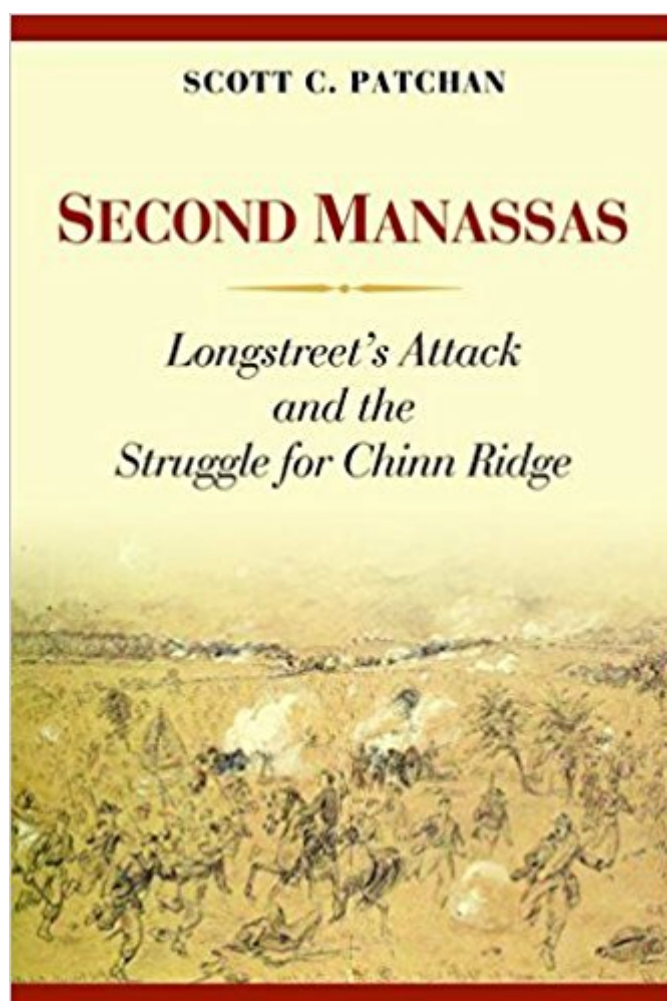


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Second Manassas: Longstreet's Attack And The Struggle For Chinn Ridge



Synopsis

In 1862, looking for an opportunity to attack Union general John Pope, Confederate general Robert E. Lee ordered Maj. Gen. James Longstreet to conduct a reconnaissance and possible assault on the Chinn Ridge front in Northern Virginia. At the time Longstreet launched his attack, only a handful of Union troops stood between Robert E. Lee and Gen. John Pope's Army of Virginia. Northern Virginia's rolling terrain and Bull Run also provided Lee with a unique opportunity seldom seen during the entire Civil War—that of "bagging" an army, an elusive feat keenly desired by political leaders of both sides. *Second Manassas: Longstreet's Attack and the Struggle for Chinn Ridge* details the story of Longstreet and his men's efforts to obtain the ultimate victory that Lee desperately sought. At the same time, this account tells of the Union soldiers who, despite poor leadership and lack of support from Pope and his senior officers, bravely battled Longstreet and saved their army from destruction along the banks of Bull Run. Longstreet's men were able to push the Union forces back, but only after they had purchased enough time for the Union army to retreat in good order. Although Lee did not achieve a decisive victory, his success at Chinn Ridge allowed him to carry the war north of the Potomac River, thus setting the stage for his Maryland Campaign. Within three weeks, the armies would meet again along the banks of Antietam Creek in western Maryland. Uncovering new sources, Scott Patchan gives a vivid picture of the battleground and a fresh perspective that sharpens the detail and removes the guesswork found in previous works dealing with the climactic clash at Second Manassas.

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Customer Reviews

"On the afternoon of August 30, 1862, Robert E. Lee glimpsed an opportunity to destroy a Union army on the field of battle. Much is known about how James Longstreet's men rolled over a gallant brigade of New York Zouaves and headed for the Union rear. What happened next is the subject of Scott Patchan's fine study, based on an intimate familiarity with the sources and the ground over which men fought and died. Essential reading for anyone who wants to know more about Second Manassas." —Brooks D. Simpson, ASU Foundation Professor, Arizona State University (Brooks D. Simpson)

Scott C. Patchan, a veteran Civil War battlefield guide and historian, is the author of *Shenandoah Summer: The 1864 Valley Campaign* (2009) and *The Forgotten Fury: The Battle of Piedmont, Virginia* (1996). He also served as a research consultant and contributing writer for *Time-Life's Voices of the Civil War: Shenandoah, 1864* (1998). Mr. Patchan has twice served as president of the Bull Run Civil War Round Table and is a much sought after tour guide for both Revolutionary and Civil War battlefields and historic sites. He resides in Northern Virginia.

