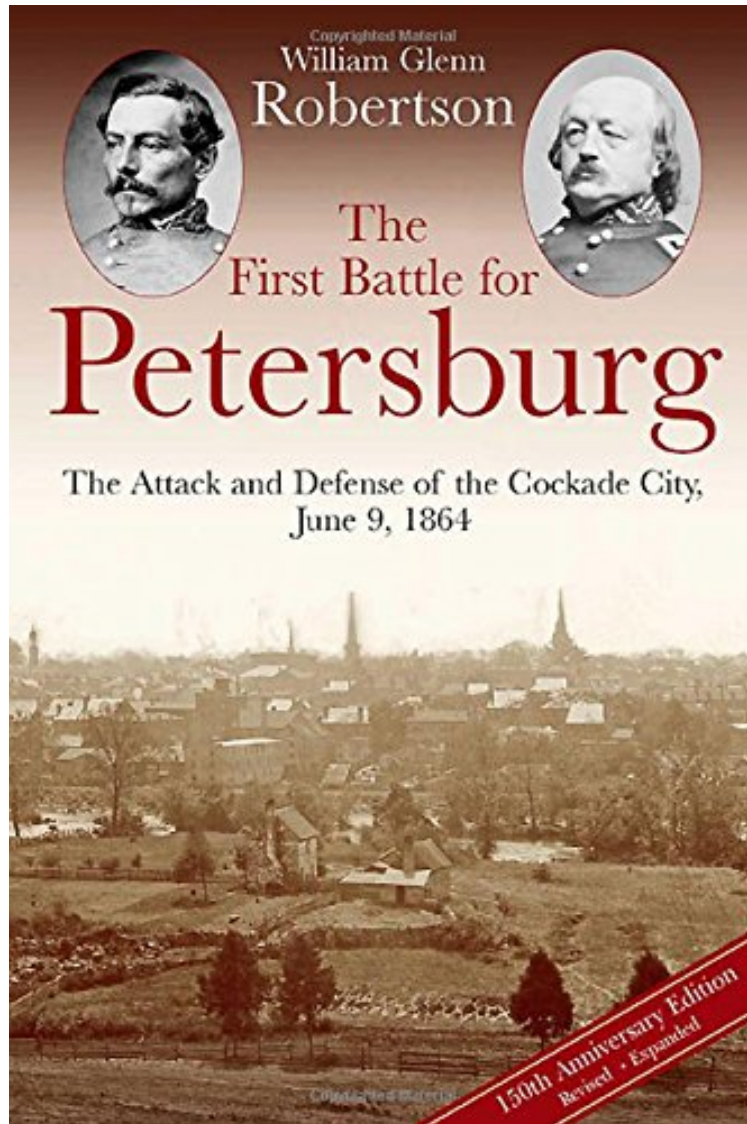


The First Battle for Petersburg: The Attack and Defense of the Cockade City, June 9, 1864

William Glenn Robertson

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1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Excellent service. Thank youBy james r. leach,jr.Wonderful book. Excellent service. Thank you.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Opening shots to the longest siege in

American history
By Jonathan Weller
The First Battle for Petersburg: The Attack and Defense of the Cockade City, June 9, 1864, by William Glenn Robertson is a unique look at a relatively forgotten portion of the ten-month long siege of the city of Petersburg, Virginia. It is in this largely forgotten environment that Robertson's book fits so well. The book showcases the initial attempt by the Federal Army of the James to take the city, and the defiant stance of "second-rate" militia troops trying desperately to stave off disaster. Robertson's book is a unique look at the first attempt by the Federals to capture Petersburg in early June of 1864. It was during Ulysses S. Grant's grand movement south to destroy all the inner workings of the Confederacy that the first battle of Petersburg was waged. What makes this work so unique is that there is no Grant, Lee, or battle-hardened legions waging a desperate struggle for survival in southern Virginia. Instead, the book centers around Union general Benjamin Butler—a political general who showed little competence in commanding troops in the field—and his Union Army of the James, squaring off against P.G.T. Beauregard and his rag-tag army of mostly militia and Richmond defenders. While this book does not include the usual characters that most Civil War buffs are accustomed to, Robertson paints a vivid picture of the dire circumstances that the Southern Confederacy faced in the spring of 1864. With Lee's Army entangled with Grant in a bloody cat-and-mouse game to the northeast of Richmond, Benjamin Butler was tasked with moving his Army of the James against either Richmond or Petersburg. Grant—who held little regard for Butler's military skills, allowed him to remain in command of the operation because of Butler's political influence, but remained extremely hesitant about Butler's qualifications to command. Grant was soon proven right. Butler and his subordinates allowed themselves to become bottled up on the Bermuda Hundred by a much inferior force of rebel troops, and with this immobility saw a large section of his army moved to Grant in early June. Butler was scorned by the removal of a large portion of his army, and shortly thereafter decided that an offensive plan of action was needed to keep what remained of his command intact. Butler decided that he should make a move toward the formidable Petersburg defenses and its militia defenders. The operation was botched from the beginning by Butler and subordinates alike, and soon the Petersburg defenders became aware of the intentions against the city. Though the garrison contained little to no actual combat troops, Henry Wise formed his rag-tag group together to do their duty for their native state. The assault finally got underway and proved semi-successful in areas for Butler's army, but costly delays and ineptitude prevented the Union troops from entering the city. By the time the Federals were able to mount a coordinated assault, James Dearing's veteran cavalry troopers had arrived and helped the militia troops to repel Butler's advance. By the end of June 9, 1864, Petersburg was safe again, and Butler had wasted a prime opportunity to possibly end the war earlier than it did. I recommend this work for those that have interest in the lesser known battles of the American Civil War. While the units or commanders are not household names, the book shows the true dedication of a city facing a much superior foe. Henry Wise's brave defense on June 9th essentially decided that Petersburg would take almost ten more months to fall, and would end up being the longest and bloodiest siege ever waged on North American soil.⁴ of 4 people found the following review helpful. The battle of Old Men Young Boys
By Timothy E. Massey
With its location near Richmond and its strategic importance as a major rail center Petersburg was destined to become a household name following the Civil War. The union launched a ten month siege of the Petersburg defenses. It was Brig. Gen. Henry Wise's paltry 1,200 Confederate defenders, one-quarter of which were reserves that included several companies of elderly men and teenagers who withstood the surge of 4600 Union troops. The defense of Petersburg is some of the least understood battles of the Civil War. How such mortals could withstand the perils of such bombardments and frontal assaults and still hold and protect the city is the focus of this book. The battle of Old Men and Young Boys is the only Civil War battle commemorated in Petersburg today. Read this book and you will know why.

