



Memoirs of the Confederate War for Independence

Heros von Borcke

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As was the custom in the 19th century, foreign nations sent observers to other nations' wars, where these observers could learn tactics, see the latest weaponry, and report back to their own country. General George B. McClellan was an observer of the Crimean War and saw the Siege of Sevestapol, which heavily influenced his tactics during the Civil War. The Confederacy had a few of them, most notably the British observer Arthur Fremantle, who witnessed Gettysburg. But Heros von Borcke had no intention of being an observer. Coming ashore in May 1862, the 6'4 "giant in gray" and his huge Solingen straight sword cut the ideal image for a cavalry officer, especially one under the swashbuckling J.E.B. Stuart's command. Heros von Borcke had a colorful career in service of the Confederacy, coming into contact with famous soldiers like the "Gallant" John Pelham and J.E.B. Stuart himself, who admired the Prussian and eventually made him chief of staff. Von Borcke was also present at some of the war's most noteworthy campaigns, including Stuart's famous ride around McClellan's army, the Battle of Fredericksburg, and the Battle of Yellow Tavern, where Stuart was mortally wounded. Von Borcke was nearly killed by a shot to the neck just before the Battle of Gettysburg, but he recovered to continue fighting in 1864 through the rest of the war. In 1876, von Borcke wrote these memoirs warmly recalling his Confederate comrades and descriptively telling the tale of the Civil War. When von Borcke died on May 10, 1895, 31 years to the date of the Battle of Yellow Tavern, it was due to complications from the grievous wound he suffered during the Battle of Middleburg in June 1863.

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