



The Sword of Lincoln: The Army of the Potomac

Jeffry D. Wert

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The Sword of Lincoln is the first authoritative single-volume history of the Army of the Potomac in many years.

From Bull Run to Gettysburg to Appomattox, the Army of the Potomac repeatedly fought -- and eventually defeated -- Robert E. Lee and his Army of Northern Virginia. Jeffry D. Wert, one of our finest Civil War historians, brings to life the battles, the generals, and the common soldiers who fought for the Union and ultimately prevailed. The obligation throughout the Civil War to defend the capital, Washington, D.C., infused a defensive mentality in the soldiers of the Army of the Potomac. They began ignominiously with defeat at Bull Run. Suffering under a succession of flawed commanders -- McClellan, Burnside, and Hooker -- they endured a string of losses until at last they won a decisive battle at Gettysburg under a brand-new commander, General George Meade. Within a year, the Army of the Potomac would come under the overall leadership of the Union's new general-in-chief, Ulysses S. Grant. Under Grant, the army marched through the Virginia countryside, stalking Lee and finally trapping him and the remnants of his army at Appomattox. Wert takes us into the heart of the action with the ordinary soldiers of the Irish Brigade, the Iron Brigade, the Excelsior Brigade, and other units, contrasting their experiences with those of their Confederate adversaries. He draws on letters and diaries, some of them previously unpublished, to show us what army life was like. Throughout his history, Wert shows how Lincoln carefully oversaw the operations of the Army of the Potomac, learning as the war progressed, until he found in Grant the commander he'd long sought. With a swiftly moving narrative style and perceptive analysis, *The Sword of Lincoln* is destined to become *the* modern account of the army that was so central to the history of the Civil War.

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