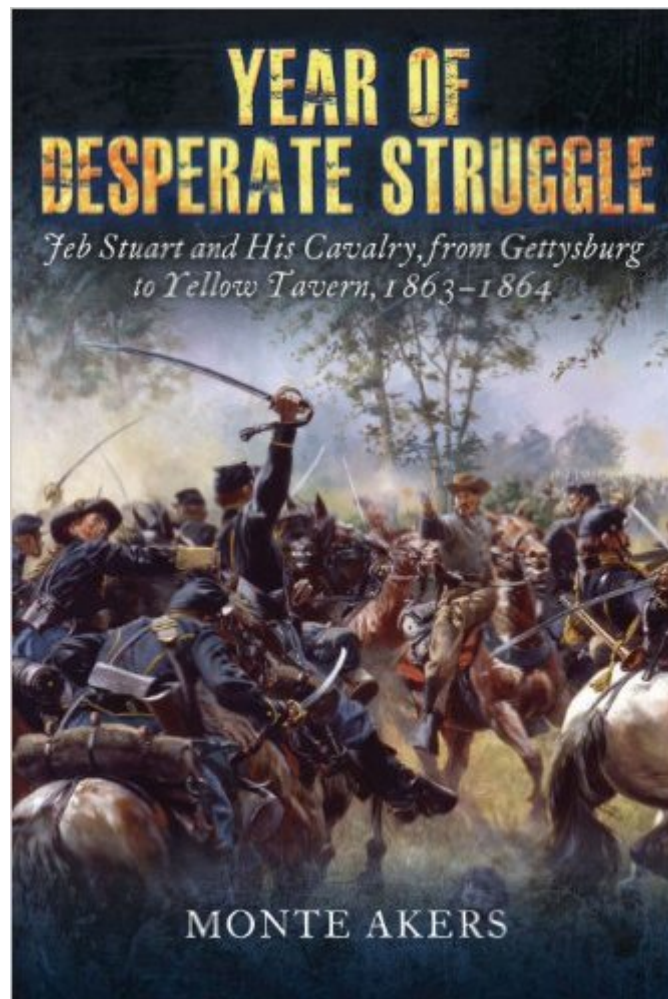


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# Year Of Desperate Struggle: Jeb Stuart And His Cavalry, From Gettysburg To Yellow Tavern, 1863-1864



## Synopsis

By the summer of 1863, following Chancellorsville, it was clear to everyone on both sides of the Civil War that the Army of Northern Virginia was the most formidable force Americans had ever put in the field. It could only be tied in battle, if against great odds, but would more usually vanquish its opponents. A huge measure of that army's success was attributable to its cavalry arm, under Major General J.E.B. Stuart, which had literally run rings around its enemies. But Northern arithmetic and expertise were gradually catching up. In this work, the sequel to his acclaimed *Year of Glory*, author Monte Akers tracks Stuart and his cavalry through the following year of the war, from Gettysburg to the Overland Campaign, concluding only when Jeb himself succumbs to a gunshot while fending off a force three times his size at the very gates of Richmond. Gettysburg put paid to the aura of unstoppable victory surrounding the Army of Northern Virginia. But when Grant and Sheridan came east they found that Lee, Stuart, Longstreet, and the rest still refused to be defeated. It was a year of grim casualties and ferocious fighting—in short, a year of desperate struggle—with the gloves off on both sides. This work picks up where *Year of Glory* left off, with a minute examination of Stuart's cavalry during the controversial Gettysburg campaign, followed by the nine months of sparring during which the Army of Potomac declined to undertake further major thrusts against Virginia. But then the Union's western chieftains arrived and the war became one huge funeral procession, as Grant and Sheridan found that their prior victories had by no means prepared them for meeting the Army of Northern Virginia. In this work Akers provides a fascinating, close-in view of the Confederacy's cavalry arm during this crucial period of the war. After Stuart's death the Army of Northern Virginia would eventually be cornered, but while he was alive it was often the Northerners who most needed to look to their security.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Buy this book. I have read a lot of books about the Civil War and I know a good book when I get one. I always read at the end of the night before I go to bed and this book is one of those books where I looked forward to reading each night. I always like a book that gets into the small details as to how people lived in those days. It not only gets into the battles but into personal relationships with his wife, other officers and others people he was involved with. You even get small details as to how the camps were set up, how they fed and took care of their horses, how they entertained themselves in camp and how they felt about losing friends in battle. I cannot say enough about this book and how much I liked it. Hope this helps.

