“ANYTHING BLUE WOULD DO:” THE CLOTHING OF UNION SOLDIERS DURING THE CIVIL WAR”

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Abstract

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The American Civil War has generated books by the thousands and continues to fascinate both academics and the general public. However, clothing has been one long-ignored subject, mainly due to opinions that it is niche and has little to add to academic studies. It has been a mistake to let this rich subject area pass to the wayside. Clothing not only played an important role in the war, but helped soldiers and civilians find ways to connect themselves to one another, the home front, and the battlefield. Uniforms allowed men to fight for their country, while generic pieces of clothing, such as socks, shirts, and havelocks, let those on the home front take feel that they contributed directly to their loved ones. Women, too, used clothing to advance themselves. Some women donned uniforms and snuck into regiments, but most women took jobs in factories, churning out millions of yards of fabric and ready-made uniforms for the War Department. The military's need for clothing expanded the farming industry as well, causing farmers in the Midwest to grow their flocks, affecting American farming for generations.

Clothing also contributed to the expanding power of the federal government as the War Department subsumed the traditional roles of states in supplying volunteer regiments, an action that drew the ire of governors. Finally, historians have long overestimated the amount of clothing made of shoddy, leading to an assumption that a great deal of graft occurred between the government and the companies who got contracts. Clothing touched on every aspect of the war, from the home front to the battlefield, and connected people and the government in new ways which transformed the war and post-war period.

Introduction

"We were not punctilious about the regulations as to dress. Our regimental uniforms of semi-zouave pattern had been turned in before Chancellorsville, and we had frock coats, blouses or jackets, just as it happened; anything blue would do."[1] The words of Charles Sprague, remembering his time in uniform defending the flag against the forces of secession and tyranny, highlight an understudied part of the American Civil War: the clothing of soldiers. Unlike the Regulars, Sprague was part of a volunteer regiment, the 44th New York, who had their own uniform style until it was phased out, and these men created their own style, depending on their wants and needs.[2] Sprague went on to describe several different style of hats and caps, some that he did not care for, that existed in his regiment, and he spoke of the broad shoes given out by the government "that was the only part of the uniform which private enterprise did not much improve upon."[3] As a part of Civil War material culture, soldier's clothing is one of the few subjects which affected all people of the Union and connected them in a way that came together to win the war.

Civil War literature has advanced significantly in recent decades, with new topics being researched each day, but one topic that has received little attention is the issue of clothing.[4]

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[1] Charles Sprague, "Military Life as Seen from the Ranks of the Army," *The Burlington Free Press*, July 5, 1886, 6.

[2] For the purposes of this dissertation, I make a distinction between three different classes of soldiers: volunteers, citizen-soldiers, and Regulars. Volunteers are those men, mainly from existing militia units, that come to the nation's aid in times of a military crisis for a short term, a maximum of ninety days, as prescribed by law at the start of the conflict. They supplement the Regulars, the enlisted men and officers of the standing army that already existed. The citizen-soldier is somewhere between the other two. He is a volunteer but remains a soldier for a much longer period than the ninety-day limit. Because of this, he becomes a military veteran, experiencing the hardships of soldiering on a daily basis, and thus is more akin to a Regular.

[3] Charles Sprague, "Military Life as Seen from the Ranks of the Army," *The Burlington Free Press*, July 5, 1886, 6.

[4] In 1989, Maris Vinovksis argued that social historians had neglected the Civil War as a topic of study as evidenced by how little was known about everyday life during the war. At that time, the most extensive study of common soldiers remained Bell Wiley's *The Life of Johnny Reb: The Common Solider of the Confederacy* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merill, 1943) and *The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merill, 1952). Social historians have suggested that a focus on battles has skewed our understanding of the far-reaching

Material culture of the war in general has received less attention than many other traditional works such as government power, the destruction of slavery, military studies, the economic costs of war, and understanding Confederate defeat. Scholars have taken steps to study the material cost of the war in terms of the environment, destruction, and the landscape, but little has been done on clothing though it had a wide impact on the war.[5] Clothing transcended the home front battlefield divide, as soldiers received clothing from family members, and the need for men to buy more than their allotments hurt families financially. Battlefield losses meant the government had to buy more clothing, providing more contracts to private firms and more jobs for people on the home front. In 1862 alone, the Quartermaster's Department contracted for almost 1.22 million pairs of infantry trousers, totaling $4,324,422.50.[6] Indeed, two-thirds of the Union's outlays went to providing material for soldiers to fight, and the Quartermaster's Department was the biggest spender of those funds, so it is curious that there are so few studies of clothing during the war.

consequences of war. However, military historians have countered with the argument that an overwhelming focus on the home front has taken the "war" out of war. Maris A. Vinovskis, "Have Social Historians Lost the Civil War? Some Preliminary Demographic Speculations." *Journal of American History* 76, no. 1 (June 1989): 34-58.

[5] A substantial number of these works focus on the environment as the lack of previous research has left a substantial opportunity for historians to do research. Gregory A. Coco, *A Strange and Blighted Land: Gettysburg: The Aftermath of a Battle* (Gettysburg: Thomas, 1995); Michael Golay, *A Ruined Land: The End of the Civil War* (New York: Wiley, 1999); Andrew McIlwaine Bell, *Mosquito Soldiers: Yellow Fever, Malaria, and the Course of the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010); Kathryn S. Meier, "'No Place for the Sick': Nature's War on Civil War Soldier Health in 1862 Virginia," *Journal of the Civil War Era* 1, no. 2 (June 2011): 176–206; Lisa M. Brady, *War Upon the Land: Military Strategy and the Transformation of Southern Landscapes during the American Civil War* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 2012); Megan Kate Nelson, *Ruin Nation: Destruction and the American Civil War* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 2012); Michael A. Burns, "War and Nature in Northern Virginia: An Environmental History of the Second Manassas Campaign" (PhD diss., Texas Christian University, 2018); Judkin Browning and Timothy Silver, *An Environmental History of the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020); Kenneth W. Noe, *The Howling Storm: Weather, Climate, and the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2020).

[6] "Abstract of Departmental Contracts Made, 1861-1866," entry 1239, vol. 1, *Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General (RG92)*, National Archives, Washington D.C.

For a large part of the twentieth century, studies of campaigns, battles, and biographies of the men who fought dominated Civil War literature, but the emergence of the new social history shifted focus towards the experiences of ordinary soldiers, civilians, and slaves. These studies focused more on the "home front," a broad category that includes the history of ordinary people and their experiences of the war, as well as the political dimensions of civilian life. The divide between the battlefield and home front began to blur as scholars rethought their delineations of the two.[7] The study of Union soldiers' clothing blurs things even further because the full process of clothing men at the front touched daily lives of the fighting men, their families at home, government bureaucracy, and those who supplied raw material and finished uniforms. Unlike most of the war's material culture, a fine web connected all of these groups.

For Union soldiers during the Civil War, clothing was both a practical and personal issue, involving economic and stylistic decisions that connected them to the wider world, but clothing was also an issue that forced the nation to reckon with new relationships between individuals, businesses, and the government as the Union navigated how best to fight and supply equipment for the war. In many ways it was a struggle over ideals, pitting the needs of the military against the nation's republicanism. This conflict may be best described as a fight between centralization and de-centralization, but it involves more than just government or military power over

[7] Recent studies of military-civilian relations have helped to bridge the division between military and social history. A substantial number of these works have dealt with whether or not the Civil War was a "total war" and focus on soldiers and the civilians in the path of the armies. A number of historians, including Charles Royster, Mark Grimsley, Anne Bailey, and Mark Neely have rejected the idea that the Civil War was a total war. Charles Royster, *The Destructive War: William Tecumseh Sherman, Stonewall Jackson, and the Americans* (New York: Knopf, 1991); Mark Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War: Union Military Policy Toward Southern Civilians, 1861-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Anne J. Bailey, *War and Ruin: William T. Sherman and the Savannah Campaign* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2003); Mark E. Neely, "Was the Civil War a Total War?" *Civil War History* 50: 4 (2004): 434- 458; Steven J. Ramold, *Baring the Iron Hand: Discipline in the Union Army* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2009).

individuals. The entire contracting system espoused by the Quartermaster's Department de-centralized clothing operations, but in the process centralized it in the public sphere by generally only contracting with larger firms or middle-men, who then de-centralized their process by sub-contracting. The army itself went through a similar process by centralizing the identities of volunteers into the Union Army. Though they clung to some small forms of autonomy, volunteers became much closer to regulars than historians have admitted. Women, too, were part of this struggle as their lives were upended by the needs of the war. There was a fight over the centralizing operation of the United States Sanitary Commission and a fight over female identity generally, as some women determined to join the army and fight for nation, an act completely against the gender norms of the period. Clothing played a central role in all these developments and more, providing a point of agreement and contention throughout the war. Clothing, a seemingly insignificant part of the war, offers a new way of looking at the internal struggles of the Union as it balanced the competing forces of centralization and de-centralization in its quest to defeat the Confederacy.

The American Civil War launched an unparalleled use of uniforms throughout the nation. Whereas the number of uniformed men in the Mexican-American War numbered roughly 100,000, the number in the Civil War swelled to more than three million, more than two-thirds of whom fought for the Union. Such an expansion of the military necessarily meant the federal government expanded as well as it attempted to support the military. However, it was not inevitable that the federal government would end up with vastly expanded powers, nor was the scope of those powers predetermined.[8] A great deal of the federal government's actions came as

[8] See, for instance: Richard Bensel, *Yankee Leviathan: The Origins of Central State Authority in America, 1859-1877* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1990); Brian Balogh, *A Government Out of Sight: The Mystery of National Authority in Nineteenth-Century America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Frank E.

reactions to Confederate policies or problems with the Union army. For example, when the federal government relied on states to outfit regiments at the start of the conflict, prices for goods rose drastically, forcing both Washington D.C. and state governments to outbid one another and driving up prices. It was not until the start of 1862 that every state gave up authority to provision its own troops to the national government, a great departure from the pre-war period. This centralization of power allowed the War Department to make larger and more beneficial contracts with private firms and develop a substantial surplus if needs arose.

"The North can make a steam-engine, locomotive, or railway car; hardly a yard of cloth or shoes can you make. You are rushing into war with one of the most powerful, ingeniously mechanical and determined people on earth – right at your doors. You are bound to fail."[9] The words of William Tecumseh Sherman to southerners on the eve of the Civil War ring true to modern ears, looking back and viewing the end result of the conflict, but they were not so obvious to his contemporaries, who believed one grand, Napoleonic victory was all that either side needed for their causes. Four years later, the deaths of 750,000 people, wide-scale destruction, and expenditure of billions of dollars, proved how wrong they were. Sherman's words, however, proved true, as the industrial productive capacity of the loyal states shook off the stunning defeats of the early war and provided enough arms, ammunition, clothing, accoutrements, and ships to make the Union army the most powerful and formidable fighting force on the planet, but it did not come without problems and criticism.

Vandiver, "The Civil War as an Institutionalizing Force," in William F. Holmes and Harold M. Hollingsworth, eds., *Essays on the American Civil War* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968).

[9] Brooks Simpson and Jean V. Berlin, *Sherman's Civil War: Selected Correspondence of William T. Sherman, 1860-1865* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 3.

The traditional view of the contracting system was that it was gathering place for "speculators, rogues, [and] conniving dishonest men" who swindled the federal government out of millions of dollars, only to provide the military with "shoddy" uniforms and poor equipment.[10] Some small cracks in this theory appeared with the publishing of biographies of J. P. Morgan and Montgomery C. Meigs, the Union's Quartermaster General during the Civil War.[11] Though these works demonstrated deficiencies in the work of Shannon and Meneely, they did not receive much attention until detailed analysis of Philadelphia during the war by J. Matthew Gallman found that few Philadelphians who prospered during the war did so as direct result of the conflict.[12] The most substantial analysis of the war supply system, its effect on the government and general public alike, and overall efficiency is Mark R. Wilson's *The Business of Civil War*. Wilson's in-depth research provides examples of successes and failures of the contracting system, how that system developed, and how it affected government and private enterprise in the

[10] A. Howard Meneely, *The War Department,* 1861: *A Study in Mobilization and Administration* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1928), 269-71. Similarly, Fred Shannon argued that contracting during Civil War was the origin of the wealth of the "Robber Barons" who rose to prominence in the post-war years. Fred A. Shannon, *The Organization and Administration of the Union Army,* 1861-1865 (Cleveland: Clarke, 1928), 1:56,71,73. For others who agree with these assessments see Ludwell H. Johnson, "Northern Profit and Profiteers: The Cotton Rings of 1864-1865," *Civil War History* 12 (June 1966) 101-115; James A. Frost, "The Home Front in New York during the Civil War," *New York History* 42, no.3 (July, 1961), 273-297; Earl K. Molander, "Historical Antecedents of Military-Industrial Criticism," in *Military Affairs* 40, no. 2 (April, 1976), 59-63; Samuel Richey Kamm, *The Civil War Career of Thomas A. Scott* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1940); George Edgar Turner, *Victory Rode the Rails: The Strategic Place of the Railroads in the Civil War* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1953); d Erwin Stanley Bradley, *Simon Cameron, Lincoln's Secretary of War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1966); d Richard F. Kaufman, *The War Profiteers* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor, 1972).

[11] R. Gordon Wasson, *The Hall Carbine Affair: A Study in Contemporary Folklore* (New York: Pendick, 1941,1948; privately printed, 1971); Russell F. Weigley, *Quartermaster General of the Union Army: A Biography of M.C. Meigs* (New York: Columbia University Press,1959). Weigley's work demonstrated the lengths Meigs went to in order to ensure the Quartermaster's Department was not being defrauded or awarding contracts unnecessarily.

[12] J. Matthew Gallman, *Mastering Wartime: A Social History of Philadelphia during the Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 324-26. See also Stuart D. Brandes, *Warhogs: A History of War Profits in America* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1997).

post-war years.[13] Though Wilson's work on contracting is exceptional, the most comprehensive history of the Quartermaster's Department is Erna Risch's *Quartermaster Support of the Army, 1775-1939*.[14] This work takes a focused approach, tracking the development of the department between the time periods and delving into both problems and successes of the department. Despite these works that challenged the narrative of a wasteful contracting system, historians have been lackadaisical in reassessing their assumptions, but a substantial portion of that reluctance comes from an unwillingness to treat clothing as a subject of study itself or from the notion that clothing is in the provenance of history 'buffs' or reenactors who are uninterested in serious academic work.

