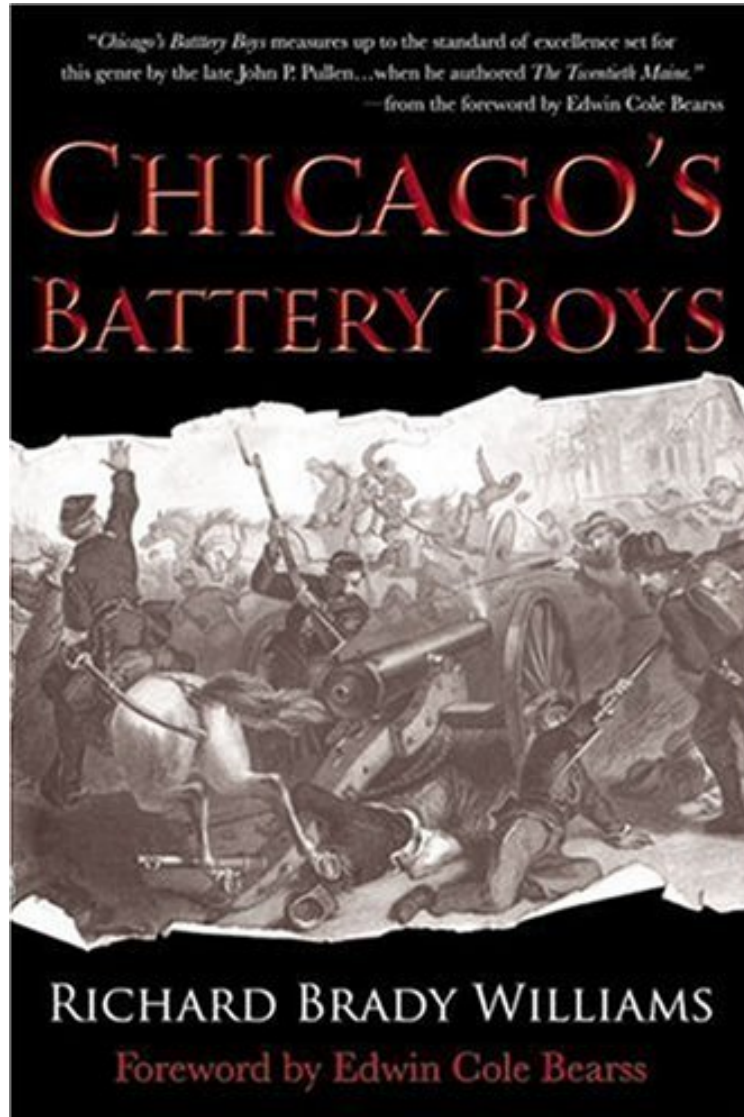


(Get free) Chicago's Battery Boys: The Chicago Mercantile Battery in the Civil War's Western Theater

Chicago's Battery Boys: The Chicago Mercantile Battery in the Civil War's Western Theater

Richard Brady Williams

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Richard Brady Williams : Chicago's Battery Boys: The Chicago Mercantile Battery in the Civil War's Western Theater before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Chicago's Battery Boys: The Chicago Mercantile Battery in the Civil War's Western Theater:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Boys to Men By Craig Mayer Well researched and written, "Chicago's Battery Boys" is a thoroughly engaging history of the diverse experiences of a group of young men serving

