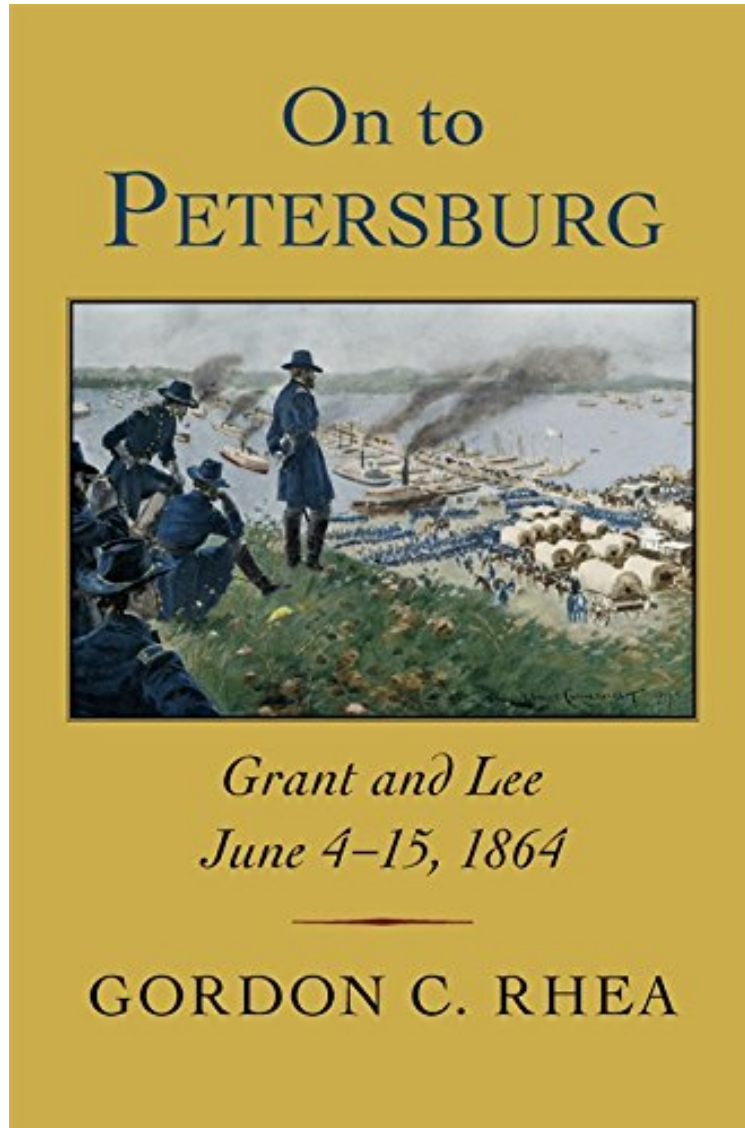


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Gordon C. Rhea

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#16785 in Books 2017-09-06 2017-09-06Original language:English 9.08 x 1.34 x 6.111, #File Name: 0807167479472 pages | File size: 67.Mb

Gordon C. Rhea : On to Petersburg: Grant and Lee, June 4-15, 1864 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised On to Petersburg: Grant and Lee, June 4-15, 1864:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Bill TRhea is excellent writer. Detailed and readable.10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Long Awaited Study of the Culmination of the Overland Campaign of May-June 1864By Herbert M. SchillerThis is the fifth; and final, book in the series chronicling the Union army's five week Overland Campaign. Readers of the earlier volumes know the thorough research of the author. This

