

**MAJOR GENERAL JOHN FULTON REYNOLDS**  
**by Justus "Jud" D. Reynolds, Jr.**

Major General (M.G. - 2 stars) John F. Reynolds entered the U.S. Military Academy at West Point NY from Lancaster PA in 1836 and graduated with the class of 1841. His classmates and friends during the four years at West Point included Generals Grant, Doubleday, Buckner, Buell, Bragg, Longstreet, Rosecrans, Pope, Thomas, Hooker, D.H. Hill, Jubal Early, Hancock, Thomas, P.G.T. Beauregard and W.T. Sherman. His graduation number was 1084, which means he was the 1,084th cadet to graduate from the academy.

There is a hero's place at West Point overlooking the Hudson River known as Battle Monument which was dedicated on 31 May 1897. General Reynolds' name is inscribed on this monument erected to the men and officers killed in the Civil War. The stone shaft atop the monument is the largest piece of turned granite in the world. It also contains the names of 2,230 brave fallen soldiers.

M.G. Reynolds served as an artillery officer in the Mexican War and was the Commandant of Cadets at West Point when the Civil War broke out in 1861. This was, and is a very prestigious position in the Army. He was appointed brigadier general of U.S. volunteers in 1861. He served with distinction in the Peninsular Campaign.

In his first principal engagement in the Civil War, he defeated Robert E. Lee at Cheat Mountain in western Virginia near Elkwater. Reynolds' losses were 21 while Lee lost almost 100. This action secured that portion of Virginia for the North in the early part of the war.

General Reynolds was shot dead by a Confederate rifleman as he rode forward disposing his troops on the first day of the battle at Gettysburg. His death occurred at 10:15 a.m., 1 July 1863, along a woodline adjacent to McPherson's Ridge a few miles south of the town. There is a large equestrian statue of him where he fell.

General Reynolds was at the time of his death the Commanding General of the Union's I Corps or 1st Corps, and was ironically replaced by a classmate, M.G. Abner Doubleday, later to become famous as the founder of baseball.

His body was brought back to be buried with his kindred in Lancaster PA by two of his aides, Capt. Ridle and Major Rosegarten. At his burial, Napier's eulogy was quoted, "no man died on that field with more glory than he, yet many died, and there was much glory."

General Reynolds was born in Lancaster 20 Sep 1820. He had a brother named James L. Reynolds, a prominent democrat who served on Governor Curtin's draft commission during the Civil War.

From many memoirs of that era it is clear that General Reynolds was highly respected. Perhaps representing the best of that said of him is the statement by General Robert E. Lee in his memoirs: "Among the officers killed at Gettysburg was Major General John F. Reynolds, whose gentlemanly bearing and soldierly qualities were unsurpassed in any other officer of either army."

[RFA does not have family information on General Reynolds. If you have any knowledge of his family history, please let us know.]