



# Opposing the Second Corps at Antietam: The Fight for the Confederate Left and Center on America's Bloodiest Day

*Marion V. Armstrong*

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With a tally of more than five thousand killed, twenty thousand wounded, and three thousand missing, the Battle of Antietam made September 17, 1862, the deadliest day of combat in American history. In *Opposing the Second Corps at Antietam*, Antietam scholar Marion V. Armstrong Jr. completes his magisterial study of Antietam begun in *Unfurl Those Colors!* by examining Robert E. Lee's leadership at the climactic battle in the Confederate invasion of Union territory.

Eminent Civil War historians consider Antietam the turning point of the war. Hoping to maintain the initiative they had gained at the Second Battle of Bull Run, Confederate leaders looked to a stunning victory on Northern soil to sour Northern sentiment on the war as well as to coax European powers to recognize the fledgling Confederacy. Having examined McClellan's command and role at Antietam in *Unfurl Those Colors!*, Armstrong now recounts in riveting detail Lee's command decisions and their execution in the field, drawing on a superlative collection of first-person accounts by Confederate veterans to narrate the cataclysmic struggle between Lee and McClellan.

Armstrong sets the stage with a lively recap of the political and military events leading up to the early fall of 1862 and foreshadowing the conflagration to come on September 17. Each chapter then traces a critical section of the battle, the fight for the West Woods and the bloody engagement of the Sunken Road. Armstrong augments this collection with an exceptional set of maps, which will be valued by scholars, readers, and visitors to the battlefield. These unique maps delineate troop movements in intervals as brief as fifteen minutes, bringing to life the fluid, mutable lines that characterize the glory and horror of Antietam.

Either together with *Unfurl Those Colors!* or as a stand-alone account of the Confederate side of the battle, *Opposing the Second Corps at Antietam* provides the fullest possible understanding of the experience of Confederate soldiers at Antietam.

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