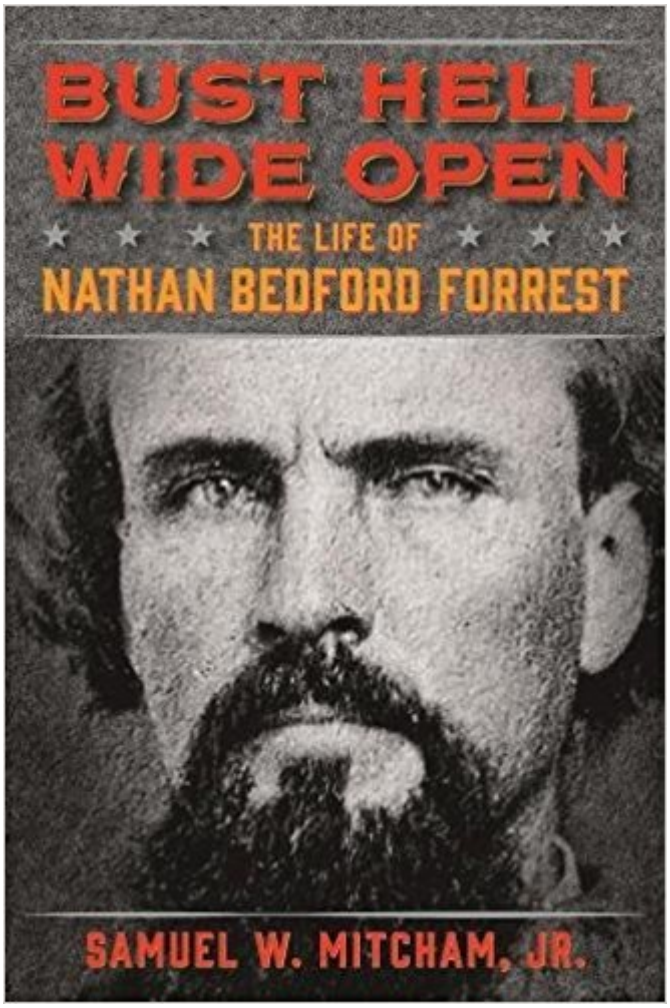
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Bust Hell Wide Open: The Life Of Nathan Bedford Forrest



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Synopsis

At fourteen he became the head of his impoverished family, responsible for feeding eleven on the rough American frontier. By thirty-nine he had established himself as a successful plantation owner worth over $1 million. And at forty years old, Nathan Bedford Forrest enlisted in a Tennessee cavalry regiment—and became a controversial Civil War legend. The legacy of General Nathan Bedford Forrest is deeply divisive. Best known for being accused of war crimes at the Battle of Fort Pillow and for his role as first Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan—an organization he later denounced—Forrest has often been studied as a military figure, but never before studied as a fascinating individual who wrestled with the complex issues of his violent times. Bust Hell Wide Open is a comprehensive portrait of Nathan Bedford Forrest as a man: his achievements, failings, reflections, and regrets.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Some called him “the wizard of the saddle.Ã¢â ¬Â• Union General William Tecumseh Sherman damned him as “that devil Forrest.Ã¢â ¬Â• Confederate Commander Robert E. Lee said he was the greatest military genius of the war. This giant of a man—six foot two, two hundred and ten pounds—was Nathan Bedford Forrest, a general who killed no less than thirty men in man to man combat in the Civil War. He also hunted down a panther when he was fifteen, fought a gunfight in what was then the Western frontier, and amassed a business fortune, which he spent on his troops, after growing up on a ramshackle farm—responsible, as a teenager, for

the well-being of his widowed mother and nine siblings. Gallant, tough, chivalrous, Forrest was the epitome of a Confederate cavalryman, but without the polish and education of a Virginia aristocrat. He was also controversial—in his own time and ours: charged with losing control of his men and allowing a massacre to happen at Fort Pillow and serving as the first elected leader of the Ku Klux Klan (a group he later helped to disband and disavow). There have been other biographies of Forrest, but none like this one by Professor Samuel W. Mitcham, which taps all the latest scholarship while approaching Forrest not just as a celebrated general whose campaigns are studied to this day, but as a man in full, a man raised and shaped by the Tennessee frontier, with a conscience sharpened by his devoutly Christian wife. Forrest said he would “bust hell wide openÃ¢â ¬Â• rather than surrender to the Federals during the siege of Fort Donelson. In Samuel W. Mitcham, Forrest has found the perfect biographer to capture his defiant and courageous spirit.

Samuel W. Mitcham, Jr. was a professor of history at Henderson State University, Georgia Southern University, and the University of Louisiana at Monroe, and a visiting professor at West Point. He is the author of more than twenty books on World War II, including Hitler's Commanders: Officers of the Wehrmacht, the Luftwaffe, the Kriegsmarine, and the Waffen-SS (2012) and Triumphant Fox: Erwin Rommel and the Rise of the Afrika Korps (2009).

Having read everything on Forrest I could get my eyes on, this is a good review or refresher of those readings. New bits are throughout so good from that point of view. Recommended for those bits for NBF fans.

To rise from private to 3 star general is unbelievable! I have read several books on NB Forrest but this one really measures the man! I highly recommend the book. West Point generals including some of the most notable needlessly had their men attack fortified installations recklessly! Had they taken Forrest's methodology the South would have handily won the war even though beginning without a standing army, disadvantaged resources in man power and treasury against the invaders!!

Excellent read. Well written, thoroughly researched, and an excellent resource for gaining a complex, capable Warrior.

Great book about a Great man.

Rehash of the earlier biographies of Forrest with all the legends and misconceptions. Will find bits of good information and analysis- but only bits.

This book is a good read and tell's the story of a brilliant commander ,a man of unusual charter and contradictions .The final chapter will surprise most people that think they know the Wizard of the Saddle. You will never look at Forrest the same way after you read Bust Hell Wide Open .

Mitcham established himself as a first-rate historian with his many books on World War II; however, I'm delighted that he's now turning his talents to his first love--the Civil War. Looking forward to many years of fine reading, with enough detail for the serious scholar and a readability sure to delight the casual reader.

Nathan Bedford Forrest was a Force. This book explains why.

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