



# Reminiscences of the Civil War

*John Gordon*

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## **Reminiscences of the Civil War** John Gordon

John Brown Gordon (1832-1904) was one of the South's biggest firebrands, and he fought like it, displaying personal courage and toughness unmatched by most of the South's fighters. The result was multiple wounds at places like the Seven Days Battles, and most notably at Antietam, where he was hit 4 times and continued to fight until a bullet slammed him in the face, passing through his cheek and out his jaw. Gordon would have likely drowned in his own blood if it had not drained out through a bullet hole in his cap. Lee described Gordon to Jefferson Davis as "characterized by splendid audacity."

The same qualities that made Gordon a ferocious leader throughout the war also made him an ardent opponent of the Reconstruction and a feisty writer. Gordon had been in the thick of almost every famous battle in the Eastern theater, making him a great source. **Gordon's memoirs, *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, also tell soldierly anecdotes, the most famous of them being the way in which he aided Union division commander Francis Barlow during Day 1 at Gettysburg.**

Gordon's memoirs, published near the end of his life almost 40 years after the war, also demonstrate the mystique of the Lost Cause, of which Gordon was one of its strongest proponents. His memoirs reflect that, leading historians to compare him to General Jubal Early. Like most memoirs, Gordon's was self-serving, and historians dispute some of his claims (such as being promoted to Lieutenant General, the highest military title in the Confederate armies). Nevertheless, *Reminiscences* is a spellbinding account of the Civil War told by one of its toughest fighters.

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