



# **A Glorious Army: Robert E. Lee's Triumph, 1862-1863**

*Jeffry D. Wert*

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From the time Robert E. Lee took command of the Army of Northern Virginia on June 1, 1862, until the Battle of Gettysburg thirteen months later, the Confederate army compiled a record of military achievement almost unparalleled in our nation's history. How it happened—the relative contributions of Lee, his top command, opposing Union generals, and of course the rebel army itself—is the subject of Civil War historian Jeffry D. Wert's fascinating and riveting new history.

In the year following Lee's appointment, his army won four major battles or campaigns and fought Union forces to a draw at the bloody Battle of Antietam. Washington itself was threatened, as a succession of Union commanders failed to stop Lee's offensive. Until Gettysburg, it looked as if Lee might force the Union to negotiate a peace rather than risk surrendering the capital or even losing the war. Lee's victories fired southern ambition and emboldened Confederate soldiers everywhere.

Wert shows how the same audacity and aggression that fueled these victories proved disastrous at Gettysburg. But, as Wert explains, Lee had little choice: outnumbered by an opponent with superior resources, he had to take the fight to the enemy in order to win. For a year his superior generalship prevailed against his opponents, but eventually what Lee's trusted lieutenant General James Longstreet called "headlong combativeness" caused Lee to miscalculate. When an equally combative Union general—Ulysses S. Grant—took command of northern forces in 1864, Lee was defeated. *A Glorious Army* draws on the latest scholarship, including letters and diaries, to provide a brilliant analysis of Lee's triumphs. It offers fresh assessments of Lee; his top commanders Longstreet, Jackson, and Stuart; and a shrewd battle strategy that still offers lessons to military commanders today. *A Glorious Army* is a dramatic account of major battles from Seven Days to Gettysburg that is as gripping as it is convincing, a must-read for anyone interested in the Civil War.

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