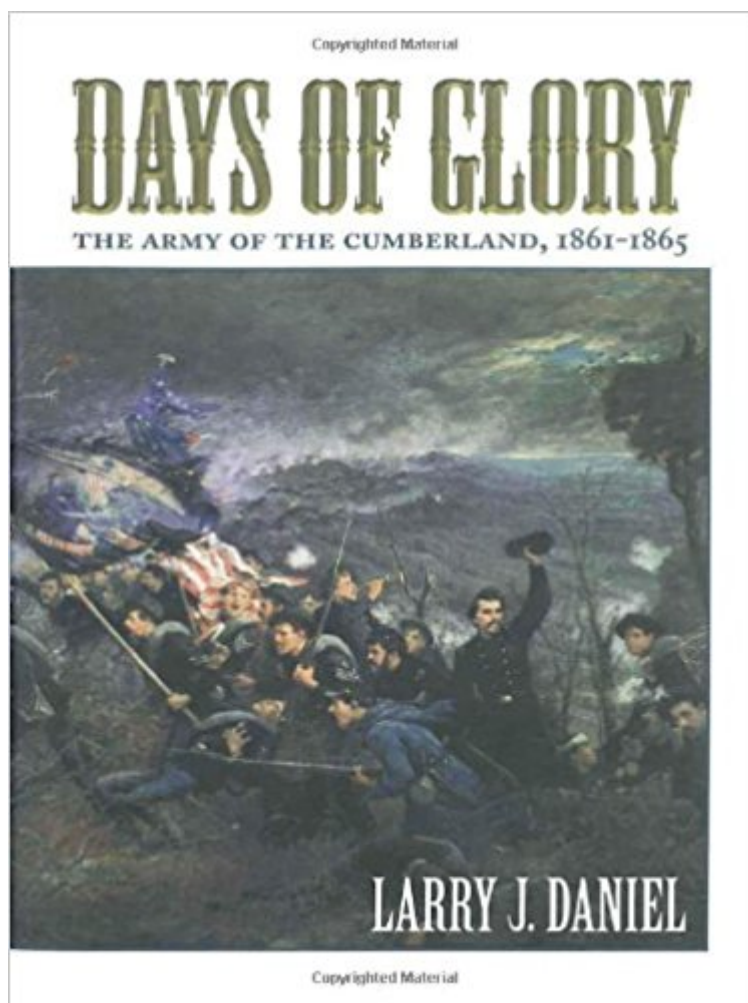




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Days Of Glory: The Army Of The Cumberland, 1861-1865



Synopsis

A potent fighting force that changed the course of the Civil War, the Army of the Cumberland was the North's second-most-powerful army, surpassed in size only by the Army of the Potomac. The Cumberland army engaged the enemy across five times more territory with one-third to one-half fewer men than the Army of the Potomac, and yet its achievements in the western theater rivaled those of the larger eastern army. In *Days of Glory*, Larry J. Daniel brings his analytic and descriptive skills to bear on the Cumberlanders as he explores the dynamics of discord, political infighting, and feeble leadership that stymied the army in achieving its full potential. Making extensive use of thousands of letters and diaries, Daniel creates an epic portrayal of the developing Cumberland army, from untrained volunteers to hardened soldiers united in their hatred of the Confederates.

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Customer Reviews

Larry J. Daniel is the author of *Shiloh: The Battle That Changed the Civil War*; *Cannoneers in Gray: the Field Artillery of the Army of Tennessee*, winner of the Fletcher Pratt Award; *Soldiering in the Army of Tennessee*; and *Island No. 10: Key to the Mississippi Valley*. A prolific speaker on the Civil War Round Table circuit, he lives in Murray, Kentucky, where he is the minister of First United Methodist Church. Larry J. Daniel is the author of *Shiloh: The Battle That Changed the Civil War*; *Cannoneers in Gray: The Field Artillery of the Army of Tennessee*, winner of the Fletcher Pratt Award; *Soldiering in the Army of Tennessee*; and *Island No. 10: Key to the Mississippi Valley*. A prolific speaker on the Civil War roundtable circuit, he lives in Murray, Kentucky, where he is the

minister of the First United Methodist Church.

