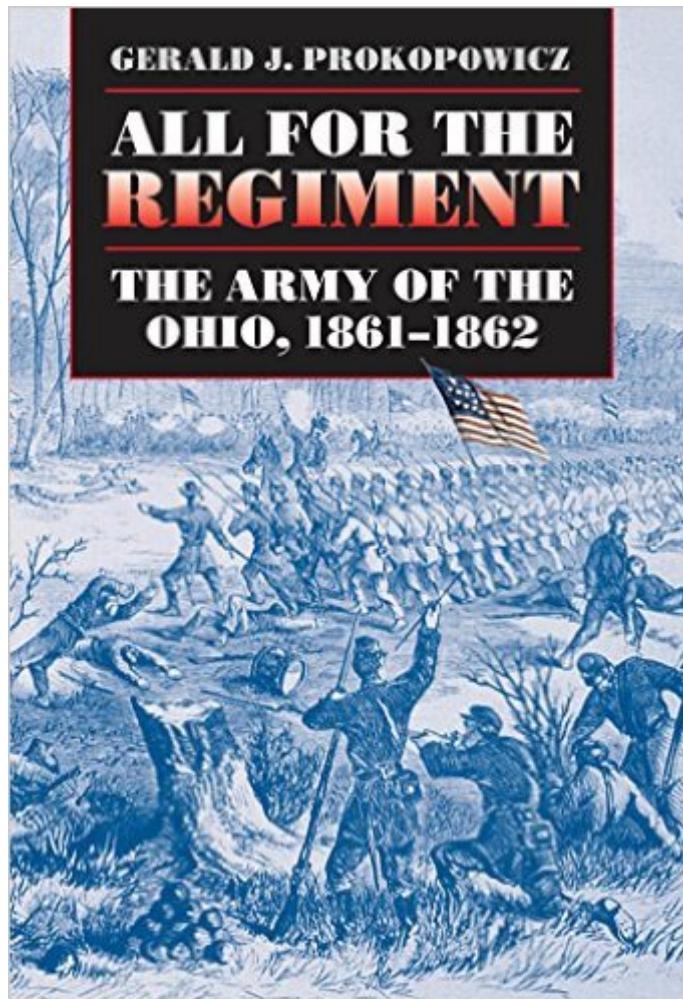


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All For The Regiment: The Army Of The Ohio, 1861-1862 (Civil War America)



Synopsis

Despite its important role in the early years of the Civil War, the Army of the Ohio remains one of the least studied of all Union commands. With *All for the Regiment*, Gerald Prokopowicz deftly fills this surprising gap. He offers an engaging history of the army from its formation in 1861 to its costly triumph at Shiloh and its failure at Perryville in 1862. Prokopowicz shows how the amateur soldiers who formed the Army of the Ohio organized themselves into individual regiments of remarkable strength and cohesion. Successive commanders Robert Anderson, William T. Sherman, and Don Carlos Buell all failed to integrate those regiments into an effective organization, however. The result was a decentralized and elastic army that was easily disrupted and difficult to command--but also nearly impossible to destroy in combat. Exploring the army's behavior at minor engagements such as Rowlett's Station and Logan's Cross Roads, as well as major battles such as Shiloh and Perryville, Prokopowicz reveals how its regiment-oriented culture prevented the army from experiencing decisive results--either complete victory or catastrophic defeat--on the battlefield. Regimental solidarity was at once the Army of the Ohio's greatest strength, he argues, and its most dangerous vulnerability.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book apparently is a PhD dissertation that the author has brought out, possibly with some modification, into popular history. It is short (189 pages) with 64 pages of endnotes that actually add

a fair amount of scholarly information if one cares to read through them. The basic premise is that Civil War soldiers made their regiments the primary fighting unit to which they were committed and would fight for to the end if unit integrity was kept intact. The problem with the book, is that premise falls into the "duh!" category as having been recognized for eons by Civil War historians and others. It is hardly a seminal conclusion. This is not anywhere close to McPherson's "Why They Fought." That being said, there is much good here. I will not reiterate the content -- that is covered well in the review by Durney. The good includes the mundane but critically important aspects of training at the regimental and company levels have been mostly ignored in the Civil War literature. The ability to maneuver under fire won many battles (the Wilderness comes to mind) and the lack thereof lost many (Fair Oaks for example.) The author provides a good introduction to this subject, but it needs a huge amount of fleshing out. I recommend Benjamin Scribner's work, "How Soldiers Were Made", now long out of print & difficult to find, to add to this discussion. In my own case, although I have ancestors who fought on both side of the Civil War, my Great-grandfather's diary covering his three years fighting as a member of Company "K", 5th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry (one of the units mentioned in this work), by itself proved the author's thesis concerning the importance of the Company and Regiment, as well as training.

This is a good account of the building of regiments and brigades in the early years of the war. Using the Army of the Ohio as a model, the author gives a good account of the raising, equipping and training of a regiment. This is the book's strongest point and much of its' value. If this justifies spending \$37.50, is an open question. After reading the book, I'm not sure that I have an answer for you. The Army of the Ohio's role at Shiloh is still being debated. The author comes down firmly on saving Grant's army; over the secondary role many historians assign it. The question isn't debated as much as stated with little more than a nod to the other side. This caused no little upset with the reviewer, as it contradicted other histories without providing real answers as to why. The frustrations of campaigning between Shiloh and the invasion of Kentucky are explained. The army was used not so much as a weapon but as a construction crew. Isolated garrisons, poorly lead and badly trained were no match for the hard riding raiders of Morgan and Forrest. Both of these men built reputations at the expense of this army. The author manages to show how decisions made months before caused many of the problems at this time. Political appointees do not make a regimental commander or a fighter. More than one surrender caused army wide embarrassment and strained the fragile ties between units. Bragg's invasion of Kentucky, the political implications and the impact on the 1862 election are not developed. Neither is a good explanation of the battle of Perryville

provided. Without reading Noe's excellent book, I'm not sure you can understand what is going on. This is the weakest part of the book and the most vital, as the army is really tested during this time.

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