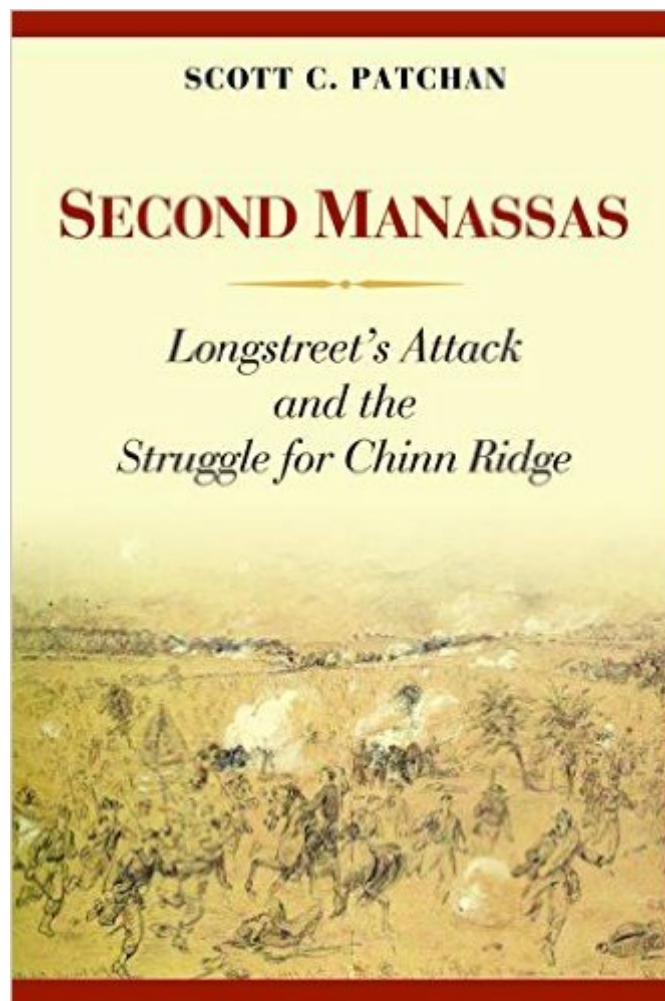


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Second Manassas: Longstreet's Attack And The Struggle For Chinn Ridge



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

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.

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.

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