Lost Triumph

Longstreet at Gettysburg

Main Selection of the History Book Club The Battle of Gettysburg, the Civil War’s turning point, produced over 57,000 casualties, the largest number from the entire war that was itself America’s bloodiest conflict. On the third day of fierce fighting, Robert E. Lee’s attempt to invade the North came to a head in Pickett’s Charge. The infantry assault, consisting of nine brigades of soldiers in a line that stretched for over a mile, resulted in casualties of over 50 percent for the Confederates and a huge psychological blow to Southern morale. Pickett’s Charge is a detailed analysis of one of the most iconic and defining events in American history. This book presents a much-needed fresh look, including the unvarnished truths and ugly realities, about the unforgettable story. With the luxury of hindsight, historians have long denounced the folly of Lee’s attack, but this work reveals the tactical brilliance of a master plan that went awry. Special emphasis is placed on the common soldiers on both sides, especially the non-Virginia attackers outside of Pickett’s Virginia Division. These fighters’ moments of cowardice, failure, and triumph are explored using their own words from primary and unpublished sources. Without romance and glorification, the complexities and contradictions of the dramatic story of Pickett’s Charge have been revealed in full to reveal this most pivotal moment in the nation’s life. Skyhorse Publishing, as well as our Arcade imprint, are proud to publish a broad range of books for readers interested in history—books about World War II, the Third Reich, Hitler and his henchmen, the JFK assassination, conspiracies, the American Civil War, the American Revolution, gladiators, Vikings, ancient Rome, medieval times, the old West, and much more. While not every title we publish becomes a New York Times bestseller or a national bestseller, we are committed to books on subjects that are sometimes overlooked and to authors whose work might not otherwise find a home.

Barksdale’s Charge

The Battle of Gettysburg

The Battle of Gettysburg was fought July 1–3, 1863, in and around the town of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, by Union and Confederate forces during the American Civil War. The battle involved the largest number of casualties of the entire war and is often described as the war’s turning point. Union Maj. Gen. George Meade’s Army of the Potomac defeated attacks by Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia, ending Lee’s attempt to invade the North. After his success at Chancellorsville in Virginia in May 1863, Lee led his army through the Shenandoah Valley to begin his second invasion of the North—the Gettysburg Campaign. With his army in high spirits, Lee intended to shift the focus of the summer campaign from war-ravaged northern Virginia and hoped to influence Northern politicians to give up their prosecution of the war by penetrating as far as Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, or even Philadelphia. Prodded by President Abraham Lincoln, Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker moved his army in pursuit, but was relieved of command just three days before the battle and replaced by Meade. Elements of the two armies initially collided at Gettysburg on July 1, 1863, as Lee urgently concentrated his forces there, his objective being to engage the Union army and destroy it. Low ridges to the northwest of town were defended initially by a Union cavalry division under Brig. Gen. John Buford, and soon reinforced with two corps of Union infantry. However, two large Confederate corps assaulted them from the northwest and north, collapsing the hastily developed Union lines, sending the defenders retreating through the streets of the town to the hills just to the south. On the second day of battle, most...
of both armies had assembled. The Union line was laid out in a defensive formation resembling a fishhook. In the late afternoon of July 2, Lee launched a heavy assault on the Union left flank, and fierce fighting raged at Little Round Top, the Wheatfield, Devil’s Den, and the Peach Orchard. On the Union right, Confederate demonstrations escalated into full-scale assaults on Culp’s Hill and Cemetery Hill. All across the battlefield, despite significant losses, the Union defenders held their lines. On the third day of battle, fighting resumed on Culp’s Hill, and cavalry battles raged to the east and south, but the main event was a dramatic infantry assault by 12,500 Confederates against the center of the Union line on Cemetery Ridge, known as Pickett’s Charge. The charge was repulsed by Union rifle and artillery fire, at great loss to the Confederate army. Lee led his army on a torturous retreat back to Virginia. Between 46,000 and 51,000 soldiers from both armies were casualties in the three-day battle, the most costly in US history.