Clothing did not just reflect identity, but helped people develop identity.[15] It provided context to who people were and quite literally transformed them as they shaped gender, morality, and other characteristics. Take for instance freedmen and other African Americans who were legally barred from fighting at the start of the war. The Union uniform transformed these men from second class citizens and slaves into having an equal stake in the republic by sharing in the duties of upholding the constitutional order. The uniform quite literally made them citizens.[16] At

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[13] Mark. R. Wilson, *The Business of Civil War: Military Mobilization and the State, 1861-1865* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 4.

[14] Erna Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army, 1775-1939* (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, 1962).

[15] See Karen Haltunnen's treatment of clothing in *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-Class Culture in America,1830-1870* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982); Richard Bushman, *Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992).

[16] There is a wide literature that deals with this topic and the similar way the uniform affected immigrants. See Hondon B. Hargrove, *Black Union Soldiers in the Civil War* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 1988); Joseph T. Glatthar, *Forged in Battle: The Civil War Alliance of Black Soldiers and White Officers* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990); Susannah J. Ural, ed., *Civil War Citizens: Race Ethnicity, and Identity in America's Bloodiest Conflict* (New York: New York University Press, 2010); Christian G. Samito, *Becoming American Under Fire: Irish Americans, African Americans, and the Politics of Citizenship During the Civil War Era* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009); Richard M. Reid, *African Canadians in Union Blue: Volunteering for the Cause in the Civil War* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2014); Ian Michael Spurgeon, *Soldiers in the Army of Freedom: The 1st Kansas Colored, the Civil War's First African American Combat Unit* (Norman, OK: University

the same time, the poor quality of some military clothing made men feel the equivalent of slaves because the nation was not treating them as responsible citizens performing their patriotic duty to the nation. Indeed, the modern use of the term "shoddy" developed at this time from public criticisms of the government and businesses that provided clothing.[17] Shoddy was necessary to make up for deficiencies in raw wool, and there is little to suggest that it was a staple of uniforms, even though newspapers and politicians made a spectacle of presenting it as such. Because of this, most works that deal with uniforms and clothing during the war are more interested in what men actually wore rather than trying to learn about the process of clothing men or understanding the clothing's transformative nature.[18]

The first and indeed only work to embark on this exercise is Sarah Weicksel's dissertation, "The Fabric of War," which assesses the transformative nature of uniforms on women and African Americans in the Union and Confederacy and how these groups affected the war and governments through clothing.[19] Weicksel argues that a powerful culture of uniforms, what she calls "brass manhood," developed at the start of the conflict, as both sides adopted a

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of Oklahoma Press, 2014); Joseph P. Reidy, "Coming from the Shadow of the Past: The Transition from Slavery to Freedom at Freedmen's Village, 1863-1900," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 95, no. 4 (Oct., 1987), 403-428; Bobby L. Lovett, "African Americans, Civil War, and Aftermath in Arkansas," *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 54, no. 3 (Autumn, 1995), 304-358; Chandra Manning, "Working for Citizenship in Civil War Contraband Camps," *Journal of the Civil War Era* 4, no. 2 (June, 2014), 172-204. For a study of enslaved people and clothing in the antebellum South, see Katie Knowles, *Fashioning Slavery: Slaves and Clothing in the U.S. South, 1830-1865* (PhD diss., Rice University, 2014).

[17] A recent work from Hanna Rose Shell studies the development of shoddy and how it became enmeshed in political fights, scientific study, industrial espionage, ethnic prejudices, and war profiteering. Still, her work does not explore the why it was even necessary to use shoddy during the Civil War in the first place. Hanna Rose Shell, *Shoddy: From Devil's Dust to the Renaissance of Rags* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020).

[18] For works that deal specifically with what soldiers wore, see Frederick P. Todd, *American Military Equipage, 1851-1872*, vols. 1 and 2 (Providence, RI: The Company of Military Historians, 1971); Michael J. McAfee, *Zouaves: The First and the Bravest* (Gettysburg: Thomas Publications, 1991); Earl J. Coates, Michael J. McAfee, and Don Troiani, *Don Troiani's Regiments and Uniforms of the Civil War* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2002).

[19] Sarah Weicksel, "The Fabric of War: Clothing, Culture and Violence in Civil War America" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2017), 3.

uniform culture as "the dominant culture writ large." In making this proclamation, she neglects the nation's history of disdain for the regular army and its historical reliance on volunteer units and militia to fight its wars. The brass manhood she describes cannot be separated from the military culture in 1861, a derivative of the republican virtue of the nation's citizens; men volunteered to fight for the country while women supported them on the home front. This system depended on an experienced militia system that regularly drilled. But since the War of 1812, the militia system had drastically deteriorated. Additionally, the war with Mexico showed that the regulars, supported by a sufficient number of volunteers, were more than enough to win a conflict.

As Wayne Hsieh has shown, the United States military system developed its bureaucracy by copying the British and French systems and implementing them as part of officer studies at West Point.[20] These officers were the backbone of the high command and general officers for both the Union and Confederacy and provided a high level of military competency, but their experience was undermined by having to deal with volunteers rather than regulars. This parallels Mark Wilson's argument that the pre-war quartermasters were more important than those who did not have experience. In each of these works, the authors accept that a more centralized system was better for the military, but neither, and especially Hsieh, really take into account the positive effects of decentralization, which had its biggest impact on the home front.

It has long been acknowledged that the Confederate home front experienced the devastation of war very differently from the Union home front, facing a constant Union military

[20] Wayne Wei-siang Hsieh, *West Pointers and the Civil War: The Old Army in War and Peace* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009). This is not to say that non-professional soldiers were not good, competent officers, but the large proportion of officers with experience in the regular army suggests that they were more important.

presence in many areas for the war's duration.[21] The perceived separation of the battlefield and home front envisaged by Civil War scholars began breaking down when new studies of the southern home front came about. Indeed, a large portion of this newer scholarship, focused on irregular warfare, the role southern women in the Confederate cause, and African Americans deals with the lack of boundaries between the home front and the battlefield for many southerners.[22]

Contrary to the Confederate experience, the Union home front has been mostly portrayed in terms of politics, patriotism, economics, and corruption, making large assumptions that the daily material cost of the war did not affect life in general. Prices of raw material, and indeed most goods, increased during the war, but wages did not rise at the same rate. The use of greenbacks instead of hard currency increased inflation, leading to increased prices for the government as well as ordinary citizens. In addition, there has been a great deal of criticism for businesses and companies who provided war material, but there has been little in the way of defenses of them. For women, labor issues, patriotism, and collective suffering have been dominant themes in the literature for several decades.[23] Newer scholarship has begun to shed

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[21] For studies of war and civilian life in the Confederacy, see: Jacqueline Glass Campbell, *When Sherman Marched North from the Sea: Resistance on the Confederate Home Front* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); LeeAnn Whites and Alecia P. Long, eds., *Occupied Women: Gender, Military Occupation, and the Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2009); John F. Marszalek, *Sherman's March to the Sea* (Abilene, TX: McWhiney Foundation Press, 2005); Steven V. Ash, *When the Yankees Came: Conflict and Chaos in the Occupied South, 1861-1865*, 2nd edition (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); *Weirding the War: Stories from the Civil War's Ragged Edges*, ed. Stephen Berry (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011).

[22]Anne Marshall, "Forum: The Future of Civil War Era Studies: The Southern Home Front," *Journal of the Civil War Era* (March 2012), accessed May 20, 2021, https://www.journalofthecivilwarera.org/forum-the-future-of-civil-war-era-studies/the-future-of-civil-war-era-studies-the-southern-home-front/.

[23] Judith Giesberg, *Army at Home: Women and the Civil War on the Northern Home Front* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009); Mary Elizabeth Massey, *Bonnet Brigades* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966); Jeannie Attie, *Patriotic Toil: Northern Women and the American Civil War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998); Elizabeth D. Leonard, *Yankee Women: Gender Battles in the Civil War* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1994); Nina Silber, *Daughters of the Union: Northern Women Fight the Civil War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).

more light on the women who disguised themselves as soldiers and fought for the Union or worked in the dangerous occupation of spying.[24] At the same time, material culture studies have begun to connect the home front to the soldier and battlefields in different ways.[25] Mementos from home were dear to men who had not seen their families in months or years and who may have expected to die. The home front and battlefield were much more connected than previously believed.

In the studies mentioned so far, only Sarah Weicksel's looks at clothing in the Civil War as a serious academic topic. This is a serious deficiency. Take the diary of Isaac Harrison Perkins, for instance. It is fairly monotonous, mentioning things such as weather and being on guard duty, but Perkins was quite meticulous in noting his pay, expenses, and what clothing he bought. He noted that he received two pairs of shoes, one overcoat, two jackets, two blankets, seven shirts, two pairs of trowsers, and a myriad of other things from the government.[26]

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[24] Elizabeth D. Leonard, *All the Daring of a Soldier: Women of the Civil War Armies* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1999); Lauren Cook Burgess, ed., *An Uncommon Soldier: The Civil War Letters of Sarah Rosetta Wakeman, alias Private Lyons Wakeman 153rd Regiment, New York State Volunteers* (Pasadena, MD: The Minerva Center, 1994); Richard Hall, *Patriots in Disguise" Women Warriors of the Civil War* (New York: Parargon House, 1993); Larry G. Eggleston, *Women in the Civil War: Extraordinary Stories of Soldiers, Spies, Nurses, Doctors, Crusaders, and Others* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Co., 2003).

[25] For published works on material culture in the war, see Joan E. Cashin, "Trophies of War: Material Culture in the Civil War Era," *Journal of the Civil War Era* 1, no. 3 (September 2011): 339-367; Michael DeGruccio, "Letting the War Slip through Our Hands: Material Culture and the Weakness of Words in the Civil War Era," in *Weirding the War: Stories from the Civil War's Ragged Edges*, ed. Stephen Berry (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011); Joseph Beilein, "The Guerrilla Shirt: A Labor of Love and the Style of Rebellion in Civil War Missouri," *Civil War History* 58.2 (June 2012): 151-179; *The Civil War and the Material Culture of Texas, the Lower South, and the Southwest* (Houston: Bayou Bend, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 2012); Madelyn Shaw and Lynne Zacek Bassett, *Homefront & Battlefield: Quilts & Context in the Civil War* (Lowell: American Textile History Museum, 2012); Sarah Jones Weicksel, "Armor, Manhood and the Politics of Mortality," in *Astride Two Worlds: Technology and the American Civil War*, ed. Barton Hacker (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press, 2016); Sarah Jones Weicksel, "To Look Like Men of War: Visual Transformation Narratives of African American Union Soldiers," Translated as: "Quand l'uniforme fait l'homme libre: Les soldats noirs dans la Guerre civile américaine (1861-1865)" in *Clio*; Joan E. Cashin, *War Matters: Material Culture in the Civil War Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018).

[26] "Isaac Harrison Perkins Papers: Diary and Papers," box 1, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA.

Similarly, John R. Crossman of the 1st Wisconsin Heavy Artillery noted the prices he paid for goods in 1865. A uniform coat was $12.50, shoes $2.70, infantry pants $4.75, a flannel shirt $2.32, and drawers $1.66.[27] These prices were much higher than previous years, showing just how much inflation and the length of the war affected the market and how much the government had to spend on goods. The general reliance on contractors for most military goods only increased issues, as companies had to manage what to produce for the government and what to produce for the general public. The loss of most of the southern cotton crop did not help matters either. So caught up was the home front with the battlefield that prices of goods and raw material could change on the rumor of army movements, defeats, and victories. Clothing played a greater role in events than historians have realized.

Chapter Overview

There is a need to understand the way clothing affected the Civil War, as it has been severely understudied. It falls into the vein of material culture studies, but clothing was more than that. This dissertation sheds light on the importance of clothing to the course of the war and to the changing relationships of the different groups who had a hand in the Union's victory. Chapter 1 offers a history of the development of the Quartermaster's Department and its role from the American Revolution to the beginning of the Civil War. It looks at the evolution of army operations and changes in military administration, and the ways in which the government funded or failed to fund the War Department in peacetime. It also examines standardization of uniforms and the ways in which European styles and trends influenced American uniforms. Chapter 2 follows the War Department's difficulties in furnishing the proper equipment for the

[27] John R. Crossman diary, Civil War Digital, https://www.civilwardigital.com/CWDiaries/John%20R.%20Crossman.pdf.

volunteers at the onset of the Civil War. Secretary of War Simon Cameron advised most state governors to purchase their own supplies and equipment, and to expect reimbursement by the federal government at a later date. Private citizens were also important in providing goods, as well as women's groups. When the first major battle took place between the Union and Confederacy, clothing played a role in what happened during the battle, and the fallout helped the Union army develop new strategies to win the war.

Among the new directives was the formation of the army itself into a fighting system. Chapter 3 explores the way in which the army came together from disparate companies and regiments of the various states. It follows the centralizing role clothing had in making soldiers and also explores the way clothing affected the daily lives of individual soldiers. This included the way men had to learn washing and sewing and what clothes they chose to buy in excess of their yearly allowance. Such choices affected how much money they sent their families. If soldiers lost clothing in the field, there were no procedures as to their reimbursement, so men simply wrote letters petitioning for redress.

To follow up, Chapter 4 explores the role of the War Department in the clothing process. The department went from supplying a small standing army to hundreds of thousands of soldiers, and it had to develop the processes to contract for equipment. This in itself was a controversial position since the department normally made its own clothing, but the massive expansion of the military meant the government needed help from the private sector. Early failures by private companies caused outcries from the public and led to accusations by newspapers that companies sacrificed quality goods for profits. Accusations of "shoddy" uniforms were rampant, and historians have continued to accept this position, even though it operates under faulty assumptions. This chapter pushes back at this belief.

