

Petersburg National Battlefield VirtualCache Program

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Site 9: First Maine Heavy Artillery Monument

N 37° 13'58.521
W 77° 22'19.576



After three days of trying to seize Petersburg the soldiers of the 1st Maine Heavy Artillery found themselves in the protection of the Prince George Court House road staring across a field of fallow corn and into near certain death.

On June 18, 1864 Union forces had tried once again to break the new Confederate lines around the city. Attacking that morning in piecemeal, the Federals were easily thrown back with numerous casualties. Union commanders decided to try once more that day to break Petersburg's defenses.

At 4:30pm the 1st Maine Heavy Artillery led one of the attack columns. Facing them across the open farm field were Confederate soldiers well dug in and waiting. With the signal given the regiment charged,

"Bullets whistled like rain. The Maine boys fell fast. 'Forward , men,' could be heard from their line . . canister is let loose by the Rebels and dirt is flying, yet the Maine men who crept up the bank do not flinch, but sullenly close up the ranks, now decimated. For over four hundred yards the lines . . . clung together, but it seemed a fruitless attempt, much more so that it did at the outset." (History of the 1st Maine Heavy Artillery)

Within ten minutes it was over. Most of the regiment remained on the field as either killed or wounded and there was nothing to show for their sacrifice. This monument the surviving veterans placed here after the war, is to remind us their service was not in vain nor will be forgotten.

Visit Instructions: List the names of three soldiers from the monument or make a rubbing of the names. Be careful not to get pencil or crayon on the monument.

