

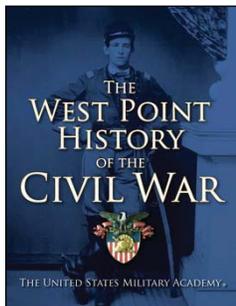
# Book Reviews



## ***The West Point History of the Civil War***

**Edited by Clifford J. Rogers,  
Ty Seidule, and Samuel J. Watson  
NY: Simon & Schuster, 2014,  
448 pages**

Reviewed by  
CPT Nathan A. Jennings



The historiography of the American Civil War, perhaps the most tectonic event in United States history, has never suffered from a dearth of scholarship. Despite the plethora of works available on the conflict, the U.S. Military Academy's Department of History has authored a highly informative, attractive, and remarkably innovative contribution to the genre. *The West Point History of the Civil War* arrives as an independent extract from the department's more expansive military history iBook that USMA currently employs to "educate and inspire" cadets in their final year of study. Utilizing digital technology to stimulate unprecedented conceptualization of historical affairs, the iPad version of the text includes an array of animated maps, interactive info-graphics, expandable primary sources, and rich period art that brings the history to life.

*The West Point History of the Civil War* consequently delivers a comprehensive study of the entirety of the confrontation that almost shattered, and ultimately strengthened, the expanding American republic between 1861 and 1865. Following an introduction by co-editor COL Ty Seidule that defines the conflict as "the most traumatic event" in West Point's existence, the book employs six chronological chapters by proven Civil War scholars Mark Neely, Joseph Glatthaar, Steven Woodworth, Earl Hess, and James Hogue to explore the origins, evolution, and conclusion of the event along both thematic and geographic frameworks. In addition to traditional emphases on "operational and tactical levels of war," they seamlessly integrate larger strategic, political, cultural, and economic factors to create a more complete explanation of dynamics that drove the epic confrontation.

Available in hardcopy and the enhanced iPad edition with Android and Windows versions to follow, *History of the Civil War* offers a broad range of utility to both civilian and military readership. In the academic setting the text supports both undergraduate and introductory graduate study through a combination of themes that focus multi-faceted narratives with dates, military data, terrain description, and statistics that inform without overwhelming. For both cadets and students attending professional military education schools from the Basic Officer Leadership Course to the Army War College, the inclusion of footnotes and hyperlinked primary and secondary sources provide detailed pathways to expanded research. However, despite these advantages, the book is limited in its applicability for advanced studies due to the sheer scope of material that

necessitates relatively rapid transitions.

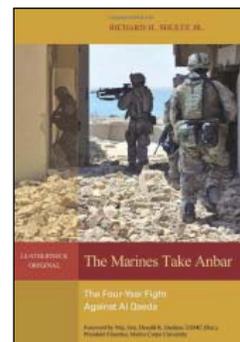
Moving past academic purposes, the West Point production also contains specialized applicability for serving Army leaders. As a resource for officers and NCOs in combat arms branches in particular, it offers utility for applying digitized conceptualization of battlefield events across time and space to facilitate tactical and leadership instruction. Just as the book aspires to allow cadets to "learn more about their roles as Army officers," the availability of interactive applications on portable screens provides new avenues for maneuver leaders to leverage animated maps, unit diagrams, and scrolling timelines to enhance seminars and staff rides. Sessions could analyze strategic decisional processes by famed theater-level commanders such as Robert E. Lee or Ulysses S. Grant, or center on more detailed operational and tactical examinations of campaigns like Antietam, Vicksburg, and Gettysburg. Efficiencies in comprehension will allow maximum payoff in discussion and analysis with minimum investment in reading time. Given this menu of developmental possibilities, West Point's ground-breaking production, and its innovative approach to exploring America's most destructive conflict, delivers an invigorating improvement to the current landscape of Civil War histories.

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## ***The Marines Take Anbar: The Four-Year Fight Against al Qaeda***

**By Richard H. Schultz Jr.  
Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute  
Press, 2013, 288 pages**

Reviewed by LTC (Retired)  
Rick Baillergeon



As we continue to study the Iraq War, one of its most analyzed aspects will clearly be the campaign waged in the Anbar Province. It is Anbar which provides numerous lessons in a wide array of subjects. Richard Schultz Jr. is one of the first authors to dissect Anbar in his outstanding book, *The Marines Take Anbar*. It is a volume which not only emphasizes the lessons learned there but also details the operations conducted in the province.

Schultz is thorough yet concise in his study of the Anbar campaign. He begins by setting the conditions for his readers. In achieving this, the author focuses on two key areas. First, he addresses the significant historical and cultural aspects of the region. Second, he details the initial decisions made (political and military) in regards to Anbar and the fighting which took place in the province during the initial year of the war — 2003. This background is invaluable as Schultz moves into the focus of his book: the U.S. Marines' role in Anbar from 2004-2008.

The Marines' operation in Anbar is a perfect example of a unit learning from their experiences and adapting. Schultz aptly

discusses the challenges the Marines initially faced in Anbar. He is candid when he says that the Marines had their struggles and had difficulty in meeting all these challenges. However, Schultz threads a theme throughout his pages — learn and adapt. He details the tough lessons learned by the Marines and the actions they took (in planning and execution) to adapt to the METT-TC (mission, enemy, terrain and weather, troops and support available, time available, and civil considerations) they faced.

