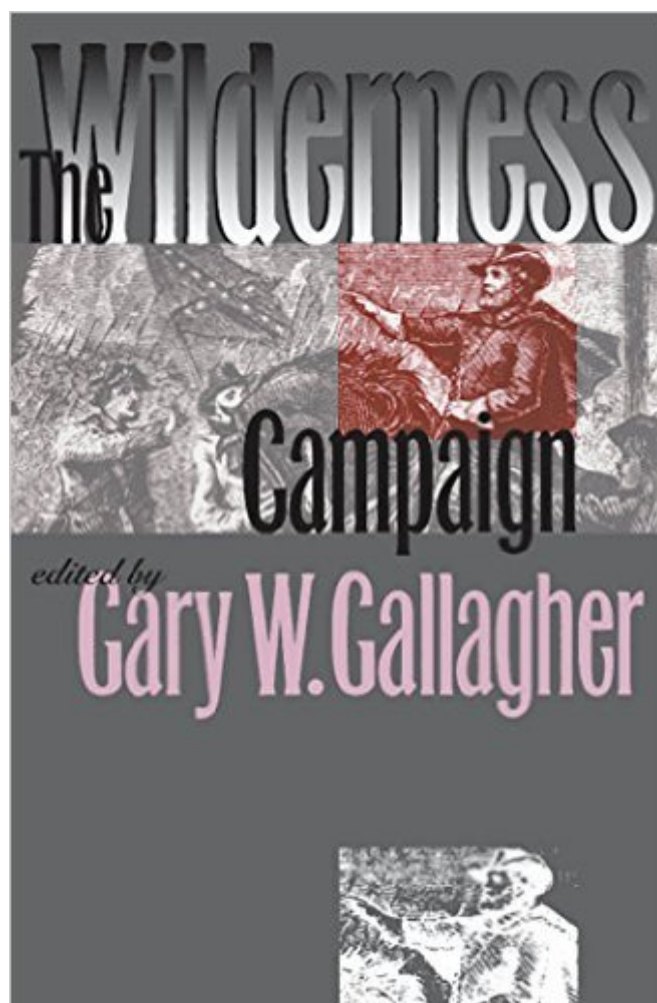


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The Wilderness Campaign (Military Campaigns Of The Civil War)



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'

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Customer Reviews

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.

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