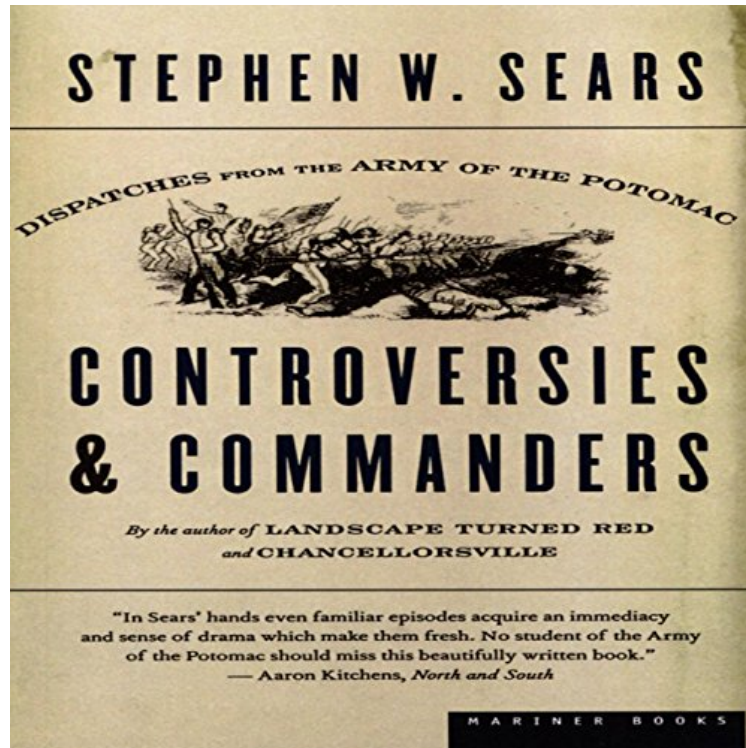


# Controversies and Commanders: Dispatches from the Army of the Potomac

Von Stephen W. Sears

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**Von Stephen W. Sears : Controversies and Commanders: Dispatches from the Army of the Potomac** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Controversies and Commanders: Dispatches from the Army of the Potomac:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Solid Book. Well Researched and ArguedVon Wayne A. SmithSears presents an interesting series of portrats relating to commanders and issues that all to frequeently dominated the Army of the Potomac and often stood in the way of effective prosecution of the war in the Eastern Theater.This book is well researched and effectively argued. Fans of Sear's Civil War works (of which I am one) will recognize many of the vignettes from works such as "Chancellorsville," "Landscape Turned Red," and "The Peninsula Campaign." They are more fully fleshed out in this book, but essentially contain the same information Sears has argued before.However, this does not detract and the Sears reader will find other stories that contain new information and interesting portraits.Gen. McClellan infuses most of the tales, his presence is never far and these different affairs demonstrate how much better "Little Mac" was at dominating the political life of the Army than the Confederates. Sears makes a compelling argument that the hapless General was excellent at everything except fighting. It begs the question as to whether or not his talents could have been more effectively employed had he gotten Halleck's job early on and field generalship been left to Meade, Hooker or Grant (although whether or not McClellan's ego or Lincoln's needs would have been satisfied by such an

arrangement is in doubt). In particular, the revolt of the generals, although covered somewhat in "Chancellorsville," is a good work and telling as to why the Army of the Potomac suffered such weak leadership at crucial times. The chapters on the General Stone affair reveal the downside of political expediency during the Civil War (and the willingness of McClellan to sacrifice his friends and colleagues -- as in Stone's case and Porter's court martial -- to further his prospects.) Interestingly, the most striking analysis regards the generalship of Gen. Hooker. Although again, "Chancellorsville" covers this ground, Sear's original research and painstaking reconstruction of the events relating to Hooker's failure during that battle are convincing in their defense against what appears in hindsight to be the scapgoating of one of the few Union generals in the East who would and could fight. Sear's analysis is at odds with that of many Civil War chroniclers including Ken Burns, Shelby Foote and James McPherson regarding Hooker's failure during the height of the battle. After taking in the evidence, I'd say that Sears has it right. The chapters are well organized, well documented and the writing succinct. This form makes for excellent "pick-up" reading as it is not one story but a series of portraits. Recommended. 0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A Marvelous Book, in Bite-Sized Essays! Von Brian SAs one who enjoys reading American Civil War history, this collection of essays was a wonderful birthday present. Sears presents informative, lively, readable essays on several crucial controversies within the Union Army of the Potomac's high command. His takes on Joe Hooker were particularly convincing and compelling. For example, I'd never read anything to contradict the assessment (supposedly by Hooker himself!) that "For once, I lost confidence in Hooker" to explain his defeat at Chancellorsville. Yet Sears leaves little doubt he simply never said that, and in fact the injury he sustained at his HQ in that battle explains much (if not all) of his problem there. Also interesting was the essay on the courts martial of Stoneman and of Porter, and the McClellan-go-round. Just a tremendous book, and easy to pick up and put down, given the right-sized essay lengths. I truly enjoy reading Stephen Sears' work, and have since having "Landscape Turned Red" recommended to me by a friend. He's just a fine writer. 0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Simply Excellent Von Ein Kunde This book is not your typical Civil War book. Sometimes my fervent interest in the Civil War is somewhat diminished as I attempt to plow through a tome filled with copious amounts of meaningless and irrelevant information (recountings of troop movements, long lists of command structure changes, etc.) Mr. Sears' book adroitly avoids these pitfalls of the typical Civil War narrative. I found the book to be pure enjoyment. I gained much insight on the inner workings of the various changes in command in the Army of the Potomac, and the internal machinations which caused them. Mr. Sears certainly comes to some conclusions with which other historians might disagree, but he makes a strong case for his arguments. This book is one of my top five Civil War recommendations.

Kurzbeschreibung Controversies and Commanders might well be the most intriguing book ever published about the Civil War, for it focuses on the people and events that one of our best historians has found most fascinating, including: Professor Lowe's reconnaissance balloons; the court-martial of Fitz John Porter; the Lost Order at Antietam; press coverage of the war; the looting of Fredericksburg; the Mud March; the roles of volunteers, conscripts, bounty jumpers, and foreign soldiers; the notorious General Dan Sickles, who shot his wife's lover outside the White House, and the much maligned Generals McClellan (justifiably) and Hooker (not so justifiably). The book follows the Army of the Potomac throughout the war, from 1861 to 1865, painting a remarkable portrait of the key incidents and personalities that influenced the course of our nation's greatest cataclysm.