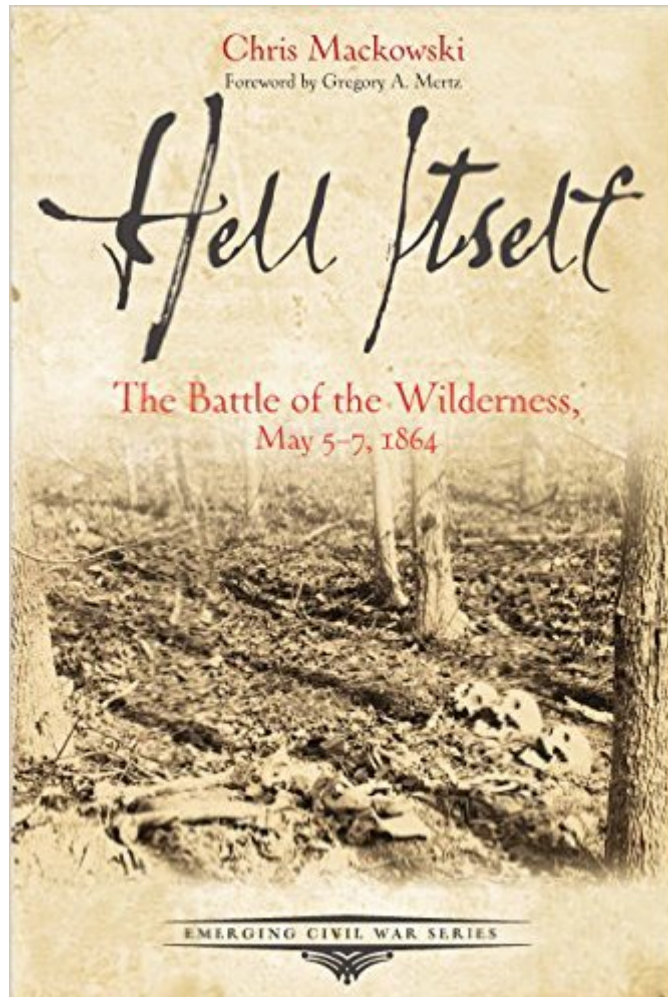


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# Hell Itself: The Battle Of The Wilderness, May 5-7, 1864 (Emerging Civil War Series)



## Synopsis

Soldiers called it one of the "waste places of nature" and "a region of gloom" the Wilderness of Virginia, seventy square miles of dense, second-growth forest known as "the dark, close wood." "A more unpromising theatre of war was never seen," said another. Yet here, in the spring of 1864, the Civil War escalated to a new level of horror. Ulysses S. Grant, commanding all Federal armies, opened the campaign with a vow to never turn back. Robert E. Lee, commanding the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia, moved into the Wilderness to block Grant's advance. Immovable object intercepted irresistible force and the Wilderness burst into flame. With the forest itself burning around them, men died by the thousands. The armies bloodied each other without mercy and, at times, without any semblance of order. The brush grew so dense, and the smoke hung so thick, men could not see who stood next to them or in front of them. "This, viewed as a battleground, was simply infernal," a Union soldier later said. It was, said another, "hell itself." Driven by desperation, duty, confusion, and fire, soldiers on both sides marveled that anyone might make it out alive. For more than a decade, Chris Mackowski has guided visitors across the battlefields of the Overland Campaign. Now in *Hell Itself* he invites readers of the Emerging Civil War Series to join him in the Wilderness—one of the most storied battlefields of the entire Civil War.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The Battle of the Wilderness has been getting some serious attention recently, so I was happy to

see that Chris Mackowski wrote a book from the Emerging Civil War Series about it. Hell Itself encompasses May 5 -7 and does what most other books from this series has done. They give an excellent overview of the battle with great information, along with readable maps and clear driving instructions around the battlefield. This series has been invaluable and Hell Itself is no exception. Mackowski brings the same academic outlook to the battle which he has done in his previous works and all other works in the Emerging Civil War series. Chris Mackowski is the editor-in-chief of Emerging Civil War along with being the writing profession in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Saint Bonaventure University. He is a former historian with the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, which includes the Wilderness battlefield, and is the historian-in-residence at Stevenson Ridge. He is the author and co-author of twelve Civil War books from both the Emerging Civil War series and others including: *Seizing Destiny*, and *Chancellorsvilleâ€™s Forgotten Front*. Also in Hell Itself are appendices written by other contributing authors of Emerging Civil War. Hell Itself works on two fronts, as all other Emerging Civil War books have done. Not only is it informative, but it also offers a driving schedule for those who want to tour the battlefield. The strength of this series is that tourists can take them along when they go to these places. Each page is accompanied by either a picture of the battlefield or a picture from the war which gives readers a more visual idea of what happened here.

By the spring of 1864, General Ulysses S. Grant new commander of all Federal armies opened the Overland Campaign. He planned to be a new Union commander in that he would never turn back and would move forward using a hard war and all resources to defeat the Confederacy in a coordinated multiple front war across the South. Commanding Confederate General Robert E. Lee of the Army of Northern Virginia was compelled to react to Ulysses S. Grantâ€™s perpetual probes of his exterior fronts and moved his soldiers into the Wilderness to prevent the Army of the Potomacâ€™s progress into central Virginia. This was the first battle between these two important Civil War figures. Neither individual was not completely bamboozled by the other, nor would either back down. At the end of the fighting neither army had earned a clear cut victory. The southerners won a tactical victory due to imposing more casualties upon the opposing force than they had received themselves during the fight. Grant attempted to pass around the Confederate flank continuously after the battle for 9 months until the war was victorious for the Union forces. The amount of casualties for both armies became significantly larger until the surrender of Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865. This engaging title leads battlefield trampers on the many stops in the battle that occurred in the Battle of the Wilderness during May

5-7, 1864. Additionally, the author includes brief overview of Union attempts to fight future important battles throughout the Overland Campaign.

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