Finally, Chapter 5 looks at the role women played in the clothing process. Women were responsible for a substantial portion of the labor that made clothing, for kin, for private companies and for the government. A few women even signed contracts directly with the government for a variety of clothing. They made clothing to send to beloved husbands, sons, and brothers in the field, hoping to provide them pieces of home and more comfort than the government could provide. They developed local clothing societies to work together and eventually the United States Sanitary Commission, but there also was pushback on the local level. Some local societies did not want to cede power to a national group for fear that local men would not receive local goods. The war had just as much of an impact on women because of clothing as men.

On the whole, the lack of historical studies on clothing during the Civil War has been detrimental to our understanding of the conflict. The blue uniform meant a great deal to both men and women, and each had a hand in its making and wearing. In addition, poor early works have continued to influence historians into accepting the belief that there was widespread corruption on the part of contractors, who attempted to take advantage of the war to make themselves rich. Clothing even played a part in the way armies moved and fought and how men made particular monetary decisions that affected them and their families. This dissertation is not all-encompassing but seeks to shed light on a neglected topic that is crying for attention from the academic community.

Chapter1: A Decisive Step in the History of Discipline

Between 1776 and the beginning of the Civil War, the American army faced problems supplying its troops with necessary equipment, especially clothing, during major periods in which the military expanded. Such was the irregular nature of uniforms during the Revolution and War of 1812 that there was often nothing "uniform" about them. During periods of peace, the army ably clad its small standing army in a standard uniform that morphed and developed through the years until the outbreak of the Civil War. The erect Union soldier, clad in two shades of blue, holding a musket is the common image conjured when one imagines Billy Yank, but the reality is much more complicated. At the beginning of the war, regiments uniformed themselves in a wide array of clothing that came in many different colors. The blue uniforms so romantically imagined by modern minds were originally only intended for the regular army and not the volunteer regiments called for by President Abraham Lincoln. Because of this, regiments clothed themselves creatively, using the personal preferences of a commanding officer, the clothing traditions of ancestral homelands, and other styles to fashion themselves into an army. Yet less than a year after the conflict began, the War Department began to systematically remove some styles of uniforms from circulation, as it assumed the role of clothing supplier from the various loyal states. In this way, the American government followed in the footsteps of European nations that embarked on the centralization of military processes throughout the period of the Military Revolution.

Throughout the medieval period of Europe and into to the 18th century, many soldiers uniformed themselves in whatever clothing was available. While knights, men-at-arms, nobles, and mercenaries might afford more professional clothing due to their station, ordinary soldiers could not, and the state as a whole did not always have the capability to provide such things for

soldiers. Historian Maurice Keen argues that uniforms were common by 1300, but his lone example, men from Tournai wearing red tunics with a silver castle on the front and back, does not equate a uniform.[28] Instead, this was the equivalent of a banner or form of identification which men could use in the field. True, various units of one type or another would be armored in the same style, but this had more to do with utility and the way that units fought rather than personal fashion. Unless you were a knight or noble, there was little room for personal taste in terms of armor. Not until the advent of handheld firearms and the rise of larger standing armies during the period known as the "military revolution" did standard uniforms come to the battlefield.

Michael Roberts' military revolution thesis provided a new take on government centralization and the rise of larger armies and military power.[29] Following his lead, Geoffrey Parker expanded the thesis, advocating that new fixed fortification technologies created increased government centralization because larger armies requiring more support needed to man friendly forts and besiege enemy forts. Conversely, a variety of historians such as Jeremy Black, J.R. Hale, Bert Hall, and Christopher Duffy argue that both Roberts and Parker had either incorrect timelines or obscured analysis due to their decisions to limit their studies to specific nations. These historians argue for a variety of changes in the military revolution thesis, including expanded or different timelines, different technological changes as factors, and different tactical and government policies. Yet none of these historians make any attempt to

[28] Norman Housley, "European Warfare, c. 1200-1320," *Medieval Warfare: A History*, ed. Maurice Keen (Oxford: University Press, 1999), 127.

[29] Roberts' thesis argued that dramatic changes in military strategy and tactics during the 16th and 17th centuries created drastic and long-lasting changes in government and society. The expansion of military power meant that the state needed more money and power in order to operate militarily.

include analysis of uniforms, a major oversight, given that government centralization and army growth of any kind could not have happened without the evolution of uniforms.

During the latter stages of the high middle ages and the onset of the Renaissance, mercenary groups became very popular throughout Europe as immediate support for armies in the field. Some groups, such as the landsknecht or the Swiss Guard wore gaudy outfits to mark their special place. Landsknecht did not even have to follow the sumptuary laws of the Holy Roman Empire. By 1500, a few rulers, such as Charles the Bold of Burgundy, began creating structures to keep their armies organized in the field. Using cornets or pennons, soldiers were able to identify their respective companies, even in the midst of battle.[30] It was not until the 17th century that various nations, principalities, and duchies felt it prudent to begin clothing soldiers in garb specific to that nation, but in an age where armor still dominated the battlefield, uniforms were redundant, as they could not be seen. Even as armor fell out of fashion, soldiers' clothing could not be maintained, especially by an army in field, leaving a wide variety of colors and styles to outfit troops. During the Thirty Years' War, King Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden managed to outfit regiments in specific colors and maintain them, as material had been bought and manufactured in bulk.[31] Even though Louis XIV attempted to clothe his army with a singular uniform in 1647, sizes, not colors, were specified. To mark their troops, commanders resorted to tokens, "usually a sash, a ribbon, or a plume."[32] Not until Oliver Cromwell's New Model Army,

[30] Maurice Keen, "The Changing Scene: Guns, Gunpowder, and Permanent Armies," *Medieval Warfare: A History*, ed. Maurice Keen (Oxford: University Press, 1999), 284.

[31] Don Troiani, Earl J. Coates, and James L. Kochan, *Don Troiani's Soldiers in America, 1754-1865* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1998), 1.

[32] Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500-1800* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 71.

which began England's tradition of wearing red uniforms – did a nation make a concerted attempt to completely clothe its army in a specific uniform. Cromwell's decision to use a reddish hue to outfit his troops provided organization and created one of the strongest contemporary fighting forces in the process. Other nations soon followed the color trend.

By 1700, European nations began adopting standardized uniform colors, most often based on their religion: white or grey for Catholic countries and blue, red, or green for Protestant countries.[33] There were certain exceptions to this, as foreign regiments often wore different colors from regular line regiments. In France for example, Swiss and Irish regiments maintained their red uniforms rather than move to the grey-white of the rest of the army.[34] Colors were not the only things to change on uniforms. Improvements in flintlock design caused a decline in the use of pikemen as support for arquebusiers and musketeers, which allowed for an even greater uniformity in soldiers' clothing. No longer would armor be a mainstay of infantry on the battlefield. Instead, new styles emerged to outfit troops. The suit of coat and doublet, a variety of which were popular for several centuries, gave way to the long coat, which was itself an adaptation of the kaftan from the Middle East.[35] The French adoption of this clothing, called a justaucorps, paved the way for this coat to become standard for soldiers across Western Europe. Officers often embroidered their coats with silver and gold lace, as they wanted to observe their station and were allowed to provide their own clothing. The standard uniform for the regular soldier consisted of a shirt made of coarse linen, bound by a stock at the top, with a waistcoat

[33] John Mollo, *Military Fashion: A Comparative History of the Uniforms of the Great Armies from the 17th Century of the First World War* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1972), 30.

[34] Ibid, 32.

[35] Ibid, 31.

covering. The coat did not differ much from civilian dress, except in the case of Prussian coats, which were a "distinctively tight-skinned and skimpy affair, and the hem came down only as far as the tip of a middle finger of a hand held at full stretch down the body."[36] Most soldiers wore breeches, with the exception of Croatian and Hungarian soldiers, with cloth gaiters protecting the legs; high-heeled and broad shoes were the standard as well, though cavalry usually wore boots.[37] Tricorn hats were standard for most line infantry by 1700, as they were cool and kept off the sun, but they were easily ruined. Though this was a standard uniform, new clothing emerged as new units developed to fit into the changing nature of warfare.

The development of handheld firearms caused a shift in the way infantry developed, as cavalry began playing a more supportive role and firearm units grew out of a mix of pikemen supporting arquebusiers and musketeers. A similar change occurred at the end of the 17th century. The development of grenadiers, often used as assault troops, created a need for a new style of uniform to set these men apart from regular line infantry. Grenadiers were picked from the heartiest and stoutest of troops, owing to their preponderance to throw grenades and assault fortifications. Unlike regular line infantry, grenadiers "had furred caps with coped crowns like Janizaries, which made them look very fierce, and some had long hoods hanging down behind, as we picture fools."[38] According to John Mollo, these uniforms were directly influenced again by the eastern appearances "in a deliberate attempt to make grenadiers look as outlandish and

[36] Christopher Duffy, *The Military Experience in the Age of Reason* (New York: Atheneum, 1988), 106.

[37] Ibid, 106-107.

[38] John Evelyn, *The Diary of John Evelyn, Vol. 2*, ed. William Bray (London: M. Walter Dunne, 1901), 123, https://www.gutenberg.org/files/41218/41218-h/41218-h.htm.

terrifying as possible."[39] The most obvious difference between grenadiers and ordinary line troops was the mitre-shaped hat worn by grenadiers. Theses tall, erect hats had no brim and were often adorned with fur and metal facings, which, combined with the size of the grenadier, gave him a more menacing and powerful look. The grenadier hat was hot and cumbersome but also a source of pride for these soldiers. No wonder that "when soldiers are assigned from other companies to the grenadiers, they take on something of the grenadier spirit at the instant they don their bearskin caps."[40] The bravery of these soldiers and the high regard [in which others held them, integrated with these uniforms so fully that it was difficult to separate the two. While many uniforms made soldiers look smart and fine on parade, they were not always practical.

Most soldiers did not wear full uniforms except on the battlefield or on parade. Soldiers on fatigue duty usually wore more comfortable clothing and did not wear a hat all. The Marquis Brezé stated that "If you wish to decide on the most practical way of dressing the soldiers, you ought to banish from your mind the vision of how they look drawn up on parade on some splendid square."[41] But practicality was often not the primary thought of many national leaders, and a fine uniform on parade overrode the necessities of the field. Additionally, contemporary thought held that a pristine, polished uniform aided in training and held units together in the field. It was, according to historian George N. Clark, "a decisive step in the history of discipline."[42] Even as nations slowly clothed their various regiments in a uniform color, small

[39] John Mollo, *Military Fashion,* 33.

[40] Christopher Duffy, *The Military Experience in the Age of Reason*, 106.

[41] Christopher Duffy, *The Military Experience in the Age of Reason*, 106.

[42] Brian Lyndon, "Military Dress and Uniformity, 1680-1720," *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* 54, no. 218 (Summer 1976): 108.

details began identifying one regiment from another and one type of soldier form another, so that by the beginning of the Seven Years' War, individual regiments had identities tied more closely not only to their regiment but also to the nation as a whole.

The French and Indian War provided new opportunities for British colonists to come in contact with British regulars, and to also participate in the conflict more directly. Unlike earlier colonial wars, which consisted of large raids and sometimes sieges, this conflict imported a more European style of fighting; this included uniforms. Fears of French encroachment onto lands claimed by the colony of Virginia convinced Governor Robert Dinwiddie to raise volunteer companies to protect the colony's frontier. Led by recently promoted Lt. Col. George Washington, these six companies were clothed "in a simple uniform of red coats and breeches, to be paid for out of stoppages from their pay. Locally procured, the red uniforms were made of thin, sleazy cloth without lining," that soon wore out.[43] Even British regulars felt supply strains. The 40th Foot, scattered at various outposts across Nova Scotia, came to together at Halifax in June 1757, the first time the full regiment had ever been assembled together in its history. The men made "'a very shabby appearance … and did not trouble themselves much about discipline,' but after the regiment was relieved, reunited, and reequipped, they 're-assumed the air and spirit of expert regular forces.'"[44] Uniforms, well-made and personal, provided a strong esprit de corps to a regiment. It is no wonder, then, that it was important for a government to maintain lines of supply to soldiers, creating a need for increased centralization in the military. For the American colonists who rose against Great Britain, this was a problem that confounded them throughout the American Revolution.

[43] Troiani, *Soldiers in America,* 3.

[44] Ibid, 11.

The American Revolution

Unlike Great Britain, the American colonies had little in the way of a formal military system at the start of the conflict. Certainly, some leaders saw action during the French and Indian War and had experience as part of the militia, but the administrative systems present in professional army had to be created from scratch, officered by men who had little to no experience in their various processes. The creation of the Quartermaster Corps on June 16, 1775 was the first step in creating a cohesive bureaucracy to support the fledgling Continental Army, but the general failure of the Continental Congress to define the offices' functions, regulations, and limits created a recipe for conflict between the army and the Congress. It also meant the Quartermaster General did not have the flexibility to makes purchases and disbursements the best way he saw fit, thus often leaving individual states or individuals themselves to determine the best course of action for supplying soldiers in the field.

On October 2, 1779, the Continental Congress approved blue as the official color of the army, but this was generally in name only as steady supplies of a standard uniform were too difficult to obtain. Because of this, green and brown were the predominant colors worn; a hunting shirt, with "long breeches or overalls, made of the same tow cloth, gaither-fashioned about the legs and held down by straps under the shoes" was very popular, and George Washington even sought to have the hunting shirt adopted as the army's uniform.[45] Blue was a standard color uniform of several European nations and also various regiments across the continent, but the main reason the Congress chose this color was to signify opposition to the Tories, as blue was the official color of the Whig Party in Britain. It was a decision with definite

[45] Erna Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army, 1775-1939* (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, 1962), 13.

political meaning, but it proved difficult to supply the fledgling army with a standard uniform. Not until official French intervention in the war did a steadier supply of clothing reach the continental armies. Until then, the men made do with what was available.

While movies and many modern visuals portray a certain level of uniformity amongst continental soldiers, few regiments looked completely alike, and sometimes regiments had different uniforms throughout its companies. The first Quartermaster General, Thomas Mifflin, took to his position with eagerness, working to obtain clothing and material to be made into clothing by his department. At the same time, he had to work with various quartermasters appointed by each state, causing breakdowns in supply as they competed with one another for fewer and fewer goods. By December 1777, things had progressed to where it looked like the army might not be able to stay in the field. At Valley Forge, 2,898 out of 9,000 men were marked unfit for duty on December 23 because they were barefoot and naked.[46] At the same time, a transportation breakdown kept food and other supplies from getting to the men, leading to Mifflin's resignation. Both the Continental Congress and the Quartermaster's Office were responsible for the failures of supply breakdowns, even though less material was available since the colonies were cut off from its pre-war trade with Great Britain.

Textiles were the most valuable export Great Britain sent to the American colonies, accounting for 62.9 percent of total exports; woolen textiles specifically accounted for 36.1 percent.[47] The loss of these imports placed the army in a difficult position because there was not enough material for the rebels to clothe even a 10,000-man army. Goods needed to be stockpiled

[46] Erna Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army*, 31.

[47] S. D. Smith, "The Market for Manufactures in the Thirteen Continental Colonies, 1698-1776," *The Economic History Review*, New Series 51, no. 4 (November 1998): 689.

over for a proper supply line. Homespun goods, French imports, and uniforms provided directly from states made up the majority of clothing on the backs of continental soldiers. For example, the 2nd Pennsylvania were some of the lucky soldiers to receive part of 30,000 suits ordered from France in early 1778. These uniforms consisted of royal blue coats with scarlet facings and white woolen waistcoats and breeches, in the style of the Royal Army of France, but differed by having full lapels instead of half lapels.[48] Another regiment, the 4th New York, provided itself with white uniforms with red facings, white overalls, and felt hats when it began service in early 1777.[49] Whatever they wore, the men of the Continental Army wanted to look and feel like soldiers, but not all clothing styles were created equal.

One of the more economical ways the army maintained clothes for its soldiers was to use captured British clothing. This posed problems, as soldiers sometimes mistook allied troops for British soldiers, leading to incidents of friendly fire. To prevent further incidents, captured clothing had its linings and facing removed and went through a re-dying process, after which the linings and facings were returned. Unfortunately, the resulting color was most often brown. Such uniforms were issued to the New Jersey, New York, and New Hampshire brigades in the winter of 1781-82 after "other troops had refused taking the British Coats on account of the Colour."[50] For soldiers desperate for quality uniforms, turning down captured suit may appear ridiculous, but given that soldiers, especially officers, wanted clothing that looked good, it was not so outlandish to turn down these uniforms. Regimental commanders were often the ones who decided on what uniforms their troops would wear.

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[48] Troiani, *Soldiers in America*, 57.

[49] Troiani, *Soldiers in America*, 56.

[50] Troiani, *Soldiers in America*, 78.

When forming the 3rd Continental Light Dragoon, Colonel George Baylor selected a distinctive uniform of white coats with blue facings for his men, cut in the French fashion.[51] Baylor was simply continuing a tradition of regimental colonels being the arbiter of his regiment's uniform, but most European armies began phasing this out by the start of the American Revolution, leaving only a few trappings up to commanders. The lack of clothing in the colonies for American soldiers, along with a penchant for decentralization, often made commanders once again the decision makers on uniforms. It was also not uncommon for regiments and battalions to switch uniforms throughout the war. When Captain Henry Lee began forming his Partisan Legion in 1778, he outfitted them in buff faced with green, but by the end of 1780, the men received "short green coats, with other distinctions exactly resembling some of the enemy's light corps."[52] These were not outfits captured from the enemy; they simply were the only available clothing for Lee's men, who were nearly bare. Even companies of the same regiment were not always clothed in the same fashion. In September 1779, Captain Allen McLane's company of Lee's Legion obtained "Uniform light linen Jackets dyed a Purple & all there Ovrehalls (sic) the same," along with leather caps with green turbans, surmounted by a bearskin roach.[53] The combination of an array of colors, coupled with the different uniforms of their comrades, must have been an interesting sight on the battlefield.

As the war dragged into 1779, the Continental Congress began feeling the conflict's financial strain. At the war's outset, the Board of Treasury estimated it would cost $5,399,219 to support the Quartermaster's and Commissary Departments for the year; by 1779, it estimated the

[51] Ibid, 60.

[52] Troiani, *Soldiers in America*, 63.

[53] Ibid, 62.

cost to be over $200 million for the just the two departments.[54] This was an enormous expense that threatened to bankrupt the nation, so Congress looked to cut expenses wherever it could, even over the protests of Quartermaster General Nathanael Greene. In March of the same year, the Congress divided the responsibility of clothing soldiers between a Clothier General appointed by the Board of War and the states themselves, reverting to the model used in the earliest days of the war. In September, the Board of War wrote the Congress that they "find it impossible to procure a sufficient quantity of clothing for the Troops under our present circumstances of our Finances."[55] They asserted that "shirts, shoes, blankets and hats are the most scarce, and without the speedy and indefatigable exertions of the States, no quantities of these necessaries" will be available to the troops.[56] They even went so far as to ask Congress to remove from them the responsibility of provisioning clothing and to fully pass it onto the states.[57] To counter these problems, Congress simply decided to put the onus for feeding and clothing the army on the shoulders of the states and began implementing a system of specific supplies for states to deliver into national hands. Unfortunately, Congress failed to provide any instructions for transportation or storage; nor did it give thought to when to ask for seasonal goods, such as corn and wheat. At the same time, states often gave preference to their own soldiers and refused Congressional requests. The constant fluctuation of the supply system meant soldiers could not always rely on regular food and clothing, leading to such a wide array of clothing colors and styles.

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[54] E. Wayne Carp, *To Starve the Army at Pleasure: Continental Army Administration and American Political Culture, 1775-1783* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 173.

[55] Worthington Chauncey Ford, ed., *Journals of the Continental Congress, Vol. 15* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1901), 1038.

[56] Ford, *Journals of the Continental Congress,* 1038.

[57] Ibid, 1039.

Modern perceptions of Revolutionary uniforms do not provide a way to understand the wide array of clothing on a battlefield. Certainly, there were regiments and even brigades who wore the same outfit, and some regiments changed styles and colors several times during the war. But more often than not, there was a distinctive lack of uniformity caused by poor logistics, a lack of material, simple individual preference, and a failure to centralize the procurement process. The success of the Revolution, using a voluntary army supported heavily by a militia system, meant that most of these problems would continue. Not until the inception of the Constitution and ascendency of a national military would a cohesive support system emerge.

The Militia System

The success of the American Revolution led to weak national government, instructed by the Articles of Confederation, but these weaknesses soon became problematic, leading to calls for a new, more powerful national government. Fears over the prospect of a despotic and all-powerful central government made it necessary for Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay to publish the *Federalist Papers* to rouse support for the ratification of the newly proposed Constitution. In Federalist 29, Hamilton noted that a well-regulated militia is the natural defense of a free nation, allowing for the dispensation of a standing army, which was dangerous to liberty. With no regular army, the national and state governments shared responsibility for equipping and training the militia.

> Uniformity can only be accomplished by confiding the regulation of the militia to the direction of the national authority. It is, therefore, with the most evident propriety, that the plan of the convention proposes to empower the Union "to provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining the militia, and for governing such part of them as may be employed in the service of the United States, RESERVING TO THE STATES RESPECTIVELY THE APPOINTMENT OF THE OFFICERS, AND THE AUTHORITY OF TRAINING THE MILITIA ACCORDING TO THE DISCIPLINE PRESCRIBED BY CONGRESS."[58]

[58] Alexander Hamilton, "Federalist 29," The Avalon Project, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/fed29.asp.

The combination of national and state government control laid the groundwork for the development of an American military system, set into law in the Militia Act of 1792 and its amendments passed in 1795.

Congress contentiously debated the 1792 bill for several months before passing it; arguments consisted of whether or not the President had Constitutional authority to call forth the militia, the national government had the power to determine the provisioning of the militia, and if the national government could determine who was and who was not eligible for service. Congressman Samuel Livermore of New Hampshire argued that Congress was not creating a new militia, but simply calling forth the militia already existent in the several states. Under his recommendation each state would left to determine its own militia laws.[59] Other Congressmen, however, such as William Vans Murray of Maryland, believed "The militia, contemplated in the Constitution, certainly does not mean an existing militia; for many of the States have not militia nor militia laws; and therefore the clause must respect a militia to be formed or created."[60] These were fine points of implied and reserved constitutional powers, bound up with the militia bill; slowly but surely, Congress navigated its way to the bill's passage. At that point, it was reserved to the states to determine their militia laws. Importantly, this bill established that "the militia employed in the service of the United States, shall receive the same pay and allowances, as the troops of the United States."[61] This was a major element in the development of a military system

[59] 2 Annals of the Cong. 419 (Oct. 24, 1791-Mar. 2, 1793), http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llac&fileName=003/llac003.db&recNum=1.

[60] Ibid.

[61] "Militia Act of 1792," https://constitution.org/1-Activism/mil/mil_act_1792.htm.

in the United States and a massive support system for the nation's future conflict with Great Britain.

On the eve of the War of 1812, the United States Army had just over 6,000 men under arms, including all officers.[62] These men were used to skirmishing with Native Americans and manning frontier forts and were not prepared for facing the hardened British regiments. In 1810, President Madison approached Congress with a plan to mobilize 100,000 militiamen to fill out regular regiments to their proscribed strength and sign up 20,000 short-term volunteers, all at a cost of $6,037,000. Congress utterly rejected this, only allowing the president to call on state militias if necessary.[63] The clothing allowances these soldiers received was not too bad for the period. Non-commissioned officers, musicians, and privates of the infantry and artillery received "one hat, one coat, one vest, two pair of woolen and two pair of linen overalls, one coarse linen frock and trowsers for fatigue clothing, four pair of shoes, four shirts, two pair of socks, two pair of short stockings, one blanket, one stock and clasp, and one pair of half gaiters."[64] These were the clothing provisions the army marched with to fight Great Britain, but more often than not, standard colors and steady supplies were hard to come by.

Prior to the war, the majority of the army's cloth to be made into uniforms came from Europe, as did most of the army's fashion choices. The colors had changed little since the Revolution, being blue uniforms with red facings and white smallclothes, as had the style, but in 1810, the army "finally discarded the cutaway-style coat, worn since the Revolution with only

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[62] John R. Maas, *The U.S. Army Campaigns of the War of 1812: Defending a New Nation, 1783-1811* (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, 2013), 57.

[63] Maas, *Defending a New Nation,* 50.

[64] *An Act, Establishing Rules and Articles for the Government of the Armies of the United States; with the Regulations of the War Department Respecting the Same* (Albany: Websters and Skinners, 1812), 53.

minor changes in cut and trimmings, and [adopted] the single-breasted, closed-front uniform already worn by most European troops for more than a decade."[65] Federal government intransigence kept the nation's military somewhat small and not altogether properly outfitted, keeping more fashionable or practical clothing styles to take hold. Once war began, it proved difficult to keep the army supplied with the standard uniform, as it had been during the Revolution.

When the 15th U.S. Infantry regiment organized under Zebulon Pike received its first uniform in late 1812, the army was already feeling the effects of the loss of trade with Europe. Many regiments received uniforms of varying colors, although all cut the same. The 15th was no exception, wearing mixed gray uniforms with black cloth tape trimming the buttonholes on the breast, collar, and cuffs instead of white trimmings.[66] These early clothing deficiencies were overcome in 1813, as domestic production of clothing increased, allowing the army to be clothed more uniformly, but even with these increases, the supply system itself was often unwieldy. In late fall of 1812, no winter clothing arrived for the army as it went into winter quarters along the Canadian border; the same was true the following two years. When it did arrive, it was often poorly made and not enough.[67] Other times, superior officers countermanded and diverted clothing orders for themselves or their units. Such was the fate of the regulation blue uniforms destined for Winfield Scott's brigade in May 1814, forcing the army to scramble to supply his

[65] Troiani, *Soldiers in America*, 83.

[66] Troiani, *Soldiers in America, 89.*

[67] James A. Huston, *The Sinews of War: Army Logistics, 1775-1953* (Washington D.C.: United States Army, 1966), 110.

men with gray uniforms.[68] Finally, simple negligence by commanding officers led to a lack of supplies. When General Andrew Jackson began fortifying New Orleans in December of 1814, local citizens supplied his army's insufficient clothing and bedding because Jackson failed to requisition supplies or find out what was on hand locally. Though the War of 1812 proved that the United States military could hold its own against European forces on the battlefield, the failures of an active system of supply and of the General Staff were glaring.

In the years following the war, the army began a slow but steady decline in size, beginning with Congress' decision for a 10,000-man peace-time army in 1815, and then a smaller limit of around 6,000 with the signing of the Reduction Act in 1821.[69] Though the overall manpower of the military declined, serious rethinking about the professionalization of the army and its organization broadly occurred. In 1815, Secretary of War William Harris Crawford urged Congress to maintain the General Staff, created in 1813 for support of the war with Great Britain, because of "the necessity of giving to the military establishment, in time of peace, the organization which it must have to render it efficient in a state of war," and he also pushed Congress to more fully fund the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.[70] In 1818, Secretary of War John C. Calhoun continued the reform trend, urging changes to the General Staff in order to better prepare the nation's military, establishing recruiting and supply depots at major cities across the nation, continuing the build-up of coastal defenses, and establishing the foundation of the army's regulations for the next seventy-five years.

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[68] Huston, *The Sinews of War*, 110.

[69] Richard W. Stewart, gen. ed., *American Military History, Vol. 1: The United States Army and the Forging of a Nation, 1775–1917*, 2nd ed. (Washington D.C.: United States Army, 2009), 160, 164.

[70] Stewart, *American Military History, Vol. 1*, 161.

The 1821 regulations reaffirmed blue as the national color for the army and also introduced chevrons for non-commissioned officers. These were also the first regulations to describe in detail the yearly clothing allotments for a soldier, breaking them down by year. For example, while a private received 4 shirts each year, two of cotton and two of flannel, he only received a blanket and hat every other year.[71] Indeed, clothing allowances appear somewhat small, especially to a last a full year, but because most duty was at a fort or somewhere on the frontier instead of active campaigning, soldiers were able to make their clothing last. It was a good thing too, because any clothing over the allowance came out of a soldier's already low pay. A pair of socks cost .25 cents, while a blanket cost 2.90.[72] Knowing these difficulties for most soldiers, the regulations also proscribe ways to keep clothing clean and in good condition. For spots on scarlet cloth, lemon juice was recommended, while woolens had to be cleaned in the following manner: "extend the garment on a table; sprinkle it with bran very dry, mixed with a little Spanish whiting; rub them in well, and beat the garment with a smooth roll or mallet until the dust disappears, then brush it."[73] The regulations were thorough, allowing for smaller changes over time rather than massive overhauls, such as the introduction of a fatigue cap in 1826. For the most part, the uniform changed very little until 1832, when commanding general Alexander Macomb created a uniform fully based on the British style, which changed little until the end of the Mexican American War.

