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Joseph Allan Frank, George A. Reaves

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Joseph Allan Frank, George A. Reaves : Seeing the Elephant: Raw Recruits at the Battle of Shiloh

(Contributions in Military Studies) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Seeing the Elephant: Raw Recruits at the Battle of Shiloh (Contributions in Military Studies):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. useful text
By rs gordon
A useful text in the study of the American Civil War , plenty of information and testimonials relating to the personal impact of the Battle of Shiloh.
10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Very good historical scholarship
By A Customer
Seeing the Elephant takes the historiographical tactics of McPherson or Power -- close study of participants' own writings -- and applies them to a specific group at a specific moment: green recruits at the Battle of Shiloh. While the conclusions the co-authors come up with are more or less what one would expect, the book is still highly interesting and gives a good picture of the mentality of the average Civil War soldier before, during and after the battle. One thing I'd point out is that this is *not* a tactical study of Shiloh -- you'll have to go to another book for that. I would recommend this not only to students of the specific battle/campaign but to anyone interested in the battle experience and soldier mentalities of the period.
3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. From the mouths of the soldiers at Shiloh
By Mr John Hauaisen
Not a story of the Battle of Shiloh, this is a book aimed at showing readers what was the mental state of the raw recruits at the U.S. Civil War battle of Shiloh. This battle was the bloodiest battle that had ever been fought in America, with 23,000 casualties in just two days! The authors turn to letters written by soldiers to their families, friends

and to their local newspapers. Thus, we are given an opportunity to see the way the soldiers reacted to things like battle, death, being wounded, leadership, courage, slavery, and the questionable leadership qualities of their superior officers.

"For those of us in today's armchair and unable to taste battle, *Seeing the Elephant* may be as close as we will get to the real thing." *Blue Gray Magazine* "This is one of the better 'face of battle' books of the last decade. The authors have painstakingly reconstructed the terrible struggles at Shiloh as experienced by 381 Union and Confederate raw recruits who were members of 160 green regiments and batteries, and who survived the battle. The recruits were selected on the basis of their correspondence which, in the judgment of the authors, contained at least ten responses to seventy-six questions that were compiled from studies of military sociology and combat psychology. . . . Some stimulating new thoughts, challenges to other interpretations, and the authors' skill make it a significant study to those who believe that there is still much to be learned about wars and about the men who fight in them." *Civil War History*

"Frank and Reaves join a number of recent scholars who have used firsthand accounts to investigate the expectations and experiences of Civil War soldiers. Unlike other authors, Frank and Reaves concentrate on one general subject, the raw troops at Shiloh. They consulted a wide variety of primary sources to compile data and to analyze their findings by using the techniques of military sociology. The authors examine various reasons why these men enlisted, the realities they found in military life, and their first taste of battle. They compare the recruits' expectations prior to and after combat, and conclude with a discussion of factors that influenced the men's subsequent fighting spirit. Although the authors' conclusions are not as original as they claim, their methodology does contribute to a fuller understanding of the larger experience of war and its relationship to the daily existence of ordinary soldiers. Recommended for libraries that specialize in military and Civil War History." -- *Choice* About the Author JOSEPH ALLAN FRANK is Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Ottawa. GEORGE A. REAVES is Chief of Interpretation and Resources Management at Shiloh National Park.