



# Shock Troops of the Confederacy

*Fred L. Ray*

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## **Shock Troops of the Confederacy** Fred L. Ray

Shock Troops of the Confederacy is a comprehensive history of the elite troops of the Confederacy, as well as an essential reference for historians, enthusiasts, and reenactors. Although little has been written about them, the sharpshooters of the Army of Northern Virginia played an important and sometimes pivotal role in many battles and campaigns in 1864 and 1865. Confederate general Robert Rodes organized the first battalion of sharpshooters in his brigade in early 1863, and later in each brigade of his division. In early 1864 General Lee adopted the concept for the entire Army of Northern Virginia, mandating that each infantry brigade field a sharpshooter battalion. These units found ready employment in the Overland campaign, and later in the trenches of Petersburg and in the fast-moving Shenandoah campaign of 1864. The term sharpshooter had a more general meaning in the mid-19th Century than it does today. Then it could mean either a roving precision shooter like the modern sniper (a term that did not come into use until late in the century) or a light infantryman who specialized in the petite guerre: scouting, picketing, and skirmishing. The book covers the history of the Confederate sharpshooters; the development of light infantry from 1700-1918; and the human story of the sharpshooters themselves -- in battle, on the skirmish line, and at their lonely picket posts.

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