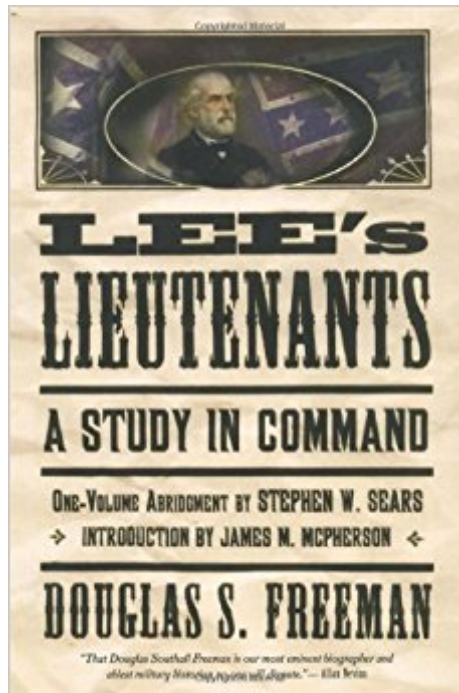


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Lee's Lieutenants: A Study In Command



Synopsis

Lee's Lieutenants: A Study in Command is the most colorful and popular of Douglas Southall Freeman's works. A sweeping narrative that presents a multiple biography against the flame-shot background of the American Civil War, it is the story of the great figures of the Army of Northern Virginia who fought under Robert E. Lee. The Confederacy won resounding victories throughout the war, but seldom easily or without tremendous casualties. Death was always on the heels of fame, but the men who commanded—among them Jackson, Longstreet, and Ewell—developed as leaders and men. Lee's Lieutenants follows these men to the costly battle at Gettysburg, through the deepening twilight of the South's declining military might, and finally to the collapse of Lee's command and his formal surrender in 1865. To his unparalleled descriptions of men and operations, Dr. Freeman adds an insightful analysis of the lessons learned and their bearing upon the future military development of the nation. Accessible at last in a one-volume edition abridged by noted Civil War historian Stephen W. Sears, Lee's Lieutenants is essential reading for all Civil War buffs, students of war, and admirers of the historian's art as practiced at its very highest level.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Bah, humbug. Having read the original 3-volume works (my parents gave it to me for Christmas of 1954), and re-read it from time to time, I found this abridgement unsatisfying and almost a mockery of the original. I recommend that any person seriously interested in the Army of Northern Virginia spend the additional money for the original. I supposed the current work would be satisfactory for a newcomer to the Civil War and might even give this work five stars. Freeman was the undisputed

giant with respect to Southern History, also writing the 4-volume set "R. E. Lee, A Biography," and editing the 52-volume set of the "Southern Historical Society Papers," which is usually purchased as an adjunct to the 130-volume "War of the Rebellion, Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies." All of these are still available (for up to \$2,500.00), and they are indispensable for the committed Civil War Historian. Freeman's prose is as lively and readable today as it was when he wrote in the 1930s and 40s. In fact, I would give five stars to all his works including "George Washington" and "The South to Posterity." I am not sorry I purchased the LL abridgement, as it is of course a good read, but not the reference the original was. So buy this abridgement, but then move up to the original or buy the original in the first place. Freeman develops all of the subordinate commanders of the Army of Northern Virginia, with a particular emphasis on Stonewall Jackson. Personnel from Major Pelham on up are treated with sympathy and respect even when their battlefield performance was not up to par. It is as if Freeman was emulating his hero, Robert E. Lee, who spoke kindly whenever possible about his people.

Douglas Southall Freeman (1886-1953) was a southerner, a Lynchburg-born Virginian; a newspaper man, editor of the Richmond News Leader from 1915 to 1949 and, most of all, a historian of such stature that it is no exaggeration to call him a giant. His reputation is based primarily upon three great pillars: "Robert E. Lee," four volumes, published 1934-35, winner of the Pulitzer Prize in 1935; "Lee's Lieutenants," three volumes, published 1942-44; "George Washington," seven volumes, published 1949-57 (the final volume completed posthumously by his assistants), winner of the Pulitzer Prize in 1958. These fourteen thick books are not only good in themselves, they have virtually set the playing field for all subsequent histories. To a historian, Freeman is simply there, and he cannot be avoided by anyone studying Lee or his army, or George Washington or his. This is not to say that Freeman is either an ultimate authority or that he is infallible. Progress has been made and new information has been discovered since Freeman's time. (For example, modern metal detectors have established that a few battles and firefights actually took place in locations where no surviving written records had put them.) Nevertheless, any historian putting notions to paper in contradiction to those of Freeman must do it consciously and only when fully prepared to defend his departure from Freeman's well-known line. In his forward to "Lee's Lieutenants," Freeman wrote that after completing his biography of Robert E. Lee in 1934, he began to collect material for a biography of George Washington, but he "found that mentally it was not easy to leave the struggle about which one had been writing for twenty years and more.

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