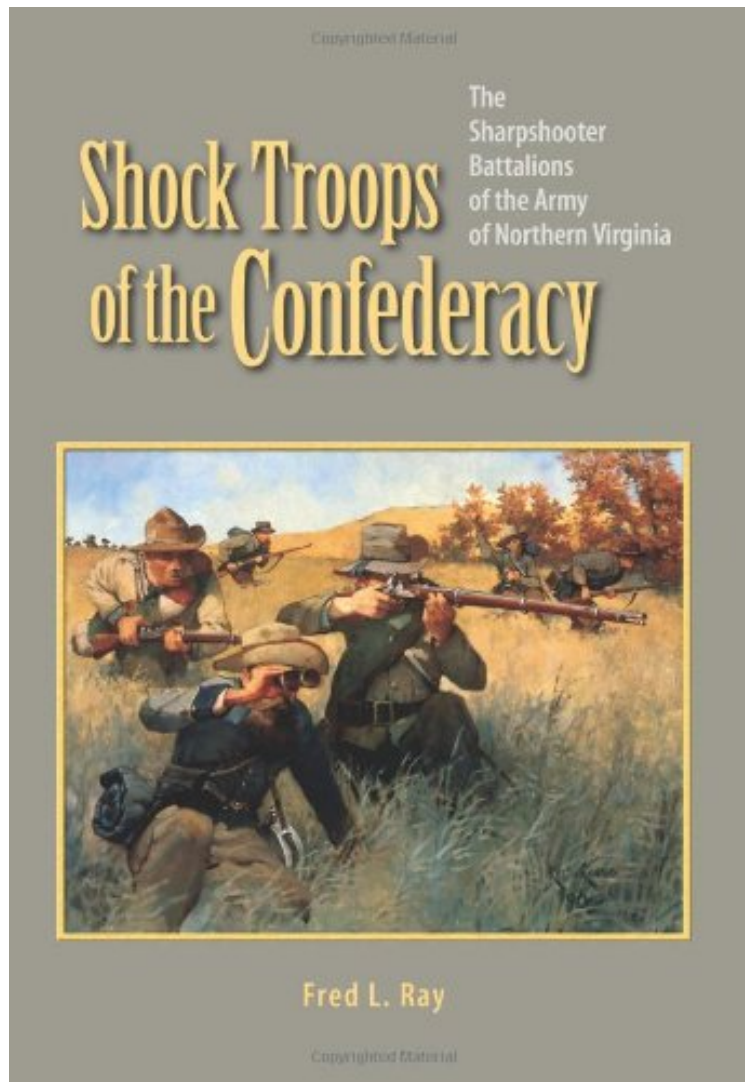


(Free pdf) Shock Troops of the Confederacy

Shock Troops of the Confederacy

Fred L. Ray

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Fred L. Ray : Shock Troops of the Confederacy before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Shock Troops of the Confederacy:

28 of 28 people found the following review helpful. The Advent of Moden WarfareBy Miles KrismanI recently had the pleasure of reading Fred L. Ray's new book, "Shock Troops of the Confederacy - The Sharpshooter Battalions of the Army of Northern Virginia". It offered a great deal of new information whereby the author outlines the changes that took place within the Confederate army that led to a new style of warfare, a warfare in which the intelligence, skill, and courage of the individual soldier became paramount. In a book that takes the reader on a journey of discovery, out between the battle lines, Fred successfully illustrates the factors that brought about these developments.Largely forgotten in the annals of time, the story of the Sharpshooters of the Confederacy begins with

two Virginians, Robert Rodes and Eugene Blackford. Both men were from Lynchburg, Virginia, but through a quirk of fate, both entered Confederate service as members of the 5th Alabama Infantry Regiment. During the winter of 1862, Rodes and Blackford formulated a new military unit to serve the Confederacy that would change the course of the war and in doing so, change warfare itself. Invaluable lessons were learned by both men at the Battle of Boonsboro, also known as the Battle of South Mountain, where Rodes' Brigade successfully fought a delaying action against an entire Division of the Union army, thereby allowing General Lee to consolidate his army and fight the Battle of Sharpsburg, or Antietam, three days later. These Confederate troops on South Mountain, primarily dispersed as a line of skirmishers, held off the advance of the Army of the Potomac by fighting from behind the rocky outcrops and the heavily wooded slopes as they slowly fell back. This single Brigade accomplished their objective and arguably saved the Army of Northern Virginia, however, they were mauled badly by the superior skirmish tactics of the Union forces. This became the impetus for change. Over the next few months, with the support of Robert E. Lee, General Rodes successfully organized and trained a Sharpshooter Battalion within his Brigade that would serve as a model for other units in the Confederacy. Fred Ray documents the accomplishments of the sharpshooting units of the Confederacy from their baptism under fire at the Battle of Chancellorsville, to the final days in the trenches of Petersburg and eventual surrender. The successes of the Sharpshooter Battalion during the "Overland Campaign" in early 1864, convinced General Lee to mandate that all Infantry Brigades would be required to form Sharpshooter units of their own. These men received special training that included long ranged target practice and soon were recognized as the elite troops of each Brigade. As the war dragged on, it was the Sharpshooter Battalions that became the primary fighting force of the Confederacy, especially in the Shenandoah Valley and around Petersburg. In fact, they were the ones that led the last attack of the war for the Army of Northern Virginia at Fort Steadman, on March 25, 1865. This is not just a cursory description of the various field actions, but rather an in depth study that takes the reader onto the battlefield where we hear the banter between the lines, rush forward in a hotly contested skirmish, and learn what it meant to serve on the front lines during the last years of the war. This understudied aspect of the war is deftly handled by the author and the reader comes away with a comprehension of how an undermanned, half starved, ragged band of men adapted to their new reality, modifying tactics, innovating and ultimately developing methods that would serve as a model for warfare into the following century. Insightful, detailed, and exciting are words that best describe "Shock Troops of the Confederacy". For those that are looking for a better understanding of the transition from Napoleonic tactics to the smaller, task orientated, combat units of the 20th century, this is a "must read". Well researched and referenced, this scholarly work is quite readable and should be added to the library of all Civil War enthusiasts. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A good read. By R. Davis The Confederate (Rodes and Blackford) sharpshooters (light infantry) were every bit as proficient as the Union's (1st and 2nd U.S.S./Berdan's) sharpshooters. Shock Troops of the Confederacy is interesting, informative and concise. A good read. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good read! By B.W.C. Good read, lots of detail!

