

Ordnance Mule Train Charge

Gettysburg July 1, 1863

During the pivotal Battle of Gettysburg in the American Civil War, fighting first broke out on the morning of 1 July 1863 northwest of the town. By mid-afternoon, Union troops from the Army of the Potomac's I Corps, to include BG Solomon Meredith's famous Iron Brigade, with its distinctive black hats, was conducting a fighting retreat from McPherson's Ridge to Seminary Ridge, being driven back by MG Henry Heth's Confederate division from GEN Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia.

The Union troops had almost expended their 60 rounds of ammunition when a column of ten wagons from the First Division, I Corps, summoned by the division commander, suddenly galloped over Seminary Ridge and turned north, moving up the small valley behind the Union line on east McPherson's Ridge. Soldiers tossed out ammunition boxes while the wagon train commander, Ordnance Sergeant Jerome A. Watrous, smashed off the lids with an axe. The timely delivery of 75,000 rounds kept the I Corps in the fight, allowing the Union to hold the key ground of Cemetery Hill south of the town at day's end, where the North would anchor its defense during the next two days of battle.

-----  
<http://www.usaoca.org/stivers.html>  
-----