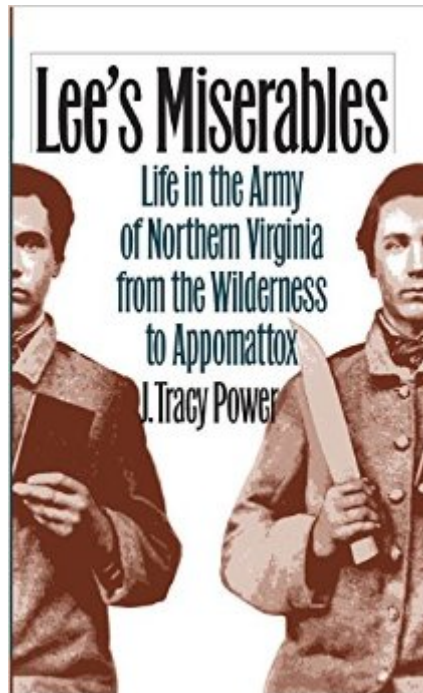


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Lee's Miserables: Life In The Army Of Northern Virginia From The Wilderness To Appomattox



Synopsis

Never did so large a proportion of the American population leave home for an extended period and produce such a detailed record of its experiences in the form of correspondence, diaries, and other papers as during the Civil War. Based on research in more than 1,200 wartime letters and diaries by more than 400 Confederate officers and enlisted men, this book offers a compelling social history of Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia during its final year, from May 1864 to April 1865.

Organized in a chronological framework, the book uses the words of the soldiers themselves to provide a view of the army's experiences in camp, on the march, in combat, and under siege--from the battles in the Wilderness to the final retreat to Appomattox. It sheds new light on such questions as the state of morale in the army, the causes of desertion, ties between the army and the home front, the debate over arming black men in the Confederacy, and the causes of Confederate defeat. Remarkably rich and detailed, Lee's Miserables offers a fresh look at one of the most-studied Civil War armies.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Lee's Miserables covers the period from May 1864-April 1865 in great detail. It uses voluminous private correspondence and diaries from that time to give a very personal view of the campaigns beginning with The Wilderness and ending at Appomattox. The research done by Mr. Power is impressive and the documentation quite complete. As I read this book my respect for the Army of

Northern Virginia increased with each page. Many of the men who fought for Southern Independence went in to the 1864 Campaign with every expectation of ultimate victory. As Grant's Army was repelled at Wilderness, then Spotsylvania, and again at Cold Harbor it did seem the future of the Confederacy was viable. But Grant did not march away after being defeated as his predecessors had done, even to the point that after Cold Harbor he had lost more casualties than Lee had in his whole army but Grant and his army stayed on Southern soil. Grant was undeterred, and pressed on to Petersburg and began the stalemate of trench warfare. The Spring Campaign of 1865 opened on a much-depleted Army of Northern Virginia and only the strongest diehards were still in the trenches when Grant began his offensive that led to Lee's surrender at Appomattox. Throughout it all, Lee's Miserables were prolific writers corresponding with their wives, mothers, fathers, etc., regarding the substance of their daily thoughts and trials. This book gives great insight into the motives of the patriots and what kept them going under extremely difficult conditions. Their ability to withstand the privations of low rations, inadequate clothing, scarce footwear, and sinking civilian morale in the South are a testament to the spirit and determination of many in that dedicated army.

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