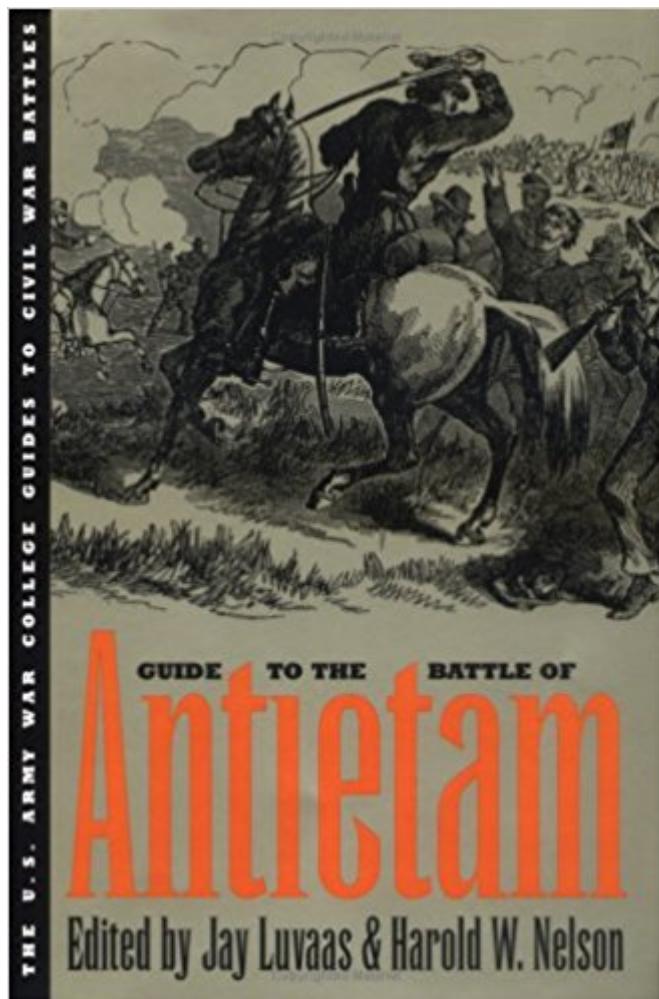


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# Guide To The Battle Of Antietam



## Synopsis

"America's bloodiest day" — the Battle of Antietam on September 17, 1862 — left more dead American soldiers in its wake than any other 24-hour period in history. Antietam and the related battles of the Maryland Campaign that led up to the lethal confrontation did not result in decisive defeats for either side. But they did serve as a brutal warning to an out-gunned, out-commanded, and out-organized Union army. 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

"These guides are the most thorough, detailed, and accurate of their kind. I have used them to lead guided tours of several battlefields, with great success." — James M. McPherson, author of *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Era of the Civil War* "I highly recommend this important and valuable series of guidebooks." — Herman Hattaway, coauthor of *How the North Won the Civil War* and

Why the South Lost the Civil War "These guides can be enjoyed without ever leaving the easy chair, or they can become indispensable companions on tramps over the scenes of the greatest engagements of the Civil War." •William C. Davis, author of *Jefferson Davis: The Man and His Hour*"These guides can be enjoyed without ever leaving the easy chair, or they can become indispensable companions on tramps over the scenes of the greatest engagements of the Civil War." •William C. Davis, author of *Jefferson Davis: The Man and His Hour*"I highly recommend this important and valuable series of guidebooks." •Herman Hattaway, coauthor of *How the North Won the Civil War* and *Why the South Lost the Civil War*

"America's bloodiest day" - the Battle of Antietam on September 17, 1862 - left more dead American soldiers in its wake than any other 24-hour period in history. Antietam and the related battles of the Maryland Campaign that led up to the lethal confrontation did not result in decisive defeats for either side. But they did serve as a brutal warning to an out-gunned, out-commanded, and out-organized Union army. This guide will be invaluable to anyone - from battlefield explorer to armchair observer - who wants a moment-by-moment replay of one of the most significant Civil War campaigns.

