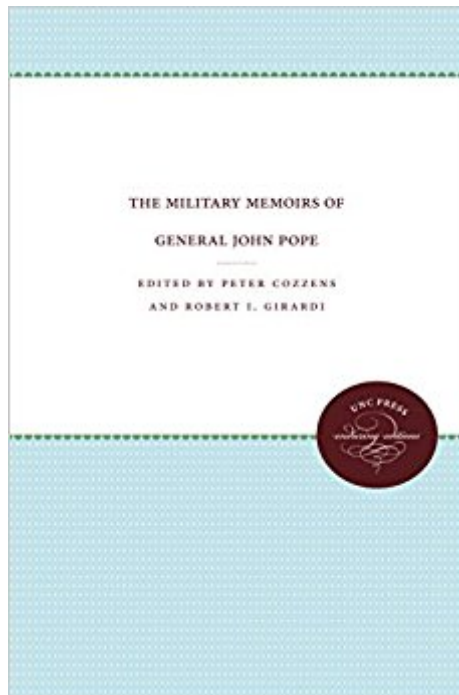




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The Military Memoirs Of General John Pope (Civil War America)



Synopsis

Union general John Pope was among the most controversial and misunderstood figures to hold major command during the Civil War. Before being called east in June 1862 to lead the Army of Virginia against General Robert E. Lee, he compiled an enviable record in Missouri and as commander of the Army of the Mississippi. After his ignominious defeat at the Second Battle of Bull Run, he was sent to the frontier. Over the next twenty-four years Pope held important department commands on the western plains and was recognized as one of the army's leading authorities on Indian affairs, but he never again commanded troops in battle. In 1886, Pope was engaged by the National Tribune, a weekly newspaper published in Washington, D.C., to write a series of articles on his wartime experiences. Over the next five years, in twenty-nine installments, he wrote about the war as he had lived it. Collected here for the first time, Pope's "war reminiscences" join a select roster of memoirs written by Civil War army commanders. Pope presents a detailed review of the campaigns in which he participated and offers vivid character sketches of such illustrious figures as Abraham Lincoln and Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton. Clearly written and balanced in tone, his memoirs are a dramatic and important addition to the literature on the Civil War. Originally published in 1998. A UNC Press Enduring Edition -- UNC Press Enduring Editions use the latest in digital technology to make available again books from our distinguished backlist that were previously out of print. These editions are published unaltered from the original, and are presented in affordable paperback formats, bringing readers both historical and cultural value.

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Customer Reviews

[A] valuable lens on a troubled time, and a new look at a troubled man. John J. Hennessy, author of "Return to Bull Run: The Campaign and Battle of Second Manassas"

Peter Cozzens . . . and Robert Girardi . . . have done General Pope a great service by letting Pope's letters, memoirs, and recollections speak for themselves.--North Carolina Historical Review
John Pope has long been one of the pat caricatures of the Civil War. But now, the caricature is exploded through the surest means of all: Pope's own thoughtful, restrained memoirs, newly discovered. Pope's literate observations are simultaneously interesting, refreshing, and important--a valuable lens on a troubled time, and a new look at a troubled man.--John J. Hennessy, author of Return to Bull Run: The Campaign and Battle of Second Manassas
An important lost look at the Civil War by one of the most complex commanders of the Union army. . . . Pope offers an intriguing eyewitness account of the battles of the Civil War, informed by an insider's knowledge of strategy, conditions, and events. Cozzens offers a succinct introduction and places the events related in the memoir within their proper context. An essential firsthand account to join the ranks of those of Sherman and Grant.--Kirkus Reviews
A superb job. . . . Readers willing to reconsider Pope will welcome the fresh perspective the book offers on his career.--Military History

