



Fighting with Jeb Stuart: Major James Breathed and the Confederate Horse Artillery

David P. Bridges

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Fighting with JEB Stuart: Major James Breathed and the Confederate Horse Artillery is the first biography of this important Southern officer, a brave and virtuous warrior who embodied all the qualities that made the Confederate Army one of the finest in history. Breathed's resume of combat mirrors that of General Lee's legendary Army of Northern Virginia. Major Breathed was involved in eighty-six battles, engagements and skirmishes. When the Civil War began, James Breathed was a 21-year-old physician at the beginning of his medical career. A Virginian by birth, and raised on a plantation in Maryland, he cast his lot with the Confederacy in April 1861. By chance, he shared a seat on a train with James Ewell Brown (JEB) Stuart, who encouraged Breathed to join the 1st Virginia Cavalry, a regiment commanded by Stuart. Breathed was then transferred to the newly formed Stuart Horse Artillery. For the doctor-turned-warrior, it was a perfect assignment. Unencumbered by formal military training, Breathed developed his own unique style of command. Relentless in his efforts to defeat the enemy, he exhibited conspicuous gallantry and accomplishments on so many fields that his actions separated him from the pack of other battery commanders inside and outside the cavalry arm. Breathed's handling of horse artillery and accurate fire became recognizable to his enemies. Alexander C. M. Pennington, the leader of a celebrated Union battery of the horse artillery, looked forward to and dreaded his many encounters with Breathed. In the minds of the Confederate veterans who knew him best, Breathed was no less of a legend than artilleryman John Pelham. After the war doctor Breathed returned to continue his practice of medicine in Hancock, Maryland. He died February 14, 1870. This study is based upon previously unknown or overlooked family primary documents and archival sources, a keen appreciation of the terrain over which Breathed's guns rolled and fought, and a broad foundation of knowledge of the American Civil War in the Eastern Theater. Fighting With JEB Stuart adds something dramatically new to the literature of the Civil War.

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