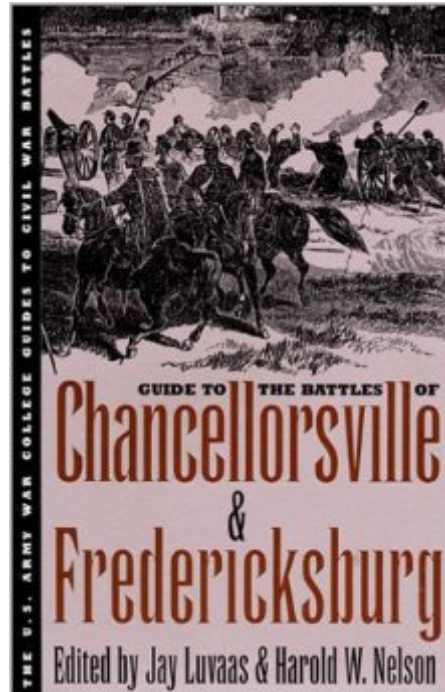


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Guide To The Battles Of Chancellorsville And Fredericksburg



Synopsis

The battles of Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, 1862-63, were remarkable in several respects. Both revealed the problems of mounting a serious attack at night and provided the first examples of the now-familiar trench warfare. Fredericksburg featured street fighting and river crossings under fire. Chancellorsville was marked by Stonewall Jackson's death and the rare instance of mounted cavalry attacking infantry. In addition, the latter battle also demonstrated in striking fashion the profound influence of the commander on the battle. The Union committed more soldiers, supplies, money, and better equipment than did the Confederacy, and yet Lee won. Eyewitness accounts by battle participants make these guides an invaluable resource for travelers and nontravelers who want a greater understanding of five of the most devastating yet influential years in our nation's history. Explicit directions to points of interest and maps illustrating the action and showing the detail of troop position, roads, rivers, elevations, and tree lines as they were 130 years ago help bring the battles to life. In the field, these guides can be used to recreate each battle's setting and proportions, giving the reader a sense of the tension and fear each soldier must have felt as he faced his enemy.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Two Confederate victories are profiled here--but the battles were very different. James Longstreet, at one point, noted the value of a Fredericksburg and the hollowness of the Chancellorsville triumph

by Robert E. Lee. Why? The ratio of Confederate to Union casualties at Fredericksburg was 12,652:5,309 (Page 349), a clear and resounding victory for the South. Chancellorsville? 12,299 Confederate casualties versus 15,818 Union casualties. The problem? Confederate forces lost a larger percentage of their total number than did the Union. Some would say that this was a Pyrrhic victory (Longstreet among them). Anyhow, this is a volume in the Army War College series of guides to civil war battles. In this volume, two battles are explored--the horrific bloodletting of the Union Army at Fredericksburg and the apparently unlikely Confederate victory at Chancellorsville. The book notes that (Page x) "these battles represent a significant stage in the evolution of Civil War tactics." One of the features of these books is a depiction of where one ought to go to get a sense of the battlefield if one visits the actual site. I visited Gettysburg, for example, earlier this year and took in the first day's action for my first time. I wish that I had had the Army War College volume with me at that time (I bought it after the fact). Another feature is the use of the Official Records to get the views/perceptions of commanders on the field of battle itself. For instance, it is fascinating to compare the responses of different officers to Hooker's failure at Chancellorsville (e.g., pages 296-297). At Fredericksburg, take a look at Lee's evaluation of the battle after the fact (Pages 117-118).

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