



Gettysburg: Day 3

July 3rd, 1863:

Lee believed that the battles on July 2nd had weakened the Union right and left flanks on Culp's Hill and Little Round Top. He also believed that the Union army reinforced the flanks with troops from the center because the battle on July 2nd took place on the flanks. Lee, therefore, planned an attack which he hoped would break through the Union center on Cemetery Ridge. Lee ordered an artillery attack all along Seminary Ridge before General George Pickett's advance. This was meant to weaken the Union line and destroy Union artillery that could fire on Confederate troops as they crossed the field. After a long artillery barrage between Confederate artillery on Seminary Ridge and Union artillery on Cemetery Ridge, the Federals stopped firing, hoping to provoke a Confederate attack. Lee believed that his artillery cleared the Union artillery from Cemetery Ridge and ordered Pickett's troops into battle.

Around 4pm, about 15,000 troops began marching across the open field that separated Seminary Ridge and Cemetery Ridge. Union artillery and musket fire killed and wounded hundreds as they advanced toward the Union lines. When Confederate troops under the command of Lewis Armistead finally reached the Union line, they briefly cross over the stone wall, capturing a cannon, but the attack soon lost momentum and the Confederate break through was soon subdued. As Confederate troops began retreating across the field toward the Confederate position on Seminary Ridge, Lee rode out to meet his discouraged troops, taking the

blame for their defeat. His grand visions of victory on northern soil, to finally end the war, were crushed.