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Simply Murder

The Battle of Fredericksburg, December 13, 1862

Chris Mackowski and Kristopher White

They melted like snow on the ground, one officer said—wave after wave of Federal soldiers charging uphill across an open muddy plain. Confederates, fortified behind a stone wall along a sunken road, poured a hail of lead into them as they charged . . . and faltered . . . and died. “I had never before seen fighting like that, nothing approaching it in terrible uproar and destruction,” said one eyewitness to the slaughter. “It is only murder now.”

The battle of Fredericksburg is usually remembered as the most lopsided Union defeat of the Civil War. It is sometimes called “Burnside’s folly,” after Union commander Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside who led the Army of the Potomac to ruin along the banks of the Rappahannock River. But the battle remains one of the most misunderstood and misremembered engagements of the war. Burnside started with a well-conceived plan and had every reason to expect victory. How did it go so terribly wrong?

Authors Chris Mackowski and Kristopher D. White have worked for years along Fredericksburg’s Sunken Road and Stone Wall, and they’ve escorted thousands of visitors across the battlefield. *Simply Murder* not only recounts Fredericksburg’s tragic story of slaughter, but includes invaluable information about the battlefield itself and the insights they’ve learned from years of walking the ground.

Simply Murder can be enjoyed in the comfort of one’s living room or as a guide on the battlefield itself. It is also the first release in the new “Emerging Civil War Series,” which offers compelling and easy-to-read overviews of some of the Civil War’s most important battles and issues.

About the Authors: Chris Mackowski is a professor in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at St. Bonaventure University in Allegany, New York, and also works with the National Park Service at Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park, which includes the Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Wilderness, and Spotsylvania battlefields.

Kristopher D. White is a historian for the Penn-Trafford Recreation Board and a continuing education instructor for the Community College of Allegheny County near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He served for five years as a staff military historian at Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park, and is a former Licensed Battlefield Guide at Gettysburg.

Longtime friends, Mackowski and White have co-authored several books and numerous articles for various Civil War magazines. They also co-founded the blog Emerging Civil War, which can be read at: www.emergingcivilwar.com.

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