

## Gettysburg National Military Park and Flight 93 Memorial: another adventure

Ruth had been wanting to revisit Gettysburg Military National Park ever since she and her book group visited there two years ago on the 150th anniversary of the famous battle between the Union and the Confederate Armies during the Civil War. I had been there with friends years ago as we were returning from a military assignment on the east coast, but wanted to visit this hallowed site with Ruth to see the new Visitors' Center and remind myself of the events of The Battle that was the turning point of The American Civil War.

The three-hundred mile drive to Gettysburg was very easy and took a little over five and a half hours. Upon arrival, we toured the museum for an hour and then saw the movie, **The Birth of a Nation**, about the three day battle. Following the movie, we entered the large circular Cyclorama to witness the football sized (377 feet long) painting depicting Picket's Charge, the defining battle of this three day engagement. The painting, first displayed in 1884, was painted in two years by Frenchman, Paul Philippoteaux. Prior to its installation in the Cyclorama it was restored in five years at a cost in the millions of dollars.

Following the impressive Cyclorama presentation, we met our Licensed Guide, Jim Pangburn (717.253.1779), for a three hour tour of the battlefield. Jim has been a guide for thirteen years and knew *everything about this battle and its participants. Essentially, (Please forgive me Jim), on **Day One** of the three day battle (July 1), the Union troops were moving North behind Lee's Confederate troops as the Confederates were making their first entry into Pennsylvania in hopes of breaking the spirit of the Union and forcing them to discontinue the fight and let the Confederates*

*secede. As the Union closed in, they were driven back through Gettysburg and suffered significant losses. The Union forces retreated to the high ground right outside of Gettysburg. On **Day Two**, with both forces having been reinforced, the Confederate Army attacked each end of the Union Forces without success. **Day Three** was the turning point of the Battle of Gettysburg and the war. The Confederate army attacked the Union Army with a center thrust which has become known as Picket's Charge. The 12,000 man Confederate force attempted to break through the Union line (which was in the shape of a fish hook), to no avail, suffering almost 5,000 casualties in their futile attempt. Lee was defeated and headed for Virginia, with the*



*knowledge that the Confederate dream would not be realized. Several more battles ensued but for all practical purposes, the Civil War had been decided at Gettysburg.*



*After our afternoon tour, we drove to our pet-friendly Comfort Inn and then to the Springhouse Tavern at the Dobson House for dinner. The Springhouse Tavern/Dobson House was open for business during the Civil War and is a delightful dinner location in downtown Gettysburg. During dinner, we met a*

*lovely couple from upstate New York and a fireman from Cleveland, Ohio.*

*The following morning, we traveled to Bedford, Pennsylvania to have lunch at the Omni Bedford Springs Resort. We ate at the Frontier Tavern, where Harold was welcome to sit with us outdoors. We plan to revisit this lovely site on another trip.*



*After lunch, we drove to **The Flight 93 National Memorial** near Shanksville, Pennsylvania. On September 11, 2001, United Flight 93, en route from Newark, New Jersey to San Francisco, California, was hijacked and the hijackers were most likely planning to crash the plane into the U.S. Capitol.*



*Several passengers engaged the hijackers and subsequently, the plane crashed in an almost vertical, upside-down crash at 563 miles per hour. Thirty-three passengers, seven crew and four hijackers were killed. The Memorial is a tribute to the passengers*

*and crew of Flight 93. The site, on several thousand acres has a Wall of Names of those innocents who lost their lives that day. The Wall is in line with the flight path of Flight 93, as well as the yet uncompleted Museum. At the end of the Museum and Wall of Names is a large boulder, the site of the actual crash. Visiting this site was/is a very moving experience.*

*After visiting the Memorial, Ruth, Harold and I headed the last 150 miles to our home in Twin Lakes, Ohio. Ruth and I would highly recommend this two-day adventure which was both educational and sobering. Both of the major sites we visited memorialize tragic and important events in our country's history. Freedom is expensive and we are grateful for those who have given their lives so that we might enjoy our liberty.*

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