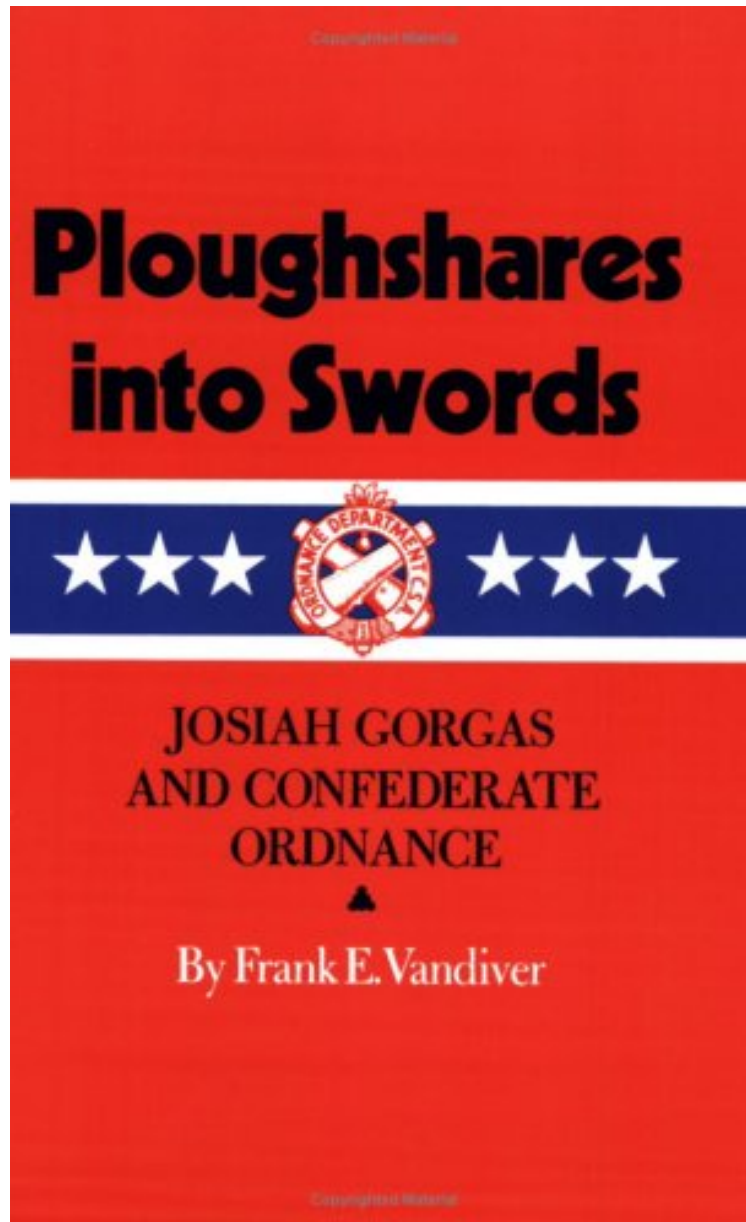


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Ploughshares into Swords: Josiah Gorgas and Confederate Ordnance (Williams-Ford Texas AM University Military History Series)

Frank E. Vandiver

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Frank E. Vandiver : Ploughshares into Swords: Josiah Gorgas and Confederate Ordnance (Williams-Ford Texas AM University Military History Series) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Ploughshares into Swords: Josiah Gorgas and Confederate Ordnance (Williams-Ford Texas AM University Military History Series)*:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars
By D. It met all my expectations. (I am related to Josiah Gorgas)
7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. The man who armed the Confederacy
By Old Grump
When the Confederacy began to arm, weapons were in such short supply that serious consideration was given to arming the troops with pikes. When Lee surrendered at Appomattox, four years later, the South was in ruins, and his men lacked shoes, uniforms, and food, but they had guns and ammunition. This book is the story of the man responsible for this miracle, Josiah Gorgas. It is a tale of invincible determination, boundless energy, and endless ingenuity, and is well worth reading regardless of your feelings about the war.
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very fine book on the man that kept the Confederacy in the war
By W. Wadford
Very fine book on the man that kept the Confederacy in the war. Without Gorgas R.E. Lee would have had to surrender in 1863.

Begun in the late 1940s, before Vandiver enrolled in the doctoral program at Tulane University, research for this book started with his interviewing the Confederate ordnance chief's daughters and included perusal of Gorgas's 1857-1877 journals. Gorgas is credited with creating, in the Confederacy's ordnance department, "success beyond expectation." With the South having far less capacity to produce arms than the North and with communications from the field severely hampered throughout the war, the former West Pointer nevertheless was responsible for the fact that, as some have argued, the South kept the war alive as long as it did. Supplying the South with firearms was such a problem in the beginning that pikes and lances had been ordered to arm troops. Lead shortages were chronically low, and at one point in 1863 a bureau circular restricted cartridge issues to three per man per month. But supplies never dried up completely, and Gorgas kept his eye on the situation in every theater. As Vandiver wrote, "one of the greatest testimonials to the efficient manner in which Gorgas had organized the bureau is the performance of his field officers during the last hectic days before the surrender of the Army of the Tennessee." Vandiver adds that "the main reason why the bureau managed to go on functioning was that Gorgas had given so much authority to the lower echelons." President Jefferson Davis rewarded Gorgas with a promotion to brigadier general in November 1864. "[W]ith Sherman ravaging the industrial heart of the shrinking Confederacy, Gorgas had done all he could to make his bureau weather the hurricane," Vandiver wrote, adding, "He thought he had succeeded, and he was almost right." In its review of the 1952 edition, the *Southwest Review* remarked that "the story of the munitions supply of the C.S.A. is the authentic miracle of military history." The *Journal of Southern History* stated that "Dr. Vandiver, with the use of much unpublished manuscript material has here made a valuable contribution to Confederate history."

From the Back Cover
First published in 1952, *Ploughshares into Swords* is a compound study of the life and Civil War record of Josiah Gorgas. A West Point graduate of the class of 1840, Gorgas chose to enter the Ordnance Corps. He supplied Scott's march to Mexico City in the Mexican War, but by 1860 he was out of sorts with his superiors and had many contacts in the South. When the Confederate States of America offered Gorgas the job of ordnance officer, he accepted the challenge, and the South gained the services of an administrative genius. Under his leadership the Confederacy developed an unfailing munitions supply that stood solidly while the rest of the Confederacy's supports crumbled. Long overshadowed in history by the exploits of the South's flamboyant field commanders and even by the achievements of his son William, the surgeon general who helped banish yellow fever, Josiah Gorgas's feats were finally presented in *Ploughshares into Swords*. This new printing makes the classic story available to a new generation who will appreciate Vandiver's flair for writing history in fluid prose.
About the Author
FRANK E. VANDIVER published his first article on Civil War history while still in his teens and has written dozens of subsequent articles and numerous books on Civil War and other military history. His most recent Civil War works include *Blood Brothers: A Short History of the Civil War* and *Voices of Valor: Words of the Civil War*, which is an audio recording of Civil War-era speeches and other documents, with historical commentary. Vandiver was a longtime member of the faculty at Rice University and is now President Emeritus and Distinguished Professor of History at Texas AM University.