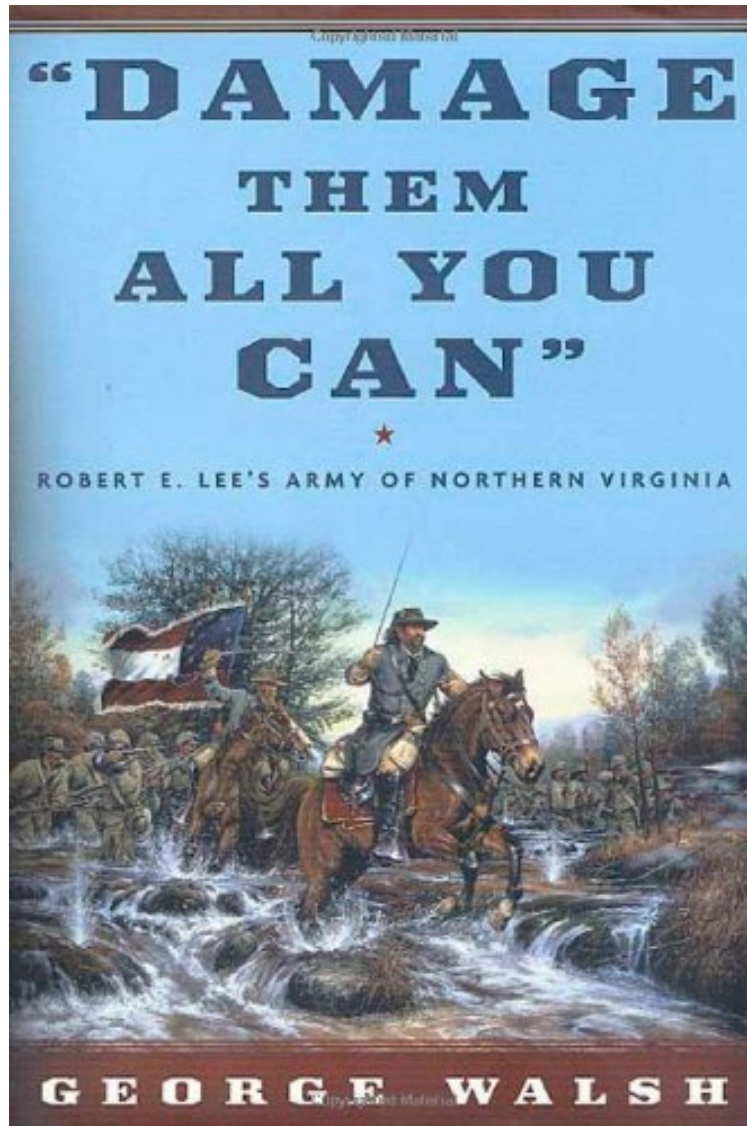


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Damage Them All You Can: Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia

George Walsh

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George Walsh : Damage Them All You Can: Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Damage Them All You Can: Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Fine view of the Army of Northern VirginiaBy Steven PetersonNot necessarily an eye opening book that provides new revelations of Robert E. Lee's generalship in the Civil War. But it

does provide nice detail of the battles engaged in by the Army of Northern Virginia under his leadership. The book begins by describing the fighting at the Eastern front before Lee took over command of the Army. We get thumbnail sketches of various Confederate generals. Then, the unfolding of battle after battle. The author speaks of his vision for the book (Page 10): "In 'Damage Them All You Can' I try to present, against the background of the great battles fought by the Army of Northern Virginia (ANV), the human side of that war--sketching the strengths and weaknesses of Lee and his men, their tender relations with wives and sweethearts, and their chilling acceptance of death." Lee's command of ANV is featured, including Stonewall Jackson's Valley Campaign, the Seven Days, Second Manassas, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, and on and on. It is an engaging story. However, I'm not sure that I'm convinced that much of anything significantly new appears here. If one hasn't read of the ANV before, then this would be a very fine work. If one has read a fair amount, I'm not sure how much new would be contributed. Still an engaging work. . . . 21 of 24 people found the following review helpful. Walsh does a superb job chronicling Lee's Stalwart Army! By C. M. Mills Strolling through the Mall I decided to stop in for a brief visit to the mass market oriented bookstore. Thumbing through the Civil War offerings I picked up this outstanding book. I did not recognize the name of George Walsh. He is a Yankee writing on the army whose story has been so well told from Southern superstars such as Douglass Southall Freeman, Clifford Dowdey and Shelby Foote. Why plunk down a Visa card to purchase it? Curiosity satisfied is the answer! Walsh writes in a personal style introducing the men and the units making up Lee's fabled Army of Northern Virginia. Even an old Civil War buff such as I learned new things about the Victorian warriors of Dixieland who lend the forces of Lee against the enemy. This book is an excellent survey of the war in the Eastern theatre. It is a valuable addition to my Civil War library. I highly recommend Walsh's book to anyone even casually interested in learning more about the American Iliad that is our Civil War! 19 of 20 people found the following review helpful. Excellent One Volume Treatment of ANV By Frank Garner George Walsh hit a grand slam with DAMAGE THEM ALL YOU CAN: ROBERT E. LEE'S ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA. Told almost exclusively from the point of view of the Confederate side this book does a wonderful job of getting into the hearts and minds of the men who fought for the Confederacy. The stereotypes of the lost cause or southerners as a pack of racists are replaced by a very human portrait of the men (and sometimes their loved ones too) who fought and died for what they believed in. Walsh has done a very real service to the memory of the Army of Northern Virginia. The battle narratives are really good as is the analysis of Lee's thoughts, decisions and occasional frustration with his subordinates. An excellent treatment!

