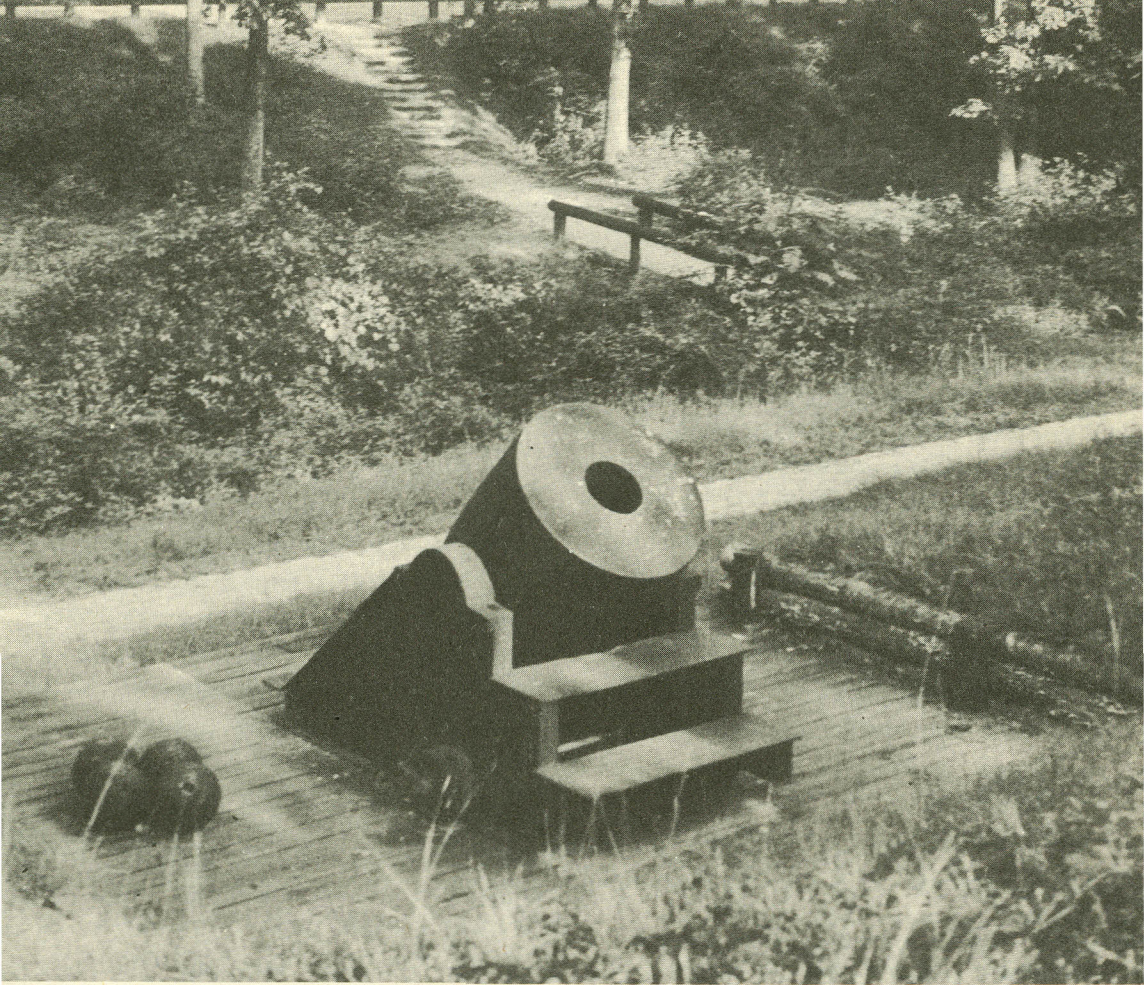




The Dictator.

PETERSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK

VIRGINIA

PETERSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK



United States Department of the Interior
HAROLD L. ICKES, *Secretary*
National Park Service, NEWTON B. DRURY, *Director*



Petersburg National Military Park commemorates the valor and devotion of the American soldiers who served around Petersburg during the Revolution and the War Between the States. In the earlier struggle those soldiers aided in overcoming a common foe and in establishing on this continent a Nation based upon democratic principles. In the later war, when antagonistic interpretations of those principles led the people of the North and the South into conflict, decisive battles were fought between the opposing armies at Petersburg.

Dominating the approaches to Richmond through control of the railroads

connecting the Confederate capital with the South, Petersburg in 1864 became the final citadel of the Confederacy. Here for nearly 10 months the strongest armies of the North and of the South, commanded respectively by Generals Grant and Lee, engaged in a life-and-death struggle, and, when in April, 1865, Lee at last lost Petersburg, the dissolution of the Confederacy was close at hand. The territory covered by the military operations of 1864-5 around Petersburg is about 170 square miles in extent, constituting by far the largest single battlefield area in America. It is an attractive country, whose colorful history stretches back through Colonial

The Moat—Fort Davis.



Visitors at Battery Five.



days to the earliest period of English settlement in Virginia.

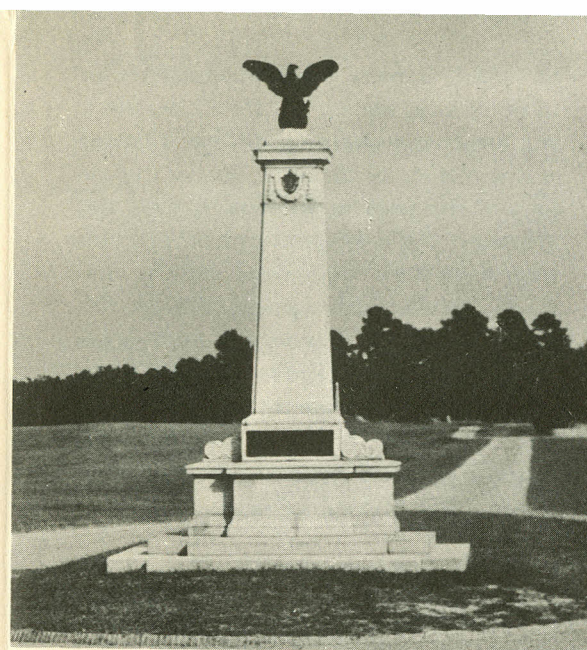
OPERATIONS AROUND PETERSBURG, 1864-5

Virginia had already been subjected to three stern years of warfare, when, in 1864, General Grant took command of the United States armies. Planning to destroy the Confederate forces under General Lee and to capture Richmond, Grant marched the Army of the Potomac across the Rapidan River, May 4, 1864. In the Battles of the Wilderness and Spotsylvania Courthouse, Lee held his ground, but Grant, nevertheless, continued moving southward toward Richmond. Again repulsed at Cold Harbor, he decided to operate against Richmond from the south through Petersburg. An army corps of Butler's Army of the James from Ber-

muda Hundred attacked Petersburg, June 15, and the Army of the Potomac, crossing the James River June 14-17, joined in the attack. In 3 days of fighting the Federals captured the eastern defenses, but General Beauregard, with a small Confederate force, retained the town. Lee's army then arrived, occupied a shorter line nearer the town, and repulsed the last assaults.

Grant now began siege operations on the eastern front, while persistently pushing his left flank southwestward to envelop Petersburg and cut the railroads leading south. His first advance, June 21-22, was driven back and for some time no further extension was attempted. On July 30 was fought the Battle of the Crater, which resulted in another Federal repulse. Striking westward again, after severe fighting August 18-21 around Globe

Earthworks—Fort Stedman.



Massachusetts Monument at Crater Entrance.

Tavern, the Federals succeeded in cutting the Weldon Railroad (Atlantic Coast Line). While destroying the track farther south at Reams Station a few days later, a Federal corps was interrupted and driven away by a sudden Confederate attack, and in a brilliant raid behind the Federal lines on September 15, Wade Hampton's cavalry captured Grant's herd of 2,500 beef cattle.

