

THE BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG

Good day everyone...it's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania.

The anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg commences Monday next for three days. Fresh from brilliant victory at Chancell-  
orville, Robert E. Lee wanted to break the back of the Union  
troops and came into Pennsylvania to produce panic in the  
North, and get fresh supplies from the lush farms of the  
Cumberland Valley and the Harrisburg area. Gettysburg became  
the bloodiest single war action of any previous war. Losses  
on both sides reach a monumental 50,000 men. Pennsylvanians  
more than any other defended their ground heroically. Lee's  
vanguard had come to a position (now Camp Hill) from which he  
could see Harrisburg. Both sides had great generals--and lost  
many of them in this battle. Jubel Early's southerners drove  
our 25th Pennsylvanians out of Gettysburg. Along the Cash-  
town Pike, General John Reynolds of Lancaster, Pennsylvania's  
greatest fighter of the day, was killed by a stray ball.  
General Doubleday skillfully met the troops of the South at  
Cemetery Ridge, throwing two brigades into the front lines.  
Generals Biddle and Stone--both Pennsylvanians--helped stop  
the South on the road to Carlisle. Doubleday's corps was  
reduced in that three-hour period by 7000 men. On the second  
day, Pennsylvania's General Dan Sickles stopped Longstreet at  
Round Top and near the Peach Orchard lost his leg. Early on  
the third day, General Slocum with many Pennsylvanians made a  
successful drive and for six hours they fought unceasingly.

This practically ended the battle, for Slocum drove the Confederates from breastworks atop the hills. There came an ominous silence--Lee, while Union forces were cooling their guns (thinking they were exhausted) ordered his choicest troops to force the Federal line. Pickett charged--and when battle cleared had lost 12 of his 15 battle banners and thousands of men. Meanwhile, the famed Jeb Stuart with the Rebel cavalry endeavored finally to break the Union line in the center, but there he met General David McMurtie Gregg of Berks County and was defeated in the most important cavalry battle of the war. From that moment, Lee was on the defensive. General Doubleday was the man who invented baseball...the Gregg-Stuart battle was fought on the Rommel Farm--same name as the German general who studied this battle in fighting desert warfare; one hero was John Burns, an Irishman who came out of Gettysburg dressed in a swallow-tail coat and a musket he had carried in the Mexican War. He begged to fight with the 150th Pennsylvania Volunteers, was told to get behind a tree--he did--used his musket--and even he, behind a tree--was wounded three times. Jennie Wade of Gettysburg was killed by a ball as she baked bread. All the North contributed courage and manhood to Gettysburg, but by its location, leadership and incidents, this was essentially a Pennsylvania battle.

This is Pete Wambach. It's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania.