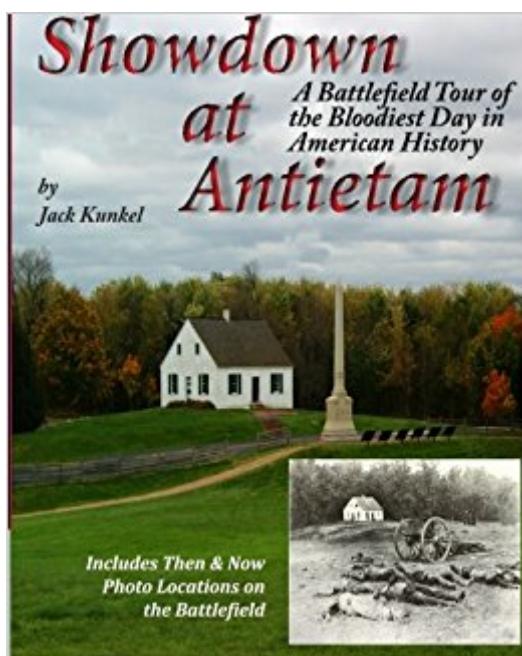


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Showdown At Antietam: A Battlefield Tour Of America's Bloodiest Day



Synopsis

The Antietam is a large creek that runs about a mile east and south of the small hamlet of Sharpsburg, Maryland. During the battle, the Union forces entered the battle from the direction of the creek, while the Confederates occupied the town — hence the two names for the battle, with the Federals calling it Antietam and the Confederates referring to it as Sharpsburg. Since the Union won the war, though not the battle, the “official” name of the battle is Antietam, which is the prettier name anyway. But despite its attractive name, Antietam was a man-made disaster, its name signifying horror to the participants and to generations of their families. Some 6,400 Americans were killed or mortally wounded on that day, which is more than those killed in the War of 1812, the Mexican-American War, the Spanish-American War and all the Indian wars, combined. At a time when the American population was a fraction of what it is today, the deaths at Antietam were more than twice the number killed at the World Trade Center, and four times the number killed on D-Day. Then of course there were the wounded and maimed. About 15,000 of them. Many would later die of their wounds, not counted as killed on the field. And an exceptional percentage of these wounded would go under the knife of the surgeons, aptly named “saw-bones,” on the kitchen table of a local farmer’s house, and then laid in some filthy straw in a dank barn, to either live or die. For those that lived, usually teenagers, they could look forward to spending the remainder of their lives hobbling around on a crude wooden crutch, or minus an arm or two, no longer capable of doing a man’s work of that time. And particularly for the Southerners, don’t count too much on any government assistance after the war. While this battlefield tour must by necessity focus on the “big picture” — the generals, the map arrows, the movements of divisions, brigades and regiments, etc. I do from time to time try to include insights from the privates and corporals in the maelstrom, so that we don’t forget that on the ground, down at the regiment, company and individual level, Antietam was not just lines on a map; it was a brutal fight between flesh and blood men who believed so completely in their cause that they were quite willing to kill or be killed to settle their differences. And it wasn’t all that long ago, you know. Sharpsburg’s still there; the Antietam’s still there; most of the same roads are still there; and thanks to the Park Service most of the houses and farms are still there. It’s just a question of walking around the battlefield and remembering what actually happened there. In many ways, for me at least, Antietam was just the day before yesterday. And that’s pretty much the way I wrote this book. Jack Kunkel

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Although Showdown at Antietam can be used as a battlefield guide. Its details of the battle and the various units is best read cover to cover before visiting the battlefield and then used again to follow the location by location tour integrated into the book. Having read it shortly before the recent anniversary, we were then able to follow the battle without either standing around reading or skipping though pages to save time during our time spent at the site. Perfect for the detail oriented Civil War buff or the casual tourist trying to quickly understand the significance of America's bloodiest day. More dead than the Revolutionary, 1812, Indian and Spanish American Wars combined. Four times the deaths at Omaha and Utah beaches on D-Day. A sacred site worth visiting and with this book in hand.

I ordered this book for my Kindle last night just before bed and planned to leaf through it for a few minutes... but instead, I found the book so fascinating and well written that I ended up reading it under the covers (to not wake Husband) until late into the night. Mr. Kunkel's dry wit, cool and well-researched battle commentary and interesting, easy-to-understand maps put this guide up there on the shelf next to the most respected historian's books about the Civil War. I also couldn't take my eyes off his 'Then and Now' photos. I highly recommend it for arm-chair travelers, and plan to actually follow his thoughtfully laid out route to tour this battlefield this summer. Buy this book, you'll be transported to another time. Can't wait to get the one on Gettysburgh now.

Book seems to offer a lot of insight into this battle. Pictures of battle scenes and current photos is helpful in visualizing the battle.

Very helpful while investigating the battlefield. I walked through the park and carried this book with me. I recommend this to anyone who is visiting sharpsburg.

A very good read!

Interesting pictures (Then and Now)

This is a book that anyone ought to have if he wants to understand the events of that Battle. I have never been to Antietam but I cannot imagine doing so without this book in hand.

I wish I had read this before I went on my tour of Gettysburg a few years ago. It would have added a lot of insight to what the tour guides tell you. Buy this if you want to go to Gettysburg or if you have been there,

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