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The South's Finest: The First Missouri Confederate Brigade from Pea Ridge to Vicksburg

Phillip Thomas Tucker

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Phillip Thomas Tucker : The South's Finest: The First Missouri Confederate Brigade from Pea Ridge to Vicksburg before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The South's Finest: The First Missouri Confederate Brigade from Pea Ridge to Vicksburg:

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Well-Rounded Trans-Mississippi/Western CS Brigade HistoryBy popinjayFrom all the western Confederate defeats, the Missouri Brigade must have been the most frustrated of units.

Tucker makes a solid case that this particular brigade was the most intrepid unit of the western CS ranks. Overall, one gets the picture that this brigade was the one most often left holding the bag, serving some of the most dangerous and audacious missions of its almost constantly defeated army. Regimental histories often degenerate into chest thumping, or worse, punditry - but here there's not a bit of the snarky, academic elitism to offend the eye, only solid research, appropriate conclusions, and commentary respectful to both sides of the War. Too few authors are able to be objective enough to describe the merits of a Confederate fighting unit while fully acknowledging the tenacity of U.S. Grant. These types of histories, told through soldiers' pens, are the best type of American military studies. They exemplify the American character of the time and do a lot to explain the reasons for the sustained pluck of the men of the blue and the gray. We learn something about the soldiers' own motivations for fighting, right down to what they thought of their first uniforms (uniforms that were not gray but white). For readers tired of "laundry list history," this is a good study of those that were actually there. Mainstream, general history would only tell us that the Confederate tactics at Pea Ridge failed, while histories such as this delve into the tremendous sacrifice endured despite that failure. A great read for lovers of regimental history, regardless of one's region or preferences. 10 of 11 people found the following review helpful. A fine source of information

By Megan A. Bowser
This 1993 non-fiction book chronologically details the experience of the 1st Missouri Brigade from 1862 until their surrender at Vicksburg in 1863. It covers their victories and defeats at Pea Ridge, Iuka, Corinth, Louisiana Expedition, Grand Gulf, Port Gibson, Champions Hill, Big Black River and Vicksburg. It gives an account in detail of the leaders of the brigade, the common soldiers and touches on the large role of the St. Louis residents in the brigade. This book gives us an in-depth look at the lives of soldiers whom most of history has forgotten. The South's Finest is a very detailed work that I enjoyed reading. It is well documented and is a very thorough, professional work using journals, newspapers, and the Missouri Historical Society. The works cited demonstrates a mastery of the subject; Phillip Thomas Tucker's extensive use of primary sources shows the authenticity of his conclusions. Tucker's background as an Air Force historian also lends to his reliability. The only draw back is, because of the professional nature of this book, the common reader may find pieces of the work a bit dry. Overall, this book can be read by amateurs and professionals alike and offers an in-depth look at the South's finest soldiers in Missouri.

Book by Tucker, Phillip Thomas

"outstanding scholarship breaking new ground . . . Dr. Tucker has achieved a monumental work. In this book, he has combined battle history with ethnic history; and the study of a military elite with social history from the bottom up . . . The South's Finest is the story of the 8,000 Missourians, mainly Irish, and their growth from farmers into one of the Confederacy's best and most often used combat units. Only about 300 veterans were left in the First Missouri Confederate Brigade by the end of the war so heavily were they engaged. In this book an important component of the Confederacy's war effort in the west finally receives its just recognition."--Martin K. Gordon, Ph.D. "He writes so vividly, accurately, and in great detail, in the process of utilizing an awesome amount of sources, many of them unpublished and hitherto unused diaries, letters, and memoirs."--Albert Castel, Ph.D. "White Mane Publishing would like to nominate Phillip Thomas Tucker's The South's Finest: The First Missouri Confederate Brigade from Pea Ridge to Vicksburg for the Lincoln Prize. As outstanding scholarship breaking new ground, The South's Finest qualifies for your consideration."--White Mane Publishing Company "Resting in relative obscurity, the First Missouri Confederate Brigade had a combat record second to none among all the Confederate and Union brigades . . . He has drawn on unpublished letters, diaries, and journals in building his portrayal of the transformation of raw troops into veterans, outnumbered but never outfought. I highly recommend this text."--Sergeant Kirkland's Museum "Dr. Tucker has rescued the 1st Missouri Brigade from relative obscurity . . . Dr. Tucker researched the brigade for 20 years, and the depth of his sources shows . . . the depth of research and the unique photographs make this a valuable addition to any library on the Civil War in the West."--Blue and Gray Magazine