It is hard to image a trained military man doing a worse job than John Pope at Second Manassas. His conduct, throughout the campaign, is a classic study of what not to do as a manager. He rises to army command based on easy victories in the West and unhappiness with McClellan in Washington. This combination and his ability to say what people wanted to hear made him the man of the hour in the summer of 1862. Lincoln combines some commands and takes others from the Army of the Potomac to create the new Army of Virginia. Once in command, Major General John Pope demonstrated an ability to upset everyone under him, "he had not one friend in his command from the smallest drummer boy to the highest general officer. All hated him". His second ability is to ignore anything that did not fit the situation as he saw it. Pope managed to convince himself that his army was on the verge of a great victory. He knew that Jackson was defeated and running, that Longstreet was miles away and one more hard blow would destroy the Army of Northern Virginia. None of this was true. Jackson, while battered, was holding fast and confident of victory. Longstreet had extended the Confederate line well beyond Pope's flank and was preparing to attack. With a little luck, they will trap Pope's army against the steep banks of Bull Run capturing most of their guns and wagons. A major portion of the Eastern Union Army will become ineffective. A victory of this magnitude coupled with the Seven Days might open the door to independence. Longstreet's attack at Second Manassas is one of the most devastating of the war. He crushes Pope's flank and drives him from the field. However, Longstreet did not trap him against Bull Run. The men, their

guns and wagons manage to escape and live to fight at Antietam. This book is a very tactical history of Longstreet's attack and the Union response. Scott C. Patchan demonstrates an in-depth knowledge of the fighting coupled with the ability to make chaos understandable. His excellent writing, clean, clear and informative brings the men and the battle to life. This well organized book maintains several actions in a logical sequence without losing the reader. This is a story of desperate fighting and missed opportunities on both sides. His evaluation of the leadership is excellent as is his look at what the missed opportunities cost. There is a full set of notes, Bibliography, index, illustrations, Order of Battle and driving tour in the book. This book has one of the worst sets of maps I have seen in a tactical study. The few maps are badly placed and almost useless. Most of the maps lack titles, time of day, compass or scale. Many of them look as if they were enlarged on a copier rather than developed. If this is the case, the Battlefield Overview map on page 11 is the only map drawn for the book. Many times, I wasted time looking for landmarks or units only to realize this was the wrong map. The publisher has done the author and the readers a huge disservice with these maps. Even with the map problem, this book is worth having.

The details of General Longstreet's attack on the left flank on the Union army during the battle of Second Manassas has never been fully covered until now. The confederate attack on Chinn Ridge, which almost succeeded in turning the entire Union flank, was brutal and chaotic and the author succeeds admirably in sorting out unit movements and giving the reader a feeling for the terrain. If you are at all interested in this particular battle, this book is a must read!

Patchman's book compliments John Hennessy's great book 'Return to Manassas' with his excellent detail on Longstreet's crushing attack on Pope's misaligned left that has been historically considered one of the great blunders of the Civil War. What Patchman provides is the most detail I have ever read on Longstreet's mass attack on the Union's less than fortified left and where many historians describe the attack as virtually a great rout, Patchman's description of the battle indicates that the few brigades on Chinn Ridge, predominately NY and Ohio units stood their ground substantially, fending off the numerous Confederate attacks that became disjointed during its massive wheel. The stands on Chinn Ridge and the artillery from Dogan Hill contributed greatly to the Confederates inability to quickly grasp their intended goals of crossing Sudley Rd. to reach the key to the Union position, Henry Hill. And on top of the well done descriptions of the raging battle in Chinn Ridge, the description of the fall back position and fight on Sudley Rd. where the Union left took another stand with Meade, Reynolds, Milroy and Chapman's units holding their

ground until Anderson's division finally moves up and overlaps the Union's far kept position causing the Sudley Rd. Position to give way, but once again, the Union holds onto Henry Hill. Patchman also gives you an appreciation on how difficult it is to launch a massive attack with over 25,000 men, as the author notes, the aggressive Texans moved forward too quickly causing a piecemeal attack with too early contact while other units moved too slowly for various reasons, or by moving to the sound of fierce fighting, turning too far north, losing focus of the most critical goal obtaining Henry Hill. After finishing this book, I have better understanding that this was not just a tidal wave of an attack as intended but one that had massive impact but not as overwhelming due to problems with coordination and some Confederate division leadership problems. Heroic fighting that was desperate on both sides and Patchman provides well documented descriptions of a battle between veteran units that at times start breaking, but often regrouping. Although I had an excellent recent tour of 2nd Manassas, after reading this book, I want to go back and walk the fields along Chinn Ridge on this less than appreciated portion of the park. And, I have greater appreciation for what happened on Sudley Rd. that today is a very active 2 lane highway, A word on the maps, borrow a magnifying glass for the small print. The maps are hard to read but I still found them useful. As author and great historian, Wilson Greene (The Final Battles of the Petersburg Campaign) stated recently, it's hard to get publishers to print maps in a book, Greene had to spend his own funds to pay for some of his maps to be inserted into his own book. The tour portion is excellent, helping to recognize key land marks.

This is a good companion to John Hennesy's book on Second Manassas and covers Longstreet's attack in greater detail. I would have liked to see more and better maps included, but having walked the battlefield, I had a pretty good idea of where things happened. For those who haven't been to Manassas more and better maps would have helped the reader to better understand the flow of the battle. I'm hoping that Bradley Gottfried eventually comes out with a Maps of Second Manassas as it would serve as a good companion to Scott's book.

This is a part of the Second Battle of Manassas that hasn't had as much coverage as the other action. The action is not easy to describe but the author does as good a job as is possible. There are plenty of maps but it would help if they show a wider area so the rest of the action could be kept in perspective. As it is, the labeling is almost too small to read so there's the rub. The battle is so often characterized by Jackson's troops throwing rocks, and when Longstreet's attack is described it seems like a steamroller - only the initial advance by Hood's men was. It wasn't quite the foregone

conclusion that many have of that part of the fighting.

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