[71] The War Department, *General Regulations for the Army; or Military Institutes* (Philadelphia: M. Carey and Sons, 1821), 240-241.

[72] The War Department, *General Regulations for the Army*, 239.

[73] The War Department, *General Regulations for the Army*, 47.

One of the few changes that occurred on a somewhat regular basis was the army's headgear. The tricorn hat of the American Revolution fell out of favor after the war, giving way to a round hat with a bear skin crest in 1790.[74] This remained the army's standard until the eve of the War of 1812, when the army copied a Belgic-style cap from Great Britain. Less than a decade later, in 1820, the army switched to a "bell crown" shako, modeled on the latest military trends from Europe; it was a hybrid that combined the flared-top shako of the Russian army with the Regency shako of Great Britain.[75] This, was superseded by a taller, straighter shako in 1833. In 1825, the army added a second official piece of headgear, the "pinwheel cap," for fatigue purposes, which was subsequently replaced in 1833 by a black leather cap, and then a cloth cap in 1839 that was the standard at the start of the war with Mexico.[76] In no other area of the uniform did the army make so many changes over a short period of time. They were certainly aware of the military fashion trends in Europe and worked to keep up with them, though they usually lagged several years behind. The relatively small army of the period allowed for this flexibility, but the war with Mexico created a need for more troops, drawn from state militias and volunteer regiments.

In the decades after the War of 1812, the regular army became something of a punching bag for the general populace, as "many Americans looked down on soldiers as shiftless individuals who donned the blue uniform either because they could not or would not engage in

[74] David Cole, *Survey of U.S. Army Uniforms, Weapons and Accoutrements* (2007), https://history.army.mil/html/museums/uniforms/survey_uwa.pdf, 4.

[75] Troiani, *Soldiers in America*, 108.

[76] Cole, *Survey of U.S. Army Uniforms, Weapons and Accoutrements*, 12-13.

the industrious pursuits of normal society."[77] It was also in this period where the militia system, the supposed backbone of national defense, fell into disrepair. Drill occurred only once or twice per year in most areas, and it was expensive and time-consuming to call out the requisite men for participation. States failed to provide proper information to the national government about quotas, which decreased the amount of equipment provided to the state, even to a point where numbers from a decade earlier had to be relied upon.[78] It was a generally a faulty system, but not without some merits. The martial display of the muster was a means for social control in some areas, allowing for the maintenance of order.[79] Unlike the standing armies of continental Europe, the militia was a grass-roots entity, and "local units were pictured as both defenders and products of the republican way of life — yeoman farmer-soldiers with a heritage as ancient as Cincinnatus."[80] This beau ideal, combined with the nation's expansion, created an atmosphere where the militia stagnated. Who had time to prepare for national defense while the nation was at peace and growing?

With the outbreak of hostilities with Mexico in May 1846, the United States Congress began the process of preparing for war by appropriating ten million dollars for the effort, creating a company of sappers, miners, and pontoniers, increasing the regular army company strength from sixty-four to one hundred privates, creating the Regiment of Mounted Riflemen, and calling up fifty thousand volunteers to supplement the regular army, which would be equipped by the

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[77] Clayton R. Newell, *The Regular Army Before the Civil War, 1845-1860* (Washington D.C.: United States Army, 2014), 8.

[78] Paul T. Smith "Militia of the United States from 1846 to 1860," *Indiana Magazine of History* 15, no. 1 (March 1919): 23.

[79] F. John and Kathleen Smith Kutolowski, "Commissions and Canvasses: The Militia and Politics in Western New York, 1800–1845," *New York History* 63, no. 1 (January 1982): 23.

[80] F. John and Kathleen Smith Kutolowski, "Commissions and Canvasses," 12.

their respective states.[81] The Schuylkill Arsenal in Philadelphia increased its number of tailors and seamstresses to four thousand, ten times its peacetime levels.[82] It was a substantial undertaking that required moving large numbers of soldiers and equipment over vast distances, something the United States really never dealt with logistically. General Zachary Taylor, leader of American forces in Texas at the war's outset, did not have high hopes for prolonged military success, fearing the campaign to invade Mexico "will be a failure which will break down the individual who conducts it – The Q M dept. or those who compose it are not adequate to furnish the necessary transportation, provisions, ammunition, &c; and I begin to doubt their willing in some quarters to do so."[83]

It took almost a year for the invasion force to materialize and come ashore at Vera Cruz in March 1847, all while General Taylor waited on soldiers and supplies and fought with the Mexican army. The Quartermaster's Department was a constant irritant for Taylor, and prior to the Battle of Monterey, he said "We are in some respects indifferently supplied, but I became doubtful if I depended on the Qr Masters dept to complete the necessary arrangements so far as the same was concerned" for fear the volunteer enlistments would expire before the proper supplies arrived.[84] Most of the problems stemmed from a lack of immediate availability of equipment, but there was great political interest in supporting the Vera Cruz invasion led by General Winfield Scott. Indeed, the department procured 11,549 horses, 16,288 oxen, 22,907

[81] Newell, *The Regular Army Before the Civil War*, 13.

[82] Mark R. Wilson, *The Business of Civil War: Military Mobilization and the State, 1861-1865* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 44.

[83] Taylor to Dr. R. C. Wood, June 24 1846, in *Letters of Zachary Taylor from the Battle-Fields of the Mexican War*, reprint ed., William K. Bixby, ed. (New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1970), 18.

[84] Taylor to Surgeon R. C. Wood, September 3, 1846, in *Letters of Zachary Taylor from the Battle-Fields of the Mexican War*, 50.

mules, and 6,886 wagons during the war.[85] Such preparations were only underway once fighting began, even though President James K. Polk intended the movement of U.S. army troops to the Rio Grande as provocation for Mexico to begin hostilities. After almost two years of conflict, Mexico conceded and signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo on February 2, 1848, giving the United States California and most of the rest of its present-day western lands. For the average soldier during the war, his clothing had changed little since 1833, other than a new style of forage cap and a standardized fatigue uniform in 1839 and the use of chevrons in 1847 to denote non-commissioned officers, but in 1851, the regulation uniform would change once more.

Though the 1851 regulations were short-lived, they laid the foundation for what soldiers would wear in the Civil War. The frock coat eliminated the coatee as the service uniform for all branches of the service, and a system of branch colors was introduced: "Prussian blue for Infantry, scarlet for Artillery, orange for Dragoons, green for Mounted Rifles, and black for Staff."[86] While these colors do not a have a direct correlation to European trends, they are the descendants of the practice of piping which was begun in Europe. The "stovepipe" shako was also replaced by the "Albert" cap, copied from the British and named after Prince Albert. The final uniform changes came at the end of the decade, when Secretary of War Jefferson Davis replaced the Albert cap with the Army Model 1858 Hat, made of black felt. It was also styled the "Hardee hat" after Lt. Col. W. J. Hardee, but it also had a striking resemblance to the headgear worn by Lajos Kossuth when he toured the United States in 1851-1852.

Elected the democratic governor of Hungary in the wake of the revolutions of 1848, Kossuth fled to Ottoman Turkey the following year after Russian armies crushed his

[85] Mark Wilson, *The Business of Civil War*, 44.

[86] David Cole, *Survey of U.S. Army Uniforms, Weapons and Accoutrements*, 19.

government, and he eventually made his way to Great Britain and then to the United States. He was greeted with great fanfare and celebrity in the North and Mid-West, attending parades, banquets, and speeches in his honor, all while trying to raise money for efforts to democratize his home. *The Sun* said,

> Thus immediately previous to the Christmas of 1851 New York city underwent a period of Kossuth mania, and it affected the holiday presents. Every New Year's gift associated itself in some designation with Kossuth and Hungary. Restaurants abounded with Hungarian goulash, a savory dish of boiled beef and vegetables, strongly infused with red peppers; and there were Kossuth cravats (formidable bands of satin or silk wound around the neck, with ends liberally folded over the shirt front), Kossuth pipes, Kossuth umbrellas, Kossuth belts and buckles, Kossuth purses, Kossuth jackets, and Kossuth braid and tassels for wearing apparel."[87]

Portraits of Kossuth "typically show him in a brimmed hat, usually adorned with an ostrich feather." The words of *The National Era* proved true when they said "No foreign revolutionist of modern times has taken so deep a hold of the American heart as Kossuth."[88] Yet it was a French style that truly enraptured Americans at the end of the decade.

The Zouave Craze

Of all the uniform styles of the Civil War, the French Zouave uniform was the one that garnered the most attention at the war's outset. In fact, one French newspaper in New York stated "Ils pleut des Zouaves," in reference to the number of Zouave units mustering into United States service. The style was not an official part of the army's regulation uniform but still managed to make a big impression on the public imagination prior to the war, even though the French did not develop the style and troop type until the 1830s.

[87] "Louis Kossuth's Visit," *The Sun*, May 30, 1897, 6.

[88] *The National Era* 5, no. 10, March 5, 1861, 35.

Born out of the French conquest of Algeria, Zouave units developed out of a need to maintain French soldiers in the colony. France, fearing European trouble, brought most of the Algerian expeditionary force home, leaving only a handful of regular soldiers to keep order. Alarmed at this problem, the regional commander, General Clausel, began forming native auxiliary units, beginning with the Zouazes. The names developed as a derivation of an old militia unit, the Zouadaouas, who offered their services, and this regimental composition served until the end of 1832.[89] Because these troops fought against other native groups, it was difficult to recruit soldiers, thus making it necessary to bring Frenchmen into the unit. Though the regiment did not maintain its native origins, the uniform most certainly did.

The expeditionary force that left for Algeria in 1830 wore their normal uniforms, except with linen headcovers for their shakos, but the hot climate and miserable conditions soon forced the soldiers to adapt, as they discarded cross-belts, shakos, sabres, and jackets for lighter loads.[90] A new hat, the casquette, made of a lighter cloth and covered with a waterproof linen cover, became standard issue, as well as a greatcoat instead of a jacket.[91] These were small initial changes to standard French uniforms, but the acceptance of this new dress by the French military in Algeria made the new Zouave style possible. The Zouave uniform consisted of a "jacket with sleeves and waistcoat closed in front, without sleeves, in blue cloth. Moorish pants in wine-colored cloth … Turban and red riding breeches. Shoes, legging in leather. Knapsack. Turkish

[89] Edouard Detaille, *L'Armée Française: An Illustrated History of the French Army, 1790-1885*, trans. Maureen Carlson Reinertsen (New York: Waxtel & Hasenauer, 1992), 190.

[90] John Mollo, *Military Fashion*, 163.

[91] Ibid.

cartridge box."[92] This was certainly a departure from the traditional blue French uniform, and it was not particularly popular with the French high command, but this style met the needs of soldiers serving in Algeria and allowed the French army to develop newer tactics. The realities of fighting in Algeria made large, well-provisioned movements of big armies difficult, so French forces resolved to light infantry tactics. After establishing a base in the field, the main body of troops provisioned themselves for two days and marched to meet the enemy, while their more cumbersome equipment and personal effects were guarded in camp. The loose-fitting clothes of the Zouaves, combined with the new tactics, made them a formidable fighting force that many officers and men wanted to join, and the decades leading up to the Civil War showed how influential these men would be on the battlefield and in civilian society.

While the French high command grumped about the permissiveness of the uniform of the soldiers in Africa, the general public relished the new style brought to France by the veterans of North Africa. Loose-fitting styles began appearing on men and women, and the officers' caban was "the first link in a series of loose box-like coats, which in turn developed into the lounge suit of the 1850s."[93] The Zouave style also led to the adoption of blouses and the bolero jacket by women and knickerbockers by men.[94] Because Paris was a center of fashion Europe, this new style ranged across the globe. One California newspaper advertised Zouave pantaloons for sale, while another advertised the Zouave style of hats that were "already known in this city for comfort and elegance."[95] Edward Lambert and Co. advertised Zouave sackings as "a great

[92] Detaille, *L'Armée Française*, 190.

[93] John Mollo, *Military Fashion*, 169.

[94] Ibid.

[95] *The Nevada Journal*, April 9, 1860, 2; *Daily National Democrat*, April 5, 1860, 2.

novelty for ladies' spring mantles."[96] Even hair products took on the Zouave moniker as a way to sell itself. In 1859, A. Bellows of Indiana advertised Srasburgh's(sic) Zouave Ointment, which claimed to be "the only article invented that will cure Baldness and turn Gray Hair into its Original Color."[97] The nation was fascinated with anything related to zouaves, but it would probably not have been so without the influence of Elmer E. Ellsworth of Chicago.

As the drillmaster for a militia company, Ellsworth was familiar with military exercises and protocols, but it was not until his contact with a former surgeon who served with French zouaves in Algeria that he put himself on a path to drastically increase the popularity of zouaves in the United States. He formed the United States Zouave Cadets out of an unkempt Chicago militia company in 1859. Ellsworth demanded his volunteers abstain from gambling, drinking, playing billiards, or acting in any way unbecoming of a gentleman.[98] Such rules would have shocked French zouaves, who regularly caroused, drank, and acted foolhardy. In fact, that was part of the mystique of the regiment; those men lived hard and fought hard, earning great distinction for themselves and their regiment. Ellsworth began training his company in the zouave drill, and they soon became the best drilled company in Illinois, earning the approval of the public and newspapers, who especially took to their brilliant uniforms. Because of this, Ellsworth issued a challenge to any company of militia or regulars in the United States and Canada to compete for a stand of championship colors.[99] When none answered the call, he embarked his company on a tour of eastern cities to display their military prowess.

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[96] *New York Daily Tribune*, April 9, 1860,1.

[97] *Marshall County Republican*, October 27, 1869, 3.