This is the companion volume to the author's "Year of Glory: The Life and Battles of Jeb Stuart and His Cavalry, June 1862-June 1863". The first book presented Stuart's dynamic rise to fame as the South's cavalier and cavalry genius. That book ends with Stuart at the pinnacle of success after the Battle of Chancellorsville, his cavalry master of the battlefield. This book is a very different picture of Stuart and his cavalry. The Army of the Potomac has started to use their cavalry, as a fighting force not as messengers and pickets. Additionally, the volunteer have mastered the skills needed to be an effective fighting force. The South's shortages and having cavalrymen provide their own horse is having an effect on his cavalry's efficiency too. Stuart is no longer able to dominate the battlefield and is the target of some embarrassing press reports because of this. This is a very well written balanced look at the last year of Stuart's life. The handling of Gettysburg is excellent! The author balances the conflicting stories in presenting a factual honest account. This is done a second time in the handling of the Dahlgren Affair. Each campaign is covered with proper space given the important actions. "The world without JEB Stuart" ends the book with a look at the post-war lives of the major characters. Most of the maps are at the campaign level, sufficient for this book, with notes at the end of the chapter. A full index, Bibliography and photographs complete the text. This is a good-looking book with a good hand-feel that makes "print" books so enjoyable.

This is another fine addition to a previous work, this time to Year of Glory. Monte Akers focuses on the Army of Northern Virginia whose flashy cavalry commander J. E. B. Stuart had taken his

horsemen for literal gallops around the Federals. Given its own time the Union Army's cavalry had grown from farm boys riding mules, to its own formidable force. Sheer numbers on the northern side had remained steady among the boys in blue, while the force in gray had seen its numbers decimated by the war. This book picks up after the Year of Glory ends and examines Stuart's controversial Gettysburg campaign, a time when Stuart had left Lee's army blind, by not providing its eyes and ears. Stuart is known for his flashy clothes, strutting horses, and giving a romance to the Confederate Cavalry image. Stuart was the man known to make stoic Stonewall Jackson laugh. He could recite poetry, loved a party, a dance, and music. He possessed a fine singing voice and according to Porter Alexander sang "œlf you want a good time join the cavalry" and at Chancellorsville sang "œOld Joe Hooker, won't you come out of the Wilderness?" This book covers the 12 months of June 1862 to June 1863 and while it gives insight into the flashiness Stuart brought to the war, it covers his low points as well. His defeat at Upperville, and the ill-fated ride into Maryland are covered. This book does not provide much in new research, nor does it contain many maps to help explain Stuart's campaigns from a skyward view. It is however, a nice companion and follow up to the first book of Akers.

Akers combines fine storytelling with a Civil War reenactor's eye for detail. He writes as if he's got lots of experience in the saddle himself. This book needs to be read in conjunction with, and after, his first book on Stuart and his cavalry. I hope he'll do a 3rd book covering the time that Wade Hampton led Stuart's forces. I've read pretty much every single book ever done on Stuart and his horsemen (40+ years of studying this force my ancestors rode with) and I rate Akers as good as any author I've read.

This book is written for the general public in an almost conversational tone which makes for an interesting read. It also contains a wealth of small details about the last year of Jeb Stuart's life as well as the people around him. I enjoyed it and ordered Akers first book on Stuart, which covers 1862 up to Brandy Station in 1863.

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