Despite its significance, very little has been written about the nearly ten-month struggle for Petersburg, Virginia. It comes as no surprise, then, that few readers are even aware that Petersburg's citizens felt war's hard hand nearly a week before the armies of Grant and Lee arrived on their doorstep in the middle of June 1864. During his ill-fated Bermuda Hundred Campaign, Maj. Gen. Benjamin Butler in late May took note of the "Cockade City's" position astride Richmond's railroad lifeline and its minuscule garrison. When two attempts to seize the city and destroy the bridges over the Appomattox River failed, Butler mounted an expedition to Petersburg on June 9. Led by Maj. Gen. Quincy Gillmore and Brig. Gen. August Kautz, the Federal force of 3,300 infantry and 1,300 cavalry appeared large enough to overwhelm Brig. Gen. Henry Wise's paltry 1,200 Confederate defenders, one-quarter of which were reserves that included several companies of elderly men and teenagers. The attack on the critical logistical center, and how the Confederates managed to hold the city, is the subject of Robertson's groundbreaking study. Ironically, Butler's effort resulted in Gen. P. G. T. Beauregard's decision to slightly enlarge Petersburg's garrison—troops that may have provided the razor-thin margin of difference when the head of the Army of the Potomac appeared in strength six days later. The First Battle for Petersburg describes the strategy, tactics, and generalship of the Battle of June 9 in full detail, as well as the impact on the city's citizens, both in and out of the ranks. Robertson's study is grounded in extensive primary sources supported by original maps and photos and illustrations. It remains the most comprehensive analysis of the June 9 engagement of Petersburg's "old men and young boys." Petersburg itself has never forgotten the sacrifices of its citizens on that summer day 150 years ago, and continues to honor their service with an annual

commemoration. Once you read Dr. Robertson's *The First Battle for Petersburg: The Attack and Defense of the Cockade City, June 9, 1864*, you will understand why.

"The campaigns around Petersburg rank among the least understood elements of Civil War military history. This revised edition of Glenn Robertson's study of the initial fighting around the city provides an excellent starting point for anyone who hopes to understand the sprawling operations that unfolded over the next ten months and did much to settle the fate of the Confederacy (Gary W. Gallagher, award-winning author and Nau Professor of History, University of Virginia)"Petersburg was the second largest city in all of Virginia, a major rail center of strategic importance. The first Federal effort to capture it on June 9, 1864, when it was defended by little more than 'old men and young boys,' is the subject of Dr. Robertson's *The First Battle for Petersburg*, a completely revised edition of his outstanding micro-history, and one I highly recommend to anyone who wants to understand how the subsequent siege began, and why." (Chris Calkins, noted Civil War author and historian, Petersburg, Virginia)"Only one Civil War battle continues to be commemorated in Petersburg, Virginia, today. The 'Battle of Old Men and Young Boys' on June 9, 1864 is brought to life in this new edition of Glenn Robertson's comprehensive study. Deeply researched, well-written, and updated with new information, Robertson's new edition provides a splendid preface to any study of the Petersburg Campaign." (A. Wilson Greene, author of *Civil War Petersburg: Confederate City in the Crucible of War*)

About the Author
William Glenn Robertson received his Ph.D. from the University of Virginia in 1975. He is the author of *Back Door to Richmond: The Bermuda Hundred Campaign, April-June 1864* as well as numerous articles on the Civil War. After a ten-year career in academic institutions in Virginia, New Mexico, and Colorado, he joined the faculty of the Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas in 1981. There he revived the educational technique known as the Staff Ride, and wrote the Army's manual on the subject. He retired as the Director, Combat Studies Institute in 2011.