book is no exception. The author captures the importance of field works and how miserable it was to endure in them day after day. Although I have more interest in the Army of the Potomac than their adversaries, he provides a balanced, yet analytical, discussion of events on both sides. I especially enjoyed the discussion of June 15th assault on the Confederate defenses of Petersburg. I'd had the privilege of being with Will Greene and Jimmy Blankenship as Will prepared for one of his spring tours dealing with the June 15th assault on Petersburg, and then going along on the tour shortly thereafter. The Civil War Fortification Study Group also spent two days walking the terrain of the entire June 15-18 effort. It is obvious that Gordon Rhea has also walked all of the terrain covered in the book; one can tell when an author hasn't. I was surprised to learn how badly General Grant seems to have "dropped the ball" on ordering coordination of the assault on Petersburg. Grant to me is an interesting person, and his career is fascinating, both during the war and afterwards. Grant, like all the other major participants on both sides, was complicated, multidimensional, and very ambitious. Grant, as did Lee, made his share of mistakes. But overall he seems to have learned from them and I believe he did an overall excellent job throughout his career. Finally, the maps were well done, clear, and appeared at just the right place. This book, like its predecessors, is excellent and is an invaluable addition, along with its earlier companion volumes, to the library of any one with a serious interest in the Army of the Potomac and/or the Army of Northern Virginia. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great book, great maps, and a brilliant description of the end of the Overland Campaign. By Mark Kingseed This is an excellent book and a fitting end to the five volume series the author wrote on the Overland Campaign. I was especially impressed with the high quality maps and the evocative description of the miserable day to day existence in the trenches on the Cold Harbor front after the June 3 general assault. The strategic logic and impact of Grant's move to the James River is explained in great detail and reinforces my belief that Grant was an extraordinarily capable general. The tactical implementation of Grant's strategy is told in a clear to understand fashion. The reasons for the failure of Grant's overall strategy to capture Petersburg in June 1863 are clearly explained. The author's extensive research and narrative skill help one understand the complexity of military operations and how even the most brilliant plan can fall short given human failings, hard fighting by the enemy, the "fog of war" and the difficulty in coordinating separate military commands. This is a great book which should be read by anyone who wants to understand what happened at Petersburg in June 1864.

With *On to Petersburg*, Gordon C. Rhea completes his much-lauded history of the Overland Campaign, a series of Civil War battles fought between Generals Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee in southeastern Virginia in the spring of 1864. Having previously covered the campaign in his magisterial volumes on *The Battle of the Wilderness*, *The Battles for Spotsylvania Court House and the Road to Yellow Tavern*, *To the North Anna River*, and *Cold Harbor*, Rhea ends this series with a comprehensive account of the last twelve days of the campaign, which concluded with the beginning of the siege of Petersburg. *On to Petersburg* follows the Union army's movement to the James River, the military response from the Confederates, and the initial assault on Petersburg, which Rhea suggests marked the true end of the Overland Campaign. Beginning his account in the immediate aftermath of Grant's three-day attack on Confederate troops at Cold Harbor, Rhea argues that the Union general's primary goal was not as often supposed to take Richmond, but rather to destroy Lee's army by closing off its retreat routes and disrupting its supply chains. While Grant struggled at times to communicate strategic objectives to his subordinates and to adapt his army to a faster-paced, more flexible style of warfare, Rhea suggests that the general successfully shifted the military landscape in the Union's favor. On the rebel side, Lee and his staff predicted rightly that Grant would attempt to cross the James River and lay siege to the Army of Northern Virginia while simultaneously targeting Confederate supply lines. Rhea examines how Lee, facing a better-provisioned army whose troops outnumbered Lee's two to one, consistently fought the Union army to an impasse, employing risky, innovative field tactics to counter Grant's forces. Like the four volumes that preceded it, *On to Petersburg* represents decades of research and scholarship and will stand as the most authoritative history of the final battles in the campaign.

In this fifth and final volume of his magisterial study of Grant's Overland Campaign from the Wilderness to Petersburg, Gordon Rhea maintains the high standard of the preceding volumes. He shows in clear and engrossing detail how the brilliant stroke of the Army of the Potomac's disengagement from Cold Harbor failed in the end to capture Petersburg, thereby prolonging the war and its crushing casualties another ten months. *On to Petersburg* brings to a triumphant close Gordon Rhea's authoritative treatment of the Overland campaign between Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee. Marked by the impeccable scholarship, descriptive grace, and analytical acuity of the previous four volumes, it illustrates the rich possibilities when a gifted historian engages with an important and dramatic topic. Gordon Rhea's *On to Petersburg* maintains the high standards so widely praised in his previous four volumes on the Overland Campaign. Rhea has established himself as the undisputed authority on the momentous struggle between Robert E. Lee and Ulysses S. Grant in May and June of 1864, and the deep research, lucid analysis, and engaging writing of this last volume in his series only enhances that reputation. About the Author Gordon C. Rhea is the author of *The Battle of the Wilderness*, May 5-6, 1864, winner of the Civil War Regiments Book Award; *The Battles for*

Spotsylvania Court House and the Road to Yellow Tavern, May 7-12, 1864; and Cold Harbor: Grant and Lee, May 26-June 3, 1864, winner of the Austin Civil War Round Tables Laney Prize.