Peter Cozzens and Robert Girardi provided an excellent service to Civil War scholars by assembling the collected newspaper essays that General John Pope wrote in way of reflecting on his Civil War career. Best known for his stunning defeat at Second Bull Run and his bravado, a very different Pope emerges here. Often witty, Pope left excellent sketches of President Lincoln (an old friend of the family), Edwin Stanton, as well as numerous commanders of both the North and the South. Pope is excellent in capturing the chaos and incompetence of John Fremont's command in Missouri in the first days of the war. His scathing attack on Henry Halleck's tortuously slow move towards Corinth reveals the extent of this wasted opportunity. But Pope is best known for two battles: Island Number 10 and Second Bull Run. His account of Island Number 10 is a bit rushed though certainly through. While Pope does an excellent job of describing the layout of his forces at the start of the Bull Run campaign, he relies on official records a bit too much and seems willing to let the matter slide. That is understandable, after all Pope was humiliated by Lee at Second Bull Run. The problem is that the Second Bull Run campaign was Pope's moment in the sun and he has little to

say on it. With the large exceptions of George McClellan and Fitz John Porter, who Pope believed deliberately undermined his command, there is little bitterness. Even Nathaniel Banks, who picked a fight at Cedar Mountain against Pope's orders and was mauled by Stonewall Jackson, comes off relatively unscathed. It seems as if all of Pope's fire was being saved for McClellan and Porter, as can be seen in the memoirs as well as in a correspondence with the Comte de Paris which is included in an appendix. The memoirs reveal Pope to be much more intelligent and witty than his traditional blowhard persona would indicate though the bile is still there certainly in the cases of Porter and McClellan. One can see from these memoirs why so many men, including Grant and Sherman, seemed to like and respect Pope and while others had no use for the man. All in all, an interesting and revealing memoir to some long neglected parts of the war though be warned the main course, Second Bull Run, remains a bit bland.

Needs a good editing to eliminate repetitions and errors.

Instead of reading "Team of Rivals" and getting a load of old material repackaged with a catchy title-read this book. Pope's memoirs are magnificent. Historians owe Cozzens a real debt for this work.

The Memoirs show a well organized, thoughtful person and not the "crybaby" General who wanted General Porter court-martialed for cowardice at 2nd Bull Run. In many Civil War books Pope come off as blustering incompetent who tries to blame everyone and everyone for his defeat by Stonewall Jackson and Longstreet at 2nd Bull Run. Pope however seems remorseful to the death at the casualties his division suffered at 2nd Bull run. There is an urgency in his writings. He seems to want to tell us an important tale, that is "General Porter could have helped my division and should have aided me at 2nd Bull Run". Pope insists he saw that Porter was in position to help and since human lives were at stake, Porter needed to come to Pope's assistance immediately at 2nd Bull Run. Pope insisted that Porter coldly and motivated by McClellan politics, allowed General Pope's division to be slaughtered. The whole book seems to build up to and revolve around this accusation against General Porter made by John Pope. He might even want to shout this accusation from his grave, "the tragic cold death and maiming of a division of brave men", the result of cold politics and cowardice. From my read of the book, Pope's accusation is haunting even though it may not be provable, still it is fascinating.

Peter Cozzens rightly compares General John Pope's memoirs with those of U.S. Grant and W.T.

Sherman. This is a highly readable account from one of the participants in some of the least-understood episodes of the Civil War. Of course, Pope's writings are not "new." As Cozzens relates, the entries which make up this book appeared in the National Tribune and other Reconstruction-era publications. However, they have spent the last century forgotten by the general public. Cozzens and his colleague, Gerardi, have done a great service both to Civil War scholars and to the casual Civil War buff by bringing Pope's reminiscences and analyses to life. What is most surprising is the humor, candor and generosity of a man who has gone down in history as a narrow, bitter mediocrity. For example, devotees of General Lee, whose comments largely consigned Pope to history almost as a barbarian, will be surprised to read Pope's poetic evocation of the beauty of Virginia and the nobility of its citizens. In a similar vein, readers will benefit from a "fresh" take on a wide range of issues -- such as the relationships between Lincoln, Stanton, Halleck and McClellan -- from a player very much in the know, but whose views have gone largely unremarked. My only cautionary note would be that an appreciation of this volume depends upon a basic understanding of the events of the war, and perhaps also upon an introductory familiarity with the post-war debates on those events.

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