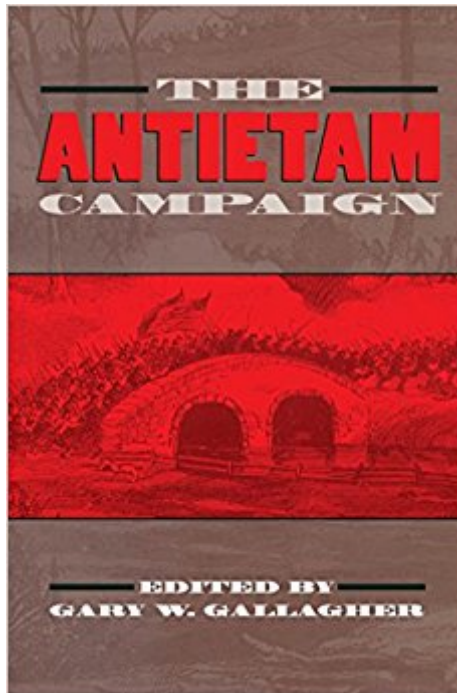




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# The Antietam Campaign (Military Campaigns Of The Civil War)



## Synopsis

The Maryland campaign of September 1862 ranks among the most important military operations of the American Civil War. Crucial political, diplomatic, and military issues were at stake as Robert E. Lee and George B. McClellan maneuvered and fought in the western part of the state. The climactic clash came on September 17 at the battle of Antietam, where more than 23,000 men fell in the single bloodiest day of the war. Approaching topics related to Lee's and McClellan's operations from a variety of perspectives, contributors to this volume explore questions regarding military leadership, strategy, and tactics, the impact of the fighting on officers and soldiers in both armies, and the ways in which participants and people behind the lines interpreted and remembered the campaign. They also discuss the performance of untried military units and offer a look at how the United States Army used the Antietam battlefield as an outdoor classroom for its officers in the early twentieth century. The contributors are William A. Blair, Keith S. Bohannon, Peter S. Carmichael, Gary W. Gallagher, Lesley J. Gordon, D. Scott Hartwig, Robert E. L. Krick, Robert K. Krick, Carol Reardon, and Brooks D. Simpson.

## Book Information

Series: Military Campaigns of the Civil War

Hardcover: 352 pages

Publisher: The University of North Carolina Press (May 31, 1999)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 080782481X

ISBN-13: 978-0807824818

Product Dimensions: 9.6 x 6.3 x 0.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars 12 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,526,835 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #73 in Books > History >

Americas > United States > Civil War > Campaigns & Battlefields > Antietam #15772 in Books >

History > Military > United States #32138 in Books > History > Americas > United States > State & Local

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"This paperback . . . will make this fine work readily available and affordable for college classrooms and firesides tables, where it can inform, enlighten, and entertain." -- "Military History of the West"

[This book] significantly advances our understanding of a well-known clash between the North and the South. . . . The essays in this volume, as in the earlier entries in this fine series, show that it is still possible for scholars to explore new and challenging interpretations of the legendary but familiar battles of the Civil War. Blending tactical and strategic analysis with insights into social, cultural, political, and economic trends, *The Antietam Campaign* is fascinating and instructive. . . . It should inspire historians of the Middle Period to adopt a similarly rigorous, analytical approach to the study of the war's battles.--*Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*

This latest volume in the *Military Campaigns of the Civil War* series continues the tradition of excellence established with its first publication. . . . The *Antietam Campaign* succeeds wonderfully in its goal of exploring 'a variety of questions and topics with an eye toward underscoring the potential of Civil War military operations as subjects for research and interpretation.' The book deserves a place on bookshelves next to the standard monographs about the Battle of Sharpsburg.--*Civil War History*

This is a far-ranging and provocative collection of essays. As intended, it both informs and challenges.--*Richmond Times-Dispatch*

Each of the articles in *The Antietam Campaign* is well researched and written in a delightful prose style befitting the interesting subject matter. A brief but insightful bibliographical essay compliments the notes accompanying each article. Readers with an interest in the Maryland Campaign and a sound grasp of the general scenario will find these detailed pieces both thought provoking and instructive.--*Civil War Regiments*

