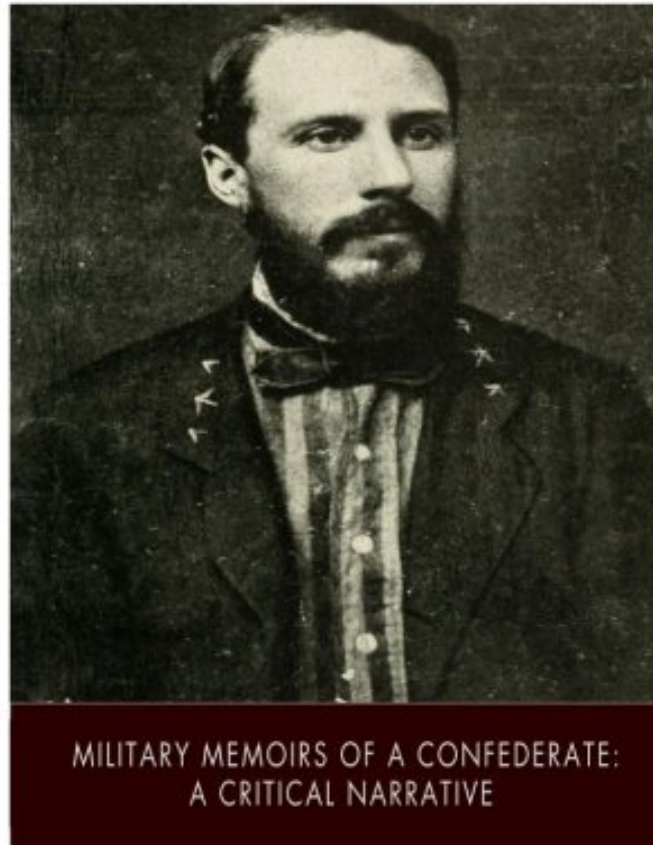


[Download pdf] Military Memoirs of a Confederate: A Critical Narrative

## Military Memoirs of a Confederate: A Critical Narrative


*Edward Porter Alexander*

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EDWARD PORTER ALEXANDER

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**Edward Porter Alexander : Military Memoirs of a Confederate: A Critical Narrative** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Military Memoirs of a Confederate: A Critical Narrative:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Enjoyable and insightful book about the Army of Northern Virginia. By John Stults I read the ebook version and it seemed to miss some maps or tables that the author referred to in the text. As some reviewers mentioned, if you don't have a map and are somewhat familiar with the Civil War it might be hard to follow. On the other hand, if you have a good understanding of battlefield geography and are somewhat acquainted

with some of the key command players this book provides a good insight into the confederate side of the Army of Northern Virginia. Some of his bias does come thru for instance he seems to not like Lincoln -- probably understandable. The end of the book seems rushed as if it was heavily edited or the author had a time limit to finish the book. Having mentioned some problems with the book, overall I found it a delightful read and I liked the frequent summaries of casualties and number of captured cannons, etc. The author is good at pointing out errors made by some confederate generals, including Lee, and good at pointing out good things from leaders less well thought of for instance DH Hill and Pickett. All in all I found the book an enjoyable read and well worth the time invested. I recommend this book to anyone interested in the ins and outs of the civil war, especially the war in Va. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. It is also very unbiased - the author gives intelligent notes on both sides and critiques when necessary. By MBA very informative read if you are looking to learn about the complex ins and outs of army movements and strategies of the Civil War. It is also very unbiased - the author gives intelligent notes on both sides and critiques when necessary. Being confused on so many things about the Civil War, I finally felt like I was starting to grasp it after reading this book. I would say it is truly a must-have for any serious student of the Civil War. I would recommend having a Civil War atlas handy while reading, as it helps to be able to follow along. 8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Best Ever first hand account of the Civil War campaigns. By Michael D Land. Alexander's narrative is well written and easily flows from one Civil War campaign to the next. He was very insightful and critical of some of the decisions made by both the Federal and Confederate commanders. I learned some things that were not covered in other first hand accounts of the war, such as Longstreet leaving the ultimate decision for Pickett's charge at Gettysburg up to Alexander who was in command of the artillery fire being put on cemetery hill. This put Alexander in a moral and practical bind because Longstreet told him when he felt he had put enough fire into the enemy, signal Pickett to charge. Alexander knew he didn't have enough 'fire' and would be sending Pickett to slaughter, but was following orders. Highly intelligent author and highly recommended.

In the narrative of the Civil War, Edward Porter Alexander has loomed larger in death than in life. Just 25 years old when the war broke out, Porter Alexander had already served as an engineer and officer in the U.S. Army, but the native Georgian resigned his commission in May 1861 and joined the Confederacy after his home state seceded. Porter Alexander spent 1861 as an intelligence officer, and he served as part of a signal guard, but he soon became chief of ordnance for Joseph Johnston's army near Richmond. Half a year later, Johnston would be injured during the Peninsula Campaign at the Battle of Seven Pines, after which he was replaced by Robert E. Lee. Over the course of 1862, Porter Alexander took on more roles in the Army of Northern Virginia's artillery branch, particularly under James Longstreet's 1st Corps. Though he participated in several battles, he played his biggest role at the Battle of Gettysburg. On the third day, Lee decided to make a thrust at the center of the Union's line with about 15,000 men spread out over three divisions. Though it is now known as Pickett's Charge, named after division commander George Pickett, the assignment for the charge was given to Longstreet, whose 1st Corps included Pickett's division. Lee's decision necessitated a heavy artillery bombardment of the Union line in an attempt to knock out the Union's own artillery before beginning the charge that would cover nearly a mile of open space from Seminary Ridge to the Union line on Cemetery Ridge. Lee tasked Porter Alexander, in charge of the 1st Corps' guns, to conduct the artillery bombardment. What resulted was the largest sustained bombardment of the Civil War, with over 150 Confederate cannons across the line firing incessantly at the Union line for nearly 2 hours. Unfortunately for Porter Alexander and the Confederates, the sheer number of cannons belched so much smoke that they had trouble gauging how effective the shells were. As it turned out, most of the artillery was overshooting the target, landing in the rear of the Union line. Reluctant to order the charge, Longstreet commanded Porter Alexander to order the timing for the charge. As Longstreet and Alexander anticipated, the charge was an utter disaster, incurring a nearly 50% casualty rate and failing to break the Union line. Porter Alexander would continue to serve under Longstreet's corps for most of the rest of the war, and he famously suggested to Lee at Appomattox that the Confederate army should disband and melt away instead of surrender. Porter Alexander would later regret the suggestion, and Lee scolded him for it anyway. Though he had served with distinction during the Civil War, it was Porter Alexander's memoirs that have kept his name alive today. While many prominent officers on both sides wrote memoirs, Porter Alexander's were among the most insightful and often considered by historians as the most evenhanded. With a sense of humor and a good narrative, Porter Alexander skillfully narrated the war, his service, and what he considered the successes and faults of others, including Lee, when he thought they had made good decisions or mistakes. As a result, historians continue to rely heavily on his memoirs as a source for Civil War history.

From the Back Cover This book was published in 1907 and immediately recognized as a classic. Unlike 'Fighting for the Confederacy,' which was based largely on Alexander's own recollections, 'Military Memoirs of a Confederate' relies on a vast amount of research. It is undoubtedly the most accurate and most important first-hand general history of the Civil War. About the Author General Edward Porter Alexander (1835-1910) was Robert E. Lee's artillery commander for most of the Civil War. After the Confederate surrender, he served as an executive at various railroad

companies and became a respected author. He died in Savannah, Georgia.