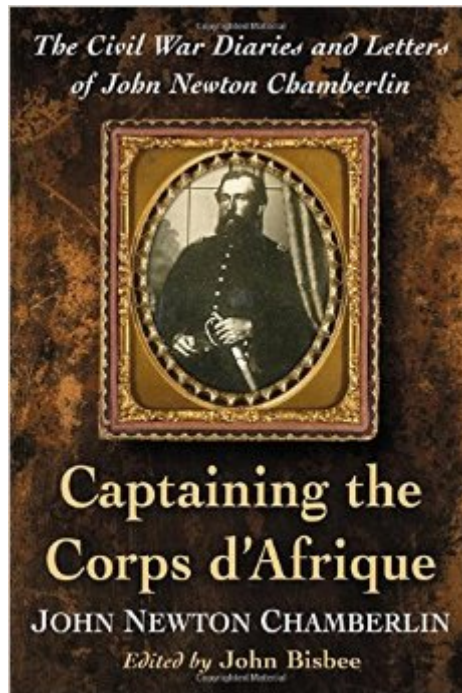


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Captaining The Corps D'Afrique: The Civil War Diaries And Letters Of John Newton Chamberlin



Synopsis

I have stood by their side in the grim conflict," wrote Union Captain John Chamberlin of the Corps d'Afrique. "Woe to the nation that long withholds their rights from them." Chamberlin spent nearly five years in the South during and after the Civil War. A well read, observant and articulate writer, he recorded his unique perspective as a commander of black soldiers and engineers. More than everyday accounts of camp life and battles, Chamberlin's letters and diaries --here presented in historical context--give an insider's view of the Union army's relationship with black troops and of the political and social implications of wartime events. Late in the war, his correspondence focused on a schoolmate, Anna Bullock, and their burgeoning relationship.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Captaining the Corps d'Afrique, edited by John Bisbee is an account of a Union Civil War soldier who spent the entire conflict in the deep South. These thoughts and reflections are written in his own hand through personal diaries and letters. I am always intrigued, fascinated, and authentically touched by living history when portrayed by those who lived the time period. To have a Civil War soldier talk directly to me is just so powerful! John Newton Chamberlin is a great-grandfather of the book's editor John Bisbee, so this is truly a labor of love. Mr. Bisbee connects excerpts of Chamberlin's diary entries and letters with flow, simplicity and knowledgeable narration of the subject. Mr. Bisbee's extensive research is well documented through chapter notes, appendices and bibliographies which become a treasure trove for those who wish to pursue further. He defines

War terms, draws understandable maps, and generally clarifies diary and letter entries. The facts of John Chamberlin's experiences are all here...his assignment locations, specific battles, and accomplishments/failures. But I find the fascination to be in his relationships with other soldiers, his separations from family and home territory, and the special situations he finds himself in as captain of a black regiment. We watch Chamberlin grow in his appreciation for his troops--faces become individuals, individuals morph into troop, and together they become the 3rd Engineers, Corps d'Afrique....totally dependent on each other for survival. His experience challenges the whole premise for this War---slavery. We are privy to Chamberlin's thoughts, analyses, insights, and feelings about the War.

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