**The Second Day at Gettysburg**

150 years after the event, the grand near-suicidal attack against the Union position on Cemetery Ridge still emotionally resonates with Gettysburg enthusiasts like no other aspect of the battle. On the afternoon of July 3, Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee ordered more than 12,000 Southern infantry to undertake what would become the most legendary charge in American military history. This attack, popularly but inaccurately known as Pickett’s Charge, is often considered the turning point of the Civil War’s seminal battle of Gettysburg. Although much has been written about the battle itself and Pickett’s Charge in particular, Pickett’s Charge at Gettysburg is the first battlefield guide for this celebrated assault. After the war, one staff officer perceptively observed that the charge “has been more criticized, and is still less understood, than any other act of the Gettysburg drama.” Unfortunately, what was true then remains true to this day. The authors of this book—two of Gettysburg’s elite Licensed Battlefield Guides along with one of the Civil War’s leading cartographers—have corrected that oversight. Grounded in the premise that no better resource exists for understanding this unique event than the battlefield itself, Pickett’s Charge at Gettysburg encourages its readers to explore this storied event from a wide variety of perspectives. For the first time, readers can march toward the Copse of Trees with Armistead’s Virginians, advance on the Confederate left with Pettigrew’s North Carolinians, or defend the Angle with Alonzo Cushing’s gunners and thousands of Union soldiers. There is much here to enrich the experience, including dozens of full-color original maps, scores of battlefield and other historic photographs, a unique mix of rare human interest stories, a discussion of leadership controversies, and a rare collection of artifacts directly related to the charge. Pickett’s Charge at Gettysburg is designed for readers to enjoy on or off the battlefield, and will give Civil War enthusiasts an entirely new appreciation for, and understanding of, Gettysburg’s third day of battle.

**Custer’s “Lost” Official Report of the Battle of Gettysburg, July 3, 1863**

Stephen Dodson Ramseur, born in Lincolnton, North Carolina, in 1837, compiled an enviable record as a brigadier in the Army of Northern Virginia. Commissioned major general the day after his twenty-seventh birthday, he was the youngest West Pointer to achieve that rank in the Confederate army. He later showed great skill as a divisional leader in the 1864 Shenandoah Valley campaigns before he was fatally wounded at Cedar Creek on 19 October of that year. Based on Ramseur’s extensive personal papers as well as on other sources, this absorbing biography examines the life of one of the South’s most talented commanders and brings into sharper focus some of the crosscurrents of this turbulent period.

**Amongst Immortals Raging**

On the crucial third day of the decisive Battle of Gettysburg, a newly-appointed brigadier general, age 23, commanded a full brigade of Michigan cavalrymen during his first major battle? George Armstrong Custer. He played a key role in saving the day in the Army of the Potomac’s rear by leading his four cavalry regiments to victory. This book has emphasized the importance of the decisive clash at the East Cavalry Field on July 3, 1863 by presenting Custer’s official report?long considered “lost” and often ignored?about the most important cavalry action during the largest and most decisive battle ever fought on the North American continent. Most of all, this is an important story about the Union cavalry’s vital contributions to decisive victory on the final day of the most climactic showdown of the Civil War at Gettysburg.

**The Battle of Gettysburg, 1863**

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**Battles and Leaders of the Civil War: The tideshifts**

Virginians Lewis A. Armistead and Richard B. Garnett, two Confederate officers killed during Pickett’s Charge at Gettysburg, lived remarkably parallel lives. In this Civil War Short, Robert K. Krick follows the two men
from their early military careers fighting against American Indians and Mormons through two decades of military service and onto the field at Gettysburg, where both were mortally wounded. The work was originally published in The Third Day at Gettysburg and Beyond, edited by Gary W. Gallagher, which combines fresh evidence with the reinterpretation of standard sources to testify to the enduring impact of the Civil War on our national consciousness and refocus our view of the third day at Gettysburg. UNC Press Civil War Shorts excerpt rousing narratives from distinguished books published by the University of North Carolina Press on the military, political, social, and cultural history of the Civil War era. Produced exclusively in ebook format, they focus on pivotal moments and figures and are intended to provide a concise introduction, stir the imagination, and encourage further exploration of the topic. For in-depth analysis, contextualization, and perspective, we invite readers to consider the original publications from which these works are drawn.

