

Waiting For The Bugle: Camp Life Offered Troops Rest, Diversions, And Reflection

Meg Galante-DeAngelis

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Review

WAITING FOR THE BUGLE

Camp life offered troops rest, diversions, and reflection

Galante-DeAngelis, Meg

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Madden, David *Beyond the Battlefield: The Ordinary Life and Extraordinary Times of the Civil War Soldier*. Touchstone Publications, 2000-07-01. ISBN 684856336

Every year hundreds of books are published recounting the story of this or that battle, of one or another officer. Some of the works bring to light stories never before written; others reveal another perspective on an oft-told tale. But in **Beyond the Battlefield**, David Madden offers a fascinating glimpse at the every day existence of Civil War soldiers. This glimpse invites us to get to know the men better, offering details that have been obscured by the usual focus on troop movements, battle tactics, famous officers, and statistics. By quoting heavily from soldiers' wartime journals and postwar memoirs, Madden uncovers the humanity behind the numbers.

Beyond the Battlefield, reminiscent of classic soldier memoirs, tells the story of life between the battles. However, instead of the perspective of a single soldier remembering the experiences of a single regiment, we are treated to a montage of soldiers, North and South, officers and enlisted men. Using wonderful, evocative quotes from a variety of primary sources, the book lets the soldiers speak for themselves, thus providing a vibrant connection to the men.

We rejoice with them as they play a rousing game of town ball, we grieve with them over the death of a child at home, we feel the excitement of a new recruit, and we resign ourselves to the brave reserve of a prisoner of war. We train with them in camp and listen to songs and stories around the campfire. We forage for food and endure the privations of the weather and the march.

Madden brings us into the hospitals to sit by the bedsides of the dying and lets the men tell their dreams of loved ones and home. **Beyond the Battlefield**

guides us through the universal story of the soldier as every man.

Beyond the Battlefield looks honestly at the soldiers, allowing them to celebrate their strengths and to bare their flaws. In return, they allow us to be voyeurs as they struggle to answer that age-old question: how do men retain their humanity amidst the inhumanity of war?

Meg Galante-DeAngelis is a lifelong student of the human side of the Civil War period. As a social historian, her search for a glimpse at our ancestors as people has led her to study the lives of the soldiers of the Civil War and their families.