[98] Michael J. McAfee, *Zouaves: The First and the Bravest* (Gettysburg, PA: Thomas Publications, 1991), 25.

[99] Michael J. McAfee, *Zouaves*, 26.

In New York, the men were accompanied by bands and companies of New York militia and as they marched to the Brooklyn Navy Yard "thousands of our citizens thronged the sidewalks to get a glimpse at the champion soldiers of the West."[100] Similar circumstances greeted them in other cities; a battery of cannon signaled the company's arrival in Baltimore, along with several companies of the Independent Greys. *The Daily Exchange* said the Zouave's reputation "has not suffered during their present visit to Northern cities; on the contrary, every day has added to their high character as soldiers and gentlemen."[101] The tour expanded the zouave reputation and led to militias in other states to form under the same banner. The style was popular amongst all people, as fifty African-Americans formed a Zouave company, called the Fort Pitt Cadets, in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania.[102] The bold French style was matched only by the descriptions of the Zouaves themselves. George B. McClellan, future commander of the Union army, said "they are selected from the old campaigners for their fine physique and tried courage, and have certainly proven that they are, what their appearance would indicate, the most reckless, self-reliant, and complete infantry that Europe can produce. With his graceful dress, soldierly bearing, and vigilant attitude, the Zouave at an outpost is the beau ideal of a soldier."[103] *The Arizonian* reported a particularly striking example of French Zouaves who encountered Austrian opponents during the Second Italian War of Independence in 1859. The Austrians were shocked seeing the Zouaves come into action with pipes in their mouths, saying "The German's love for a pipe is of the number of calm delights – a thing to be appreciated when "he beside his cottage

[100] *New York Herald*, July 18, 1860, 1.

[101] "The Arrival of the Zouaves," *The Daily Exchange* (Baltimore, MD), August 2, 1860.

[102] "Miscellaneous," *The Highland Weekly News* (Hillsborough, OH), September 13, 1860, 1.

[103] "Something About the Zouaves," *Daily Iowa State Democrat* (Davenport, IA), June 22, 1859, 1.

door is sitting in the sun" but a pipe in battle! Innocent German! Incomparable Zouave!"[104] These soldiers were elite and represented as much to the public, allowing their imaginations to run wild and embrace the French style. While the Regular Army copied the dress of the regular French line infantry, the public became enamored with the Zouaves, but each style would serve to clothe soldiers as the Civil War approached.

The variety of clothing options used by the United States Army between the Revolution and the Civil War followed the whims of the commander in charge. Whether it was a French or British style, or even Eastern European, the army took its clothing styles from Europe. More importantly, it began copying the same systems of military bureaucracy developed in Europe, especially after the War of 1812. Military developments that had existed in Europe for a hundred years or more in 1860 had only been adopted by the United States in the several decades prior, but it was enough time to establish the military system that both the Union and Confederacy used as a foundation for their respective military administrations. It was a system designed for a smaller standing army that was to be supported by state militia. The centralization of the army that occurred between the Revolution and the start of the Civil War was at odds with the republican nature of the nation, and quite often, the military bureaucracy was at odds with Congress. This struggle played a major part in shaping the administrative issues of the Union Army during the first year of the Civil War.

[104] "The Zouaves," *The Weekly Arizonian* (Tucson, AZ), August 11, 1859, 2.

Chapter 2: You Are Green Alike

The unprecedented nature of the Civil War meant unprecedented measures had to be taken to fight, and ultimately win the war. Among these actions were the massive expansion of the Regular Army, the nature of military volunteering, and the centralization of provisioning for the army. It took time for many of these new initiatives to fall in place, and most of them only occurred at the end of the first year of the war, after the public saw the conflict would last much longer than previously expected. It was a costly war, in terms of both men and material. Over 2.1 million soldiers fought for the Union, and over 640,000 of these died from wounds and disease. All of these men needed food, clothing, and other equipment to prosecute the war. According to historian Mark Wilson, the United States spent roughly $1.8 billion in 1860 dollars on the war effort, more than the combined total of all previous government expenses, and two-thirds of this cost went to pay for material.[105] Products such as shoes, clothing, buttons, hats, firearms, tents, and a host of others needed buying because the War Department's supplies were not enough to sustain the army, even for a short period. Many of those supplies were also too antiquated for proper use, and the Department itself needed to expand to deal with the changes created by the war. Additionally, the United States' reliance on the state militia systems to bolster the regular army meant the states were quite often responsible for equipping their own men, and could call on the federal government for supplies at other times. It was a complicated system, made worse by a lack of coordination and cooperation among state volunteer regiments. The Quartermaster's Department eventually wrested control of supply away from the various states to improve efficiency. The Civil War was a massive national project to save the nation, and a more

[105] Mark R. Wilson, *The Business of Civil War: Military Mobilization and the State, 1861-1865* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 1; this is an equivalent of 55.6 billion modern dollars.

centralized government was needed to take control of the nation's war efforts, but at the opening of the conflict, there was a much greater decentralization of the supply system, causing conflict among all of the parties scrambling to equip the nation's volunteers.

Early in the morning on April 12, 1861, Confederate forces opened fire on Fort Sumter in Charleston harbor, the opening salvo of a bloody four-year conflict. Although many believed a conflict would arise, a scant handful believed the war would drag on for any length, leading to an atmosphere of war fever. The *Fremont Journal* reported in Toledo an "immense gathering of citizens of all parties to-night, expressing sympathy with the government," and in Milwaukee "war news created extreme excitement, and all through the state influential men are tendering their services to the Governor."[106] Even party affiliations and differences were cast aside in favor of sustaining the Union. From Illinois, erstwhile presidential candidate Senator Stephen Douglas said "There are only two sides to the question. Every man must be for the United States or against it. There can be no neutrals in this war, *only patriots – or traitors.*"[107]

Within twenty-four hours after the fall of Fort Sumter, President Lincoln called for 75,000 ninety-day state militiamen to put down the rebellion, and most states eagerly answered the call, but this had the effect of pushing Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina firmly into the Confederacy. A week later, Lincoln expanded this call, requesting 42,000 three-year volunteers, 18,000 sailors, and increasing the regular army's size by 23,000 men.[108] This explosive growth more than quadrupled the size of the roughly 16,000-man peacetime army, putting a great deal of strain on the army's supply depots. Not only that, but loyal states actively

[106] *Fremont Journal,* April 16, 1861, 1.

[107] James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom* (Oxford: University Press, 1988), 274.

[108] Ibid, 322.

desired larger quotas of troops to send to the defense of the flag. Only New York (16), Pennsylvania (16), and Ohio (13) had double-digit regimental quotas. The next highest number was Indiana and Illinois with six each, and many states only needed to send one.[109] Governor William Dennison, Jr. of Ohio wired Washington that "without seriously repressing the ardor of the people, I can hardly stop short of twenty" regiment.[110] While citizens flocked to the flag in support of the Union, and in quite a few cases to end slavery, new problems plagued the federal government and the War Department.

At the outset of the conflict, the War Department produced the majority of its own goods for the regular army, including clothing, weapons, ammunition, medical supplies, and even food. Each of these depots, from the Schuylkill Arsenal in Philadelphia to the army bakeries in Alexandria, Virginia, employed several hundred men, women, and children, but these employment numbers were only meant to support the small peace-time army. The expansion of the nation's military forces meant these depots could only sustain the army for a small period of time, and although the number of depots and employees would expand exponentially, it took time for this to occur. Accordingly, Secretary Cameron informed several governors that the federal government would recompense their states for any costs occurred in clothing militia volunteers, saying to Governor Andrew Curtin of Pennsylvania, "The soldier, as soon as mustered into service, is provided for by the United States."[111] However, this only applied to militia called up for national service, and Cameron stated that clothing is "sometimes issued to

[109] *New York Herald*, April 16, 1861, 3.

[110] James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 255.

[111] Robert N. Scott, ed., *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, series iii, vol. 1 (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1899), 132. Hereafter referred to as *OR*.

volunteers. Just at present we have not the supplies, but they are being prepared as rapidly as possible."[112] This was an important distinction between how militia and volunteers should be supplied, which led to a great deal of confusion and disagreement between the states and national government. But for the time being, it was the system that would have to work.

The militia system of the nation formed the core of those first three-months volunteers. Some of these units were old, dating back to the start of the century, while others were newer and developed from the Zouave craze in the 1850s. But they were also small units, mostly consisting of eighty to one hundred men, who rarely, if ever, operated in concert with more men than their own company. Additionally, most companies selected or designed their own uniforms, creating wide discrepancies in styles in those initial war months. For example, the 79th New York militia wore a kilt, while the 14th Brooklyn wore a zouave style, as did Elmer Ellsworth's Zouaves. In this system, the "individual man had to bear the greater part of the burden of expense" for equipping themselves.[113] This was actually one of the reasons it was so difficult to muster enough men for states' required militia regiments. The federal government provided ordnance and firearms for the state militias, based on their muster rolls, but this proved problematic. On April 16, 1861, the *Evening Star* reported that Pennsylvania had 20,000 uniformed volunteers but only "4,260 effective small arms, leaving an actual deficit for them alone of 14,800."[114] This was a pretty standard problem for most states. There was a severe lack of arms and other equipment, as well as proper clothing, causing states to take matters into their own hands to supply their

[112] Ibid.

[113] Paul T. Smith, "Militia of the United States from 1846 to 1860," *Indiana Magazine of History* 15, no. 1(March 1919): 38.

[114] *Evening Star,* April 16, 1861, 1.

soldiers. This augmented a decentralized system of state governments competing against each other, the federal government, local governments, and even private citizens for material to outfit soldiers, which led to bidding wars for goods and material. While the North held the vast majority of the nations' industries needed for war in 1861, it took some time for those industries to reach the output needed to support what would become a roughly 2-million-man army. A daunting task, at best, the department maintained two years of clothing for the small peacetime army, hardly enough to supply all of the volunteers.

The sheer speed with which these regiments mustered into national service and the explosive growth of the military placed the federal and state governments in difficult situations. The national government greatly desired to maintain itself within the confines of the law, meaning it could only call up limited numbers of militia and volunteers. Secretary Cameron cautioned Governor Dennison that additional militia regiments "cannot be received under the requisition. But the president has authorized the raising of twenty-five additional regiments under the act of 1846 … should they agree to enter the service of the Government for three years."[115] Legal problems such as this plagued the nation until the early part of 1862, and though matters began to run more smoothly, it took a great deal of maneuvering and compromising to reach that point. So many men wanted to come to the defense of the country that regiments filled up quickly, but states still wanted to increase the number of regiments they sent to save the union and bring honor to the respective states. As the days passed and men flocked to the colors, the nation moved blindly forward into a conflict it was not prepared for, with a patriotic zeal that often left men ill-equipped for the struggles of war.

[115] *OR* iii, vol. 1, 131.

Meigs was an energetic individual, utterly loyal to the Union. Prior to the war, as an officer in the Army Corps of Engineers, he helped design and oversaw construction of the expansion of the Capitol building, including its dome, and supervised the construction of the Washington Aqueduct. More importantly, before the hostilities broke Fort Sumter, Meigs, at the behest of Secretary of War William Seward, developed and implemented a plan to reinforce Fort Pickens in Florida in case war began. On April 16, Meigs resupplied the garrison, bringing its numbers close to 3,200 men, all without the public or Confederates discovering the plan.[116] This decisiveness and administrative ability led to Meigs' appointment as Quartermaster General, and he needed these traits to deal with the departments' problems in the summer of 1861.

One of the first major obstacles Meigs faced was how to effectively supply volunteers with appropriate equipment. The Schuylkill Arsenal did not have enough supplies on hand to outfit 75,000 militia because it normally supported an army of 16,000 men. Additionally, it was impossible for the government to make enough clothing for these troops, as they were only called up for ninety days, as the law stipulated. To make up for these deficiencies, the government relied on the contracting system, but even this was difficult because only a few mills in the nation were set up to produce the type of course, heavy woolens the army needed.[117] Meigs desired to work Schuylkill to capacity, but not expand operations, instead relying on "well-organized establishments whose business had been cut off by war and whose workers were suffering."[118] Even this was not enough and eventually proved impractical, so quartermasters

[116] Robert O'Harrow, *The Quartermaster: Montgomery C. Meigs; Lincoln's General; Master Builder of the Union Army* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2016), 110.

[117] Erna Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army*, 351.

[118] Ibid, 352.

made contracts directly with clothing firms for finished products, while also expanding government facilities and making clothes. It was the beginnings of a mixed military economy that grew during the war, and the individual states were active participants in the war's first year.

Raising the Regiments

"The only question as to uniform is what will best stand hard service, and best protect the men in all kinds of weather. It is sufficient for the purpose of mere show, that the dress shall be uniform; and when it is so, and is substantial and comfortable, it can hardly be improved by gilt-lace or gaudy colors."[119] The words of the *Cincinnati Gazette* were adamant that clothing troops should be a practical endeavor, ignoring many of the fineries often associated with the military. These men were volunteers and militia, coming to defense of their nation and needed proper provisions. The *Gazette* stated, "In a government made up as ours is, of local government … it is incumbent on the local governments to take the initiative. It is not like centralized hereditary Governments, where the wars are made by princes, merely to satisfy military ambition, or for some quarrel of dynasties, of no real interest of the people; but this is a war undertaken by the people to sustain their Government; and it is proper and according to the nature of our institutions that the movement should be carried on, as well by the primary assemblies and local Governments of the people, as by the Federal authorities."[120] Localities determined to maintain control of their soldiers and supplies in support of the national government in the tradition of the nation's political character, and this bottom-up approach by cities and states was the way most

[119] *Evansville Daily Journal,* vol. 13, April 23, 1861, 1.

[120] Ibid.

soldiers were supplied in the initial months, albeit with some federal support and looking at the standards of supply for the regular army.