The Battle of Gettysburg

What did the battle of Gettysburg look like? Despite the vast number of photographs associated with the Civil War, we have no photos of the battles themselves. The state of photography at that time could not stop action as it does today. But we DO have pictures. They are the drawings of the battlefield artists -- the Specials, as they were called -- sent out by publications such as Harper's Weekly to make a visual record of the pivotal event in American history. The woodcuts that Harper's and other publications produced based on these drawings are famous and well-known. But what of the drawings themselves -- those made during the battle or in the evening when the firing has ceased? Unfortunately, while many of them still exist, relatively few have ever been published. This series, Battlelines, seeks to correct that. We begin with a five-volume set of these drawings related to the battle of Gettysburg. This volume (number 4 in the set) presents the drawings of the third day of the battle, Wednesday, July 3, 1863. This final day of the battle included the famous Pickett's Charge by Confederate forces and their infamous retreat. Watch for other volumes in this set.

Stephen Dodson Ramseur

A telling assessment of the myths and facts surrounding the most famous single military event of the Civil War.

Pickett's Charge in History and Memory

In this Civil War Short, Gary W. Gallagher surveys Confederate sentiment in the summer of 1863 and argues that many southerners did not view the battle of Gettysburg as a resounding defeat. Gallagher makes the compelling case that, although southern casualties were tremendous, Confederates across the South, along with the vast majority of Lee's soldiers, persisted in viewing Robert E. Lee as an invincible commander whose army increasingly sustained the hopes of the nation. The work was originally published in The Third Day at Gettysburg and Beyond, edited by Gary W. Gallagher, which combines fresh evidence with the reinterpretation of standard sources to testify to the enduring impact of the Civil War on our national consciousness and refocus our view of the third day at Gettysburg. UNC Press Civil War Shorts excerpt rousing narratives from distinguished books published by the University of North Carolina Press on the military, political, social, and cultural history of the Civil War era. Produced exclusively in ebook format, they focus on pivotal moments and figures and are intended to provide a concise introduction, stir the imagination, and encourage further exploration of the topic. For in-depth analysis, contextualization, and perspective, we invite readers to consider the original publications from which these works are drawn.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg

On the third day of Gettysburg, Robert E. Lee launched a magnificent attack. For pure pageantry it was unsurpassed, and it also marked the centerpiece of the war, both time-wise and in terms of how the conflict had turned a corner from persistent Confederate hopes to impending Rebel despair. But Pickett's Charge was crushed by the Union defenders that day, having never had a chance in the first place. The Confederacy's real high tide at Gettysburg had come the afternoon before, during the swirling conflagration when Longstreet's corps first entered the battle, when the Federals just barely held on. The foremost Rebel spearhead on that second day of the battle was Barksdale's Mississippi brigade, which launched what one (Union) observer called the "grandest charge that was ever seen by mortal man." Barksdale's brigade was already renowned in the Army of Northern Virginia for its stand-alone fights at Fredericksburg. On the second day of Gettysburg it was just champing at the bit to go in. The Federal left was not as vulnerable as Lee had envisioned, but had cooperated with Rebel wishes by extending its Third Corps into a salient. Hood's crack division was launched first, seizing Devil's Den, climbing Little Round Top, and hammering in the wheatfield. Then Longstreet began to launch McLaws' division, and finally gave Barksdale the go-ahead. The Mississippians, with their white-haired commander on horseback at their head, utterly crushed the peach orchard salient and continued marauding up to Cemetery Ridge. Hancock, Meade, and other Union generals desperately struggled to find units to stem the Rebel tide. One of Barksdale's regiments, the 21st Mississippi, veered off from the brigade in the chaos, rampaging across the field, overrunning Union battery after battery. The collapsing Federals had to gather men from four different corps to try to stem the onslaught. Barksdale himself was killed at the apex of his advance. Darkness, as well as Confederate exhaustion, finally ended the day's fight as the shaken, depleted Federal units on their heights took stock. They had barely held on against the full ferocity of the Rebels, on a day that decided the fate of the nation. Barksdale's Charge describes the exact moment when the Confederacy reached its zenith, and the soldiers of the Northern states just barely succeeded in retaining their perfect Union. Phillip Thomas Tucker, Ph.D. has authored or edited over 20 books on various aspects of the American experience, especially in the fields of Civil War, Irish, African-
American, Revolutionary, and Southern history. A native of St. Louis, Missouri, he has earned three degrees in American history, including a Ph.D. from St. Louis University in 1990. For over two decades, Dr. Tucker served as a military historian for the U.S. Air Force. He currently lives in the vicinity of Washington, DC.

