

TURNING PAGES

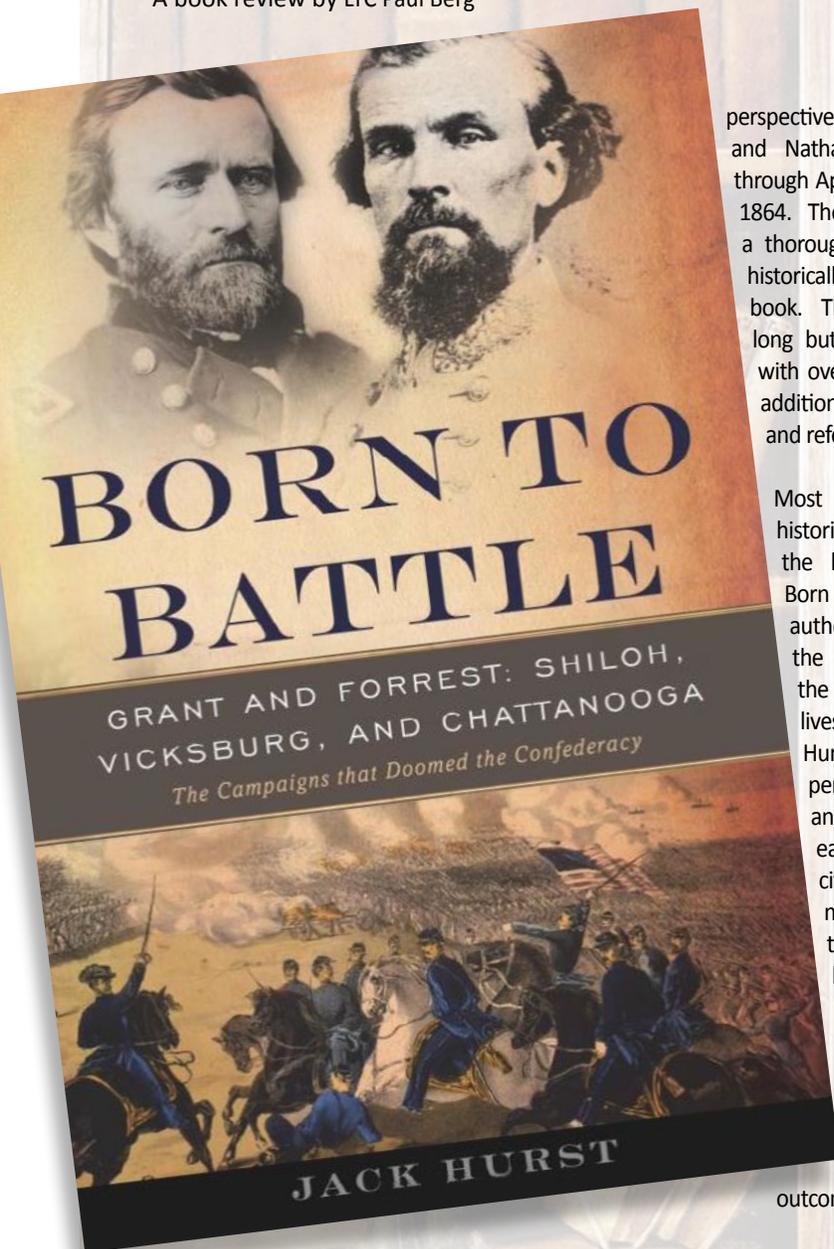
~ book reviews of interest to the aviation professional

Born to Battle:

Grant and Forrest: Shiloh, Vicksburg, and Chattanooga; the Campaigns That Doomed the Confederacy

By Jack Hurst. *Born to Battle: Grant and Forrest: Shiloh, Vicksburg, and Chattanooga; the Campaigns That Doomed the Confederacy*. Published by Basic Books, a member of the Perseus Books Group - 387 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016-8810. Photographs and artwork used courtesy of the Library of Congress. Formats available are; Hardcover, Kindle, Adio Book, and MP3 CD.

A book review by LTC Paul Berg



perspective of Ulysses S. Grant and Nathan Bedford Forrest through April 1862 to February 1864. The author has written a thoroughly researched and historically detailed Civil War book. The book is relatively long but historically concise with over 417 pages and an additional 50 pages of notes and references.

Most Civil War military historians will appreciate the historical details of *Born to Battle*, but the author's intent is to tell the unique story about the personal and military lives of Grant and Forrest. Hurst abbreviates the personal lives of Grant and Forrest through early childhood, civilian, and early military careers but takes exceptional historical clarity on the exact actions of the Shiloh, Vicksburg, and Chattanooga during the Civil War and their meaning in the final outcome of the Civil War.

Hurst's main theme throughout the book is that the Southern West Point aristocratic military leaders failed the South and prevented victory in key battles especially Vicksburg and Chattanooga. Hurst also describes how northern elitist officers did everything they could to prevent Grant from succeeding and winning the war sooner. Hurst clearly blames the West Point political military machine for

causing the additional years of the war. Hurst also severely criticizes the many Northern officers to West Point blue-blood classist who could not be adaptive, or show any initiative unless it came from the curriculum of West Point. Hurst describes how the teachings of West Point Professors in reference to military tenets went right over the heads of students who were self-serving aristocrats like Bragg and Halleck.

The book clearly describes the difficult military service that Grant and Forrest faced daily by not coming from social elite and working against the aristocratic elitist officers to win the war instead of receiving credit or fame like their fellow officers. Both men proved to be exceptional combat commanders but sometimes their worst enemies were not the opposing force but the fellow military officers. Both of these men conducted some of the most difficult fighting in the Civil War which caused their superiors to have distaste for the success instead of letting them achieve more victories. Grant's famous quote provides a clear conviction that "War means fightin' and fightin' means killin'" which was a clear distinction of the West Point theorist minimal mind-set of an academic exercise.

Jack Hurst successfully and with an acute historical background tells the unlikely story of two lower-societal men who in spite of the national military culture became two of the most legendary generals of the Civil War. He clearly tells the true story of both sides of military elitism and how it cost the South any chance of victory. This book encompasses the quality of leadership values and duty which are relevant today especially with the experiences of Iraq and Afghanistan generalship. I highly recommend this book for those interested in Ulysses S. Grant, Nathan Bedford Forrest, and especially those interested in the battles of Shiloh, Vicksburg and Chattanooga.

Born to Battle is a concise historical biography of two of the most extraordinary and non-aristocratic generals of the American Civil War within the analysis of the three most important battles that doomed the confederacy. Jack Hurst vividly and historically describes the events of the battles of Shiloh, Vicksburg, and Chattanooga through the