

Petersburg National Battlefield VirtualCache Program

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Site 11: Five Forks Battlefield - Visitor Contact Station

N 37°8'6.84"

W 77°37'12.328"



You are now standing in the middle of the two-mile long Confederate defense line along White Oak Road. On the morning of April 1, 1865 you would be among a battery of cannon under the command of Confederate artillerist William Pegram. Up and down this line would be another 10,000 men waiting for the attack of nearly 22,000 Union soldiers.

By 4:15 pm there is an explosion if gunfire to the east as the Union Fifth Corps slams into the end of the line. About an hour later the left flank of the Confederate line is right across the road, the Federals are coming down the road behind you and also pressing you from the front, and William Pegram has been mortally wounded. Soon the Confederates are falling back westward along White Oak Road trying to escape and Union soldiers following close behind trying to end this siege.

By 6:30 pm General Grant's men have seized the forks and gained access to the South Side Rail Road, the last rail out of town. By the evening of April 2, 1865 Lee has begun his abandonment of Petersburg and Richmond.

Visit Instructions: Name the three roads that make up Five Forks?