



U.S. ARMY

15 YEARS
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250
U.S. ARMY
THIS WE'LL DEFEND

FORGED BY FIRE, THE REINVENTION AND MODERNIZATION OF THE U.S. ARMY DURING THE CIVIL WAR. 1861-1865

For 250 years, the US Army has adapted as a living organization composed of operating units and institutional organizations that generate combat power.

Following the Mexican-American War (1846-1848), the Army faced reduced budgets and manpower, but still had to maintain control over newly acquired territory. This amounted to over 525,000 acres of newly acquired land through Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. By 1850, the size of the Army had been reduced to 10,320 Soldiers but gradually grew to 16,367 by December 1860 through, in part, the efforts of the new Secretary of War Jefferson Davis. During this time, the Army was the predominate force responsible for law and order, exploration, and infrastructure development, including the construction of lighthouses, bridges, and some public buildings.

In the 1850s, the Army made increasing efforts to conduct modernization of its force, including the adoption of new technologies such as rifled muskets and rifled artillery. This change would have a dramatic impact on the Civil War and the amount and types of casualties that were created. It also worked to expand its mounted forces to better handle movement over the vast amounts of new open territory. However, the development of tactical doctrine lagged behind, and the Army would continue to largely rely on traditional linear formations. This would be the doctrine that would continue to be taught to most of the West Point graduates participating in the war.

The outbreak of the Civil War in 1861 posed significant challenges for the Army. 286 officers of the 1,080 on the rolls resigned or were dismissed to return to their home states and join the Confederacy. In response to the firing on Fort Sumter as well as the announcement of states seceding President Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers for three months service, but the effectiveness of these militiamen was limited due to lack of training and experience. The Army would initially struggle to keep up with the demand for manpower, and repeated calls were made to state governors to form new volunteer units to fill the void caused by casualties and ending enlistments. Initially the Union Army faced significant logistical challenges, including the supply of ammunition and equipment. The rapid increase in manpower in response to the start of the war combined with limited production capabilities led to a logistics nightmare. At points individual states were bidding against each other to purchase foreign weapons and equipment to properly supply the new state units. The Union Army would eventually adopt a standardized rifle and ammunition, which improved supply chain management.

The evolution of tactics within the Army during the Civil War was significant, with the large scale introduction of rifled muskets leading to a slow shift away from traditional linear formations generally by 1864. The use of closed formation tactics and entrenchments became more common, as was highlighted during the battle of Spotsylvania Court House in 1864.

By the end of the Civil War, the Union Army had increased dramatically in size, with over 600,000 Soldiers at its peak. The total enlistments in the Union Army numbered 2,672,341, demonstrating the overall effectiveness of the federal system in generating and sustaining large armies, despite major obstacles. After the emancipation proclamation was signed the Union Army would also enlist 178,975 African-American Soldiers which aided in the overall war effort. The war marked a significant turning point in the development and evolution of the US Army, with the training of future leaders such as Emory Upton and the adoption of new technologies and tactics. The Army had matured and learned from the war and was well-positioned to face the challenges of the future and a growing nation.



THE VOICE OF THE UNION SOLDIER

The American Civil War served to revolutionize the United States and Army and in many different unexpected ways. New technologies and a growing demand for information during the war influenced the nation's press practices, photography, the importance of the telegraph, the use of illustrations as well as the wide spread growth in demand for newspapers. The demand for information grew so fast that even papers made for and by the Soldiers themselves were introduced. The original *Stars and Stripes* newspaper debuted in November 1861, thanks to the efforts of Soldiers from the 18th and 29th Illinois Volunteers based in Bloomfield, Missouri. The Soldiers had seized a local newspaper and adapted the printing press for their own use. Other Soldier produced newspapers began to pop up around the U.S. Army to include the *Union Guidon*, *Camp Kettle*, and *Unconditional S. Grant*.

"Real-time" reporting emerged for the first time as well with the creation of embedded reporters utilizing telegraph to rapidly send information back to their papers to be printed in special editions. About 500 journalists would cover the war for Northern newspapers where about 150 of them went out into the field with the Soldiers. This became so prevalent that field commanders attempted to control disinformation. MG Joseph Hooker forced journalists, reporting on military operations within the Army of the Potomac, to use a by-line so an article could be attributed to the author and if mis-information was reported they would lose their access to Army operations. At the same time, leaders such as President Abraham Lincoln became convinced that newspapers were one of the keys to maintaining popular support. The United States became a nation of newspaper readers during the war. So much so that literacy rates within the Union Army would exceed 80% by 1865.



MARCH TRIVIA

1. How many Soldiers in the Union Army were recent immigrants?
2. MG Sherman directly blamed who for the Union loss at first Bull Run?
3. What was President Lincoln's nicknames for President Jeff Davis and GEN Robert E. Lee?

LAST MONTH'S ANSWERS

1. How many officers from the war of 1812 were still serving at the start
3 of 4 General Officers
2. Who was the Army officer who described Los Angeles, in 1859, as a
cow town that had no chance of anything more of that?
Then CPT Winfield Scott Hancock
3. In 1855 what was the literacy rate of the Army?
30 percent

THERE'S MORE
TO THIS STORY!



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Contact: usarmy.ria.asc.list.history@army.mil | Bldg. 390, 1 Rock Island Arsenal, Rock Island, Illinois, 61299

Kevin Braafladt : Command Historian | Mark Struve : Assistant Historian | Kaleb Bemis : Archivist

