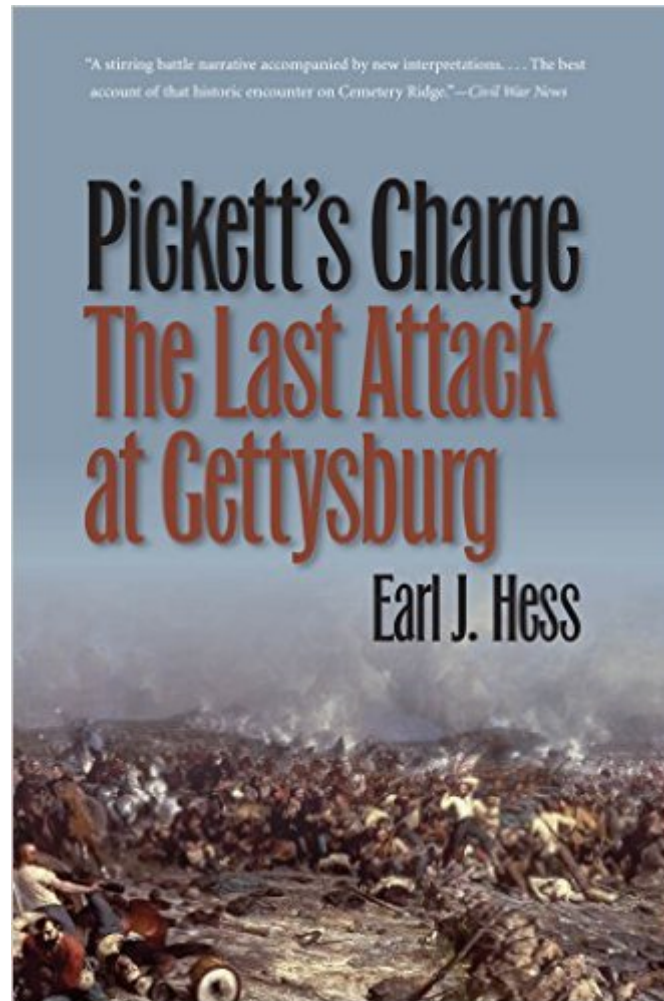


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Pickett's Charge--The Last Attack At Gettysburg



Synopsis

Sweeping away many of the myths that have long surrounded Pickett's Charge, Earl Hess offers the definitive history of the most famous military action of the Civil War. He transforms exhaustive research into a moving narrative account of the assault from both Union and Confederate perspectives, analyzing its planning, execution, aftermath, and legacy.

Book Information

Series: Civil War America

Hardcover: 520 pages

Publisher: The University of North Carolina Press; First Edition edition (November 5, 2001)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0807826480

ISBN-13: 978-0807826485

Product Dimensions: 9.5 x 6.4 x 1.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 2 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (25 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #582,259 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #163 inÂ Books > History >

Americas > United States > Civil War > Campaigns & Battlefields > Gettysburg #1100 inÂ Books >

History > Military > Strategy #1486 inÂ Books > Textbooks > Humanities > History > Military

Customer Reviews

For many people, Pickett's July 3, 1863 charge up Cemetery Ridge is the climactic event of the Battle of Gettysburg and the defining moment of the Civil War. Earl J. Hess has written a detailed, scholarly account of Pickett's charge which draws copiously upon contemporary sources. His book is clear and easy to follow, given the subject matter, and is poignant to read. I found myself riveted to his account. I found a major virtue of the book was the manner in which Hess shifted his focus back and forth from the Confederate to the Union side of the line. The book begins with a discussion of the planning of the charge, focusing on the interactions between Lee and Longstreet. This is followed by two chapters dealing with, respectively, the disposition of the Confederate troops before the attack and the Union lines before the attack. I found this invaluable in helping me understand the events of the day and their sequence. Hess follows this discussion with a discussion of the Confederate cannonading barrage, and the Union response, that proceeded the infantry advance. Again, he shifts his focus from the Confederate side of the line, and the effect of the cannonading on the Union, to the Union response and its effect on the Confederacy. He spends a great deal of time

explaining the decision of the Union artillerists to hold their fire and the disagreement this decision provoked with General Hancock. This theme pervades the book and is well-treated. Hess concludes that the cannonading was about one hour in duration before the infantry charge,(i.e. from about 1:00p.m. to 2:00p.m.) contrary to some other accounts which make it substantially longer.

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