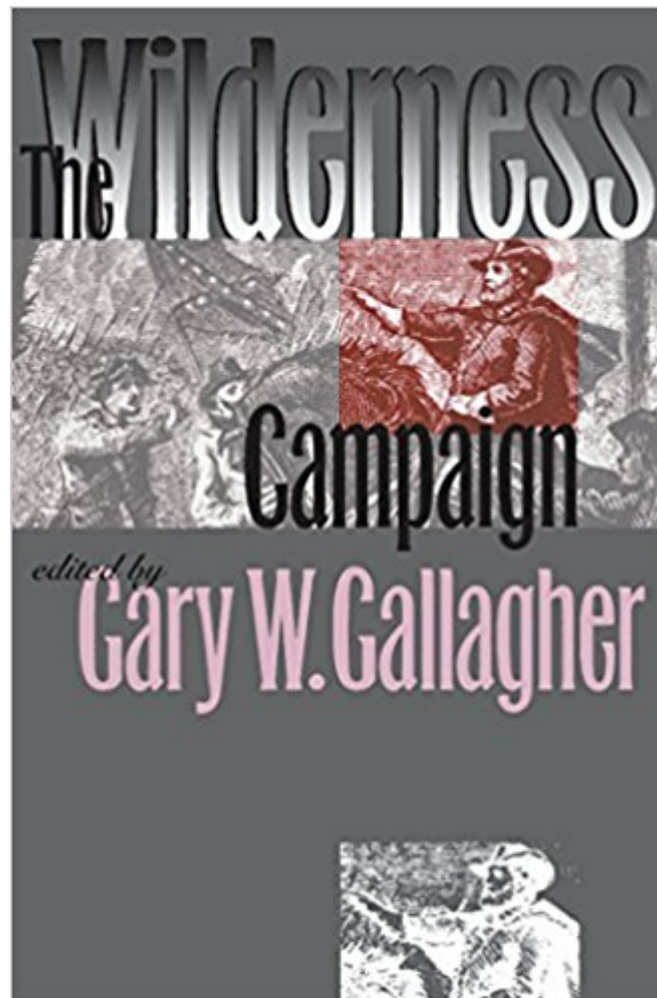




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The Wilderness Campaign (Military Campaigns Of The Civil War)



Synopsis

In the spring of 1864, in the vast Virginia scrub forest known as the Wilderness, Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee first met in battle. The Wilderness campaign of May 5-6 initiated an epic confrontation between these two Civil War commanders--one that would finally end, eleven months later, with Lee's surrender at Appomattox. The eight essays here assembled explore aspects of the background, conduct, and repercussions of the fighting in the Wilderness. Through an often-revisionist lens, contributors to this volume focus on topics such as civilian expectations for the campaign, morale in the two armies, and the generalship of Lee, Grant, Philip H. Sheridan, Richard S. Ewell, A. P. Hill, James Longstreet, and Lewis A. Grant. Taken together, these essays revise and enhance existing work on the battle, highlighting ways in which the military and nonmilitary spheres of war intersected in the Wilderness. The contributors: --Peter S. Carmichael, 'Escaping the Shadow of Gettysburg: Richard S. Ewell and Ambrose Powell Hill at the Wilderness' --Gary W. Gallagher, 'Our Hearts Are Full of Hope: The Army of Northern Virginia in the Spring of 1864' --John J. Hennessy, 'I Dread the Spring: The Army of the Potomac Prepares for the Overland Campaign' --Robert E. L. Krick, 'Like a Duck on a June Bug: James Longstreet's Flank Attack, May 6, 1864' --Robert K. Krick, 'Lee to the Rear,' the Texans Cried' --Carol Reardon, 'The Other Grant: Lewis A. Grant and the Vermont Brigade in the Battle of the Wilderness' --Gordon C. Rhea, 'Union Cavalry in the Wilderness: The Education of Philip H. Sheridan and James H. Wilson' --Brooks D. Simpson, 'Great Expectations: Ulysses S. Grant, the Northern Press, and the Opening of the Wilderness Campaign'

Book Information

Series: Military Campaigns of the Civil War

Hardcover: 283 pages

Publisher: The University of North Carolina Press (May 26, 1997)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0807823341

ISBN-13: 978-0807823347

Product Dimensions: 9.6 x 6.4 x 1 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 7 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #186,154 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #15 in [Books > History > Americas > United States > Civil War > Campaigns & Battlefields > Appomattox](#) #1948

inÃ Â Books > History > Military > United States #2665 inÃ Â Books > History > Americas > United States > State & Local

Customer Reviews

YA?In 1864, Ulysses S. Grant's Union troops collided with Robert E. Lee's vaunted Army of Northern Virginia in the densely wooded area known as the Wilderness. The ensuing battle was the opening salvo in a campaign that ended 11 months later with Lee's surrender at Appomatox Courthouse and the virtual end of the war. This title presents eight essays by noted Civil War scholars that examine the many aspects of this crucial battle including the leadership, the composition of each army, why the soldiers fought, critical events, legends that arose in the decades following the event, the individual heroics, and how this battle set the tone for what was to follow. The essays are well written and organized chronologically, which makes the ebb and flow of this encounter easy to follow.?Robert Burnham, R. E. Lee High School, Springfield, VACopyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

"Thought provoking and thoroughly researched essays, each dealing with a different aspect of the Wilderness Campaign.... [A]n excellent addition to the Civil War student's shelf." - Blue & Gray Magazine"

A collection of research papers on the Wilderness Campaign. It is a good read though.