Years ago I toured the battlefields of Shiloh, Stones River, Perryville, Chickamauga, and Chattanooga. Since then, I discovered a distant Union ancestor who fought in the Army of the Cumberland (first as part of the XX Corps, then later as part of the IV Corps). This discovery sparked my interest once again in the Tennessee "out West" battlefields and the Army of the Cumberland in particular. I find that this book fills a void, since there seems to be little published in recent years on the AofC. Until I read this book, I did not realize how deep the roots of this army were in (Unionist) Kentucky. I knew that Buell had been relieved after Perryville, but I did not know how poor his relations were with Washington and how reluctant he was to move his army. Rosecrans seemed to be a great improvement at first, but quickly it was seen that his tactical ability did not match his ability to maneuver his army. He pulled out a victory at Stones River, but as in the case of Chickamauga, he let the enemy take the offensive. No matter how much one is tempted to defend Rosecrans, his defeat at Chickamauga and his supply problems at Chattanooga (although much of this was not Rosecrans' fault) inevitably led to his relief. He had won no friends in Washington, a lot of it due to the general's own sarcasm and belligerence towards his superiors. This left George H. Thomas to be the last commander of the AofC. Unfortunately, Thomas had developed no warm relationship with either Grant or Sherman. He also avoided politics as much as he could, and as a native Virginian who stayed with the Union cause, he had no political friends and probably for a while was even somewhat suspect. He performed well whether on the defensive or the offensive, despite the charges of being "slow," "cautious," and "deliberate." I realize there is a group of historians who recently have written new biographies of Thomas with the view that he did not get the credit he deserved. I think that Daniel recognizes this but in many instances believes that some of what is claimed is not necessarily supported by contemporary accounts. To give Daniel credit, he often footnotes what other historians have written, even those with a different point of view. I do have a few criticisms, some which other reviewers have mentioned: the lack of good maps. It would have been nice to have more photographs, especially of the division commanders. After all, the purpose of a book is that some of these men should not be forgotten--it would have been nice to see some photos of them. Unless I missed it, in the order of battles appendix he seems to have left out Stones River. All in all, this is a good history of an army. It can't be easy to write a history of an army from its first organization to its demise. Daniel has a good writing style, and his put together a fascinating mixture of personalities, politics, and tactics that will keep the reader interested.

A quite interesting topic, the Army of the Cumberland generally gets only passing attention in most works as its major battles, Stones River and Chickamauga, are covered. Here Larry Daniel provides an in-depth coverage, from its inception as the Army of the Ohio until its final battles at Franklin and Nashville. Generally speaking, like the Army of the Potomac, it was a poorly led army until after the ascension of Grant. Once Grant takes overall command, placing Sherman in charge, this Army performs well under George Thomas. After Sherman's victory at Atlanta, the Army of the Cumberland is detached to address John Bell Hood's Army of Tennessee as it seeks to redirect the Federal advance into Georgia by itself advancing into Tennessee, but Hood's army is destroyed by Thomas at Franklin and annihilated at Nashville. The second largest Union Army when it was under Don Carlos Buell, this army served in all the actions in middle Tennessee and participated in Shiloh as well. The Cumberland army engaged the Confederates across five times the territory as the Army of the Potomac with one half to one third fewer men, yet its achievements in the Central Theater rivaled those of its eastern counterpart. This is a good work by Mr. Daniel, well written and well researched. He is not shy about delving into the politics, discord and poor leadership that prevented this army from achieving its full potential.

A very well written book but short on maps. If I had not been familiar with the Tennessee/Kentucky area I would have been lost for the first 2/3 of the book. Overall though one will learn quite a bit about the composition and politics of the army. The book is a little light on describing the actual battles but if one really enjoys reading about the Civil War then major engagements like Shiloh, Chickamauga and others are already well known.

I consider this book to be a long overdue narrative of the crucial role the Army of the Cumberland played in the Civil War. Many thanks to Larry Daniel for writing this and I would recommend it to anyone who wants to learn about the Civil War.

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