

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

## MITCHELL C. SKLAR



### Gettysburg and After

From September 27–29, the NJSACOP conducted this year's NJSACOP Staff Ride for Law Enforcement Program at the national military park in Gettysburg, PA. Naturally, the program focused on the historic battle that took place in July 1863.



The leaders at the Battle of Gettysburg faced problems all too familiar to the modern police executive—internal (and external) politics, working with often unreliable information, juggling a shortage of manpower and resources, getting people with diverse personalities to work together for a common goal. The decisions they made in the face of these obstacles provide a range of leadership lessons for today's leader.

Gettysburg was the bloodiest battle in the American Civil War with around 50,000 casualties, and it marked one of the war's turning points. Over the three days of fighting, victory hung in the balance, as the commander's individual strengths and weaknesses caused the battle to swing first one way then the other. In many ways, the battle provides a laboratory to explore contemporary issues including strategic thinking, decisiveness, empowerment, succession management, personal projection, communication, acting under pressure, and the use of new technology. As always on our Staff Rides, the attendees had a very enjoyable time while at the same time studying and contemplating these issues.

This year, however, there was an added dimension to the program. We arrived in Gettysburg having recently commemorated the anniversary of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. This added a new and sobering element to this program. Walking the fields, seeing the monuments, contemplating the sacrifices made on those very spots is always a moving and important experience. To do so with those recent commemorations still fresh in our minds only added to the richness of the experience.



Times change, but truly some issues are eternal, and how those who came before us confronted those issues can provide us with valuable lessons. Our Association will continue to mine the great events from our nation's past, drawing contemporary lessons from the experiences of leaders (and those they led) who shaped that past by their actions and decisions. We hope you will consider joining us at a future program. You can be certain it will be a moving, educational, and enjoyable experience.

[Online Photo Album](#)



*Continued on next page*