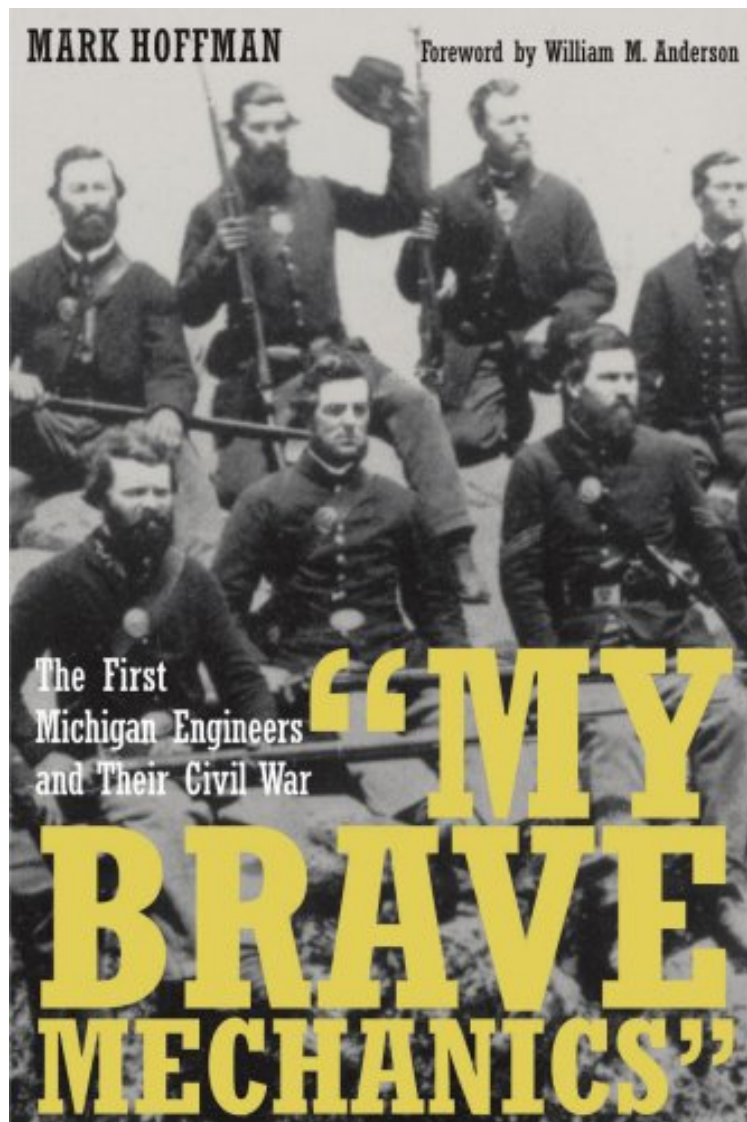


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"My Brave Mechanics": The First Michigan Engineers and Their Civil War (Great Lakes Books Series)

Mark Hoffman

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Mark Hoffman : "My Brave Mechanics": The First Michigan Engineers and Their Civil War (Great Lakes Books Series) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised "My Brave Mechanics": The First Michigan Engineers and Their Civil War (Great Lakes Books Series):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Determined brave mechanicsBy Jeff DufloDetailed description of

the harsh realities that our brave engineers and mechanics endured. Recommend for any history buff. I am proud to know that my great great grandfather had served in this regiment that aided Sherman's assault on Atlanta. Thank you for having this book and part of my heritage on my doorstep before Christmas for my father. 2 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Witty and poignant! By Puaaloalo My Brave Mechanics: The First Michigan Engineers and Their Civil War, is a witty and poignant view of the struggles of the Michigan volunteers from the beginning of the Civil War to its end. This is the unit that my Great-great-great-great uncle served in from its inception in 1861 until the war's end in 1865. I found myself caught up in Mark Hoffman's descriptions of the daily life in camp, battles fought, and history being made. I found it very interesting that not only did the volunteers have to deal with poor sanitary conditions, and back-breaking labor building bridges and repairing railroads, they also had severe pay problems. My Brave Mechanics is extremely well written and a must read for any Civil War buff. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A most informative and well written bit of history. By ragnarok2 I decided to read this book because my maternal great grandfather was a member of the 1st Michigan (Company G) for a few years during the war. I also had an opportunity to meet Mark Hoffman a few years ago while he lectured on the unit and found him (Mr. Hoffman) to be a very gracious gentleman whose knowledge of this unit seemed to be everything that I would have expected considering the amount of time he spent researching and writing it. If you need to know something about the 1st Mich. and it's not somewhere on the pages of this book (or somewhere in Mr. Hoffman's brain), then I strongly suspect that it simply doesn't exist, at least, not this side of the grave.

As volunteer engineers for the Union army, the First Michigan Engineers and Mechanics regiment was made up of skilled artisans, craftsmen, railroad men, and engineers whose behind-the-scenes work was crucial to the Union victory. Charged with maintaining the Union supply line in the western theater, the engineers constructed and repaired a staggering number of bridges, blockhouses, fortifications, railroads, and telegraph lines to keep the Union army functioning in the aftermath of battle. "My Brave Mechanics" traces the history of this little-known unit, revealing their substantial engineering accomplishments as well as their combat experience. Although they were charged primarily with engineering work, the regiment also saw substantial direct combat action. Confederate guerillas and bushwackers bent on disrupting vital communication and supply lines routinely disregarded the usual rules of warfare to target the engineers. They struck quickly, and sometimes at night, exploiting the isolation and vulnerability of the workmen, who, unlike regular infantrymen, were almost never dug-in and ready for an attack. Yet despite the odds against them, the Michigan engineers are recognized for several key accomplishments, including their work in keeping the railroad open south from Union supply depots in Louisville, the relief of the Union forces in Chattanooga, and destruction of rebel railroads during Sherman's march through Georgia and the Carolinas. The regiment's senior officers also held important posts within the Union military organization in the west and were instrumental in developing a coherent policy for the use of captured rebel railroads and infrastructure. Historian Mark Hoffman offers readers a detailed account of the Michigan engineers from a wealth of sources, including letters, diaries, regimental papers, communications and orders from the military establishment, period newspapers, and postwar accounts. As little has been written about Union volunteer engineers in the western theater, their unique history will undoubtedly be fascinating reading for Civil War buffs, local historians, and those interested in the history of American military engineering.

About the Author Mark Hoffman is deputy department director of the Michigan Department of History, Arts and Libraries.