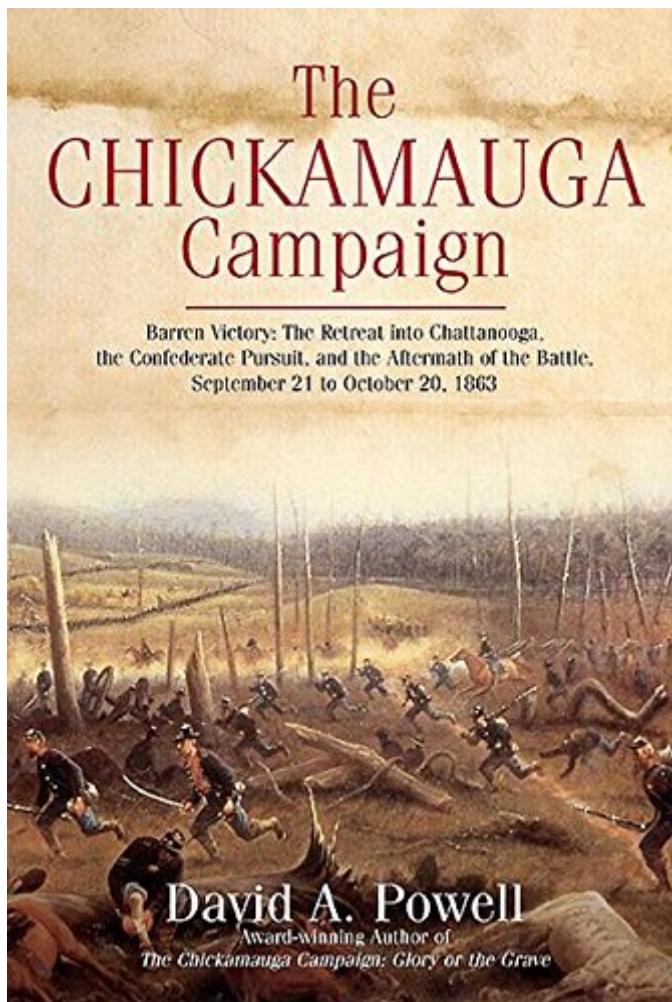


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# The Chickamauga Campaign – Barren Victory: The Retreat Into Chattanooga, The Confederate Pursuit, And The Aftermath Of The Battle, September 21 To October 20, 1863





## Synopsis

Barren Victory is the third and concluding volume of the magisterial Chickamauga Campaign Trilogy, a comprehensive examination more than a decade in the making of one of the most important and complex military operations of the Civil War. The first installment, *A Mad Irregular Battle*, introduced readers to the major characters of this sweeping drama and carried them from the Union crossing of the Tennessee River in August 1863 up through the bloody but inconclusive combat of the first and second days of the battle (September 18 and 19, 1863). *Glory or the Grave*, the trilogy's second volume, focused on September 20—the decisive third day of fighting that included the Confederate breakthrough of the late morning and the desperate Union final stand on Horseshoe Ridge. This installment drew to a close at nightfall. *Barren Victory*, David Powell's final installment, examines the immediate aftermath of this great battle with unprecedented clarity and detail. The narrative opens at dawn on Monday, September 21, 1863, with Union commander William S. Rosecrans in Chattanooga and most of the rest of his Federal army in Rossville, Georgia. Confederate Gen. Braxton Bragg has won the signal victory of his career, but has yet to fully grasp that fact or the fruits of his success. Unfortunately for the South, three grueling days of combat has broken down the Army of Tennessee and made a vigorous pursuit nearly impossible. In addition to carefully examining the decisions made by each army commander and their consequences, Powell sets forth the dreadful costs of the fighting in terms of the human suffering involved. *Barren Victory* concludes with the most detailed order of battle (including unit strengths and losses) for Chickamauga ever compiled, and a comprehensive bibliography. David Powell's *The Chickamauga Campaign Trilogy* is now complete, with the fighting in the hills and valleys of North Georgia finally receiving the extensive treatment it has so long deserved.

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## **Customer Reviews**

This is a fine end to the three volume series on the extraordinarily sanguinary battle at Chickamauga. This is not a lengthy volume, but it has heft. For instance, the order of battle lays out what units were involved in the battle--and also the best estimate as to casualties. The percentage of dead, wounded, and missing or captured is high. This is clearly a very deadly battle. The tables in appendices are a valuable contribution to our understanding of the battle. The subtitle is telling. For the Confederate Army of Tennessee, this was indeed a "barren victory." Commanding general Braxton Bragg did not have a sense of the magnitude of his victory. And the momentum of the battle dissipated as the dysfunctional leadership structure of the southern forces manifest itself. Confederate forces had a sense that the Union Army of the Cumberland was devastated by the battle. They were not. There was a reasonable degree of order in their retrograde movement into Chattanooga. The Union forces began to take action to stabilize their position. U. S. Grant brought forces to Chattanooga. The Army of the Potomac contributed two corps to the city. The dynamic rapidly changed. And the victory was indeed barren.

A worthy finish to the "trilogy". Powell gives the immediate follow up to the battle and plenty of material on the costs, consequences and losses--with sources. The author explains that casualty research is ongoing, yet comparing the figures to the loss lists in his Maps book shows few changes--and a typo or two. He is working on maps of Chattanooga/ Knoxville, and i hope he follows that up with a book on the battle of Chattanooga. (Dave, that's a hope not a request or a suggestion for the next part of your life.)

Exceptionally well researched and detailed. This volume, along with the first two, set the standard

for historical research into a battle which doesn't always get the the attention it deserves. One can only hope similar efforts to this one will be made for other notable battles in the Western theatre of the Civil War

The trilogy is very demanding reading and sometimes hard to catch the time lines, but certainly appears to be researched by the author,

How anyone could ever accuse General Rosecrans of cowardess or ineffectual command is beyond the scope of reality in my opinion. Mr. Powell has shined a very bright light on some very murky circumstances surrounding the removal from command of General Rosecrans. That is to say, short of accusing Edwin Stanton of running a 'Good Old Boys Club' where merit had no bearing on advancement or even support of the administration for service faithfully rendered. Lincoln said when asked about Grant's drinking and fitness for command, "I cannot spare this man, he fights". Really? In my mind, Rosecrans outshined Grant by a wide margin in both categories. Rosecrans was a tactician, that is plain to see, who used position as well as strength to achieve his goals . He took Chattanooga not by force, but by maneuver, it was the object of the campaign and achieved almost bloodlessly. Rosecrans leaving the field to safeguard this does not surprise me. Negley's refusal to take the eight or ten thousand rallied troops back into the field mystifies me. It seems to me that he held an opportunity to turn what appeared to be a rout into a resounding Union victory and all he had to do was show up. Like Hooker at Chancellorsville, his corps commanders, aside from Thomas, seemed to lack any initiative, no sense of responsibility to achieve anything unless expressly ordered to do so. Braxton Bragg however, mistakenly believed his would let circumstances dictate their movements, giving them a green light to take advantage of circumstances as they saw them. Was Negley blind, stupid or frightened? Perhaps he cared little for Thomas. In any event, it appears he wasn't up to the moment. All of that aside, in my estimation, General Rosecrans was the brightest star in the Union Army, bar none.

Good book

Great author worth your reading time.

Detailed and superb account of an important but little known battle.

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