

Reader Reviews

No Soap, No Pay, Diarrhea, Dysentery & Desertion

“Mr. Toalson . . . chose to use the writings of civilians and Confederate soldiers, rather than generals and politicians, because they provide a perspective that is often overlooked. . . . He took great care to preserve the voices of those whose diaries and letters appear in the book.”

Mandy Malone – Book Corner
The Daily Press – Newport News, VA
March 11, 2007

“This remarkable book gives voice to our ancestors and tells us what they actually experienced. The story is told entirely in the first person from diaries, letters and journals of 270 soldiers, farmers, clerks, wives, preachers and more.”

The Confederate Courier Newsletter
SCV Camp 1502 – August, 2007

“In addition to boasting the best title for a book that this reviewer has ever read, Toalson’s contribution to Civil War history has opened the door to a far-too-neglected subject, the day to day strife . . . (through the voices) of . . . 220 men and 50 women . . . The concept of this book is so simple, yet brilliant, and the collection of quoted material is superb. . . .The greatest contribution . . . is found in the “voice” that has been given to the personal memories of these 270 courageous men and women, who lived through the darkest of times in our nation’s history. By sharing their most intimate and personal recollections, Toalson presents an opportunity for us to learn what really happened as their cause and their country came to an end.”

Michael Aubrecht – BOOK REVIEW
The Free Lance –Star, Fredericksburg, VA
April 26, 2008

“If you had a Confederate Ancestor you have to have this book! Mr. Toalson tells the story of the Plight of the Confederacy through the eyes of those who lived it. The diary and journal entries . . . from soldiers and civilians alike . . . are sometimes Humorous and sometimes Haunting but always Captivating.”

Cmdr. David Barlow – SCV Camp 1471
Franklin, Virginia

“My favorite book on the war has always been *Co. Aytch* by Private Sam Watkins. *No Soap, No Pay, Diarrhea, Dysentery & Desertion* is 270 of Private Watkins’ contemporaries relating first hand stories of what our ancestors endured. I now have two favorite books on the war.”

Cmdr. Ken Parsons – SCV Camp 2095
Williamsburg, Virginia

“ . . . a poignant book filled with letters from the heart . . . very readable and beautifully edited.”

Jack – Amazon.com reader review

“As a North Dakota/Minnesota native . . . the Civil War experience seems very abstract to me. . . . through the personal and often heart wrenching accounts of life during the war for those in the trenches and those trying to hold the family together at home, I now have a much clearer and more personal sense . . . of the conflict. The South risked more than they could imagine and lost even more. . . . I would never have read a book of battles and strategy . . . but your book gives life to an American experience . . .”

Kathryn Grev – Minneapolis, Minnesota

“ . . . your book was a wonderful read . . . I was especially drawn to the journal entries of Mrs. Catherine Edmundston and the family letters of Reverend Davis and Sarah Wood and their son James.”

Carrie Dolan – Williamsburg, VA

“Interesting read! We are hoping to use portions of your book during our home schooling history classes. I was reading selections from your book to the kids last night while they cooked marshmallows by an open fire.”

Don Gustafson – Jacksonville, Florida

“From a classroom teacher’s perspective . . . educators should welcome this Civil War study, told in the first person, to bring the war to life. . . . it allows students to realize that all wars cause many hardships for soldiers and families . . . I would recommend Mr. Toalson’s book to all educators.”

Sue Goehring – Elementary Principal
Wimbledon, North Dakota

“I dove into your book last night. I had no idea that my great-grandfather, Pvt. Newton Camper of the 11th Virginia Infantry, had published any memoirs. . . . thanks to your book I now know he was at Drewry’s Bluff and passed through Richmond on a slow moving train to Cold Harbor. . . . I will now revisit those battlefields with a stronger bond . . .”

Chris Trinite – SCV Camp 1247
Richmond, Virginia

“Toalson provides a remarkable selection of first hand experiences. No drippy sentiments, no notions of glory, no revisionist whitewash here, just harsh realities soberly presented.”

J. K. Brandau – author
Murder at Greensprings
Amazon.com reader review

“The most revealing and human depiction of the Civil War I have ever read. The realities of the day explode across the page.”

Vance – Amazon.com reader review

“Thanks so much for writing a book on the Confederacy from a different point of view. The voices of our ancestors come alive and bring home not only their suffering but their dedication to the cause. . . . [your book] is well indexed which makes it easy to pick up, for a few minutes, to read by topic, individuals and commands.”

Charlotte Copley – Historian
UDC Chapter, Williamsburg, Virginia

“This book is one of the most interesting first hand accounts of the war that I have read. I found the content very captivating and heartfelt. It was one of those books you hope never ends.”

Don Woolridge – 1st Lt. Commander
SCV Camp 2095
Williamsburg, Virginia

“. . . am almost finished with the book. Truly a difficult book to put down!!! Extremely interesting . . . and so nice to read in the first person. Very happy I purchased the book . . .”

Al Brown – Atlanta, Georgia

“. . . it's great that you chose to include the letters and diaries of the civilian population . . . so many people have no idea what their great great grandmothers went through back at home. It was a truly sad, sad time in the South and their words need to be published! Thank you for doing so.”

Tracy Clary – Past Commander
SCV Camp 512
Brunswick County, Virginia

“. . . Mr. Toalson's work is very enjoyable, readable and informative . . . concentrating on writings that were made while events were ongoing instead of memoirs or books written decades later. . . . This decision added a feel of authenticity . . . people describing events as they were, not as they tried to remember then being. . . . I truly appreciated the geographic diversity of the writers . . . from all over the South, Confederate ships, hospitals, and even Union prison camps. For anyone interested in an enjoyable, readable book, *No Soap, No Pay, Diarrhea, Dysentery & Desertion* is absolutely worth acquiring and reading. It is a wonderful addition to a Civil War library and adds great perspective to the struggles southerners faced . . .”

Mr. Richard McCormick
My Civil War Obsession – Book Review