Anyone interested in bringing into sharp relief their own assumptions surrounding the Antietam campaign would do well to consult this volume.--*North & South*

The *Antietam Campaign* is at once a lively and provocative read. It offers proof that the study of military history, too often detached from the larger social and political contexts, can be rewarding to those who seek to understand more thoroughly our nation's past.--*Southern Historian*

Some of the most important and innovative scholarship on Civil War battles and their political and social impact has appeared in the volumes of the *Military Campaigns of the Civil War* series. I strongly recommend these essays to everyone who is interested in the latest findings and interpretations.--James M. McPherson, author of *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War*

A well-crafted collection of reasoned and thought provoking examinations of issues revolving around the battle. Your Antietam library is incomplete without it.--*Civil War News*

[Gallagher] forges ten finely crafted essays into a stunning piece of scholarship. . . . Engagingly written, the essays provide an abundance of fresh and noteworthy insights that should stimulate further research into other topics. . . . For any serious student or reader, this set of essays is mandatory reading.--*Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*

This collection of essays edited by Professor Gary Gallagher offers entertaining passages, interesting details, and

thought-provoking ideas. The entries in the book also have complementary strengths: some are valuable for the wealth of their information, others are valuable for the depth of their analyses. All of them are enjoyable to read. This volume should attract a large and varied audience.--Journal of Southern History  
In this book, Gallagher again demonstrates that he is willing to challenge traditional and recent revisionist interpretations of the Civil War with equal energy. He and this team of writers collectively combat the popular and often incorrect interpretations of the war. The Antietam Campaign offers many new insights and is highly recommended to the serious student of the Civil War.--North Carolina Historical Review  
This paperback . . . will make this fine work readily available and affordable for college classrooms and firesides tables, where it can inform, enlighten, and entertain.--Military History of the West

After 30 years as a field artilleryman with 12 years overseas including a combat tour in Vietnam and then 13 years as a high school history teacher, I looked forward to reading "The Antietam Campaign," especially since I have such a high regard for Dr. Gary W. Gallagher, its editor. Quite frankly, I was initially disappointed due to the lack of an overview of the battle. Although Dr. Gallagher clearly stated in his introduction that it was not his intent to provide a chronological narrative of the battle, I feel that the reader would have been better served with an early chapter outlining the major moves and personalities. Or, at the very least, the description of the book should have made this intentional omission clear. In hindsight, I now wish that I had read "Landscape Turned Red" before "The Antietam Campaign." Having served as a senior officer, I understand the importance of logistics and how the news media can influence public opinion. Unfortunately, I felt that the first few chapters belabored the point to where I had to force myself to read through them and continue on. I am so glad that I did. The chapters on individual regiments were insightful and helped humanize the battle. I particularly enjoyed the chapter on Confederate artillery and the gallant Pelham. I also had had no idea as to the incompetence of William N. Pendleton, Lee's artillery chief. That chapter brought home the power of politics at that time. As a battalion commander, I once took my officers on a staff ride to Antietam and thus found the final chapter on how Antietam prepared officers for World War I especially interesting. I read this book as part of my reading program to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Civil War and am thankful I did so. The chapters are detailed and well-documented. I could not, however, recommend this book to the general reader who has little prior knowledge of Antietam. This book would be a welcome addition to any serious student of the Civil War with an interest in America's bloodiest single-day battle.

