Alexander called the removal of Longstreet the critical juncture of the battle : " I have always believed that , but for Longstreet 's fall , the panic which was fairly underway in Hancock 's [II] Corps would have been extended & have resulted in Grant 's being forced to retreat back across the Rapidan . "

Longstreet missed the rest of the 1864 spring and summer campaign , where Lee sorely missed his

skill in handling the army . He was treated in Lynchburg , Virginia , and recuperated in Augusta , Georgia , with his niece , Emma Eve Longstreet Sibley , the daughter of his brother Gilbert . While in Augusta , he participated in the funeral service for Lt. Gen. Leonidas Polk at Saint Paul 's Church , joining the Bishops of Mississippi and Arkansas in casting earth onto the coffin . He rejoined Lee in October 1864 , with his right arm paralyzed and in a sling , initially unable to ride a horse . He had taught himself to write with his left hand ; by periodically pulling on his arm , as advised by doctors , he was able to regain use of his right hand in later years . For the remainder of the Siege of Petersburg he commanded the defenses in front of the capital of Richmond , including all forces north of the James River and Pickett 's Division at Bermuda Hundred . He retreated with Lee in the Appomattox Campaign , commanding both the First and Third Corps , following the death of A.P. Hill on April 2 . As Lee considered surrender , Longstreet advised him of his belief that Grant would treat them fairly , but as Lee rode toward Appomattox Court House on April 9 , 1865 , Longstreet said , " General , if he does not give us good terms , come back and let us fight it out . "

= = Post @-@ bellum life = =

After the war , Longstreet and his family settled in New Orleans , a location popular with a number of former Confederate generals . He entered into a cotton brokerage partnership there and also became the president of the newly created Great Southern and Western Fire , Marine and Accident Insurance Company . He actively sought the presidency of the Mobile and Ohio Railroad but was unsuccessful , and also failed in an attempt to get investors for a proposed railroad from New Orleans to Monterrey , Mexico . (In 1870 , he was named president of the newly organized New Orleans and Northeastern Railroad .) He applied for a pardon from President Andrew Johnson , endorsed by his old friend Ulysses S. Grant . Johnson refused , however , telling Longstreet in a meeting : " There are three persons of the South who can never receive amnesty : Mr. Davis , General Lee , and yourself . You have given the Union cause too much trouble . " Regardless of such opposition the United States Congress restored his rights of citizenship in June 1868 .

Longstreet was the only senior Confederate officer to join the Republican Party during Reconstruction . He endorsed Grant for president in 1868 , attended his inauguration ceremonies , and six days later received an appointment as surveyor of customs in New Orleans . For these acts he lost favor with many white Southerners . His old friend Harvey Hill wrote to a newspaper : " Our scalawag is the local leper of the community . " Unlike Northerners who moved South and were sometimes referred to as " Carpetbaggers , " Hill wrote , Longstreet " is a native , which is so much the worse . " The Republican governor of Louisiana appointed Longstreet the adjutant general of the state militia and by 1872 he became a major general in command of all militia and state police forces within New Orleans . During protests of election irregularities in 1874 , referred to as the Battle of Liberty Place , an armed force of 8 @,@ 400 White League members advanced on the State House . Longstreet commanded a force of 3 @,@ 600 Metropolitan Police , city policemen , and African @-@ American militia troops , armed with two Gatling guns and a battery of artillery . He rode to meet the protesters but was pulled from his horse , shot by a spent bullet , and taken prisoner . The White League charged , causing many of Longstreet 's men to flee or surrender . There were casualties of 38 killed and 79 wounded . Federal troops were required to restore order . Longstreet 's use of black troops during the disturbances increased the denunciations by anti @-@ Reconstructionists .

In 1875 the Longstreet family left New Orleans with concerns over health and safety , returning to Gainesville , Georgia . By this time Louise had given birth to ten children , five of whom lived to adulthood . He applied for various jobs through the Rutherford B. Hayes administration and was briefly considered for Secretary of the Navy . He served briefly as deputy collector of internal revenue and as postmaster of Gainesville . In 1880 Hayes appointed Longstreet as his ambassador to the Ottoman Empire , and later he served from 1897 to 1904 , under Presidents William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt , as U.S. Commissioner of Railroads , succeeding Wade Hampton III .

On one of his frequent return trips to New Orleans on business , Longstreet converted to Catholicism in 1877 and was a devout believer until his death . He served as a U.S. Marshal from

1881 to 1884 , but the return of a Democratic administration ended his political careers and he went into semiretirement on a 65 @-@ acre (26 ha) farm near Gainesville , where he raised turkeys and planted orchards and vineyards on terraced ground that his neighbors referred to jokingly as " Gettysburg . " A devastating fire on April 9 , 1889 (the 24th anniversary of Lee 's surrender at Appomattox) destroyed his house and many of his personal possessions , including his personal Civil War documents and memorabilia . That December Louise Longstreet died . He remarried in 1897 , in a ceremony at the governor 's mansion in Atlanta , to Helen Dortch , age 34 . Although Longstreet 's children reacted poorly to the marriage , Helen became a devoted wife and avid supporter of his legacy after his death . She outlived him by 58 years , dying in 1962 .

