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Reluctant Rebels: The Eleventh Texas Cavalry Regiment
(review)

Brian F. Neumann

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summary of Texas's revolutionary circumstances, Powers presents in six chapters a bird's-eye understanding of the war at sea as he mingles commanders and missions of all active vessels. Two chapters are devoted to the naval inquiries into Capt. Henry Thompson's loss of the *Invincible* and Secretary Fisher's curious affair.

Powers makes no exaggerated claims for the accomplishments of these brave men, yet one cannot dismiss his postscript assessment. Seaborne resupply, protection of coastal residents, recognition of Texas's belligerent status, and similar issues would have been more complicated without the presence of this abbreviated armada, whose total service enrollment at any one point would have numbered less than the Alamo roll call. Houston and Fisher may have collided over naval funding, but the San Jacinto victors had no misgivings about sharing battlefield spoils with their seafaring comrades. To a financially desperate navy, the army awarded \$3,000 of Santa Anna's gold. To paraphrase Winston Churchill, in Texas's revolutionary struggle, so much is owed to these few.

Such homage, however, must yield annually to the chants of the faithful amid renewed strife: Go Army, Beat Navy.

Austin Community College

BOB CAVENDISH

Reluctant Rebels: The Eleventh Texas Cavalry Regiment. By Allen G. Hatley. (Hillsboro, Texas: Hill College Press, 2006. Pp. 191. Illustrations, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. ISBN 0912172428. \$31.95, cloth.)

Allen Hatley's *Reluctant Rebels* faces the daunting challenge of finding new avenues of approach that justify yet another book on the American Civil War. Ostensibly, Hatley finds that justification by focusing on the motivations of soldiers who put aside their own misgivings about the cause of secession and fought valiantly for kin and country, enduring four years of hardship and struggle in pursuit of a goal for which they were not initially supportive. Hatley's subject, the Eleventh Texas Cavalry Regiment, was comprised of men from more than a dozen counties in northeastern Texas, who served with distinction from the initial border conflicts of 1861 to the last gasp of the Confederacy in the Carolinas in 1865. Hatley sets up his investigation with the fact that "about one-half of the men making up the Eleventh Texas and/or their fathers . . . voted against Texas leaving the Union and opposed the war" (p. vii). The author proposes to inquire into how these men, who showed such dubious support for the war in its initial stages, came to serve with such enduring tenacity, engaging in numerous battles and conflicts up through the final days of the war.

Unfortunately, the book's promising initial question does not match up with its content. Hatley's coverage of the Eleventh Texas, in which several of his ancestors served (as he repeatedly mentions), consists of a description of the unit's movements, the engagements it fought in, and the larger units of which the regiment was a part. Utilizing official unit records and recent secondary sources, Hatley fails to provide the personal details and accounts that would illustrate how the individual soldiers reconciled their initial misgivings and trepidations and came to support the Confederate cause. He offers some evidence that the soldiers in the regiment

showed a continual concern for the protection of their homes, and that desertions often resulted when the men felt they were being mistreated by the Confederate leadership. However, this insight reveals little that was not already known regarding soldiers serving on both sides of the war.

Over the course of the work, Hatley becomes too easily distracted in describing circumstances and situations that are irrelevant to the actions of the Eleventh Texas. What initially offered a unique view into the motivations of a group of Confederate soldiers becomes a standard narration of troop movements and personal feuds between senior Confederate leaders. Too often the main subject, the Eleventh Texas, drops out of the book's narrative, resurfacing occasionally as the author references it as taking part in movements or engagements that are covered in more effective detail by other authors. This lack of attention reduces the main point of interest to such a degree that it limits the value of the entire work for both the casual reader and the professional scholar.

Hatley's work shows that there are still viable topics of investigation from the Civil War that justify the era's continuing hold on historical scholarship. Unfortunately, he does not follow through on the work's promising beginning and falls into the trap of covering well-worn material without offering much new information that would make the book useful to any but the most limited audience.

Texas A&M University

BRIAN F. NEUMANN

Our Trust is in the God of Battles: The Civil War Letters of Robert Franklin Bunting, Chaplain, Terry's Texas Rangers, C.S.A. Edited by Thomas W. Cutrer. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2006. Pp. 472. Series foreword, acknowledgments, editorial practice, illustrations, maps, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. ISBN 1572334584. \$45.00, cloth.)

Our Trust is in the God of Battles is an excellent compilation of Civil War primary source material that reaffirms that the South was not just fighting a political war but a cultural and philosophical one as well. Robert Franklin Bunting, a Presbyterian minister, was born in Pennsylvania but, as an adult, he adopted Texas as his home. He also adopted Southern culture and attitudes about states' rights as well. Shortly after the war began, Bunting became the official chaplain of the Eighth Texas Cavalry, more popularly known as Terry's Texas Rangers, which was serving with Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston's Confederate Army of Mississippi in the western theater of the war.

During the war, Bunting regularly wrote letters to Texas newspapers in which he relayed news from the front, stories about Texas volunteers, and casualty lists. Ninety-five of those letters saw publication, and editor Thomas W. Cutrer has built this book around them. The letters show clearly that the Southern clergy was a vital force in encouraging Southern men to war. Bunting was both preacher and rebel, delivering the message of salvation on the one hand and anti-Union rhetoric on the other.

Bunting witnessed the collapse of Johnston's thin defensive line in central Tennessee in February 1862. Bunting's description of the situation is biblical and