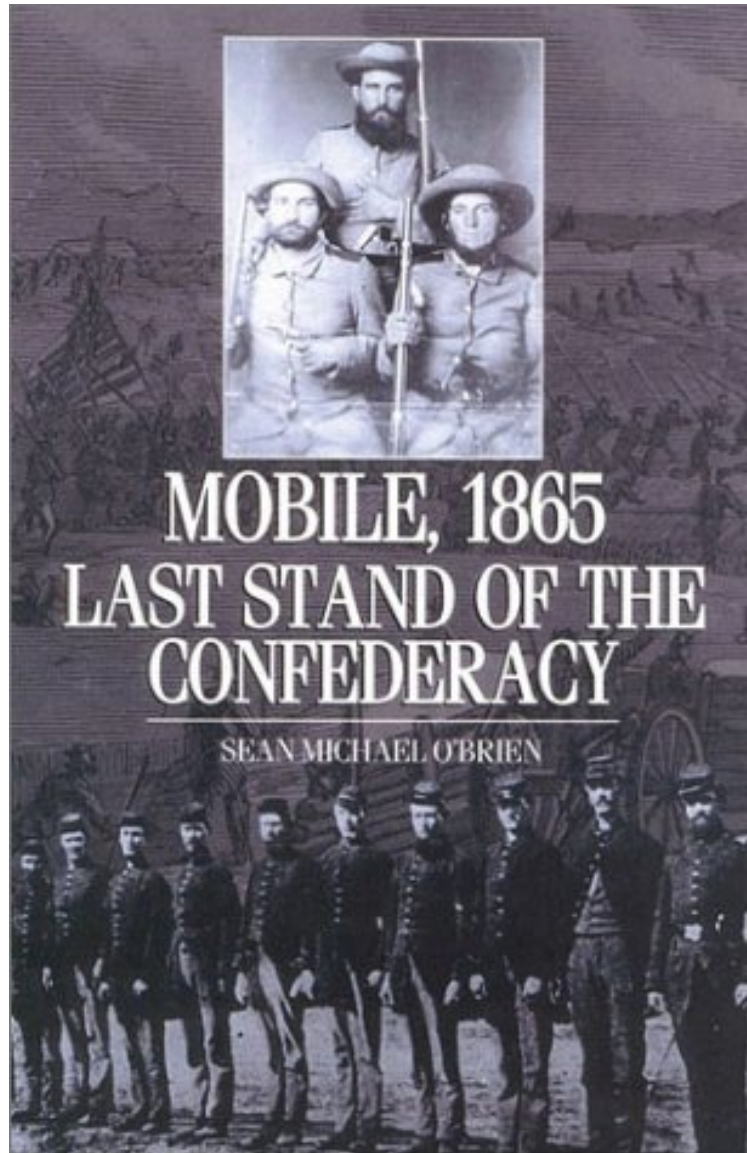


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Mobile, 1865: Last Stand of the Confederacy

Sean O'Brien

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best book on the Mobile campaign but leaves something to be desired. A glaring omission is the maps. No Civil War history should be without helpful maps to visualize the text, but there is only three period drawings of the defences-not very helpful. The author also goes into a little too much detail on each unit's prior history and their commanders. This causes the book to not really become interesting until the real action starts after about 100 pages. It was also a little irritating that the author uses the common, politically correct view of black troops. In the chapter he devotes to black units his account of their actions are misleading and too generous. Still, there is little literature on the Mobile campaign and this book details the actions and the campaign as a whole fairly well. It's probably the best book on the subject but the definitive history of the campaign is yet to be written.

The last major battle of the Civil War at Fort Blakely, Alabama, on April 9, 1865, was quickly overshadowed by the concurrent surrender of Robert E. Lee's army at Appomattox, and is largely forgotten today. And yet the Federal campaign against Mobile, the last important Southern city that remained in Rebel hands, was a significant military operation involving 45,000 Union soldiers and 9,000 Confederates. Faced with overwhelming odds, diehard Rebels refused to surrender, and--even with the end of the war clearly at hand--Federal soldiers remained willing to fight and die to capture the last enemy stronghold. O'Brien explores the battle and the driving forces behind it in the first comprehensive treatment of the campaign in over 130 years. The Mobile campaign sheds light on the workings of unit cohesion in the closing days of the war--a bond of loyalty forged by four years of hardships, with soldiers no longer fighting just for country or cause but for their own band of comrades. Black soldiers (ten percent of the Federal army in the Mobile campaign) were further motivated by another factor: to end slavery and to prove African Americans worthy of equality. Soldiers in this campaign faced the full fury of America's war-making science, with innovations like trench warfare, rifled artillery, land and naval mines, army-navy amphibious operations, submarines, and minesweeping operations--all new technologies to be perfected by a later generation in World War I.

"An account of the last major operation of our great national epic merits a pen capable of rising to the occasion. Sean Michael O'Brien's pen rises to that occasion...and more. Sometimes horrifying, sometimes heartbreaking, Mobile, 1865 is a riveting, blow-by-blow narrative of a dramatic event in American history." Thomas Goodrich, author of *The Day Dixie Died: Southern Occupation, 1865-1866* About the Author SEAN MICHAEL O'BRIEN is the author of *Mountain Partisans: Guerrilla Warfare in the Southern Appalachians, 1861-1865* and of numerous articles on Southern military history. Trained in the U.S. military, he has also taught at the college level.