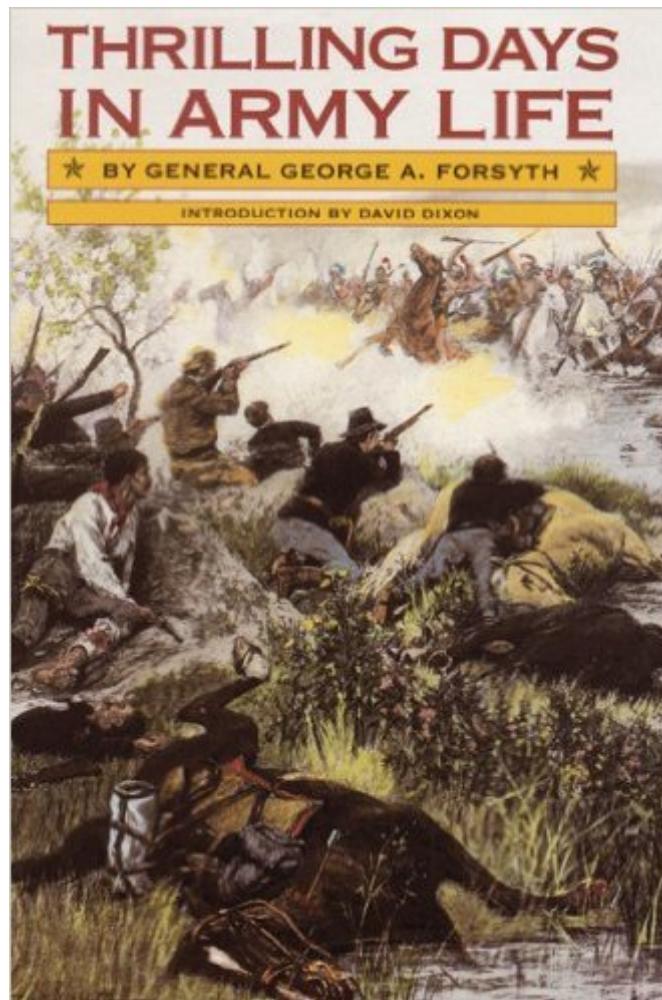


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Thrilling Days In Army Life



Synopsis

Thrilling Days in Army Life describes one of the classic encounters between Indians and the frontier army. In the summer of 1868 George A. Forsyth led fifty scouts to search out Cheyennes who were raiding Kansas. In this book, he relates the six-day siege in September that pitted his small force against 750 Cheyennes and Sioux. Because the battle occurred in a dry bed of the Arickaree Fork of the Republican River in western Colorado and claimed the life of Forsyth's brave lieutenant, Frederick Beecher, it would be known to history as the Battle of Beecher Island. Forsyth, who was breveted brigadier general for the 1868 battle, had an action-packed career. In 1882, as commander of the Fourth Cavalry in New Mexico, he pursued the Chiricahua Apaches across the border into Mexico. It was a raid full of dangerous traps, but he lived to tell about it. Originally published in 1900, Thrilling Days in Army Life will be of interest to both frontier and Civil War buffs. Forsyth was an aid to Major General Philip H. Sheridan in 1864 and accompanied him on the dramatic ride to the rescue of Union troops at Cedar Creek. That episode is presented in a rush of detail. Forsyth ends with an eyewitness account of the surrender of the Confederacy at Appomattox Court House. Of special interest to readers will be the many drawings by Rufus Zogbaum, a leading military artist of his day.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Thrilling indeed! In this memoir, General Forsyth elected to relate four major events of his long military career, two from his Civil War days and two from his service in the Indian wars in the West.

Most famous, of course, is the account of his (along with 50 cavalry troops) holding off a thousand attacking Plains Indians, led by Roman Nose, for nine days in the summer of 1868 on an island in the Arickaree Fork of the Republican River in eastern Colorado that became known as the Battle of Beecher Island. Forsyth, wounded in three places, was brevetted brigadier-general for his actions there. Also included from his frontier days is his telling of the Apache raid he led against Geronimo in New Mexico in 1882 that took his troops deep into Mexico. The two Civil War records include his riding with Sheridan from Winchester to the Battle of Cedar Creek in October 1864, and his reminiscence of the closing scene at Appomattox Court House and Lee's surrender to Grant. Forsyth's main interest is in giving the details in as exciting a manner as dignity will allow. Dialogue is included and much of it sounds invented (the death scene of Lt. Beecher might have been exactly as Forsyth describes it, but it sounds straight out of a romance novel of the day: "I have my death-wound general. I am shot in the side and dying."). Historians and realists might cringe at this kind of thing, but it has its appeal, too, for those wanting a strong human (and heroic) element to the writing. What it attempts to do, it does well. An enjoyable first-hand account of one man's take on a few highlights in his military career.

At the end of the Civil War George Forsyth found he liked the Army and stayed until medically retired in 1890. In that time he was in 18 battles, 40 skirmishes; he was wounded 6 times and received 5 brevet commissions for bravery. He commanded at Beecher's Island, was with Sheridan on the ride to Winchester and sat on the porch of Appomattox Court House. In true John Ford/John Wayne fashion, he led 6 troops of the 4th Cavalry "to the rescue". And this is the short version.

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