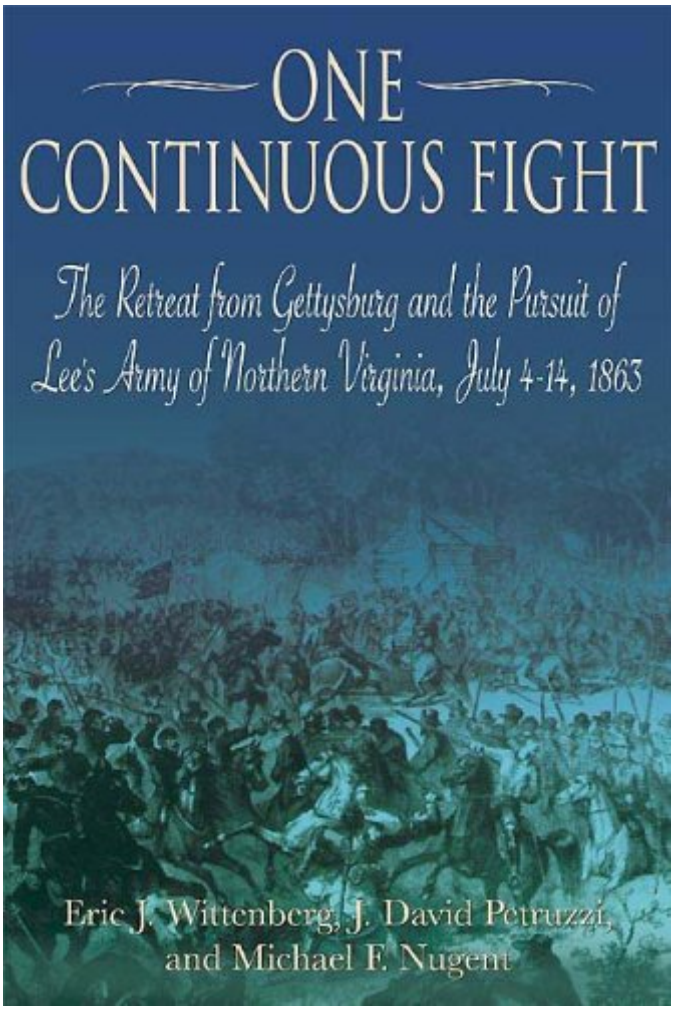
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One Continuous Fight: The Retreat From Gettysburg And The Pursuit Of Lee's Army Of Northern Virginia, July 4-14, 1863



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Synopsis

The titanic three-day battle of Gettysburg left 50,000 casualties in its wake, a battered Southern army far from its base of supplies, and a rich historiographic legacy. Thousands of books and articles cover nearly every aspect of the battle, but not a single volume focuses on the military aspects of the monumentally important movements of the armies to and across the Potomac River. One Continuous Fight: The Retreat from Gettysburg and the Pursuit of LeeÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Army of Northern Virginia, July 4-14, 1863 is the first detailed military history of LeeÃ¢â ¬â„¢s retreat and the Union effort to catch and destroy the wounded Army of Northern Virginia. Against steep odds and encumbered with thousands of casualties, Confederate commander Robert E. LeeÃ¢â ¬â„¢s post-battle task was to successfully withdraw his army across the Potomac River. Union commander George G. MeadeÃ¢â ¬â„¢s equally difficult assignment was to intercept the effort and destroy his enemy. The responsibility for defending the exposed Southern columns belonged to cavalry chieftain James Ewell Brown (Jeb) Stuart. If Stuart fumbled his famous ride north to Gettysburg, his generalship during the retreat more than redeemed his flagging reputation. The ten days of retreat triggered nearly two dozen skirmishes and major engagements, including fighting at Granite Hill, Monterey Pass, Hagerstown, Williamsport, Funkstown, Boonsboro, and Falling Waters. President Abraham Lincoln was thankful for the early July battlefield victory, but disappointed that General Meade was unable to surround and crush the Confederates before they found safety on the far side of the Potomac. Exactly what Meade did to try to intercept the fleeing Confederates, and how the Southerners managed to defend their army and ponderous 17-mile long wagon train of wounded until crossing into western Virginia on the early morning of July 14, is the subject of this study One Continuous Fight draws upon a massive array of documents, letters, diaries, newspaper accounts, and published primary and secondary sources. These long-ignored foundational sources allow the authors, each widely known for their expertise in Civil War cavalry operations, to describe carefully each engagement. The result is a rich and comprehensive study loaded with incisive tactical commentary, new perspectives on the strategic role of the Southern and Northern cavalry, and fresh insights on every engagement, large and small, fought during the retreat. The retreat from Gettysburg was so punctuated with fighting that a soldier felt compelled to describe it as Ã¢â ¬Å“One Continuous Fight.Ã¢â ¬Â• Until now, few students fully realized the accuracy of that description. Complimented with 18 original maps, dozens of photos, and a complete driving tour with GPS coordinates of the entire retreat, One Continuous Fight is an essential book for every student of the American Civil War in general, and for the student of Gettysburg in particular. About the Authors: Eric J. Wittenberg has written widely on Civil War cavalry operations. His books include