**Pickett's Charge**

The Harrisburg Telegraph says “...an unique and authoritative book, The Story of the Battles at Gettysburg” will arouse great interest among military men throughout the country.” It is not generally known that the three-day battle of Gettysburg, one of the most important and significant engagements of the Civil War, is included in the course of training of student officers in practically all the European war colleges as an outstanding example of tactics and strategy. Once a year the students of the West Point Military Academy spend several days at Gettysburg in studying the battle problems during the first three days of July 1863. The outstanding features to the military, are the maps of the battlefield...these maps are drawn to scale with careful fidelity and the position of each regiment and branch of service is shown every hour of the day at different stages in the progress of the battles.

**Gettysburg, the Third Day**

The Third Day at Gettysburg & Beyond

**Amongst Immortals Raging**

In graphic novel format, this book tells the story of the Battle of Gettysburg, the three-day battle that was the turning point in the Civil War.

**Gettysburg’s Peach Orchard**

A collection of essays from Civil War historians on leadership during the three-day Battle of Gettysburg. Based on manuscript sources and consideration of existing literature, the contributors challenge prevailing interpretations of key officers’ performances.

**‘We Were There, Waiting’**

July 1, 1863. The Confederate Army of Northern Virginia under General Robert E. Lee advanced across the Pennsylvania countryside toward the small town of Gettysburg—less than 90 miles from Washington, D.C.—on a collision course with the Union Army of the Potomac. In Lee’s ranks were 5,000 South Carolina troops destined to play critical roles in the three days of fighting ahead. From generals to privates, the Palmetto State soldiers were hurled into the Civil War’s most famous battle—hundreds were killed, wounded or later suffered as prisoners of war. The life-and-death stories of these South Carolinians are here woven together here with official wartime reports, previously unpublished letters, newspaper accounts, diaries and the author’s personal observations from walking the battlefield.

**Custer at Gettysburg**

Original essays refocus the final day at Gettysburg and examine pivotal issues of the engagements, including why Meade failed to pursue Lee, Longstreet’s role in Pickett’s charge, and the impact of the South’s defeat on its myths.