Schultz displays numerous strengths throughout the book. These clearly enable him to answer the two questions he highlights in his introduction: “How did the Marines do it?” and “How were they able to learn and adapt in the midst of war?” Let me key on three of these strengths. Chief among these is the exhaustive research the author conducted (and subsequently utilized) in the writing of his book. In particular, he makes excellent use of field interviews conducted by the Marine Corps History Division’s Field History Branch. These interviews were conducted on the battlefield immediately following key missions executed during the Anbar campaign. The impact of these is powerful and highlights the human dimension of war for readers.

The second major strength is the author’s ability to make seamless subject transitions within *The Marines Take Anbar*. Throughout his book, he is able to take readers from decisions made politically or at a higher headquarters to the ramifications of those decisions on the Marines on the ground.

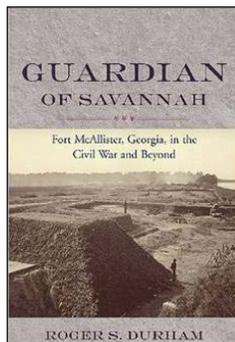
The final strength of the volume which I would like to highlight is its concluding chapter. Like the majority of you, I find the conclusions of many books to be abrupt and seem like an afterthought. In the case of Schultz, he has organized and crafted a book which flows into the conclusion. Within this conclusion, he superbly discusses the many lessons learned from Anbar (with an obvious focus on counterinsurgency). This ending alone is worth the purchase of this book.

In summary, Schultz has written an extremely valuable book. I have no doubt it will serve as a benchmark to which other Anbar-focused books will be compared. Unquestionably, *The Marines Take Anbar* is a book that must be read by those seeking further understanding of the Iraq War. Just as importantly, it should be read to serve as a reminder of the U.S. Marines’ ability to learn, adapt, and accomplish the mission.

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***Guardian of Savannah:  
Fort McAllister, Georgia, in the  
Civil War and Beyond***  
By Roger S. Durham  
Columbia, SC: The University of  
South Carolina Press, 2008,  
316 pages  
Reviewed by  
LTC Keith Everett

Throughout the Civil War, Fort McAllister near Savannah, Ga., was never captured from attacks from the sea. The men stationed there successfully guarded the mouth of the Ogeechee River against any naval attacks against Savannah. Sherman’s



troops took the fort from its land side in a brief footnote on his famed march to the sea. How did Fort McAllister survive seven naval attacks before its capture by Sherman’s troops? The answer has to do with fort’s unique construction; it was an earthwork fort instead of the brick and mortar fort such as Fort Sumter and Fort Pulaski, both of which were bombarded and surrendered. As an earthwork fortification, it could not be reduced to rubble or catch on fire. Cannonballs and all other types of projectiles merely blew sand and dirt into the air and the cavities were quickly filled in during lulls in the fighting. The lack of funds to construct a formidable brick and mortar fort proved the saving factor for Fort McAllister and Savannah. Engineers and other officers interested in protecting the force will find Fort McAllister’s battle history an example of what can be accomplished with the materials at hand.

The historical significance of Fort McAllister is that it is one of the few earthwork fortifications preserved close to the way it actually was at the time of capture. Standing on the guide path today around the fort, it is amazing that this unimpressive earthwork was able to hold its own against one attack of four monitors and six other naval attacks. Author Roger Durham researched the defender’s letters, official battle reports, soldier diaries, and many other sources to come up with this detailed account of the development, defense, capture, and then preservation efforts of Fort McAllister to bring the story alive. The story is told in a lively fashion to the point I felt I was listening to the soldiers themselves telling their stories. I felt compelled to visit the fort after reading about it and took a tour along the ramparts, the bomb proofs, and the museum. About eight years ago, museum staff took an old railroad rail and recreated a Sherman necktie — a railroad rail superheated over a wood fire and then bent completely around a tree so it could not be used again. This “necktie” is on display at the Fort McAllister museum and is interesting because the many Sherman neckties made during the Civil War were probably melted down and recycled into something else, as they just are not seen anywhere.

Rifled artillery reduced the brick and mortar walls of Fort Pulaski, near Hilton Head, S.C., resulting in its quick surrender in April 1862. Located north of the Savannah River, the capture of this fort made the fall of Fort McAllister appear imminent. Durham chronicles the attacks on Fort McAllister and how the men assigned there were able to fight off each attack and keep the route to Savannah closed to Northern naval forces. Stationary torpedoes in the water helped stop the attacking naval forces and almost sunk one of the monitor ships. After a torpedo blew a hole in the hull of that ship, Union sailors on board made quick repairs and kept the ship afloat. Early forms of land mines were planted at about 150 places on the land side of the fort when Sherman’s forces came to attack. Some of the Union attackers were killed stepping on the land mines during the successful attack.

Any engineer will enjoy the story of Fort McAllister and the imagination of the men defending it, as they used the materials they had at hand to make one of the more successful forts of the Confederacy. The problems the attacking colonel solved in overcoming the defensive obstacles in capturing the fort is an intriguing part of the story as well.



# IN THE NEXT ISSUE:

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Combat Skills Training**

**\* Why the Army Needs an Ultra Light Combat Vehicle**