The regulations for the regular army allowed for a certain number of clothing items per year, that amounted to $42 worth of goods. If a soldier needed anything over his allowance, he paid for it out of his own pocket, meaning that it was possible for a pre-Civil War soldier to owe money to the government at some point during his enlistment. During a five-year enlistment, the average soldier received 5 hats, forage caps, and uniform coats or jackets, 10 sack coats, 13 trousers, 15 shirts, 11 drawers, 20 pairs of bootees and stockings, 2 leather stocks, 1 great coat, 5 fatigue overalls, and 2 blankets.[121] Other than certain stylistic and material differences, the army had not changed the amount of clothing provided to soldiers since the inception of the Quartermaster's Department. The 1841 regulations were very similar, but made distinctions between cotton clothing and woolen clothing, allowing soldiers to have one style for winter and one for summer.[122] This was an important change, because the thinking of the War Department was that wool was the better material because it would not wear out fast and would keep soldiers warm in winter and cool enough in summer. Former soldiers concurred with this assessment, as one wrote to the *Cleveland Morning Leader*, saying "Woolen is preferable to linen or cotton, is equally light, costs less than the former, and is easier washed and kept clean."[123] The increased level of standardization allowed the War Department to cut down on its supply chain and standardize the uniform even more.

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[121] *Regulations for the Army of the United States, 1857* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1857), 170.

[122] *Regulations for the Army of the United States, 1841* (Washington D. C.: J. & G. S. Gideon, 1841), 209-210.

[123] *Cleveland Morning Leader,* April 25, 1861, 2.

The regulations for soldiers' clothing was detailed and extensive. There were distinct differences in how every officer grade dressed, even down to the number of buttons on the frock coat.[124] For enlisted men, the uniform coat was "a single-breasted frock of dark blue cloth, made without plaits, with a skirt extending one-half the distance from the top of the hip to the bend of the knee." This style was worn on dress parade or in combat. For fatigue duties, enlisted men wore "a sack coat of dark blue flannel extending half-way down the thigh, and made loose, without sleeve or body lining."[125] These were important distinctions, because the sack coat was meant to be worn while performing regular camp duties, rather than publicly. The same was true of headwear; a hat was for dress and a forage cap was for fatigue purposes. The hat was one of a very few changes that occurred to regulations before the Civil War began. The 1858 Army hat was supposed to be just for two new cavalry regiments created in 1855, but then Secretary of War Jefferson Davis decided to adopt it for the whole army, believing it more practical than the shako. While the hat was admirable looking, it was made "of black felt … with a double row of stitching, instead of binding, around the edge," making it very hot to wear and also somewhat cumbersome.[126] Though disliked by a great number of soldiers, the Hardee hat would become one of the most recognizable headpieces of the war.

The army regulations were very thorough, describing the specifics for gloves, sashes, belts, swords, badges, and host of other minor accouterments believed to be important to a uniform. For example, epaulettes were worn by all officers, but they could be dispensed with

[124] *Revised United States Army Regulations of 1861* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1863), 462-463.

[125] Ibid, 462, 464.

[126] Ibid, 466.

"when not on duty and on certain duties off parade … except when, in war, there is immediate expectation of meeting the enemy, and also when the overcoat is worn."[127] It may appear strange to require wearing these decorative implements in battle, but they were useful, in the confusion that accompanied fighting, to note who officers were. But officers were also aware of their stations, and it was desirable to maintain a level of dress to distinguish them from regular soldiers. There was certainly a class divide of the regular army in that sense. In addition, officers often kept servants, and the cost for clothing, feeding, and transporting a servant was reimbursed to officers.[128] Additionally, officers purchased their own uniform, allowing them to have a higher quality clothing than enlisted men and expand their uniforms in the way they desired, within the bounds of army regulations. The states followed the regular army regulations fairly well and tried to equip its soldiers in a similar fashion, but the reliance on state militias to form the cores of state regiments meant that the various companies wore different styles of clothing, if they had an official uniform at all. This was an initial problem for several states and forced their soldiers to wear a hodgepodge of clothing and also purchase inferior goods.

Shoddy became a catch-all word for inferior products during the Civil War, but it originally was "a fabric made of cuttings and other waste retrieved from the floors of clothing makers. Combined with glue, pounded and rolled, it had the appearance of sturdy cloth."[129] Not until soldiers were extensively engaged in the field under hot sun did the material reveal its nature, literally falling off soldiers in the field. At this stage of the war, Pennsylvania received the most criticism for the shoddy material provided to its volunteers. Blankets provided to many

[127] Ibid, 471.

[128] *Regulations for the Army of the United States, 1841*, 353.

[129] Robert O'Harrow, *The Quartermaster*, 125.

soldiers were thin enough to be seen through, while pants that wore out in a week "cost the State $3, and blouses, made of shoddy, with pants, $10."[130] This was extremely disturbing for the public, because Pennsylvania had expended a substantial amount of money on equipment. Newspapers blamed everyone from the contractors, to Governor Andrew Curtin, to Secretary Cameron for these problems, but there was actually little that these men could do at that early stage. Some governors, such as Erastus Fairbanks of Vermont, were defended by newspapers for their efforts to supply the states' soldiers. The *Caledonian* commended the governor for purchasing cloth, clothing, and horses within the state and defended Fairbanks' decision to purchase wagons from a Connecticut manufacturer because they were needed without delay.[131] The needs of state governments stressed an already burdened market made procurement difficult, but some thoughtful and enterprising individuals were not caught completely unprepared.

Several governors, believing a civil war was a future possibility, worked to update and train their militia units. Governor John Andrew of Massachusetts was one of these enterprising men, as he ordered supplies to arm the states' militia units and ordered daily drills.[132] Four of these regiments were ordered to muster in Boston on April 15, before President Lincoln's call even reached many governors. Governor Andrew Curtin of Pennsylvania also quickly called up several militia companies and sent them to Washington D.C. to protect the capital from the possibility of attack. One such regiment was the 6th Massachusetts Volunteer Militia. This regiment mustered quickly and left for Washington as quickly as possible to protect the capital. The men were provided a "dark-gray overcoat, water-proof knapsack and haversacks, regulation

[130] *New York Herald,* May 24, 1861, 1.

[131] *The Caledonian,* July 26, 1861, 2.

[132]), 4.

caps and new rifle muskets. Each man is provided with two flannel shirts and two pairs of drawers and stockings. Many of them being recruited, were not fully uniformed. The uniformed companies have black pants, with orange and red stripes down the sides, and dark blue infantry coats."[133] These men, were supplied fairly well by the state, and even had Springfield M1855 rifles instead of the old buck and ball M1842. Massachusetts wanted to make sure their soldiers were equipped with every necessity and sent agents into the field with the regiments.

Another well-equipped militia unit was the 7th New York. Unlike many early regiments, the 7th "numbered a full 1,000 men and regimental staff, even a surgeon and a chaplain."[134] They were the beau ideal of a militia regiment, even though their nickname was the "Silk Stocking regiment," due to the men mostly being from New York City's middle-class of clerks, salesmen, and junior professionals. This regiment was one of the first to arrive in Washington DC and help secure the capital. It was also well-armed by the state, having the new and improved regulation musket (M1855) and bayonets, as well as knives and pistols. "Its gray fatigue uniforms were trimmed with black, a color combination chosen in the 1820s.… Gray knit sack coats, nicknamed 'Aspinwalls' after their donor, were also worn into Washington."[135] The regiment certainly looked the part of citizen-soldier, but they never fought in an engagement as a unit and mustered out in the summer of 1861. It was this type of militia regiment most people believed would answer the call of the President to aid in the nation's defense: fully armed and equipped;

[133] Earl J. Coates, Michael J. McAfee, and Don Troiani, *Don Troiani's Regiments & Uniforms of the Civil War* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2002), 5.

[134] Ibid, 7.

[135] Ibid.

few of those regiments existed, though, and the majority of militia units simply formed a regimental core of two to four companies, around which other volunteers joined.

Militia regiments such as the 79th New York state militia were the backbone of the forming regiments. The 79th developed from a suggestion by Roderick Cameron of the British Consulate, that New York form a militia unit made of Scotsmen.[136] The number of Scottish immigrants in New York City, especially the number with military experience in the British army, made this a welcome suggestion. With this martial tradition in mind, the 79th "Cameron Highlanders" formed on October 25, 1859, with 223 officers and men.[137] Although most of the regiment's pre-war experience came from dress parades and contending with riots, it was still more than most regiments, so it was no surprise when the state called up the regiment as part of its quota. When mustered into service on June 1, the "officers wore kilts, as did the men from the old militia … while the recruits were decked out in uniforms supplied by the Union Relief Committee of New York: State coats trimmed in red, Cameron tartan trousers and … forage caps."[138] Local organizations and governments played a big part in outfitting these units.

Another New York regiment was the 14th New York State Militia, also known as the 14th Brooklyn. The regiment developed into a strong veteran unit and played a major role in operations throughout the war, but in April 1861, it was still a loose formation of militia companies. Formed in 1847 after New York passed a bill consolidating and reforming the militia system, the 14th answered the early call to arms, even aiding Captain Andrew Foote of the Navy

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[136] William Mark McKnight, *Bluebonnets O'er the Border: The 79th New York Cameron Highlanders* (Shippensburg, PA: White Mane Books, 1998), 8.

[137] Ibid, 14.

[138] Ibid, 20.

when he feared southern sympathizers might sabotage the Brooklyn Navy Yard after the fall of Fort Sumter.[139] The regiment was sharply outfitted, and the uniform added to the regiment's legacy. It was a chasseur-à-pied uniform style, with red pants and kepi and a short blue jacket. The pants were bright red but not as baggy as a Zouave style, and the coat was blue and red.[140] It was a fine looking uniform and one that would earn the regiment recognition from friend and foe alike, but it was not a typical blue army uniform that might be envisioned in the modern world. It was a special uniform provided by the people of Brooklyn, solely designed to make the regiment stand out.

On April 29, the city of Brooklyn began buying equipment to fully outfit raised regiments. The 14th received "211 Zouave suits … 860 prs blankets … [and] 855 overcoats," purchased from Brooks Brothers by the city, for the cost of $11,910.25 on May 3.[141] F. B. Baldwin provided another two hundred suits and three hundred shirts for $1,925, and on May 13, a further one hundred uniforms were purchased from Thomas Blood for $750.[142] Devlin, Hudson, & Co. provided "300 chasseur uniforms at $7.75," which netted them a tidy sum.[143] Other companies that provided specifically for the 14th were S. F. Scarlett & Co. who provided fatigue caps, Edward Gumbs who provided knapsacks, and F. B. Baldwin who provided more blankets. The 14th regiment alone, accounted for a little under eleven thousand dollars' worth of

[139] Frank Callenda, *The 14th Brooklyn Regiment in the Civil War: A History and Roster* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Co., 2013), 11.

[140] Ibid, 3.

[141] *Report of the Special Commission On the Equipment of the Volunteer Regiments of Brooklyn, and the Relief of the Families of the Members Thereof* (Brooklyn, NY: L. Darbee and Son, 1861), 16.

[142] Ibid, 20, 18.

[143] Ibid, 22.

clothing before the start of July, but this omits many other accoutrements such as officers' sashes, shoulder straps, etc. and does not take into account mass purchases made for multiple regiments. Certainly, those men who were part of the 14th as a militia unit had their own uniform, but the city of still paid a good deal of money to outfit the rest of the men. Additionally, the special uniforms of the regiment required the city to seek out particular merchants who held the proper clothing on hand, and more than one was always needed. This turned into a logistical and financial issue later on, but the fervor of war overcame any worries at the time. The 14th was also not the only regiment the city outfitted, as the 13th and 28th New York mustered into national service first, but unlike the 14th, these regiments only signed up for three months service and disbanded at that time. Altogether, Brooklyn spent $77,785.23 on equipment for these regiments and $12,506 for relief of their families.[144] The city undertook these costs believing that the state would pay them back, and respective states did the same, expecting the federal government would pay them back.

A state operating under this assumption was Wisconsin. Though only admitted as a state in 1848, Wisconsin was rapidly expanding due to immigration influxes in the nation. Still, the state was only asked to furnish one regiment, to the chagrin of its people and Governor Alex Randall. A great deal of this had to do with commerce and practicality, as Governor Randall feared a more protracted war, saying the "The majesty and force of the government, if it has either, should be manifested now so that the world may see it.… States cannot be satisfied with call after call of raw troops to be put into the field as soon as mustered, without discipline or drill."[145] Most of the states in the old northwest did not have to call up as many militia, leading to

[144] Ibid, 26.

[145] *OR* iii, vol. 1, 169.

fears about Confederates attacks. These states "cannot wait to see their towns and cities upon navigable streams sacked and burned and the contiguous country wasted, and then content themselves with retaliations."[146] This was a common fear in the early stages of the war, though it proved groundless, but Randall's desire for calling up more troops and supplying them was problematic. One Badger soldier in the First Regiment of Wisconsin State Active Militia wrote on May 5th, "The clothing for the regiment is being made as fast as possible, but it will require several days yet to complete the outfits."[147] This organization was already close to two weeks old and still needed uniforms. The regiment was finally outfitted by May 12th, but another soldier commented that it was anything but uniform. "The cloth is of all varieties of what is styled *grey*, from a light drab to a dark brown. The fact is, the uniforms and supplies for the regiment thus far, have been one complete swindle—a regular sham. The haversacks are the most miserably constructed things I ever saw, and the clothing is a regular botch. The cloth is good enough but such sewing—it is almost enough to make a man swear to look at it. The shoes, too, are utterly worthless. Many of them came to pieces within two days after they were put on."[148] Unfortunately, this was an all-too-common problem in the first year of the war, but some regiments were better provided for than others.

Some states wanted to make sure supplies went to their soldiers specifically and worked to those ends. Governor Andrew of Massachusetts chartered a steamer to convey supplies and equipment specifically to the soldiers of his state who were stationed around Washington. He

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[146] Ibid.

[147] *History of the Organization and Services of the Wisconsin Volunteers in Defense of the Union, with a list of Members of Each Company, and Instructions for Procuring Back Pay, Pensions, &c.* (Madison: George W. Bowman, 1861), 3.

[148] Ibid.

desired the "Massachusetts troops to receive and have the first benefit of our supplies, but, if need be, that others should share them."[149] States purchased goods for their soldiers and theirs alone, making it more difficult to understand who provided for what soldiers. There was a great disconnect between national and state governments over provisioning, which made the system erratic. Even private citizens contributed a great deal to purchasing and making clothing for the soldiers.