**Historical Dictionary of the Civil War and Reconstruction**

Gettysburg is America’s most famous battle. Fought on the first three days of July 1863, it was one of the largest and by far the bloodiest of the Civil War. Yet the importance of this great conflagration cannot be measured...
George Armstrong Custer is famous for his fatal defeat at the Little Bighorn in 1876, but Custer’s baptism of fire came during the Civil War. After graduating last in the West Point class of 1861, Custer served from the First Battle of Bull Run (only a month after graduation) through Appomattox, where he witnessed the surrender. But Custer’s rise to prominence began at Gettysburg in 1863. On the eve of the Battle of Gettysburg, only twenty-three years old and barely two years removed from being the last of his West Point class, Custer received promotion to brigadier general and command—his first direct field command—of the Michigan Cavalry Brigade, the “Wolverines.” Now that he held general rank, Custer felt comfortable wearing the distinctive, some said gaudy, uniform that helped skyrocket him into fame and legend. However flashy he may have been in style, Custer did not disappoint his superiors, who promoted him in a search for more aggressive cavalry officers. At approximately noon on July 3, 1863, Custer and his men heard enemy cannon fire; Stuart’s signal to Lee that he was ready for action. Thus began the melee that was East Cavalry Field at Gettysburg. Much back and forth preceded Custer’s career-defining action. An hour or two into the battle, after many of his cavalrymen had been reduced to hand-to-hand infantry-style fighting, Custer ordered a charge of one of his regiments and led it into action himself, screaming one of the battle’s most famous lines: “Come on, you Wolverines!” Around three o’clock, Stuart mounted a final charge, which moved down Union cavalry—until it ran into Custer’s Wolverines, who stood firm, with Custer wielding a sword at their head, and broke the Confederates’ last attack. In a book combining two popular subjects, Tucker recounts the story of Custer at Gettysburg with verve, shows how the Custer legend was born on the fields of Gettysburg, and offers eye-opening new perspectives on Gettysburg’s overlooked cavalry battle.
Lee’s Army Has Not Lost Any of Its Prestige

A bold new thesis in the study of the Civil War suggests Lee had a heretofore undiscovered strategy at Gettysburg that, if successful, could have changed the outcome of the war. Conventional wisdom has held that on the third day of the battle, Lee made one profoundly wrong decision. But there is much more to the story, which Tom Carhart addresses for the first time. With meticulous detail, Carhart revisits the historic battles Lee fought at West Point—the victories of Napoleon at Austerlitz, Frederick the Great at Leuthen, and Hannibal at Cannae—and reveals what they can tell us about Lee’s real strategy. What Carhart finds: Lee’s plan for a rear assault that, combined with Pickett’s Charge, could have broken the Union forces in half. Only in the final hours of the battle was the attack reversed through the daring of an unproven young general—George Armstrong Custer.

The Battle of Gettysburg 1863

Offers an analysis of the final day of the decisive battle of Gettysburg, drawing on letters and diaries from men on both sides to illuminate the events and personalities responsible for the ultimate Union victory.

Third Day at Gettysburg

Pickett’s Charge

On the afternoon of July 2, 1863, Lt. Gen. James Longstreet struck the Union left flank with a massive blow that collapsed Dan Sickles advanced position in the Peach Orchard and rolled northward, tearing open a large gap in the center of the Federal line on Cemetery Ridge. Fresh Confederates from A. P. Hill’s Corps advanced toward the mile-wide breach, where Southern success would split the Army of the Potomac in two. The fate of the Battle of Gettysburg hung in the balance. Despite the importance of the position, surprisingly few Union troops were available to defend Cemetery Ridge. Major General Winfield S. Hancock’s veteran Second Corps had been whittled from three divisions to less than one after Gibbon’s division was sucked into earlier fighting and Caldwell’s command was shattered in the Wheatfield. With little time and few men, Hancock determined to plug the yawning gap. Reprising Horatio at the Bridge, the gallant commander cobbled together various commands and refused to yield the precious acres in Plum Run ravine. The swirling sea of fighting lasted for hours and included hand-to-hand combat and personal heroics of which legends are made. The Second Day at Gettysburg: The Attack and Defense of the Union Center on Cemetery Ridge, July 2, 1863, expands on David Shultz and David Wiecek’s critically acclaimed earlier work The Battle Between the Farm Lanes. This completely revised and expanded study, which includes new photographs, original maps, and a self-guided tour of the fighting, is grounded in extensive research and unmatched personal knowledge of the terrain. The result is a balanced and compelling account of this often overlooked portion of the battle. About the Authors: David L. Shultz is the author of numerous books, pamphlets, and articles concerning the Battle of Gettysburg including the acclaimed Double Canister at Ten Yards: The Federal Artillery in the Trenches. He is the recipient of numerous awards including special citations from the House of Representatives and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for Meritorious Public Service for Battlefield Preservation. He is currently working on an extensive and comprehensive tactical study on the artillery at Gettysburg. In addition to co-authoring The Battle Between the Farm Lanes and The Second Day at Gettysburg, David Wiecek has written several articles on Civil War topics, most recently on Frank Furness, Medal of Honor winner and famous Philadelphia architect. He has edited more than twenty books on military history, and is a frequent speaker on the Civil War and a personal favorite, John Quincy Adams. He works for the federal government, specializing in the advocacy of rights and benefits for military veterans. He lives in Philadelphia with his wife and four presidential cats.

