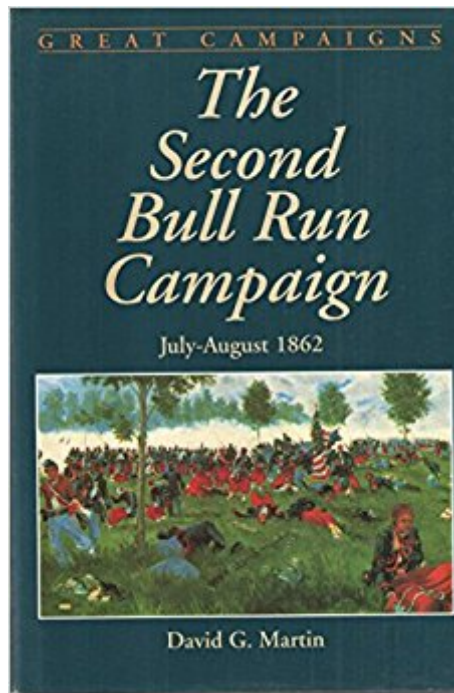




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Second Bull Run Campaign (Great Campaigns)



Synopsis

Second Bull Run (or Second Manassas, as it was known in the South) is considered by many to be the greatest example of Robert E. Lee's tactical genius. It was also the final humiliation for John Pope, the Union general who had been personally selected by Abraham Lincoln to come East and lead the Union army to victory in northern Virginia. In the summer of 1862, George McClellan's Union army was bogged down east of Richmond. In order to break this stalemate, Union officials decided to create a new army in northern Virginia and send it against Richmond from the north. Confederate commander Robert E. Lee, fresh from his costly victory against McClellan in the Seven Days Battle, made a bold decision to risk leaving McClellan in place in order to strike a decisive blow against Pope's new army. Second Bull Run was the culmination of a series of maneuvers by which Lee, Longstreet, Jackson and Stuart outmarched the larger Union command and outgeneraled its confused commanders. The book's campaign approach also shows the relationship of the culminating battle to the related battles at Cedar Mountain, Groveton and Chantilly. The Second Bull Run Campaign includes fourteen specially commissioned maps by Paul Dangel, the most up-to-date order of battle available, and special sidebars on leaders, units, incidents and controversies of the campaign. Connections between the First and Second Bull Run battles are examined, the battlefields as they are today are described, and suggestions for further study are made in a descriptive bibliography and reader's guide.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This isn't a long book and in some ways that works to its disadvantage because the botched second battle of Bull Run was complicated. There were no grand sweeps around the enemy's flank, like Jackson's at Chancellorsville. There was no single outright blunder like Burnside's at Frederickburg, no glorious Gotterdammerung like the Confederate charge against Cemetery Ridge at Gettysburg. Instead, the Union Army lost the initiative and finally the battle itself through a series of misjudgments and inexplicably misrouted orders on the part of General Pope and some of his subordinates. There is always what von Clausewitz called "the fog of war", of course. In this instance, there was a lot of confusion on both sides about who was doing what, and where, but as much as anything the Federal defeat could be attributed to one feature -- Pope's persistent conviction that the enemy was in full retreat and needed only to be cut off to be annihilated. This was less than the fog of war. It was garden-variety wishful thinking. I found much of it a bit hard to follow, often losing track of the movements of brigades and of whole divisions. (The author has helpfully put the regimental names in italics.) The fog of comprehension would probably have been lessened if I'd know more about the battle, or about the Civil War in general, to begin with. There are a series of easily read maps, and they were useful. They were limited too because the text frequently mentions units or terrain features that don't appear on the maps. For anyone like myself, who is trying to win a victory -- ANY victory -- in the "Take Command" series of video games, not too much should be expected.

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