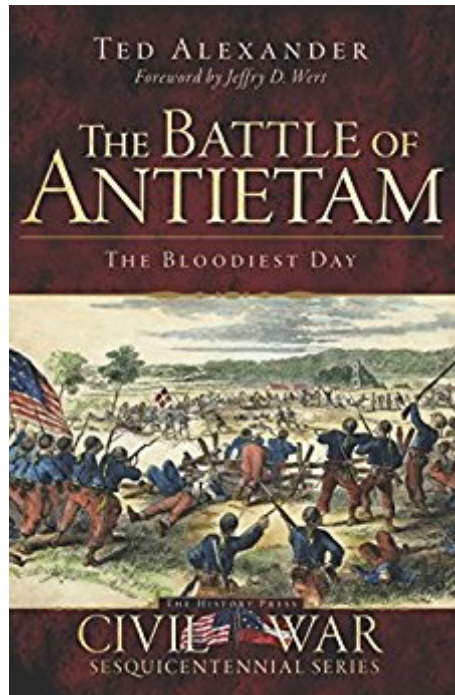


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Battle Of Antietam, The: The Bloodiest Day (Civil War Series)



Synopsis

The heavy fog that shrouded Antietam Creek on the morning of September 17, 1862, was disturbed by the boom of Federal artillery fire. The carnage and chaos began in the East Woods and Cornfield and continued inexorably on as McClellan's and Lee's troops collided at the West Woods, Bloody Lane and Burnside Bridge. Though outnumbered, the Rebels still managed to hold their ground until nightfall. Chief historian of the Antietam National Battlefield, Ted Alexander renders a fresh and gripping portrayal of the battle, its aftermath, the effect on the civilians of Sharpsburg and the efforts to preserve the hallowed spot. Maps by master cartographer Steven Stanley add further depth to Alexander's account of the Battle of Antietam.

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Customer Reviews

The subtitle of this book - "The Bloodiest Day" - refers to fact that on September 17, 1862 more American soldiers died in the Battle of Antietam than were killed on any other single day of battle in United States history. Indeed, the deaths at Antietam exceeded the combined number of deaths in combat of all other wars from the 19th Century (the War of 1812, the Mexican-American War, the

Spanish-American War, and all the Indian wars). The number of casualties (deaths and wounded) over the twelve hours of fighting was a staggering 23,000 -- one casualty every two seconds. Antietam (which in the Confederacy was known by the name Sharpsburg, the town where the battle was fought) also proved to be the turning point of the Civil War. The Sesquicentennial of the Battle of Antietam falls this coming September. In recognition of that fact, the History Press has issued this volume as part of its Civil War Sesquicentennial Series. It is written by Ted Alexander, who is the chief historian at the Antietam National Battlefield, where he has worked for more than twenty-six years. So I think one is safe in assuming that *THE BATTLE OF ANTIETAM* is authoritative. The information in the book generally is consistent with what I have read elsewhere. Alexander adds a few new details and he defends the performance of several generals against conventional criticism. A considerable plus is that the book contains dozens of illustrations, photographs, maps, and schematic diagrams of different areas of the battle. But the narrative itself is not particularly distinguished or graceful. The book gets off to a slow and less than enthralling start; the tone is very matter-of-fact; there are some defects in organization; and the writing at times is awkward or clichéd.

Ted Alexander is the chief historian for the Antietam National Battlefield. In this role it would be expected that he would be able to write a clear and concise work on the battle. Overall he has succeeded. While by no means is this work going to supplant Stephen Sears massive work *Landscape Turned Red: The Battle of Antietam* that is not the goal of works from The History Press. For those looking for a good introduction to the battle this may be your best option. The book starts out with a history of the Sharpsburg area and its surroundings. The town was originally founded in 1763. After losing a close vote to become county seat the area of Sharpsburg remained mostly rural farm land while the town of Hagerstown became more industrialized. On September 17, 1862 this farm land would see some of the most violent fighting our country has known. Mr. Alexander covers the major areas of fighting near Antietam Creek well: chapters cover the Cornfield and the East Woods, West Woods and the Dunker Church, Bloody Lane, and Burnside Bridge. Each are covered in good depth but not to a point where an unfamiliar reader is confused. While pointing out many of the "highs and lows" Alexander tends to stay away from the finger pointing and the blame game that often occurs in books. Union General George McClellan is spared the beating he is given by many historians for his slow reactions and General Edwin Sumner is spared the criticism often dealt his way in regards to his early morning actions at the West Woods. In his book Alexander does more than cover just the military aspects of the battle. As the subtitle to the book says this was America's

bloodiest day. With over 23,000 total casualties both armies took a beating.

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