The Third Day at Gettysburg

Winner, 2019, The Bachelder-Coddington Literary Award, Given by the Robert E. Lee Civil War Round Table of Central New Jersey More books have been written about the battle of Gettysburg than any other engagement of the Civil War. The historiography of the battle’s second day is usually dominated by the Union’s successful defense of Little Round Top, but the day’s most influential action occurred nearly one mile west along the Emmitsburg Road in farmer Joseph Sherfy’s peach orchard. Despite its overriding importance, no full-length study of this pivotal action has been written until now. James Hessler’s Peach Orchard: Longstreet, Sickles, and the Bloody Fight for the “Commanding Ground” Along the Emmitsburg Road corrects that oversight. On July 2, 1863, Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee ordered skeptical subordinate Lt. Gen. James Longstreet to launch a massive assault against the Union left flank. The offensive was intended to seize the Peach Orchard and surrounding ground along the Emmitsburg Road for use as an artillery position to support the ongoing attack. However, Union Maj. Gen. Daniel Sickles, a scheming former congressman from New York, misinterpreted his orders and occupied the orchard first. What followed was some of Gettysburg’s bloodiest and most controversial fighting. General Sickles’ questionable advance forced Longstreet’s artillery and infantry to fight for every inch of ground to
Cemetery Ridge. The Confederate attack crushed the Peach Orchard salient and other parts of the Union line, threatening the left flank of Maj. Gen. George Meade’s army. The command decisions made in and around the Sherfy property influenced actions on every part of the battlefield. The occupation of the high ground at the Peach Orchard helped General Lee rationalize ordering the tragic July 3 assault known as “Pickett’s Charge.” This richly detailed study is based upon scores of primary accounts and a deep understanding of the terrain. Hessler and Isenberg, both Gettysburg Licensed Battlefield Guides, combine the military aspects of the fighting with human interest stories in a balanced treatment of the bloody attack and defense of Gettysburg’s Peach Orchard.

The Third Day of Gettysburg and Retreat of the Confederate Army Across the Potomac at Williamsport, Virginia


Battle of Gettysburg

Presents forty-five poems focusing on the Civil War’s Battle of Gettysburg in 1863.

Three Days at Gettysburg

The six essays in this volume testify to the enduring impact of the Civil War on our national consciousness. Covering subjects as diverse as tactics, the uses of autobiography, and the power of myth-making in the southern tradition, they illustrate the rewards of imaginative scholarship—even for the most intensely studied battle in America’s history. The Third Day at Gettysburg and Beyond brings current research and interpretation to bear on a range of pivotal issues surrounding the final day of the battle, July 3, 1863. This revisionist approach begins by expanding our knowledge of the engagement itself: individual essays address Confederate general James Longstreet’s role in Pickett’s Charge and Union general George Meade’s failure to pursue Lee after the fighting. Other essays widen the scope of investigation to look at contemporary reactions to the Confederate defeat across the South, the construction of narratives by the participants themselves—from Confederate survivors of Pickett’s assault to Union sergeant Ben Hirst—and the reverberations of Pickett’s final momentous charge. Combining fresh evidence with the reinterpretation of standard sources, these essays refocus our view of the third day at Gettysburg to take in its diverse stories of combat and memory. The contributors are Gary W. Gallagher, William Garrett Piston, Carol Reardon, Robert K. Krick, Robert L. Bee, and A. Wilson Greene.

