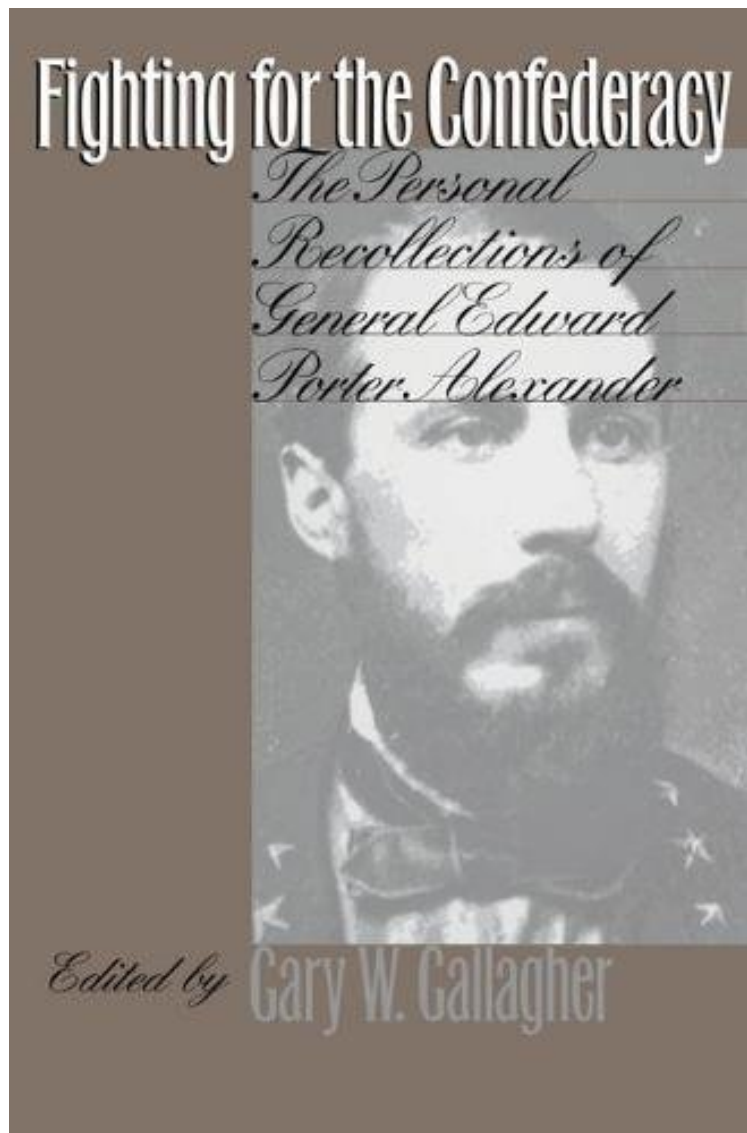


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Fighting for the Confederacy: The Personal Recollections of General Edward Porter Alexander (Civil War America)

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From Brand: The University of North Carolina Press : Fighting for the Confederacy: The Personal Recollections of General Edward Porter Alexander (Civil War America) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Fighting for the Confederacy: The Personal Recollections of

General Edward Porter Alexander (Civil War America):

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Fantastic Book - What a Find!By CD4DCI recently stumbled across two books of memoirs by Gen. Edward Porter Alexander. Fighting for the Confederacy: The Personal Recollections of General Edward Porter Alexander Military Memoirs of A Confederate If you haven't read his "personal" memoir, "Fighting for the Confederacy," I highly recommend it! I'm finding it fascinating. These memoirs were never published, and were "lost" until discovered and then published in 1989. Alexander wrote much of it while away on business in South America, and lonely enough that he had time to sit and write - and write with relish he did. He wrote for his children, who had been nagging him to capture his memories in writing, and he never intended for his personal memoirs to be published. He didn't have lots of reference material with him, so he drew upon his memory and strongest personal recollections, and felt free to express lots of personal opinions, which make the book a pleasure to read and illuminate the history wonderfully. The act of writing his personal story drew him in. He had been carrying his "assessment" of the different battles in his mind for years (this was 1894), and wanted to focus on the military "chess game" that was being played by the generals on both sides. So after he finished his personal memoirs for his family, he started again and rewrote his memoirs in a more formal, "detached" and analytic manner, this time with the intention of publishing them. This is how the second book (Military Memoirs of a Confederate) came about, and also why the first set of memoirs were never published. They sat in a pile of their family's papers, most subsequent archivists assuming that they were early drafts of the second book, until it was finally realized that they were an entirely separate and earlier personal work. I haven't read the second book yet - but skimmed it a bit. I decided to read the personal history first — as I thought it would be more interesting, and perhaps I'd then have a lot more context to help me through the second book's "analysis" of the battles. I'm surprised at how much I "relate" to this man — not only as a person but in the events that he participated in. I find that because I've read enough Civil War material over the years, and also have visited places like Harper's Ferry, Bull Run, Antietam, Richmond, Fredericksburg, (etc etc.), that I'm surprisingly familiar with a lot that he's writing about. His writing "rings a bell" so to speak - and that is a pretty cool feeling to have considering he is writing about things from 150 years ago. Two quick anecdotes. First, while he expresses zero regret for fighting as hard as he did against the Federal army, he is really very glad that the Confederacy was defeated in the end. His description of why that is almost feels like he's sitting in our seats and looking back at the last 150 years, and his description feels prophetic. Second, he describes how Stonewall Jackson might have ended the war early in 1862, with a crushing victory for the South, but for his religious "trust in the will of the Lord, and follow his commandments" mindset that caused him to avoid fighting on the Sabbath (Sunday). Apparently Jackson eventually got over his hangup about that - but the tremendous opportunity was lost forever. Thank God! ;-)