together during the Civil War. While this book presents solid history, it is written largely from the perspective of the individual soldiers who lived through (and several who didn't) the campaigns and battles in which this unit was engaged. The use of diaries and reminiscences brings history to life. Being so far removed from when the events described in this book occurred, one tends to think of frail old men sporting grey beards fighting their way through the South, rather than the impossibly young and rather naive boys who found themselves thrust into the midst of such incredible events. This book brings it all to life and admirably captures the most profound experiences that rapidly transformed these young boys from Chicago into dependable men who took what they learned from the War to help build this great nation.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Vicksburg or HellBy Dave Van DorenI thoroughly enjoyed reading this account of the Chicago Mercantile Battery. The book tells the story of its role in the Civil War's western theatre as well as what life was like from the view of the soldiers as the war wore on. Rick Williams did a wonderful job of weaving in Will Brown's Civil War letter collection and other material, which bring a vivid 1st hand account of the soldier's struggles to life. One of my favorite letters is from Corporal Charles Haseltine. He and the Battery Boys encounter the 1st Regiment of Mississippi Light Artillery in the edge of the woods at Champion Hill east of Vicksburg. They get pinned down in front of the Coker house under heavy fire when a piece of artillery shell tears through a straw Rebel hat on Haseltine's head. He had just picked up the hat the day before and thought it would bring him luck. The shell knocked him out and the Battery Boys left him for dead at the end of the day. As dusk falls on the battlefield, the Confederates' Brigadier General Lloyd Tilghman is hit by the same shell that kills his horse and the Federals disrupt Pemberton's retreat toward Vicksburg. That night,, four of Haseltine's friends return to the Coker house property to retrieve his body and discover he is alive. Back at camp, a doctor stitches the corporal's forehead back in place, and he lives to tell his story! The author goes on to describe the Mercantile Battery's role in the Siege of Vicksburg. The Battery Boys drag a one-ton gun up a steep embankment to within 20-30 feet of the 2nd Texas Lunette to fire 14 rounds into the enemy's fort, which enabled the Union infantrymen to withdraw without further damage.. A nice touch that every reader may not notice but will enjoy is the integrated placement of maps, photographs and sketches. Each of them is strategically located on the same page where it is discussed in the book. This placement must have taken quite a bit of effort during the publishing process, but it definitely makes reading the book more enjoyable. I recommend Chicago's Battery Boys for history enthusiasts who are interested in getting a fresh perspective on what was happening during the Vicksburg and Red River Campaigns. Besides following the various battles, readers may also like the behind-the-scenes look at what was happening with civilians in Illinois, Mississippi, and Louisiana. The extensive footnotes will undoubtedly appeal to Civil War buffs who want to delve into this story in greater detail.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Another terrific regimental studyBy George C. BradleyOne of the few publishers still brave enough to issue regimental histories is Savas Beatie. What sets them apart are two things. The books themselves are always wonderfully designed and constructed. When you buy one of their books you get the real deal, top quality bindings and paper, bright illustrations, crisp text. But they also take care to make certain their readers get a good story. They do not give you the collated reprints of the Official Records that sometimes passes for a unit history.

Richard Brady William's Chicago Battery Boys is a shining example of why their books, on so seemingly parochial subjects, are so deserving of the time and money of student's of the Civil War. The book itself will catch your eye. The text will keep your attention. The Chicago Mercantile Battery was raised in the Windy City in 1862, in answer to the second great call for troops that went out that summer. Sent to Grant, they made their fame at Vicksburg where six of their number earned Congressional medals of honor when they carried one of their gun tubes by hand up to the rebel works and began firing at point-blank range through an undefended break in the wall. Their heaviest battle came a year later, at Sabine Crossroads, where they were the only gunners able to get their carriages off the field, only to have to spike them when the route of retreat became irretrievably snarled.

The book is packed with maps, illustrations, and pictures of the men who made this battery a great and memorable unit. The author freely reprints their letters in those instances where the participants themselves can tell the story best. When they can't, he steps in to clearly set out the course of events. If you have an interest in Grant and the western theater of the war, this book will be a welcome addition to your collection.

The celebrated Chicago Mercantile Battery was organized by the Mercantile Association, a group of prominent Chicago merchants, and mustered into service in August of 1862. The Chicagoans would serve in many of the Western Theater's most prominent engagements until the war ended in the spring of 1865. The battery accompanied General William T. Sherman during his operations against Vicksburg as part of the XIII Corps under General A. J. Smith. The artillerymen performed well throughout the campaign at such places as Chickasaw Bluffs, Port Gibson, Champion Hill, Big Black River, and the siege operations of Vicksburg. Ancillary operations included the reduction of Arkansas Post, Fort Hindman, Milliken's Bend, Jackson, and many others. After reporting to General Nathaniel Banks, commander of the Department of the Gulf, the Chicago battery transferred to New Orleans and ended up taking part in Banks' disastrous Red River Campaign in Louisiana. The battery was almost wiped out at Sabine Crossroads (Mansfield), where it was overrun after hand-to-hand fighting. Almost two dozen battery men ended up in Southern prisons. Additional operations included expeditions against railroads and other military targets.

Chicago's Battery Boys is the

based upon many years of primary research and extensive travel by the author through Illinois, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Louisiana. Williams skillfully weaves contemporary accounts by the artillerists themselves into a rich and powerful narrative that is sure to please the most discriminating Civil War reader. His study will be hailed as a classic unit history comparable to the wonderful regimental studies of the late 19th Century. Noted historian and author Edwin C. Bearss, in his long and extraordinary Foreword, writes this: "As a unit history, *The Chicago Mercantile Battery and the Civil War in the Western Theater* measures up to the standard of excellence set for this genre by the late John P. Pullen back in 1957 when he authored *The Twentieth Maine: A Volunteer Regiment in the Civil War*."

About the Author Richard Brady Williams is a business executive in the biotechnology field. For almost a decade, Richard has been conducting research on the Chicago Mercantile Battery and collecting memorabilia from the unit.