After Louise 's death , and after bearing criticism of his war record from other Confederates for decades , Longstreet refuted most of their arguments in his memoirs entitled *From Manassas to Appomattox* , a labor of five years that was published in 1896 . His final years were marked by poor health and partial deafness . In 1902 he suffered from severe rheumatism and was unable to stand for more than a few minutes at a time . His weight diminished from 200 to 135 pounds by January 1903 . Cancer developed in his right eye , and in December he had X @-@ ray therapy in Chicago to treat it . He contracted pneumonia and died in Gainesville , six days before his 83rd birthday . Longstreet 's remains are buried in Alta Vista Cemetery . He outlived most of his detractors , and was one of only a few general officers from the Civil War to live into the 20th century .

= = Legacy = =

Criticism from authors in the Lost Cause movement attacked Longstreet 's war career for many years after his death . Knudsen maintains that because Longstreet became a " reconstructed rebel " , embraced equal rights for blacks , unification of the nation , and reconstruction , he became the target of those who wanted to maintain racist policies and otherwise could not accept the verdict of the battlefield . The attacks formally began on January 19 , 1872 , the anniversary of Robert E. Lee 's birth , and less than two years after Lee 's death . Jubal Early , in a speech at Washington College , exonerated Lee of his failure at Gettysburg and falsely accused Longstreet of attacking late on the second day and of being responsible for the debacle on the third . The following year William N. Pendleton , Lee 's artillery chief , claimed in the same venue that Longstreet disobeyed an explicit order to attack at sunrise on July 2 . Both of these allegations were fabrications ; however , Longstreet failed to challenge these lies publicly until 1875 . The delay was damaging to his reputation , as the Lost Cause mythology had taken hold in common opinion by this time . In the 20th century Douglas Southall Freeman kept criticism of Longstreet foremost in Civil War scholarship in his biography of Lee . Clifford Dowdey , a Virginia newspaperman and novelist , was noted for his severe criticism of Longstreet in the 1950s and 1960s .

After Longstreet 's death , his second wife Helen privately published *Lee and Longstreet at High Tide* in his defense , in which she stated " the South was seditiously taught to believe that the Federal Victory was wholly the fortuitous outcome of the culpable disobedience of General Longstreet . "

The publication of Michael Shaara 's novel *The Killer Angels* in 1974 , based in part on Longstreet 's memoirs , followed by its 1993 film adaptation , *Gettysburg* , have been credited with helping to restore Longstreet 's reputation as a general and to dramatically raise his public visibility . The 1982 work by Thomas L. Connolly and Barbara L. Bellows , *God and General Longstreet* , provided a " further upgrading of Longstreet through an attack on Lee , the Lost Cause , and the Virginia revisionists . "

Jeffrey D. Wert wrote that " Longstreet ... was the finest corps commander in the Army of Northern Virginia ; in fact , he was arguably the best corps commander in the conflict on either side . " Richard L. DiNardo wrote " Even Longstreet 's most virulent critics have conceded that he put together the best staff employed by any commander , and that his de facto chief of staff , Lieutenant Colonel G. Moxley Sorrel , was the best staff officer in the Confederacy . " DiNardo cited the effective way in which Longstreet delegated responsibilities for control of battlefield movements to his staff and how they were able to communicate with him more effectively during battles than the staffs of other

Confederate generals during the war .

= = = In memoriam = = =

Longstreet is remembered through numerous places that bear his name in and around Gainesville , Georgia , including Longstreet Bridge , a portion of U.S. Route 129 that crosses the Chattahoochee River (later dammed to form Lake Sidney Lanier) , and the local Longstreet Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy .

In 1998 , one of the last monuments erected at Gettysburg National Military Park was dedicated as a belated tribute to Longstreet , an equestrian statue by sculptor Gary Casteel . He is shown riding on a depiction of his favorite horse , Hero , at ground level in a grove of trees in Pitzer Woods ? unlike most generals , who are elevated on tall bases overlooking the battlefield .

The Longstreet Society is an organization and museum in Gainesville , dedicated to the celebration and study of his life and career . The General Longstreet Recognition Project is an educational project of the Agribusiness Council Heritage Preservation Committee aimed at broadening public awareness of Longstreet 's military and public service .

Longstreet 's Billet , the house in Russellville , Tennessee , that Longstreet occupied during the winter of 1863 ? 64 , has been converted into The Longstreet Museum , open to the public .

= = In popular culture = =

Longstreet plays a prominent role in Michael Shaara 's Pulitzer Prize @-@ winning 1974 novel The Killer Angels . He is portrayed in the 1993 film Gettysburg (based on the The Killer Angels) by Tom Berenger , and in the prequel , Gods and Generals (2003) , by Bruce Boxleitner . He was portrayed by Brian Amidei onstage in the world premiere of The Killer Angels at the Lifeline Theatre in Chicago .

Longstreet is a character in a number of prominent alternate history novels : Robert Skimin 's Gray Victory (1988) , Robert Conroy 's 1901 (1995) , and Harry Turtledove 's Southern Victory Series : Volume 1 : How Few Remain (1997) .

Longstreet appears as a character in Row After Row , a full length one act play by American playwright , Jessica Dickey . The action of the play takes place in the evening after a re @-@ enactment of Gettysburg . One re @-@ enactor , Cal , plays Longstreet in the battle . In parts of the play , the action moves to the moments leading up to Pickett 's Charge . The play ends with tormented Longstreet addressing the future as he wonders if we will ever form a " more perfect union . "