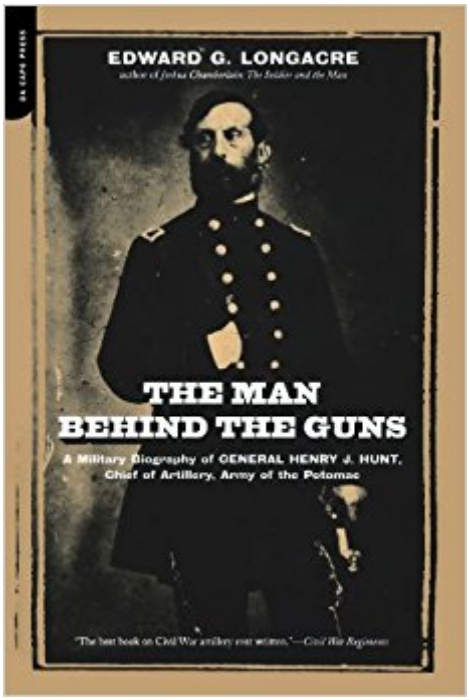
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The Man Behind The Guns: A Military Biography Of General Henry J. Hunt, Commander Of Artillery, Army Of The Potomac



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Synopsis

The deadly accurate guns of the Union artillery were the most feared weapons on Civil War battlefields. General Henry Jackson Hunt, the highest-ranking artillery officer in the Union army, was "the man behind the guns"-the military genius who transformed a disorganized artillery corps into the most effective service arm of the army. Even the Confederates admired General Hunt. One Rebel general once boasted, "Give me Confederate infantry and Union artillery, and I'll whip the world!"The Man Behind the Guns tells the life story of General Hunt, who, by the time he died in 1889, was recognized as one of the finest tacticians and military theorists ever to wear an American uniform. His outstanding reputation, however, had been established years before when his 270 strategically placed cannon shattered Pickett's Charge and decided the outcome of the most significant battle in American history.This classic military biography, published twenty-five years ago and now available for the first time in paperback, is a "must" for every student of Civil War history.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"The best book on Civil War artillery ever written." -- Civil War Regiments

Edward G. Longacre is the author of numerous biographies of Civil War generals. He is a recipient of the prestigious Fletcher Pratt Award for Civil War writing. He lives in Newport News, Virginia.

This is a well researched book, on an obscure subject. This old boy was VERY good at his job, but

didn’t seem to excel in suckling up. He did manage to keep his job as artillery chief from McClellan through the end of the Civil War.

Civil War biographies seem to be a lost art as of late. We do see the occasional biography such as Sears’ fine book on McClellan, Wert’s on Custer and it seems there’s a new Lee or Jackson biography every year. However for many Civil War commanders it’s been years since we’ve seen full biographies for them. Generals George Meade and George Thomas haven’t seen new full bios in 50+ years. Not since Freeman Cleaves wrote his works on them in the late 40s and it’s been 60 years since Walter Hebert wrote his work on Fighting Joe Hooker.So with that said, it’s nice to see a modern biography of an important and yet overlooked man in the Army of the Potomac’s leadership.Partly that that makes this book interesting is it’s as much a story of the evolution of artillery in the Civil War as it is Hunt, although it’s evolution controlled and nurtured by Hunt. In Longacre’s book we see Hunt’s famous stubbornness and to some extent his temper. We also see his brilliance with artillery and unfortunately his tragic life after the war where one could argue that his country turned it’s back on him after Hunt did so much to help preserve it.While this book is an enjoyable read it does have it’s faults. One fault is the book has a feeling of being rushed. One doesn’t have a feeling one is reading a true in depth biography of the man. The writing style is good and the essential facts are there but the book in the end simply has a feeling of being a bit rushed and not as detailed as it should have been.Another odd fault shows up in the chapter on Gettysburg. Longacre obviously isn’t the biggest fan of George Meade and it shows. In the Gettysburg chapter Longacre repeats the Dan Sickles created myth that Meade was planning to retreat from Gettysburg on July 2nd. Not only does he repeat the myth but he credits Henry Hunt with talking Meade into staying! Then Longacre takes the myth one step further and claims Meade planned to retreat on July 3rd and the only reason he didn’t was because his Corps Commanders talked him out of it! Only two chapters later in the section on the Congressional investigation into Gettysburg does Longacre tell the reader that any plans Meade had made for retreat were merely contingency plans.For the rest of the Gettysburg chapter Longacre takes his shots at Meade where he can to the point that it becomes both obvious and a bit annoying. Meanwhile Hunt’s faults are glossed over a bit. Yes he was a brilliant officer, often under appreciated these days but he still had his faults. By reading Longacre you’d think Hunt had never made an error.While the book has it’s flaws it still is worth picking up. Longacre’s nice writing style makes it a pleasant read. Hunt was an important part of the Army of the Potomac and this book help’s greatly to understand his role. Most Civil War enthusiasts will find this book worthwhile.

One of the most insightful diaries on this level that I have ever read. Editing is superb and the descriptions of interactions of the Infantry CO's and artillery are outstanding. Good read if you are a Redleg.

This work is a must for Civil War enthusiasts as an excellent primer on the tactical relationship, and lack of, of the artillery and infantry arms of Civil War armies, especially the Army of the Potomac. The contribution of General H. J. Hunt at Malvern Hill, Fredericksburg,and especially Gettysburg were game changers and merely glossed over by other tomes. Highly recommended reading.

As a Civil War scholar and an author of a book on the great war myself, I found this book to substantiate my view of Hunt from the bits and pieces I'd read about his performance on the field in other books. He was an outstanding officer; efficient, brave, demanding of excellence from his men and himself. A great read.

What a great book! General Hunt is a very interesting person and this book about his military life is very well written.

Really well Written Account of General Hunt. It tells the story of his early years and of course focus's on his Civil War Years. And eventually covers his final years. I enjoyed it.

A well-written and accurate story of the life of Henry Jackson Hunt, Chief of Artillery, Army of the Potomac. This book details Hunt's fight to overcome the neglect of the artillery division of the Union Army by various commanders, from McClellan to Grant.

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