Early in September, 1862, Robert E. Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia crossed the Potomac River into Maryland in what became the Confederacy's first invasion of the North. General McClellan received command of the Union troops following the disaster of Second Manassas. In a daring move, Lee divided his army in an attempt to capture Harpers Ferry, and McClellan had the good fortune to recover Special Order No 191 detailing the movements of the Confederate units. McClellan pressed forward, albeit cautiously, and the result was the Battle of Antietam (or Sharpsburg) on September 17, 1862, the bloodiest single day in American history. Following the battle, President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. Antietam, rather than the more famous Battle of Gettysburg, is increasingly regarded as the pivotal moment of the Civil War. The Maryland Campaign and the Battle of Antietam have provoked no end of controversy. This excellent collection, "The Antietam Campaign", edited by Gary Gallagher, consists of ten essays by as many different students of the Civil War examining in detail various aspects of the Antietam campaign. The essays are thoughtful and provocative and will cause the reader to rethink commonly held assumptions about Lee's first invasion. The book is part of a series edited by Gallagher titled "Military Campaigns of the Civil War". Various aspects of the Battle itself are examined in three essays in the volume. Robert E. L. Krick's article, "Defending Lee's Flank" explores the role of Confederate artillery in holding off the initial Union attacks early in the morning on the Confederate left in the vicinity of Dunkers' Church and the infamous Cornfield. Robert K. Krick's essay takes a close look at the Union's attack on the center of the Confederate line on what has become known as the Bloody Lane. Lesley Gordon's "All Who Went into that Battle were Heroes" is an essay in history and memory. It examines the fate of the 16th Connecticut, a unit of green volunteers, which had the unenviable task late in the battle of meeting a counter-attack by A.P. Hill's troops, after Union General Burnside had finally crossed "Burnside's Bridge" and was pressing the Confederate Army to cut-off its line of retreat. An additional essay in the collection, "We didn't know what on Earth to do with him" by Peter Carmichael covers a little-known aspect of the Maryland campaign. A small component of Union troops attacked the rear of the Confederate Army of September 19, 1862 in an attempt to harass the retreat. Confederate artilleryman "Parson" Pendleton failed to hold the line, but the small Union force was, even so, rebuffed with great loss. Carmichael, as are most scholars, is highly critical of Pendleton's role at Antietam and in the War. The remaining six essays in the collection offer broader views of matters related to the Maryland campaign. Three essays focus on the Confederacy. Gallagher's own essay, "The Net Result of the Campaign was in our Favor" explores Confederate reactions immediately after the battle. Confederates looked to the capture of Harpers Ferry, the victory at Shepherdstown, and the hard draw at Antietam as evidence of their

Army's prowess, and were motivated to continue the long, hard fighting of the Civil War. Keith Bohannon's essay, "Dirty Ragged, and Ill-Provided for is, together with the essay by Carol Reardon, the finest in the collection as it explores the difficulties faced by Lee's Army resulting from lack of supplies of basics, such as shoes, rations, and ammunition, as a result of the South's inadequate logistical system. In "Maryland, Our Maryland", Brooks Simpson examines Confederate hopes that the Maryland campaign would bring the Bay State into the Confederacy. It examines the strong efforts President Lincoln made to hold Maryland for the Union. Simpson concludes that the Confederate failure to rally Maryland to its cause worked as a defining moment for Southern identity in the conflict. Two essays take a close look at the Union side of the line. Brooks Simpson's "General McClellan's Bodyguard" challenges the view held by many students of the battle that McClellan was at fault for not pressing the attack on September 18. Simpson maintains that McClellan did about as well as could have been expected under the circumstances. Scott Hartwig's essay, "Who would not be a Soldier" compliments Simpson's in that Hartwig looks closely at the composition of the Union Army that McClellan led to meet Lee. Much of this Army consisted of raw recruits who had not had basic training, learned to march, or even to fire a weapon. These troops swelled the size of McClellan's Army but proved a liability in the heat of battle. The final essay in the volume, "From Antietam to Argonne" by Carol Reardon takes a close look at Antietam from the standpoint of the United States War College and its studies of the battle prior to WW I. Students were given detailed summaries of the actions in the Antietam campaign and, in addition, toured the battlefield. They were asked to comment on the command decisions of Lee and McClellan, as well as subordinate officers, and on the performance of the troops on both sides. The results, as Reardon explains them, were fascinating and provide a searching look at the campaign and its leaders. For me, Reardon's essay was the highlight of an excellent volume. This collection illuminates greatly the Antietam Campaign and shows how much can be gained by careful scholarship and the willingness to rethink received opinions. Readers coming to this book will benefit by a strong prior background in the Civil War and by a basic familiarity with the Battle of Antietam, as can be gained in works by James McPherson, Steven Sears, or James Murfin. Robin Friedman

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