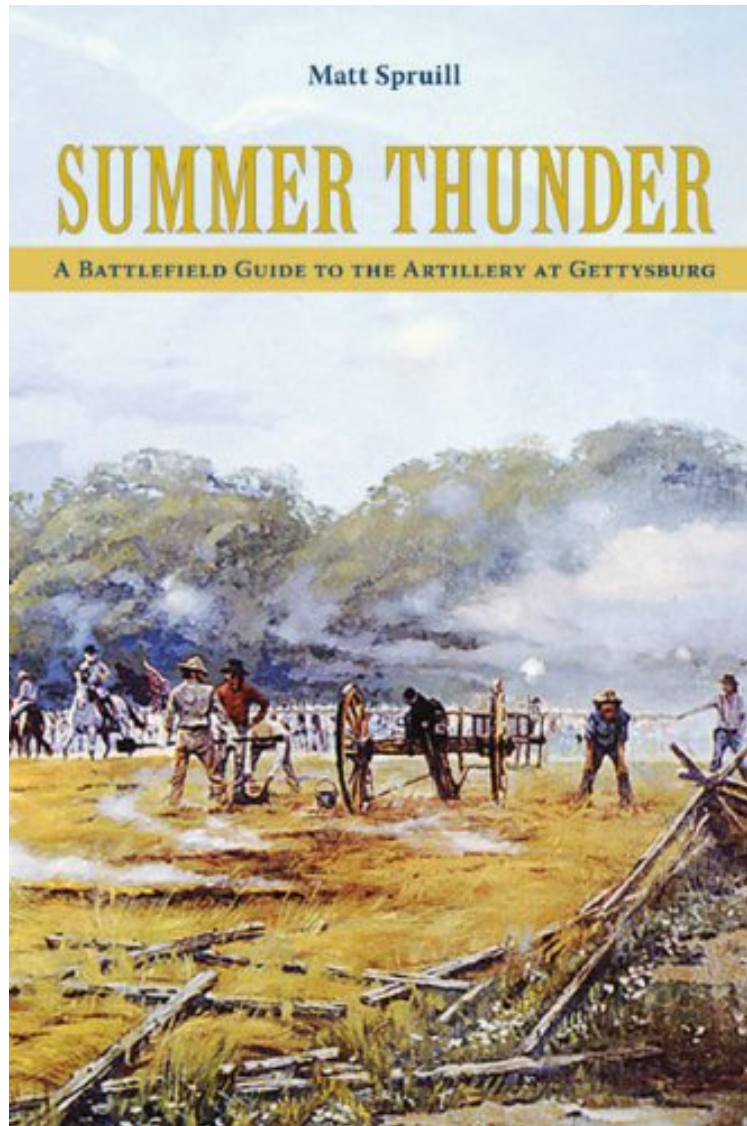


(Ebook free) Summer Thunder: A Battlefield Guide to the Artillery at Gettysburg

# Summer Thunder: A Battlefield Guide to the Artillery at Gettysburg

*Matt Spruill*

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#942424 in Books 2010-08-15 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.00 x .90 x 6.00l, 1.12 #File Name: 1572337273400 pages | File size: 54.Mb

**Matt Spruill : Summer Thunder: A Battlefield Guide to the Artillery at Gettysburg** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Summer Thunder: A Battlefield Guide to the Artillery at Gettysburg:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Edwin G. HerrickGood book2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. The Summer Thunder of Saint Barbara's ArtillerymenBy Civil War LibrarianMatt Spruill,

