



A Perfect Gibraltar: The Battle for Monterrey, Mexico, 1846: 26 (Campaigns and Commanders Series)

Christopher D. Dishman

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For three days in the fall of 1846, U.S. and Mexican soldiers fought fiercely in the picturesque city of Monterrey, turning the northern Mexican town, known for its towering mountains and luxurious gardens, into one of the nineteenth century's most gruesome battlefields. Led by Brigadier General Zachary Taylor, graduates of the U.S. Military Academy encountered a city almost perfectly protected by mountains, a river, and a vast plain. Monterrey's ideal defensive position inspired more than one U.S. soldier to call the city "a perfect Gibraltar." The first day of fighting was deadly for the Americans, especially the newly graduated West Point cadets. But they soon adjusted their tactics and began fighting building to building.

Chris D. Dishman conveys in a vivid narrative the intensity and drama of the Battle of Monterrey, which marked the first time U.S. troops engaged in prolonged urban combat. Future Civil War generals and West Point graduates fought desperately alongside rough Texan, Mississippian, and Tennessean volunteers. General Taylor engineered one of the army's first wars of maneuver at Monterrey by sending the bulk of his troops against the weakest part of the city, and embedded press reporters wrote eyewitness accounts of the action for readers back in the States. Dishman interweaves descriptions of troop maneuvers and clashes between units using pistols and rifles with accounts of hand-to-hand combat involving edged weapons, stones, clubs, and bare hands. He brings regular soldiers and citizen volunteers to life in personal vignettes that draw on firsthand accounts from letters, diaries, and reports written by men on both sides. An epilogue carries the narrative thread to the conclusion of the war.

Dishman has canvassed a wide range of Mexican and American sources and walked Monterrey's streets and battlefields. Accompanied by maps and period illustrations, this skillfully written history will interest scholars, history enthusiasts, and everyone who enjoys a true war story well told.

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