Grant's extension of his right flank across the James River near the end of the month and his capture of Fort Harrison, 8 miles south of Richmond, compelled Lee also to move much of his army north of the James and to keep it there. Thus weakened southwest of Petersburg, the Confederates lost further territory, September 29-30, when Grant's left flank pushed forward to Peebles Farm, within 2 miles of the Boydton Plank Road (now

U. S. Highway No. 1). A Federal attempt to cut this highway by advancing across Hatcher's Run toward the end of October was decisively repulsed, and thereafter field operations virtually ceased for the period of the winter.

Foreseeing that when spring came, his attenuated line, now 35 miles long, would be broken by superior numbers, Lee assaulted Fort Stedman, March 25, 1865, in a desperate attempt to penetrate Grant's right and cut his supply railroad to City Point. The attack failed and Grant countered by sending Sheridan with heavy cavalry and infantry forces to Dinwiddie Courthouse to destroy the Southside Railroad (Norfolk and Western). At first forced back, Sheridan received reinforcements, and on April 1 routed the Confederates at Five Forks. The Federal victory at Five Forks rendered the railroad indefensible and caused

Battery Five Information Station.



Lee to evacuate Petersburg and Richmond and to begin an immediate westward retreat. Grant pursued and overtook the Confederates at Appomattox Courthouse, and in that small hamlet on April 9 Lee surrendered. The long War Between the States soon was ended, and there began a new era in the history of America.

THE BATTLE OF THE CRATER

Starting June 25, 1864, a Pennsylvania regiment composed mainly of coal miners dug a tunnel, which enabled them to place a 4-ton powder charge under one of the Confederate batteries in the Petersburg line. Shortly before 5 o'clock on the morning of July 30, the mine was set off. The explosion was terrific. It tore a huge crater in the ground and hurled men and cannons high in the air. Nearly 300 Confederate soldiers were killed. The Federals had expected to charge through the breach thus made, but due to confusion and lack of coordination the movement failed. They did succeed in occupying the Crater and in taking about a quarter of a mile of the Confederate line, but after fierce fighting, which lasted all morning, they were finally driven back with casualties in killed, wounded, and captured of approximately 4,000 men, which were nearly three times the Confederate losses.

Evidence of the tunnel, the ventilating shaft, and the great mine crater may still be seen at Petersburg National Military Park.

THE PARK

Petersburg National Military Park was established by Act of Congress approved July 3, 1926. By 1940 it contained 2,047 acres. Park driveways, supplemented in places by public roads, give access to extensive sections of the entrenchments

of 1863-5, many of which mark the scenes of fierce local battles. At the Crater there is a museum containing exhibits relating to the history of the area. In the eastern part of the park at Soldiers' Spring and at Battery Eight are public picnic grounds with fireplaces, free wood supply, and tables. Bridle trails are available for riding, and pleasant scenery and many spots of historic interest invite hiking. Three miles south of Petersburg on State Route No. 675 is the Poplar Grove National Cemetery, which contains the graves of about 6,000 Federal soldiers.

ACCESSIBILITY

Petersburg, 22 miles south of Richmond, Va., is on U. S. Highways 1, 301 and 460, and may be reached by railroad and bus.

HOW TO SEE THE PARK

Visitors should go first to the Crater, located on U. S. No. 460 and 301 Alternate, southeast of Petersburg. After visiting the Crater area and the park museum, they are advised to follow the "Park Tour" signs, which will direct them on a 6-mile tour of the park. The map in this leaflet should not be used in following a tour of the park.

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ADMINISTRATION

The Petersburg National Military Park is administered by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior. Temporary park headquarters are in the U. S. Post Office Building in Petersburg, and information may be obtained there. Communications should be addressed to the Superintendent, Petersburg National Military Park, Petersburg, Virginia.

