

Crossing The Potomac: Lee's Maryland Cavalrymen Defied Odds And Allegiances

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Review

CROSSING THE POTOMAC

Lee's Maryland cavalrymen defied odds and allegiances

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Driver Jr., Robert J. *First and Second Maryland Cavalry*. Rockbridge Publishing, ISBN 1883522242

Robert J. Driver's **First and Second Maryland Cavalry, C.S.A.** provides an in-depth look at Maryland during the War, her divided loyalties, and the brave men and boys who left their native state to serve the South. Their departure from hearth and home was no mean feat. At great personal peril, they crossed the Potomac to join Confederate ranks. If caught by Federal authorities, they often would be imprisoned; the less fortunate were either shot or hanged. Yet, those who successfully crossed into Virginia served with the best the Confederacy had to offer. The book's narrative gains momentum as the two Maryland units are formed. For the most part, the book describes in great detail activities of the 1st Maryland. Due to the short duration of the 2nd Maryland Cavalry, less time is devoted to that unit's history. The Davis Battalion of Maryland Cavalry is also covered, but its history is short and the unit eventually was assimilated into the 1st Maryland.

The history of the 1st Maryland Cavalry parallels that of the Army of Northern Virginia. The 1st Maryland saw action during the Peninsula campaign, served with Jackson in the glory days of the Valley, raided Union supply lines and conducted raids in both Virginia and Maryland during the middle years of the War, and saw action at Gettysburg. From Gettysburg on its men continued to share the fate of their fellow confederates and by 1864 the unit was greatly reduced in ranks, though small numbers of new Marylander recruits continued to cross the Potomac. Finally, it served as rear guard for Robert E. Lee's infantry during the Appomattox campaign and, when the balance of the Army of Northern Virginia surrendered, many of the Maryland cavalrymen chose to remain in the saddle. Driver's work is meticulously researched, and he weaves an interesting and compelling narrative. It is loaded with quotes by the men who

served in these units. His thorough grasp of the subject matter is evident, and his book offers a lasting contribution to the study of border states, orphan brigades, and specifically -- Maryland. One point of contention: the reader would be greatly aided were subtitles placed throughout the text to highlight changes of events as well as battles.

About one-third of the book is devoted to muster rolls of the men who served in the 1st and 2nd Maryland and is a work in itself. While browsing through the rolls one reads of every possible fortune that could await a soldier: death, imprisonment, desertion, court-martial, bravery, honor, and particularly survival.

Supplemented with ample maps and photographs, **First and Second Maryland Cavalry, C.S.A.** offers a rich reading experience -- well worth its \$34.95 price.

Timothy Daiss is a journalist, freelance writer, and author of In the Saddle: Exploits of the 5th Georgia Cavalry During the Civil War (Schiffer Publishing).

H Crossing the Mason and Dixon Line â€” Soldiers from both armies passed by this historic intersection multiple times throughout the war. H Gaithersburg (Summit Hill Farm) â€” Confederate cavalry arrived here on June 28th, 1863 intent on arresting Union supporters. H Darnestown Park â€” Confederate cavalry enter town on June 27, 1863. H Edwardâ€™s Ferry â€” Most of the Union army, pursuing Leeâ€™s army, crossed the Potomac here June 24-25, 1863. H Poolesville â€” From here Hooker wired Gen. Henry Halleck in Washington, D.C. concerning supplies to be sent to Frederick. H Brunswick â€” Union troops pursuing the Confederate army crossed the Potomac River here. H Front Royal (Bel Air) â€” The Buck family entertained Lee at their home, Bel Air, July 22, 1863. The term comes from the French Army, representing a cross between light cavalry and infantry. H Jeb Stuart became famous for two audacious raids on the Union Army of the Potomac in 1862; in his third such attempt, during the Gettysburg Campaign, he squandered much of the cavalry forces of the Army of Northern Virginia and deprived Robert E. Lee of adequate reconnaissance at the beginning of the Battle of Gettysburg, one of the principal reasons for the Confederate. H Longacre, Edward G. Lee's Cavalrymen: A History of the Mounted Forces of the Army of Northern Virginia. Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2002. ISBN 0-8117-0898-5.