Antietam featured one of the bloodiest battles of the Civil War. This is another fine work in the Army War College Guides to Civil War Battles series. I think I'm getting hooked. . . .The norm with this series is to begin with a bit of context about the battle. Then, reports of key officers--both Blue and Gray--are presented, to provide a sense of events from the eyes of the participants themselves. Finally, a chapter that explores larger issues, in this case the logistics of battle. To complete the volume, there is the always helpful "Order of Battle" (in which the units and their commanding officers for each army are listed) and the grisly listing of casualties for both sides. The book covers the entire campaign, by the way, not just Antietam itself. That means that we get first hand reports from South Mountain, Crampton's Gap, Harper's Ferry, Bolivar Heights, and, finally, Antietam. One problem with using official reports, of course, is that those who took part may well not take accountability for any errors that they made in command. Nonetheless, their own views as to what happened is useful in itself. Since I was born in the Midwest, I always pay attention to troops from that region in battle. In this campaign, once again, the "Iron Brigade" catches my attention. Indeed, its performance at South Mountain, in helping the Union forces to clear the pass, led to General McClellan making a comment that produced the label "Iron Brigade." Pages 42-44 provide Gen. John Gibbons' comments (he commanded the brigade) and those of Col. Solomon Meredith, commander of the 19th Indiana regiment in the Brigade. And on it goes, with the bloodletting at

Antietam, as the two armies bled one another down. Most sanguinary. Both sides saw near successes and then near misses, as each side pounded away at the other. At the end of the day, as Burnside, unlikeliest of possible heroes, was hit hard by A. P. Hill's late arriving Confederate "Light Division." With that, both sides withdrew to lick their wounds. Shortly thereafter, Robert E. Lee began the withdrawal of the Confederate forces. The final substantive chapter deal effectively with issues of logistics. All in all, a fine work on a desperate struggle. If you find that battlefield reports are helpful, you will probably enjoy this work.

Book is great! Service was even better!!!!

I have read and participated in the AWC staff rides of the battlefields and from that light these book can be instructive at they relate to events and field conditions. They are not for the casual reader or tourist. It is essential that the reader be versed in both the theory and tactics of the time before visiting the site and that you are to read these books while standing on the actual grounds. These books supplement case studies at the AWC in tactical and strategic thinking. Observe the battleground as a military officer would and try to put yourself in the mind of the writer. What you will be reading are the after action reports written by the officers assigned to write them, of their viewings of events on the field. Beware sometimes these reports can be self serving so take that in mind. Reading the reports and standing on location will help to give you an incite into field situations and problems that the military officer must see, recognize and solve. One key point to remember is that of communication is not what it is today. The field of battle only existed as far as the individual officer could see. He generally knew nothing of events occurring several hundred yards away let alone a mile or so away in real time. All he knew what what was right in front of him. He never sees the big picture that today's communications can provide or seek instant clarification of orders. With this in mind and a knowledge of the methods of Civil War fighting these books are very instructive.

The Antietam battlefield guide is the second of many Civil War guidebooks and continued setting the standard started in the Gettysburg guide. The book covers the bloodiest single day battle of the American Civil War and a Battlefield Park that has suffered very little from commercialization. In addition to Antietam, South Mountain and Harpers Ferry are included. This gives you a detailed understanding of the important battles leading up to Antietam. Antietam is a confusing battle; this is not a battle history as such. My recommendation is to read Priest's book "Antietam" before visiting this field. This is one of a number of guidebooks on the battle and is an option to employing a guide

or purchasing a park driving tour. The series format is directions to a point on the field, orientation, a general lesson on what happened in your view, followed by first person accounts of the action. These guides are designed using the general staff training concept of a Staff Ride. This is when a class is taken to a historic location, discuss what happened and see how the terrain influences the event. Staff Rides are designed to be intensive "on the ground" training coupled with physical observation in the hopes students will gain experience for later use. I am not saying this to frighten you away from this guide but to tell you this is not a walk about and look at the monuments type of guide. This guide will have several pages devoted to the action at this point. It may contain a critique of the local commander's actions with possible alternates. My experience is that reading the book prior to my visit works best. This allows me more time observing the field and less time reading the book. Of the tour options, a professional guide is usually the best but most expensive choice. The park driving tour is the best choice for a quick trip through the field to get the kids passport stamp. This book is the best choice for a serious student of the battle looking for a detailed explanation.

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