Shock Troops of the Confederacy is a comprehensive history of the elite troops of the Confederacy, as well as an essential reference for historians, enthusiasts, and reenactors. Although little has been written about them, the sharpshooters of the Army of Northern Virginia played an important and sometimes pivotal role in many battles and campaigns in 1864 and 1865. Confederate general Robert Rodes organized the first battalion of sharpshooters in his brigade in early 1863, and later in each brigade of his division. In early 1864 General Lee adopted the concept for the entire Army of Northern Virginia, mandating that each infantry brigade field a sharpshooter battalion. These units found ready employment in the Overland campaign, and later in the trenches of Petersburg and in the fast-moving Shenandoah campaign of 1864. The term sharpshooter had a more general meaning in the mid-19th Century than it does today. Then it could mean either a roving precision shooter like the modern sniper (a term that did not come into use until late in the century) or a light infantryman who specialized in the *petite guerre*: scouting, picketing, and skirmishing. The book covers the history of the Confederate sharpshooters; the development of light infantry from 1700-1918; and the human story of the sharpshooters themselves -- in battle, on the skirmish line, and at their lonely picket posts.

A "must buy" for the Civil War scholar interested in the nuts and bolts of how armies functioned and fought. -- Joe Bilby, Civil War News, August 2005 A very well-rounded look at the evolution of light-infantry, the effect of "sniping" and the fear that both instilled. -- Michael Aubrecht, Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star on July 22, 2006 I would recommend this highly original and truly groundbreaking study to anyone interested in Civil War military history. -- Drew Wagenhoffer, Civil War Books and Authors blog, February 10, 2006 Ray has woven together the story of the organization, training, and actual combat experiences of these unique units. -- Jerry Holdsworth, Civil War Times June 2006 Ray keeps the reader interested throughout, never losing sight of the main picture. -- Brett Schulte, Civil War Gaming and Reading blog Sharpshooters were all volunteers, and performed some of the most vital, and dangerous, jobs: picket lines, skirmishing and scouting. -- Val van Meter, Winchester Star July 20, 2006 Shock Troops demonstrates an impressive level of research...his use of these sources is adept. -- Noah Andre Trudeau, America's

Civil War magazine July 2006

From the Inside Flap Shock Troops of the Confederacy tells the story of the elite troops of the South -- on the picket line and in the thick of the battlefields of Virginia. Whether screening Stonewall Jackson's flank march at Chancellorsville or leading the last desperate assault at Fort Stedman, the sharpshooters led the Army of Northern Virginia in the attack, protected it at rest, and covered its retreat. At the beginning of the Civil War the Army of the Potomac had, thanks to Hiram Berdan, an advantage in sharpshooting and light infantry, which came as a rude shock to the Confederates during the 1862 Peninsular campaign. In response the Confederates organized their own corps of elite light infantry, the Sharpshooters. Building on the ideas of an obscure Alabama colonel, Bristor Gayle, General Robert Rodes organized the first battalion of sharpshooters in his brigade in early 1863, and later in each brigade of his division. In early 1864 General Lee adopted the concept for the entire Army of Northern Virginia, directing each infantry brigade to field a sharp-shooter battalion. These units found ready employment in the Overland campaign, and later in the trenches of Petersburg and in the fast-moving Shenandoah campaign of 1864. Although little has been written about them (the last book, written by a former sharpshooter, appeared in 1899), they played an important and sometimes pivotal role in many battles and campaigns in 1864 and 1865. By the end of the war the sharpshooters were experimenting with tactics that would become standard practice fifty years later. Although most people think of Berdan's Sharpshooters when the subject comes up, the Confederate sharpshooter battalions had a far greater effect on the outcome of the conflict. Later in the war, in response to the Confederate dominance of the skirmish line, the Federals began to organize their own sharpshooter units at division level, though they never adopted an army-wide system. The book tells the story of the development of the sharpshooter battalions, their tactical use on the battlefield, and the human story of the sharpshooters themselves.

About the Author Fred L. Ray is the president and CEO of CFS Press, Inc., and author of several books on flood and swiftwater rescue. He is a US Army veteran who spent most of his time in armored cavalry, during which he served two tours in Vietnam.