author of four Civil War battlefield guides, brings his teaching experience at the U.S. Army General Command and Staff College and the U.S. Army War College to bear upon the Gettysburg battlefield. His 2011 *Decisions at Gettysburg: The Nineteen Critical Decisions That Defined the Campaign* may be among this year's best books on the Battle of Gettysburg. *Summer Thunder* is one of a kind. Students of the Battle of Gettysburg are well served by Bradley Gottfried's *The Artillery of Gettysburg* and Spruill's book is also valued resource for visitors to the national military park. *Summer Thunder*'s uniqueness lies in a 'boots on the ground' approach. Many guide books take the user on a two hour tour with July 2 and July 3 cover in one stop. Spruill's tour is thorough with 35 stops many of which have three and even four segments once the user get out of the car. July 1, July 2, and July 3 engagements are distinct on the tour. The armies' deployment of artillery from one position to another, from one day to the next is carefully described. Matt Spruill, a retired U.S. Army colonel and former Gettysburg Battlefield Licensed Guide, offers readers succinct segments of the artillerists' and infantry commanders' reports found in the Official Records and in their postwar writings. The tactical thinking of the cannoneers is revealed and their voices are clear and precise in *Summer Thunder*. Spruill has chosen 35 locations with complete with driving instructions, recent photographs, and uncluttered maps that depict the battlefield as it was in 1863. The artillery positions are marked and includes the number of guns in action with each battery. The passages from primary sources reveal the participants understandings of the event. Gregory Coco's *A Concise Guide to the Artillery at Gettysburg* is among the best short consideration of the topic. Spruill's is quite similar regarding the various artillery pieces and ammunition used by both armies. What makes *Summer Thunder* distinctive is the constant attention Spruill to the distance in yards between the tour stop and the distant targets and the ability of some pieces to reach further than others. For frequent visitors to the battlefield or those who attend the anniversary battle walks hosted by the National Park Service, *Summer Thunder* is so descriptive that the mind's eye can visual from the text the view Spruill describes. Well illustrated with portraits of the commanders and present day views of the terrain, the book's text is supported by appropriate visuals. Several but not all the maps have topographic lines. Thankfully, the farm buildings, those still standing and those lost to time, are on the maps. Small disappointments in *Summer Thunder* include the omission of the Pennsylvania Reserves assault and capture of Houck's Ridge and the clearing of the Wheatfield after the Grand Assault. Also, the cavalry battles of July 3 are not covered. The July 2 artillery duel between the Federals East Cemetery Hill, McKnight's Knoll and Culp's Hill and the Confederates on Benner's Hill is addressed in an appendix. *Summer Thunder* is of value for all who read at least one Gettysburg book in a year, who travel there anytime, who reenact Civil War artillery, who take the Licensed Battlefield Guide Exam or those who members of the Order of Saint Barbara, a military honor society of the field artillery and the air defense units of the United States Army and the United States Marine Corps. Saint Barbara's Day is December 4.3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A 'must' take-along and research key for any visitor to Gettysburg

By Midwest Book Review  
**SUMMER THUNDER: A BATTLEFIELD GUIDE TO THE ARTILLERY AT GETTYSBURG** stands out from the many titles covering the Battle of Gettysburg, offering a fine resource to visitors to the national military park. The author's commentary blends with excerpts from the Official Records and other primary sources and explores the park, its history, and how to understand the battles that happened there. From artillery used on both sides to events, this is a 'must' take-along and research key for any visitor to Gettysburg.

Among the myriad books examining the Battle of Gettysburg (July 1–3, 1863), *Summer Thunder* is one of a kind. A terrific resource for visitors to the national military park, it explores the clashing armies' deployment of artillery throughout the battle—from one position to another, from one day to the next. Matt Spruill, a retired U.S. Army colonel and former licensed Gettysburg guide, carefully takes readers to every point on the battlefield where artillery was used, and combining his own commentary with excerpts from the Official Records and other primary sources, he reveals the tactical thinking of both Union and Confederate commanders. Spruill uses a sequential series of thirty-five "stops," complete with driving instructions and recent photographs, to guide readers around the park and orient them about where the opposing units were placed and what happened there. Detailed maps depict the battlefield as it was in 1863 and are marked with artillery positions, including the number of guns in action with each battery. Meanwhile, the passages from primary sources allow the reader to see key events as the actual participants saw them. The book also brims with information about the various artillery pieces used by both sides, from howitzers to Parrott rifles and Napoleon field guns, and the critical role they played over the course of the battle, right up its outcome. *Summer Thunder* devotes a chapter to each of the three days of the historic engagement between the Army of the Potomac and the Army of Northern Virginia. One can follow the battle chronologically in its entirety from Stop 1 to Stop 35, or concentrate on a specific day or a specific area. In fact, the maps and orientation information are of such detail that the book can be used even without being on the battlefield, making it an invaluable reference work for expert and novice alike.

About the Author Matt Spruill is the author of four previous Civil War battlefield guide books. He studied and taught at the U.S. Army General Command and Staff College and the U.S. Army War College.