The First Day at Gettysburg

Many writers have argued that the Battle of Gettysburg represented the turning point of the Civil War, after which the Confederate fortunes moved inexorably toward defeat. Often overshadowed by more famous events on the second and third day, the initial phase of the contest offers very interesting problems of leadership.

Double Canister at Ten Yards: The Federal Artillery and the Repulse of Pickett’s Charge, July 3, 1863

The second edition of this highly readable, one-volume Historical Dictionary of the Civil War and Reconstruction looks to place the war in its historical context. The more than 800 entries, encompassing the years 1844-1877, cover the significant events, persons, politics, and economic and social themes of the Civil War and Reconstruction. An extensive chronology, introductory essay, and comprehensive bibliography supplement the cross-referenced dictionary entries to guide the reader through the military and non-military actions of one of the most pivotal events in American history. The dictionary concludes with a selection of
primary documents. This book is an excellent access point for students, researchers, and anyone wanting to know more about the Civil War and Reconstruction.

Armistead and Garnett

Writing of Gettysburg, which is herein so graphically depicted by Haskell, General Francis A. Walker, in his History of the Second Army Corps, refers to our author as one who was "bravest of the brave, riding mounted through an interval between the Union battalions, and calling upon the troops to go forward." He further says: "Colonel Frank A. Haskell, of Wisconsin, had been known for his intelligence and courage, for his generosity of character and his exquisite culture, long before the third day of Gettysburg, when, acting as aide to General Gibbon, rode mounted between the two lines, then swaying backward and forward under each other’s fire, calling upon the men of the Second Division to follow him, and setting an example of valor and self devotion never forgotten by any man of the thousands who witnessed it."

The Third Day at Gettysburg

The Battle of Gettysburg was fought July 1–3, 1863, in and around the town of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, by Union and Confederate forces during the American Civil War. The battle involved the largest number of casualties of the entire war and is often described as the war’s turning point. Union Maj. Gen. George Meade’s Army of the Potomac defeated attacks by Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia, ending Lee’s attempt to invade the North. After his success at Chancellorsville in Virginia in May 1863, Lee led his army through the Shenandoah Valley to begin his second invasion of the North—the Gettysburg Campaign. With his army in high spirits, Lee intended to shift the focus of the summer campaign from war-ravaged northern Virginia and hoped to influence Northern politicians to give up their prosecution of the war by penetrating as far as Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, or even Philadelphia. Prodded by President Abraham Lincoln, Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker moved his army in pursuit, but was relieved of command just three days before the battle and replaced by Meade. Elements of the two armies initially collided at Gettysburg on July 1, 1863, as Lee urgently concentrated his forces there, his objective being to engage the Union army and destroy it. Low ridges to the northwest of town were defended initially by Union cavalry under Brig. Gen. John Buford, and soon reinforced with two corps of Union infantry. However, two large Confederate corps assaulted them from the northwest and north, collapsing the hastily developed Union lines, sending the defenders retreating through the streets of the town to the hills just to the south. On the second day of battle, most of both armies had assembled. The Union line was laid out in a defensive formation resembling a fishhook. In the late afternoon of July 2, Lee launched a heavy assault on the Union left flank, and fierce fighting raged at Little Round Top, the Wheatfield, Devil’s Den, and the Peach Orchard. On the Union right, Confederate demonstrations escalated into full-scale assaults on Culp’s Hill and Cemetery Hill. All across the battlefield, despite significant losses, the Union defenders held their lines. On the third day of battle, fighting resumed on Culp’s Hill, and cavalry battles raged to the east and south, but the main event was a dramatic infantry assault by 12,500 Confederates against the center of the Union line on Cemetery Ridge, known as Pickett’s Charge. The charge was repulsed by Union rifle and artillery fire, at great loss to the Confederate army. Lee led his army on a torturous retreat back to Virginia. Between 46,000 and 51,000 soldiers from both armies were casualties in the three-day battle, the most costly in US history.

Confrontation at Gettysburg

Gettysburg, Day Three

The repulse of Pickett’s charge, described in a little-known account written shortly after the battle by a Union officer.

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