

cartridges, smokeless powder and jacketed bullets among others—he nevertheless appears to be surprised at the Army's reluctance to adopt a machinegun before those various technical developments had been completed. Once again, my objections are not with the author's description of the events, but with his conclusions.

The adoption of new weapons has generally been an agonizing process for most armies around the world. It remains a difficult task today. Eventually some advanced type of weapon will undoubtedly replace the rifle as the infantryman's primary arm. A variety of possibilities exist today including lasers, particle beam weapons, small rockets, flechettes, and bullets propelled by electromagnetic force. The basic technology may exist today just as rudimentary machineguns existed during the Civil War. The problem is determining which new weapons to develop and which ones to discard without undergoing a long period of trial and error. Although LtCol Armstrong draws some conclusions about why the Army took so long to adopt a machinegun, he does not attempt to broaden those conclusions to where they might be useful in preventing similar problems from occurring today. Had he done so, he might have transformed *Bullets and Bureaucrats* from simply an interesting book into a really important one.

**LANDSCAPE TURNED RED: THE BATTLE OF ANTIETAM.** By Stephen W. Sears. Ticknor & Fields, New Haven and New York, 1983, 431 pp., \$17.95. (Member \$16.15)

reviewed by Paul Kallina

After nearly a century and a quarter there is still much interest in the two major battles—Antietam and Gettysburg—of Robert E. Lee's 1862 and 1863 invasions of the North. But when Americans think of the Civil War's great battles, they usually think of Gettysburg first. Today the Antietam battlefield at Sharpsburg, Md., attracts less than half as many visitors as its counterpart in Pennsylvania.

The 1862 Maryland campaign deserves more attention. Had Lee won a battle on Federal territory, England and France might have recognized the Confederacy, and the war could have ended on Southern terms. The failure of Lee's invasion—though not a total Union success—gave President Abraham Lincoln the leverage he needed to issue his Emancipation Proclamation. Viewed in these terms, the bitter fighting in the

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## **Editor's Choice**

**For Self and Country: A True Story.** By Rick Eilert. William Morrow & Company, New York, 1983, 304 pp., (See *MCG*, Oct83.) \$12.55\*

In his address to the Nation 27 October, following the Beirut bombing, President Reagan praised the young Marines in Lebanon who "were not afraid to stand up for their country." This book features a cast of Marines from another war (Vietnam), including the author, who paid a dear price for the honor of wearing the eagle, globe, and anchor, but who nonetheless never lost their unquenchable spirit.

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fields and woods near Antietam Creek would have changed the course of the war.

This book details the political and military events that led to 17 September 1862, "a day of fearful violence beyond anything in the nation's experience." It begins with the final hours of the Union disaster at Second Bull Run, and ends with Gen McClellan's dismissal and farewell to his troops. The early chapters provide a helpful background to the story, particularly on the roles of McClellan and Lee in the Peninsula campaign, which began events leading to Antietam. Confederate and Union operations on the Maryland front are covered equally throughout the book.

Mr. Sears punctuates his well-crafted narrative with eyewitness quotes drawn from diaries, letters, and dispatches. Especially effective are the excerpts he uses to describe the fighting:

The first thing we saw appear was the gilt eagle that surmounted the pole, then the top of the flag, next the flutter of the stars and stripes itself, slowly mounting, up it rose, then their hats came in sight, still rising the faces emerged, next a range of curious eyes appeared, then such a hurrah as only the Yankee troops could give, broke the stillness, and they surged against us.

Mr. Sears sharply criticizes the Union commander, George McClellan, who failed to act decisively even though he had opportunities to crush his opponent that any general would envy. McClellan's flawed behavior, his political intrigues, and his many difficulties with the Lincoln administration receive lengthy treatment by Mr. Sears. Occa-

sionally, he contrasts the sound capabilities of Lee and his generals with the ineptitude of McClellan and, with a few exceptions, the generals serving under him. The contrasts show what good leadership is—and what it is not.

There is less in the book about Lee and his relationship with his government, for the Confederate commander had none of the personal and political problems that plagued McClellan. His greatest worry was the condition and size of his army. At Antietam, his ill-shod and underfed command was smaller than at any other time prior to the final days before Appomattox.

Three appendices highlight (1) Lee's *Lost Order No. 191* that precipitated the battle, (2) the Burnside's Bridge fiasco, and (3) a tabulation of the units comprising the two armies that fought at Antietam. The appendix on the Lost Order contains a fresh and most convincing analysis of this controversial subject.

The author acknowledges the help and advice of that eminent Civil War historian, the late Bruce Catton, with whom he worked for 23 years. Readers familiar with Mr. Catton's works covering the campaign and battle, such as his excellent account in *Mr. Lincoln's Army*, will recognize some of the material in this book. But many of Mr. Sears' sources are newly tapped, particularly the postwar reminiscences collected from Antietam veterans, North and South, by two former Union officers who themselves had fought in the battle. Mr. Sears has written a highly readable history in the tradition of his mentor.