This and many more great anecdotes - including a number about Gen. Robert E. Lee that reveal somewhat more of him - and thus make him more accessible as a real person than some ancient mythically heroic figure - than I'd read about before. Can't recommend this enough.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Insightful NarrativeBy Richard Ward Fighting for the Confederacy: The Personal Recollections of General Edward Porter Alexander is a unique book insofar as it represents a narrative account of one of the more important figures in the Civil War. Many books have been written by famous generals in which details of various battles are inspected and analyzed but very few offer an insight outside of battle specifics. Porter Alexander's narrative offers insight; some facts are omitted because he did not have access to other records at the time the narrative was written, blanks occur in many places where troop strengths and body counts would normally appear but honest commentary is written about Johnston, Jackson, Lee, Longstreet, and McClellan to name a few, something other books cannot provide. If you enjoy getting a real sense of this conflict it is a book well worth reading.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Well written inputBy Girard Hedereaux He was a smart man whose perceptions and conclusions and opinions mattered a great deal to a lot of historians. Reading Alexander is a must for a growing historian.

Originally published by UNC Press in 1989, *Fighting for the Confederacy* is one of the richest personal accounts in all of the vast literature on the Civil War. Alexander was involved in nearly all of the great battles of the East, from First Manassas through Appomattox, and his duties brought him into frequent contact with most of the high command of the Army of Northern Virginia, including Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, and James Longstreet. No other Civil War veteran of his stature matched Alexander's ability to discuss operations in penetrating detail-- this is especially true of his description of Gettysburg. His narrative is also remarkable for its utterly candid appraisals of leaders on both sides.

From *Library Journal* Georgia native and West Point graduate Alexander was involved in nearly all of the significant battles in the Eastern theater of the Civil War and came into frequent contact with the highest command of the Army of Northern Virginia, including Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, and James Longstreet. His perspective on such personalities and on the events unfolding around him is a most valuable one. Alexander's memoirs lay virtually untouched for some eight decades until rescued by Gallagher, who has done a splendid job of editing: unobtrusive; the

annotation not merely a rehash of that which can be readily found in other Civil War sources. An excellent index and illustrations and maps from the original manuscript complement the text. Recommended for Civil War and military history collections. History Book Club selection.- Jason H. Silverman, Winthrop Coll., Rock Hill, S.C. Copyright 1989 Reed Business Information, Inc. [A] new landmark in Civil War historiography, one that no historian of the period can afford to ignore."Journal of Southern History" The publication of Fighting for the Confederacy constitutes the most important addition to Confederate historiography in years. . . . A pleasure to read. . . . [It] will join the list of essential readings for students of the Civil War.--Civil War History Gary W. Gallagher, in publishing Fighting for the Confederacy, has given Civil War historians one of the most unexpected and delightful surprises in many years. . . . It is a book that must be read.--Louisiana History All serious students of the Army of Northern Virginia . . . owe a debt of gratitude to Gary Gallagher. . . . This book is destined to become a classic. It is simply must reading.--Blue and Gray What a marvelous book! . . . Because of Gallagher's editorial efforts everyone interested in the Confederacy has ready access to what may very well be the most outstanding Confederate military memoir.--Virginia Magazine of History and Biography Alexander's vigorous prose and astute personal observations . . . have made Fighting for the Confederacy a new landmark in Civil War historiography, one that no historian of the period can afford to ignore.--Journal of Southern History Alexander's new memoirs are relaxed and engaging, lacking the self-importance that mars the memoirs of a good many soldiers with weaker claims to distinction than his, and refreshingly candid about his own frailties and those of some of the Confederacy's most revered commanders.--American Heritage A treasure of Civil War 'personal memoirs' . . . altogether livelier and more irreverent than anything in Grant's and Sherman's books.--New Republic Fighting for the Confederacy unquestionably will join the ranks of those standard works that every serious student of the Civil War will want to read.--Georgia Historical Quarterly