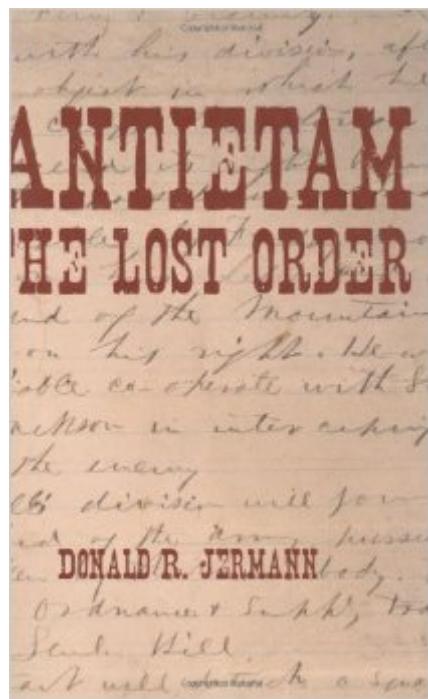


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Antietam: The Lost Order



Synopsis

The true story of the lost battle plans that led to the bloody battle of Antietam. Under the fantastic set of circumstances at Harper's Ferry, the Confederates lost and the Union recovered a copy of Confederate battle plan Special Order 191. "If I can't beat Bobby Lee with this piece of paper, I will be willing to go home," said Union army leader George B. McClellan upon reading the document. The rest, of course, is history. Although many books have been written about the battle of Antietam, no book yet has been devoted exclusively to the lost order that resulted in Lee's failed invasion. With as much emphasis given to human foibles as to troop movements, this book will appeal to a wide audience beyond Civil War devotees.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Not exactly the most eloquent or impressive military account of an important phase of the Civil War ever written, but it gets the job done. Jermann examines the events leading up to the battle at Antietam, beginning at September 9th with Lee north of the Potomac and stationed at Frederick, MD. He spends a great deal of time dealing with the situation at Harpers Ferry and the maneuverings of Franklin's Sixth Corps at Cramptons Gap on the 13th and 14th. The finding of Lee's "Lost Order" describing precisely his plans for splitting his army and the capturing of Harpers Ferry were found by Union soldiers near Frederick on the 13th and made its way quickly to McClellan's headquarters. McClellan knew exactly what he had and also, apparently, knew or should have known that quick action was necessary to strike Lee's army while it was still separated. But Little Mac was incapable of such a move. (Jermann criticizes Franklin for apparently possessing

the same "slows" bug that infected McClellan.) Jermann is very good at looking at some important details: McClellan's writing to Halleck about fog on the morning of the 16th preventing him from accomplishing much that day, for example: no one else seems to mention this mysterious fog and it didn't prevent the Confederates from getting that much closer to reuniting its army. Although Lee retreated with his army back across the Potomac after the major engagement on the 17th, Jermann does not see the Battle of Antietam as much of a Union victory - certainly when compared to what it could have and should have accomplished. Jermann's writing is okay, but rather artless ("The order reads as follows" is a typical lead-in to first-hand information). It's a better account of the lead-up to the battle than the battle itself, which he barely touches on.

ANTIETAM: THE LOST ORDER CAPTAIN DONALD R. JERMANN, U.S. NAVY

(RETIRED) PELICAN PUBLISHING COMPANY, 2006 HARDCOVER, \$24.95, 320 PAGES, PHOTOGRAPHS, MAPS, NOTES, BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX

The Battle of Antietam was the result of a chain of circumstance that began shortly after Lee's 43,000 troops entered Maryland. Having attached troops under Major General T.J. "Stonewall" Jackson, Major General Lafayette McLaws, and Brigadier General John G. Walker to subdue the Union garrison at Harper's Ferry, Lee accompanied the remainder under Major General James Longstreet and Major General D.H. Hill to capture Boonsboro. These plans were detailed in Special Order 191, dated 9 September 1862. It called for all forces to converge on Harper's Ferry and Boonsboro several days later. On Saturday morning, September 13, most of McClellan's Army of the Potomac arrived in Frederick, three days after Lee's Army of Northern Virginia had departed. The 27th Indiana Regiment bivouacked in a meadow previously occupied by D.H. Hill's division. Corporal Barton W. Mitchell noticed, among other things left behind, a bulky envelope. In it, wrapped around three cigars, was a sheet of paper entitled Army of Northern Virginia, Special Order 191, addressed to Major General D.H. Hill, ending "By command of General R.E. Lee" and signed "R.H. Chilton, Assist. Adj.-Gen." Mitchell had discovered a copy of the order describing in complete detail the scattering of the Confederate army! Within minutes, it was given to Brigadier General Alpheus S. Williams. His aide, Colonel Samuel E. Pittman had known Chilton years before and authenticated his signature.

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