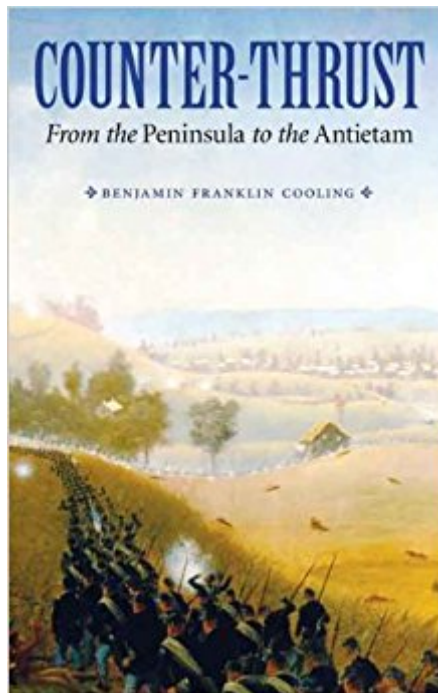




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Counter-Thrust: From The Peninsula To The Antietam (Great Campaigns Of The Civil War)



Synopsis

During the summer of 1862, a Confederate resurgence threatened to turn the tide of the Civil War. When the Union's earlier multitheater thrust into the South proved to be a strategic overreach, the Confederacy saw its chance to reverse the loss of the Upper South through counteroffensives from the Chesapeake to the Mississippi. Benjamin Franklin Cooling tells this story in *Counter-Thrust*, recounting in riveting detail Robert E. Lee's flouting of his antagonist George B. McClellan's drive to capture the Confederate capital at Richmond and describing the Confederate hero's long-dreamt-of offensive to reclaim central and northern Virginia before crossing the Potomac. *Counter-Thrust* also provides a window into the Union's internal conflict, which hampered building a successful military leadership team during this defining period. Cooling shows us Lincoln's administration in disarray, with relations between the president and field commander McClellan strained to the breaking point. He also shows how the fortunes of war shifted abruptly in the Union's favor, climaxing at Antietam with the bloodiest single day in American history and in Lincoln's decision to announce a preliminary emancipation proclamation. Here in all its gritty detail and considerable depth is a critical moment in the unfolding of the Civil War and American history.

Book Information

Series: Great Campaigns of the Civil War

Paperback: 384 pages

Publisher: University of Nebraska Press (December 1, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0803271727

ISBN-13: 978-0803271722

Product Dimensions: 5.6 x 1 x 8.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.3 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 2 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,455,169 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #67 in [Books > History > Americas > United States > Civil War > Campaigns & Battlefields > Antietam](#) #997 in [Books > History > Americas > United States > Civil War > Confederacy](#) #15048 in [Books > History > Military > United States](#)

Customer Reviews

"Cooling provides a new way of looking at the Maryland campaign and makes

Counter-Thrust a necessary read for any Civil War scholar. [Joseph-James Ahern, On Point \(Joseph-James Ahern On Point\)](#) "Far from offering simply a book of battles, Cooling places the battles into a well-defined context and demonstrates how strategic decision making occurred at the highest levels during the Civil War." [S. J. Ramold, Choice \(S. J. Ramold Choice\)](#) "Not only is [Counter-Thrust] exceptionally well written, but also it offers a highly critical account of what many scholars argue are the most significant campaigns of the Civil War." [Alex Mendoza, Journal of Southern History \(Alex Mendoza Journal of Southern History\)](#) "Counter-Thrust has few peers as an introductory volume to one of the most dramatic campaign summers in military history." [Christopher S. Stowe, Register of the Kentucky Historical Society \(Christopher S. Stowe Register of the Kentucky Historical Society\)](#) "[Counter-Thrust] is the tenth volume to be released from the University of Nebraska Press's Great Campaigns of the Civil War series. Author Benjamin F. Cooling has always been a great writer of historical narrative, but what makes his latest effort a wonderful addition to the series is the expert manner in which he mines the literature for the best scholarship the subject has to offer, dissects the findings, and concisely reprocesses it for the benefit of a wide range of readerships while at the same time injecting his own insightful analysis." [Civil War Books and Authors Blog \(Civil War Books and Authors Blog 2008-02-21\)](#) "Cooling's analysis of McClellan is especially insightful, as he synthesizes the latest scholarship on that enigmatic figure. . . . Counter-Thrust delivers as advertised with thorough research, historiographical knowledge and excellent writing, melding this with sharp analysis. It is a worthy addition to the University of Nebraska's Great Campaigns of the Civil War series." [Civil War Book Review \(Civil War Book Review 2008-05-28\)](#)

Benjamin Franklin Cooling is a professor of national security studies at Dwight D. Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy at National Defense University in Washington DC. He is the author of more than a dozen books on the Civil War, including most recently *The Day Lincoln Was Almost Shot: The Fort Stevens Story*.

Counter-Thrust, a work on the Peninsula Campaign through the Antietam Campaign, was part of the Great Campaigns of the Civil War series published by the University of Nebraska Press. Due to the nature of the series, this work is quite in depth and not only pays attention to the military details of the campaign, but looks into the realm of the political spectrum especially when it comes to the

relationship between President Lincoln and General McClellan. What Cooling has presented is a great source into the deciding campaigns in the east and does so in a flowing narrative which rarely goes stale. Benjamin Franklin Cooling is a professor of national security studies at Dwight D. Eisenhower School for National Security. He is also a Resource Strategist at the National Defense University in Washington. He has authored many works on the American Civil War including *The Day Lincoln Was Almost Shot: The Fort Stevens Story*. His most recent work is *To the Battles of Franklin and Nashville and Beyond*. The majority of his works have dealt with the American Civil War. Cooling understands something about the eastern campaigns in 1862 that many other historians seem to ignore in their studies on these battles: politics. There have been many studies into the militaristic nature of the Peninsula Campaign and the Antietam Campaign but there are only a handful of studies which look into the political aspect of the fighting. In the more recent years, these studies have come about which makes Cooling one of the main proponents of this area of study. While there are those writings which have always looked into the politics of the campaigns, Cooling does so by combining both the politics and the military without having any trouble in the narrative. It is common knowledge that Lincoln and McClellan had a difficult relationship, but this account gives us a more in depth look into the inner workings of the Washington politics when Lincoln "interfered" with the army. While the military analysis was interesting, the work shines through all the other aspects, the firsts being the political, the second being the intelligence gathering. One of the statements made in the work is that the Pinkertons sent to aid in the efforts during the Maryland Campaign would be for naught since many of the messages they attempted to get through the lines had failed. The ideals of military intelligence are often overlooked in Civil War academia and Cooling gives us that realm of study. Overall, the work never stifles due to the many different things which the author is giving us in the work and the research is quite good and formatted greatly. This book, though stated to be a bit of an introduction to the campaigns, is an in depth look into what was going on during the late summer to the early fall of 1862 in the east. I highly recommend this book to anyone who wants an all-encompassing look into the field of not only the military, but in the political and intelligence gathering world of the Civil War. Benjamin Franklin Cooling has done a great work in this book with impeccable citations and bibliography along with his flowing narrative. Highly recommended.

Matthew Bartlett - Gettysburg Chronicle

This is the best summary I have ever read for the time frame of July through September 1862. Footnotes and bibliography are excellent. Mr. Cooling is a first-rate historian. Civil-Warriors will know

what I am talking about. If you wish for only one book about pivotal period in the war this is it.

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