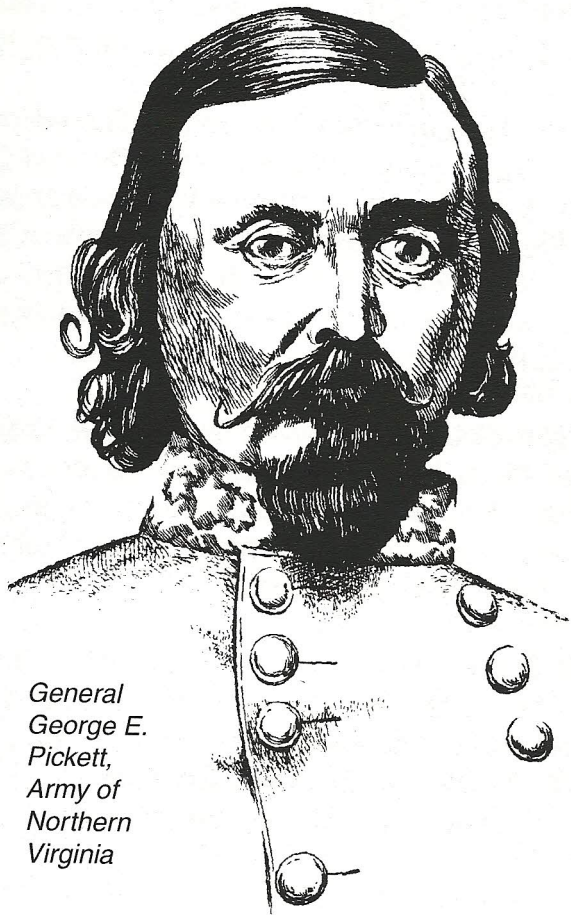


## Narration for reenacting Pickett's charge



*General  
George E.  
Pickett,  
Army of  
Northern  
Virginia*

Here we are just outside Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. For two days the opposing armies have been slugging it out. Union soldiers have repulsed Confederate charges upon Culp's Hill and the area around the Round Tops. All who have been watching this titanic clash know it will be the turning point of the war. General Robert E. Lee must be frustrated. His men have attacked the left flank of the Union to little avail. As I stand south of both armies, I see the Union's 95,000 men firmly entrenched on this high ground from Culp's Hill in the north to Big Round Top in the south. My eyes swing left to the Rebels, 75,000 strong, on Seminary Ridge just one mile west of the Federals. In the mile between lies what must have been a valley of tall grasses, beautiful peach orchards, and wheat fields. But not anymore.

My pocket watch tells me it is three o'clock on this July 3, 1863. For about two hours Southern gunners have sent a firestorm

of artillery shells against the Union center at a point called The Angle. These guns, however, have now fallen silent. Union Commander George Meade thinks the imminent attack will be a frontal assault on The Angle. He and his men are ready. The stillness now is ominous. All these brave men!



1

Look ... there! (1) I see a large Confederate force emerging from the woods on Seminary Ridge. It is an amazing sight to behold—a mile-long perfect line of men with flags unfurled and led by officers also on foot. This must be Lee's gamble to win this battle. There appears, as I view this spectacle, to be at least 50 regiments and more than 10 brigades from the four divisions on the western ridge.

I see some familiar officers in front and interspersed among the regimental waves headed east toward the Federal center. It looks like—yes, it is—out there spearheading this horde of more than 13,000 men is General George Pickett and his all-Virginia regiments. We all know from reports that glory-seeking Pickett has wanted all along to lead a charge like this one. Well, he's starring in that role now!

The Rebs are marching the mile across the valley at about 100 yards per minute as I calibrate it. Listen to 'em. Most are giving the frightening Rebel yell (2). Ouch! Even from here it is awesome. And frightening. Think how it must scare the Yanks on the ridge watching the assault come nearer. It all looks like an ocean of armed men. What a sight!

The Rebs are getting closer. They're within firing range. The Union is lobbing artillery right into the charging Confederate (3). Oh, my! One shell just exploded and wiped out half of the company. There's another (4) about 100 yards to the left. Twenty to 30 more Rebels have met their maker. This is a make-or-break attack for the South. I see General Lee, with a few of his generals near him, on his horse, back in the woods. This charge was his decision—the agony must be unbearable.



5

They're within 150 yards of the ridge now (5). It's hard to see—smoke everywhere out there, but the assault continues despite losses (6). Oh! Another shell and a direct hit on a Mississippi regiment. Several hundred Rebs have gone down already, and it's been about a half hour since the Southern boys came out of the woods.

Listen! What's that? The Union troops on The Angle are chanting something as they fire at the Rebs (7). I can't quite make it out. Wait! To get inspired, the Federals are chanting "Fredericksburg"—the battle that turned into a Union disaster and a smashing Confederate victory last December. There's real anger in the chant—believe me!

