



The Letters of General Richard S. Ewell: Stonewall's Successor (Voices of the Civil War)

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“The Letters of General Richard S. Ewell provide a sweeping view of the nineteenth century. Such chronological breadth makes this volume truly exceptional and important. Through Ewell’s eyes we see the many worlds of an American people at war. His thoughtful observations, biting wit, and ironic disposition offer readers a chance to rethink the paper-thin generalizations of Ewell as a quirky neurotic who simply crumbled under the legacy of Stonewall Jackson.” —from the foreword by Peter S. Carmichael

Richard S. Ewell was one of only six lieutenant generals to serve in Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia, and of those he was but one of two—the other being Stonewall Jackson, his predecessor as commander of the Second Corps—to have left behind a sizable body of correspondence. Forty-nine of Ewell’s letters were published in 1939. This new volume, drawing on more recently available material and scrupulously annotated by Ewell biographer Donald Pfanz, offers a much larger collection of the general’s missives: 173 personal letters, 7 official letters, 4 battle narratives, and 2 memoranda of incidents that took place during the Civil War.

The book covers the full range of Ewell’s career: his days at West Point, his posting on the western frontier, his role in the Mexican War, his Civil War service, and, finally, his postwar years managing farms in Tennessee and Mississippi. Some historians have judged Ewell harshly, particularly for his failure to capture Cemetery Hill on the first day at Gettysburg, but Pfanz contends that Ewell was in fact a brilliant combat general whose overall record, which included victories at the battles of Cross Keys, Second Winchester, and Fort Harrison, was one of which any commanding officer could be proud. Although irritable and often critical of others, Ewell’s correspondence shows him to have been generous toward subordinates, modest regarding his own accomplishments, and upright in both his professional and personal relationships. His letters to family and friends are a mixture of wry humor and uncommon sense. No one who reads them will view this important general in quite the same way again.

DONALD C. PFANZ is the author of *Richard S. Ewell: A Soldier’s Life*, *Abraham Lincoln at City Point*, and *War So Terrible: A Popular History of the Battle of Fredericksburg*.

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