Glory Enough for All (2002), The Union Cavalry Comes of Age (2003), and The Battle of Monroe's Crossroads and the Civil War's Final Campaign (2005). He lives in Columbus, Ohio. J. David Petruzzi is the author of several magazine articles on Eastern Theater cavalry operations, conducts tours of cavalry sites of the Gettysburg Campaign, and is the author of the popular "Buford's Boys" website at www.bufordsboys.com. Petruzzi lives in Brockway, Pennsylvania. A long time student of the Gettysburg Campaign, Michael Nugent is a retired US Army Armored Cavalry Officer and the descendant of a Civil War Cavalry soldier. He has previously written for several military publications. Nugent lives in Wells, Maine.

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Customer Reviews

One of the reasons I purchased this book is that it looked like an in depth description of what I had also wondered about for nearly 40 years, that is, what happened between July 4, 1863 and the Army of Northern Virginia crossing abck over the Potomac into Virginia.The book is sort of Union centered but that is ok as I am sure the historical documents and archives were easier to research. Quite a bit from the Confederate side is told.I was not disappointed in this book. Once one starts

reading it is difficult to put down. The book has a nice assortment of maps and is better than many books describing that time period in that respect. I feel the reader gets a fair and unbiased look at the condition of both armies after three days of awful bloodletting. As a bonus, if you live in that area of PA/MD a driving tour of the retreat and the Wagon Train of the Wounded is included. Also a very nice order of battle for both sides is included.

The authors follow their phenomenal account of Stuart's ride, with a well researched and astute analysis of Lee's retreat from Gettysburg and the Union pursuit. Interestingly, while this operation has been one of the most controversial of the war, it is usually one of the most neglected and least understood. This book goes a long way toward filling that gap, covering the movements of both armies and containing accounts of each battle and skirmish along the way. It makes clear that the retreat was truly one continuous fight and that the terrain, weather, and sheer exhaustion of the armies made this one of the most grueling campaigns of the war. It does not focus on the logistical aspects of Lee's retreat, instead recommending Kent Brown's book. (which unfortunately I have not yet read)The authors also debate whether Meade could or should have attacked Lee along the Potomac and are largely sympathetic to Meade. I tend to agree, but think he could have been more aggressive earlier in the retreat and made better use of his cavalry. That said, they rightly primarily blame Pleasanton for his failures to concentrate and utilize the Cavalry Corps to get between the ANV main body and its river crossings. Another person to blame is Halleck, for not moving more troops up both sides of the Potomac and for talking a good game but not really doing anything in a strategic sense. The authors touch lightly on this, I suppose because Halleck's failings as general in chief are well known and were obvious to many at that point of the war.The retreat was a very complex and confused operation and the authors do a largely excellent job of keeping the reader oriented. The maps are good and the appendixes contain driving tours for both the main retreat and the wagon train of wounded. That said it is not quite as focused as their work on Stuart's ride. My main issue, and the reason for the four stars, is in the formatting. The book is full of typos and weird spacing issues. Maybe this is only true of the Kindle version, but I was very surprised. Also, in the lengthy conclusion none of the footnote markers hot link to the notes, which is very annoying if you like to check the sources. On Kindle, some of the maps can be difficult to read, though this is largely mitigated in Landscape view.Overall, I highly recommend the work to any Gettysburg or Civil War enthusiast and look forward to more books by this writing team.**Took the retreat driving tour recently and it is a fabulous tour! Worth the price of the book alone. Even more highly recommended!**

Outstanding volume that covers the retreat from the Battle of Gettysburg. It covers the, as the title says, almost continual fighting between the Army of the Potomac and the Army of Northern Virginia from July 4 until Lee's forces recrossed the Potomac and sheds light on a period that people say "what-if" about.George Meade gets criticism for not finishing off the Confederates with a final, decisive blow in the week and a half after Gettysburg. The authors cover this, the dogged pursuit, dogged defense, the missed opportunities, the exhaustion, and the suffering men on both sides experienced in the aftermath of the largest battle fought on the North American continent.This is a book for anyone interested in cavalry operations, The Gettysburg Campaign, or logistics. It's a much-needed volume of an oft-uncontemplated subject.

A little known episode at the conclusion of the Battle at Gettysburg is the return west and back into Virginia. My family's unit was constantly plagued by attacks from multiple Union cavalry regiments and losses were high. Ambulance trains for the CSA forces extended almost from Hagerstown and over to the Battle area. Recently I turned a series of spurs from the march and war to the Virginia Historical Society, taken from union cavalrymen killed in skirmishes along the way; several of them being officers, highly decorated engravings. I always wondered about the march, now Eric Wittenberg illuminated the period and strenuous events that took place as covering force after covering force tried to protect the wounded from being attacked without mercy. Very well done, very enjoyable to read; a recommended read for all Civil War buffs.Ken StraferFairfax, VA

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