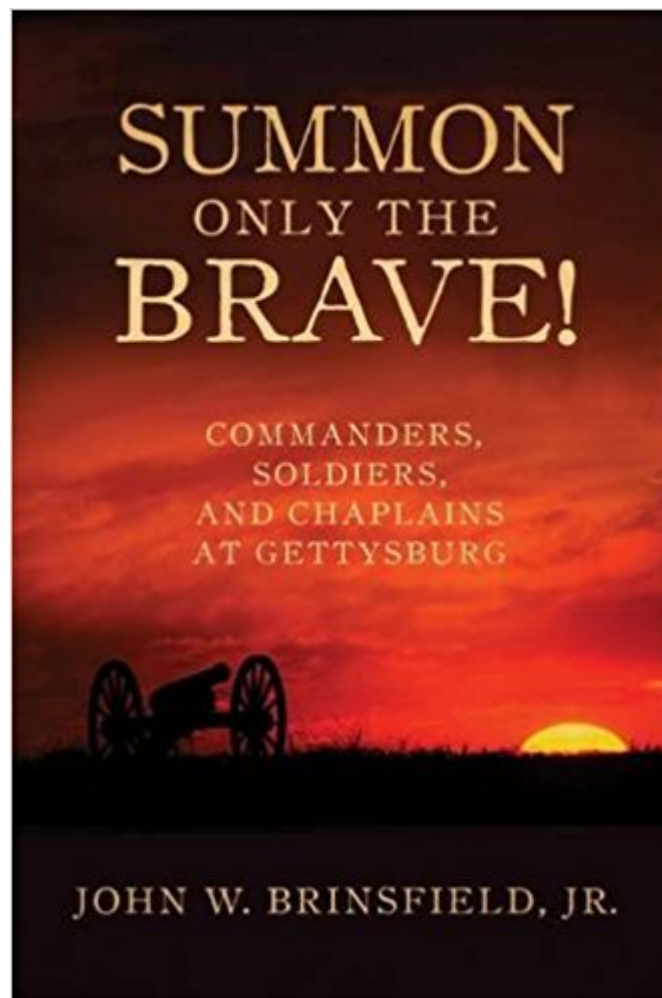




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Summon Only The Brave!: Commanders, Soldiers, And Chaplains At Gettysburg



Synopsis

Of the many books written about the Battle of Gettysburg, none has included selections from the collected memoirs of the 238 chaplains, North and South, who were present at the battle--until now. Because chaplains were considered noncombatants, most, with the exception of Father William Corby of the Irish Brigade, were largely ignored. This unique study has brought to light many of the observations of clergymen, Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish, who accompanied their regiments wherever they marched, camped, or fought. Some of the memoirs have never been published, others unnoticed for a century. Because this is the first book to approach the Battle of Gettysburg from this perspective, rosters of Union and Confederate chaplains reportedly present at the battle are also included. To establish reference points for the chaplains' memoirs, they have been placed in the context of the three-day battle itself, a bloody conflict Father James Sheeran of the 14th Louisiana Infantry characterized as a time when he could not have been more frightened "Had Hell itself broken its boundaries." Chaplain Randolph McKim of the 2nd Virginia Cavalry thought that on the firing line he had nothing to do but sit on his horse and be shot at. After the battle was over, however, chaplains became very busy. They helped bury the dead and comfort 21,000 wounded soldiers. The chaplains themselves did not escape injury. Four chaplains had been killed, wounded, or injured and eighteen captured to be detained in prisons. This is their story in their own words.

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Customer Reviews

John W. Brinsfield, Jr. is a retired Army chaplain and an adjunct professor at Wesley Theological Seminary. Previously he served as an assistant professor in the History department at West Point, director of Ethical Program Development at the US Army War College, and historian for the Army Chaplain Corps.

This book provides personal written accounts of the struggles, challenges, and losses commanders, soldiers, and chaplains experienced during the Civil War. These accounts help you to visualize the Civil War first-hand.

Summon Only the Brave! for the first time brings together the story and contributions of 240 Union and Confederate Chaplains and Missionaries during the Battle of Gettysburg in a well-researched volume which includes firsthand accounts from their memoirs, journals, diaries, letters, service records and civilian records. John W. Brinsfield, Jr. does a wonderful job of examining the actions leading to and throughout the battle as well as the disposition and essence of the civilian soldiers and officers of each army. The focus of this treatment is to evaluate how the Army of the Potomac and the Army of Northern Virginia officers made a difference in the determination of this turning point in the Civil War as well as a deeper understanding of the spiritual leadership of chaplains. The author's prodigious knowledge of 19th-century religious institutions is on display throughout Commanders, Soldiers, and Chaplains at Gettysburg. Brinsfield is able to portray chaplains as human beings who even during the combat encouraged and ministered fighting men. Their efforts were greatly appreciated by their men evidenced by a battlefield statue being erected to Father William Corby of the Irish Brigade and the memorial to Chaplain Horatio Howell of the 90th Pennsylvania in the town. The men of faith themselves did not escape injury. Four chaplains were killed, wounded, or injured and eighteen captured to be detained in prisons. This is a balanced and detailed account in the words of these brave humanitarians. Everything about this book will interest readers who want to know more about the Battle of Gettysburg and the importance of chaplains in greatly assisting the men fight during three important days in July of 1863. No one reading this marvelously researched and superbly written tome will ever again be able to see chaplains as anything other than great individuals. In this thorough and engaging new title, this outstanding writer shows how these men helped bury the dead and comfort suffering warriors. The Order of Battle, the appendices and the helpful maps produced by Hal Jespersen greatly enhance this study. Mercer University Press has produced a fascinating and informative new tapestry. It is refreshing to find that even on a battle that has been so often investigated one can discover new and insightful material.

This book reviewer highly recommends this work to the serious student of the Civil War.

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