"Damage them all you can," the patrician Lee exhorts, and his Southern army, ragtag in uniform and elite in spirit, responds ferociously in one battle after another against their Northern enemies—from the Seven Days and the Valley Campaign through Chancellorsville and Gettysburg, from the Wilderness to Spotsylvania to the final siege of Richmond and Petersburg. Lee knows that the South's five-and-a-half million white population will be worn down in any protracted struggle by the North's twenty-two million. He is ever offensive-minded, ever seeking the victory that will destroy his enemies' will to fight. He uses his much shorter interior lines to rush troops to trouble spots by forced marches and by rail. His cavalry rides on raids around the entire Union army. Lee divides his own force time and again, defying military custom by bluffing one wing of the enemy while striking furiously elsewhere. But this book is more than military history. Walsh's narrative digs deeper, revealing the humanity of Lee and his lieutenants as never before—their nobility and their flaws, their chilling acceptance of death, their tender relations with wives and sweethearts in the midst of carnage. Here we encounter in depth the men who still stir the imagination. The dutiful Robert E. Lee, haunted by his father's failures; stern and unbending Stonewall Jackson, cut down at the moment of his greatest triumph; stolid James Longstreet, who came to believe he was Lee's equal as a strategist, the enigmatic George Pickett. These men and scores of others, enlisted men as well as officers, carry the ultimately tragic story of the Army of Northern Virginia forward with heart-rending force and bloody impact. As the war progresses we wonder above all else, had orders been strictly obeyed here or daylight lasted an extra hour there, what might have been. Only Appomattox brings an end to such speculation, when the tattered remnants of Lee's army, both the still living and the shadowy dead, stack their arms at last.

From Library Journal Although the military exploits of the Army of Northern Virginia are familiar to Civil War scholars and aficionados alike, this unique history by journalist Walsh (*Public Enemies: The Mayor, the Mob, and the Crime That Was*) uses evocative vignettes to explore the lesser-known human side of this remarkable fighting machine. From the army's early victory at First Manassas to its final rout at Sailors Creek, the reader is introduced to the farmers, craftsmen, laborers, businessmen, teachers, and other professionals who comprised the officer corps and enlisted ranks. The author pulls no punches in detailing the army's weaknesses: Longstreet's unprofessional rivalry with Lee over who should command the Eastern theater; Lee's tendency to issue ambiguous orders that were frequently misinterpreted, with dire results; the common practice of scapegoating among field grade officers; and the broad swings in battlefield behavior among the defense-minded Longstreet, the foot-dragging Johnston, Ewell, Beauregard, and Bragg; and the impulsiveness of Powell Hill, Stuart, and even Lee. The overriding strengths of its

men, according to Walsh, lay in their adherence to a warrior's code of honor, their devotion to the Cause, and their own perceived role in the unfolding of God's will. This persuasively detailed work is recommended for all Civil War collections and public libraries. John Carver Edwards, Univ. of Georgia Libs., Cleveland Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist This volume merits the accolade of being called an updated and condensed version of Douglas Southall Freeman's three-volume classic, *Lee's Lieutenants* (1942-44). Walsh covers substantially the same territory, surveying Lee's army through the lenses of its commanders, down to brigade level, and retelling its battles, its successes and failures, and the fates of its commanders--the stuff of an epic portion of American history that is familiar to seasoned Civil War buffs. He has drawn on up-to-date research and, avoiding revisionist condemnation and Lost Cause hagiography, he presents the ambiguity about slavery and the serious reservations about the chances of Confederate success that many leading Southern figures felt. Walsh is not an academic and may lack the trendy virtues of deconstructionism and political correctness; still, he possesses the real virtues of intelligibility, balance, and narrative skill. This is one of the best books on the war's eastern theater in some time. Roland Green Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved "Mr. Walsh writes clearly and has a way of isolating the critical elements in a battle. His emphasis on the officers' backgrounds works very well. He treats them as people, not just uniforms with stars and gold braid. I'm learning a lot about Civil War commanders that I knew only as dry names."—Larry Bond, *The New York Times* bestselling author of *Day of Wrath* "A native New Yorker has written a moving and monumental history of the greatest army ever to fight on American soil, namely Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. This book belongs on the shelf with Catton and McPherson, Foote and Freeman, Wiley and Williams. It's a superb piece of scholarship."—Staige D. Blackford, *The Virginia Quarterly* "This is an extraordinary book. The prose is alive with vivid descriptions and shrewd insights into the leaders of the Army of Northern Virginia. The battle narratives are superb. The end result is nothing less than an epic of American courage, told with unflinching detail and deeply moving pathos."—Thomas Fleming, the *New York Times* bestselling author of *When This Cruel War Is Over* "George Walsh's probings into the characters and battles of Robert E. Lee and his officers of the Army of Northern Virginia are just brilliant. Who would have thought, with the enormity of books on the subject, that such new, incisive insights could be made on these men of the Confederacy. *Damage Them All You Can* is a magisterial work."—Dale L. Walker, the Spur Award–Winning author of *Pacific Destiny*