This is the second of Gary's books that I've read it's excellent gets you really deep into kind of esoteric issues but they are fun to read

This is a book of essays concerning the Battle of the Wilderness in May 1864. It is a collection of essays about that particular campaign, by noted writers and historians. The book might not be for the general reader, but I am writing a book about Robert E. Lee and U.S. Grant. This is a very valuable source of informataion for anyone writing about these two generals, since it is the first time they faced each other on the field of battle. I am enjoying this book and its essays about the tactics employed by Lee and Grant.

This book is a collection of essays by noted historians on various aspects of the armies of the Potomac and Northern Virginia and the Battle of the Wilderness. Author Gallagher is the editor and

all of the essay writers acquit themselves most honorably. I found myself eager to read the next essay, and the only drawback to this work for the general reader is that it supposes the reader already has substantial knowledge concerning Grant's campaign and the Battle of the Wilderness. That being said, there is much to learn here that will surprise even serious Civil War students. The first three essays focus on the armies themselves, their leadership, political factors, and the morale in the armies as well as on their respective home fronts. Both sides looked to the Spring campaign of 1864 as being the decisive conflict of arms in the war, and both expected to win it. Authors Simpson, Gallagher and Hennessey provide about 100 pages of superb analysis, even the oft-overlooked political and morale problems resulting from journalists and their expectations. The essay on the performance of the Federal Cavalry commanders (Sheridan and in particular James Wilson) casts a great deal of light on the cavalry's less than stellar performance during the battle that endangered Grant's entire campaign and even his tenure as overall commander. Fortunately, these blunders were almost matched by Lee's slow concentration of forces, most notably the tardy movement of Longstreet's corps to the battlefield. Nonetheless, putting two competent officers in charge of units for which they were certainly unqualified by experience to command (neither possessed cavalry experience), was nearly an unmitigated disaster. Both learned rapidly from their miscues, however, as Sheridan went on to perform admirably in the Shenandoah Valley with an independent command, and Wilson performed brilliantly at Nashville and later in bringing Forrest to bay at Selma. But here at the Wilderness, Wilson came within an ace of losing his entire command, and Sheridan was guilty of failing to be the eyes and ears of Meade's army. The controversy over A.P Hill and Dick Ewell's performances actually breaks new ground by Carmichael's study of the evidence and analyses of the sources. With only Heth and Gordon supporting Lee in his comments against Hill and Ewell, one must look hard at the situation. As the author points out, southern generals almost never missed an opportunity to defend Lee and place blame on subordinates, but in this case the usual suspects are strangely silent. And then there is the problem of Heth's account with regards to its accuracy. Douglas Southhall Freeman's work comes into question, and for many years he has been considered as having produced the Bible with respect to Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia. Carmichael's work also cannot be called revisionist with the negative implications of the word -- it is simply a balanced study and analysis of the evidence which I found rather compelling. The famous situation where members of the Texas Brigade promised to carry out Lee's commands if he would go to the rear (and comparative safety) is thoroughly explored by Krick in an compelling essay. As with all the essays, Krick's work is extensively annotated with end notes, and his approach exhibits the best in American scholarship. The decimation of the Vermont Brigade is a

compelling narrative of the actual fighting in the Wilderness, perhaps one of the best in Civil War literature. Author Reardon is to be commended for a superior story of a heroic brigade and its fight against superior forces. Last comes an account of Longstreet's flank attack that almost put the battle into the victory column for Lee. On a battlefield where maneuver was all but impossible, Longstreet managed the near-decisive maneuver. Unfortunately for Lee, Longstreet was wounded by "friendly" fire, and an outstanding brigadier, Micah Jenkins, was killed. Again author Krick rises to the top with an excellent scholarly analysis. As the reader can see from the above review, the book is not the definitive work on the battle itself, but rather a series of studies of various aspects of the campaign and the battle. Each is extremely valuable in presenting remarkable insight into the subjects they cover, however, and significantly add to the literature of the Civil War. I heartily recommend this work to all students of the Civil War.

Gallagher and company always add an extra dimension to previous books on their subject matter that are not normally mainstream but important events and they give you the full detail. Fascinating highlights are (Carmichael) the controversy of Hill's corps on the second day, who was at fault for not digging in or straightening the lines? Who delayed Gordon's attack on Grants exposed right flank and how effective was it? The true story of the "Lee to the Rear Event" by R. K. Krick as well as an excellent description of Sheridan's first full blown attempt to use the Cavalry in full force doing it "his way" that contributed to Meade's (with Grant) blind march through the Wilderness by Rhea. Another gem is R.E.L. Krick's description of Longstreet's and the First Corps' finest hour, stopping the hemorrhage on the confederate right and the storied shock flank attack by R.E.L. Krick. Reardon write a remarkable history of the Vermont Brigade that stood in the eye of the storm first against Hill and then Longstreet. The first few essays discuss Grant and the health and description of the two armies. Gallagher's sounds familiar to his book "The Confederate War" and the others are written well enough (Hennessy shines on the Army of the Potomac); however, I would have preferred more gems on the battle itself. More detail on the rest of the command such as Burnside's unique role as a semi-detached corps commander and his whereabouts during the battle, why the Union forces could not exploit the gap between confederate units between the Orange Plank Road and the Orange Turnpike and a larger overview map of the battle to see virtually all the units on the field to get a better feel for distance, time and terrain. Always interesting to read R. K. Krick's comments on Longstreet, he does say a few things positive about his march. Hope he writes a book on Longstreet, possible title "Longstreet and his Thorns".

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