The *Evening Star* reported that the "teachers and pupils of the Girls' National School have contributed about $240, to be expended for the purchase of soldiers' clothing."[150] Other private citizens put up money for clothing, supplies, and especially flags for regiments. Women, too, were desirous to support the effort in any way as well. One columnist wrote the *Chicago Daily Tribune* on the subject of what "we women of Chicago *can* and *will* do, if anyone will give us room large enough for twenty-five sewing machines. We will have all of our brave soldiers clothed suitably for the climate into which they will be called ere the hot weather be upon them."[151] This was a common patriotic refrain by women of the Union. Only one company of the 1st Minnesota had uniforms, in grey no less, which were knitted at home by local women, while the rest of the regiment "received trousers and red woolen shirts purchased by the state from the stock of a St. Paul mercantile house," and as this regiment departed for Washington DC, a local Ladies' Aid Society provided the men 600 knitted white havelocks. [152] Clothing was not the only thing provided by private citizens. Colonel Ambrose Burnside of Rhode Island provided a

[149] *OR* iii, vol. 1, 141.

[150] *Evening Star,* May 2, 1861, 1.

[151] *Chicago Daily Tribune,* April 26, 1861, 4.

[152] Troiani et al., *Don Troiani's Regiments & Uniforms of the Civil War*, 25.

company of the 1st Rhode Island Detached Militia with a breech-loading carbine of his own design, while a company of the 2nd New Hampshire carried breech-loading Sharps carbines provided by subscription of the citizens of Concord.[153] For the most part though, the state sought out its own supplies of clothing to outfit its soldiers, leading to a lack of supply in the market as a whole.

As a rule, most states sought to buy locally, but this was difficult for many of the western states, who did not have sufficient facilities locally to provide for their men. This meant that these states sent agents east, which might prove fruitless. States like New York, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts quickly bought up most readily available goods and contracted for even more. Most often, this meant only one or two local firms benefitted from government contracts. In Wisconsin, Marcus Kohner profited greatly as the state's leading supplier of uniforms, selling the state nearly $100,000 of uniforms in the second half of 1861; it also helped that the state's Assistant Quartermaster William Mears could not find any goods on the east coast that the state could afford.[154] Governor Morton of Indiana determined "that he preferred that the contracts, as far as was consistent with the interests of the State, should remain in the State."[155] While this was good politics, allowing funds that would ultimately be reimbursed by the federal government to stay at home, it sometimes led to problems of quality.

The state of New York, acting decisively, advertised for bids on uniforms almost before President Lincoln called for volunteers, and though it received several bids, it gave the entire order for 12,000 uniforms to Brooks Brothers, who promised to make all the clothing out of

[153] Ibid, 21; 29.

[154] Wilson, 18-19.

[155] Ibid, 17.

broadcloth at a fixed price.[156] Unfortunately, there was not enough of this material available, and with the approval of the state, Brooks Brothers used a substitute material. While this allowed clothing to be prepared, it "soon became apparent that many of the uniforms were of poor quality; as a legislative report later concluded, they had been 'badly cut, badly sewed and badly made.'"[157] Similar problems plagued Pennsylvania. *The Star of the North* reported that the Fighting First had a great deal of frustration with contractors due to the poor quality of their clothing. Though the men had been fully supplied, you could "hardly find a whole pair of breeches in the company. Buttons … fly off if you touch them, while the stitches are so far apart you can see daylight thro'. In attempting to sit down with our unmentionables on, we hear a prolonged and ominous 'rip! rip!' that warns us to be careful…. Our overcoats are worse than the pants; and for these miserable things we are charged $10."[158] A correspondent from the Dubuque *Herald* used humor to describe the uniforms of one Iowa regiment. He said, "A majority of the boys are able to get their pantaloons from the floor by buttoning their waistbands around their necks – others accomplish this desirable result by bringing the waistbands tight up under the arms and rolling them up six or eight inches at the bottom…And the coats fit beautifully – almost in fact as well as the pants. To be sure half of them are two feet too large around the waist, and almost as much to(sic) small around the chest."[159] These were major issues, especially with states spending so much money on supplies, and hearings were conducted for several years after in order to get to the bottom of these problems, but it took some time for these issues to

[156] Ibid, 20.

[157] Ibid, 24.

[158] *The Star of the North*, May 29, 1861, 1.

[159] *Cedar Falls Gazette*, May 24, 1861, 1.

come to light. Supplying soldiers with whatever was available was a priority, and the federal government was hard at work finding its own sources of supplies.

The Schuylkill Arsenal was not equipped to handle the influx of volunteers and enlargement of the regular army. It had operated at a loss for many years, and in December 1860, Congress cut its funding further, compelling the arsenal to adopt a policy of retrenchment.[160] It was certainly not ready to supply the army when war arrived. Secretary Cameron, not yet having a replacement Quartermaster General for the recently resigned Joe Johnston, placed funds in the hands of friends and business associates to purchase equipment instead of the junior officers in the department. This led to investigations by the House of Representatives of the War Department on the cost and conduct of the war. Cameron had little choice but to allow states to purchase their own goods, while making his own contracts to increase the federal government's supplies, even looking abroad for clothing.

In the summer of 1861, the department contracted with a French firm for 10,000 French chasseur uniforms, hoping it would help with supply problems and possibly even set a standard for a redesigned uniform. The uniforms were very complete, even including handkerchiefs and a cravat, as well as "hair tanned knapsacks and a sac de petite, containing five brushes for various purposes, needle case, with combs, thread, spool, cloak pin, and various other conveniences."[161] Many of these items were superfluous, such as the brushes, while others proved extremely important for veteran soldiers. To decide which regiments would receive the uniforms, the Quartermaster's Department held a drill competition among several divisions. Unfortunately, the uniforms were fitted for European sizes, not American, meaning the uniforms were too small for

[160] Erna Risch, *Quartermaster Support for the Army*, 338.

[161] Troiani et al., *Don Troiani's Regiments & Uniforms of the Civil War*, 78.

the men. It was neither the first nor last time the department faced problems in the war's first year as it struggled to figure out a process to adequately supply the nation's soldiers, and even though these volunteers did not always arrive in Washington properly equipped, the nation expected them to hold the nation together. The burden of such expectations did not match the level of abilities and supplies available to the army, but there was not time for either of these to develop.

On to First Manassas

As the weeks progressed and the growing army took little action against Confederate forces, the American public became restless, urging more and more for aggressive action. "Forward to Richmond! Forward to Richmond!" cried the *New York Tribune.*[162] These sentiments were echoed by newspapers across the nation, politicians in Washington, and the public at large, but General Irvin McDowell was hesitant to act. The men needed time to be fully trained, and most of his commanders had never maneuvered a regiment in battle, let alone a brigade or division. At the same time, McDowell needed more supplies to properly arm and equip his units, who often reported to camp inadequately supplied. At a council of war on June 29, McDowell finally outlined, though not without reservations, a planned advance against Confederate forces, with his main thrust concentrated at Manassas Junction, Virginia. Though McDowell expressed several major concerns about an advance to President Lincoln, Lincoln nevertheless ordered McDowell to set the plan in motion, noting "You are green. But they are green also. You are green alike."[163]

[162] Jeffrey D. Wert, *The Sword of Lincoln*, 12.

[163] Ibid, 13.

While the largest army in United States history began its advance, the men were in fairly high spirits. The wide array of clothing styles and colors adorning the roughly 35,000 Union soldiers as they made their way into Virginia made for a motley march. Even though many of these men had been in service for at least a month, there was a severe lack of uniformity among their uniforms. The 1st Minnesota wore red shirts, the only clothing available to them before they departed their home state and wore havelocks made by local women; red shirts were also worn by the 11th New York (Fire Zouaves), who became more famous for their drinking, fighting, and carousing rather than their aptitude for battle. The 14th Brooklyn looked gay in their bright red trousers and zouave uniforms. The 2nd Wisconsin sported grey uniforms, an unfortunate happenstance, and quite a few of the men of the 79th New York even wore their regiments' standard kilt Glengarry caps. Other regiments were in blue, some of which were the standard uniform of the U.S. Army. The colors made an impression on Congressman Elihu Washburne who wrote "there were two Rhode Island Regiments, with their white forelocks, and red blankets on their backs," followed by men from New Hampshire, and then a regiment clothed in zouave attire, "their red breeches making a magnificent appearance."[164] The variety of styles and colors represented the diversity of the nation's regions and the men who wore them. The untested soldiers made a fine spectacle, with new clothing and shining bayonets undimmed by the hardness of battle, as they marched toward a fateful encounter with Confederate forces.

General McDowell envisioned a grand victory in the style of Napoleon; one that would see the entire Confederate uprising crumble in one fell swoop. His plan relied on General Robert Patterson keeping Confederate General Joseph Johnston's 11,000 men in the Shenandoah Valley

[164] John Hennessy, *The First Battle of Manassas: An End to Innocence, July 18-21, 1861*, revised edition (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2015), 9.

from reinforcing General P.G.T Beauregard at Manassas Junction, while McDowell moved his 35,000 men against Beauregard. On July 16, McDowell put his columns in motion southward and was only a few miles from Beauregard's lines two days later. Instead of a quick strike, McDowell took several days to develop a plan designed to flank Confederate forces; a costly delay that saw Johnston's men arrive to support Beauregard. McDowell's plan called for part of his command to hold Confederate forces at the lower crossings of Bull Run, while he took half of his command on a northerly flanking march against the Confederate left.[165] This was a complicated plan that needed regular soldiers to carry it out, but McDowell gambled that his volunteers could do the job. If it paid off, McDowell could have been the man who destroyed the Confederate uprising before it began in earnest.

The inexperience of McDowell's soldiers and officers led to problems right away on July 21. McDowell's columns that only needed to cover a short distance marched out first, causing a major delay in the flanking attack, and the movement of the soldiers was extremely slow. A local guide impressed for service by McDowell, told General Daniel Hunter, whose division led the way, that another route would be better and offered more protection for his soldiers. Additionally, a second road that supposedly existed could not be located for General Heintzelman's column to take, forcing him to follow Hunter. Pioneers had to clear the road every dozen or so yards, allowing for stops and starts where the men relaxed, took naps, and even picked blackberries.[166] This delayed the army's march by several crucial hours, and forced the soldiers to march at the double quick in hot weather to make up time, thereby tiring them out sooner.

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[165] Ibid, 32.

[166] Ibid, 48.

The confusion of battle generally, coupled with the lack of uniformity among uniforms in either army and struggles of commanders to handle the large bodies of men, caused quite a few problems for both sides. Men struggled to recognize friend from foe, often leading to friendly fire encounters and commanders from a unit unable to ascertain opposing regiments. For example, as Confederate forces hastily moved to counter the flanking march at the start of the battle, some nervous South Carolinian skirmishers accidentally fired on their Louisiana comrades performing picket duty, and the Cajuns responded in kind. As Union general Samuel Heintzelman moved his brigade forward in the early afternoon, his lines encountered another line in its front. The uncertainty of friend or foe caused officers in the opposing line to walk into Heintzelman's line to inquire its allegiance, where Captain Alexander Wilkin of the 1st Minnesota took the Confederate officer prisoner.[167] These sorts of encounters were not uncommon. Later in the day, as the 2nd Wisconsin moved forward against Confederate positions on Henry Hill, it received fire from nearby Union regiments, and only the frantic efforts of the regiment's officers to alert the other regiments saved the 2nd Wisconsin. A few minutes later, after facing a barrage of Confederate fire, Wisconsin soldiers fell back, where their comrades in the 69th New York fired into the grey-clad ranks, effectively breaking the Wisconsin regiment for the rest of the battle.[168] Other regiments, particularly the 14th Brooklyn, fared poorly due to what they wore.

The red pants and kepis of the 14th Brooklyn made them an easy target. As this regiment moved against the Confederate left, held by the 33rd Virginia, a Confederate sergeant John Casler commented to his comrades that "there is the prettiest sight from the top of the hill you ever

[167] Ibid, 96.

[168] Ibid, 112-113.

saw."[169] The 14th rocked the Virginians, almost causing the collapse of the line, but arriving Confederate units stabilized the lines and forced the New Yorkers back. John A. Wells of the 14th commented that as the regiment moved onto the battlefield, they had thrown off everything that impeded their progress, but their "showey [sic] uniform was quite a mark for the enemy and they were not slow to perceive it."[170] Because of the regiment's uniform and position during the battle, its suffered heavy casualties. The inability of both sides to fully equip soldiers in a uniform manner created havoc at the Battle of First Manassas and had long-term consequences for the war, thanks to two major developments in the afternoon.

At noon, it seemed the Union held victory in its grasp, if General McDowell could only coordinate his regiments for one final push. Confederate forces were battered by the morning's fighting, and most of their available strength was used up. However, McDowell's several hours of inaction allowed Confederate reinforcements to slowly arrive on the field. When he finally decided on a course of action, McDowell pushed forward two artillery batteries, supported by infantry, to pound Confederate lines into submission. This was one of the biggest factors on the day's outcome. The batteries of Griffin and Ricketts closed to within 350 yards of Confederates, which exposed them to fire they did not face earlier. As Ricketts' battery received a pounding, Griffin made a desperate attempt to save him by enfilading the enemy line from the extreme right. Captain Griffin's men arranged the guns quickly, perceiving Confederate movement closing, but as he aimed at them, his superior, Major Barry, ordered him not to fire because those men were supporting the battery. Griffin disagreed vehemently but followed orders, which

[169] Frank Callenda, *The 14th Brooklyn Regiment in the Civil War*, 29.

[170] Ibid, 32.

allowed a volley from the Confederate line to disable his battery.[171] At this point, Union hope for victory began to fade. The untested nature of the soldiers, inexperienced commanders, and a gross lack of uniformity created a disaster for easy victory.

In the Union retreat that followed First Manassas, civilians, on hand to witness the battle, mixed with soldiers and caused a panic and mass confusion that led to a stampede. Soldiers left all kinds of equipment in their haste to escape a Confederate counter-attack that never materialized. Overcoats, blankets, knapsacks, hats, shoes, guns, and everything else littered the roadsides. Congressman Elihu Washburne noted this panic afterward, saying he "beheld a perfect avalanche pouring [on the]road immediately behind me. It was the retreat of the army … a perfect panic had seized every body. The soldiers threw away their guns and their blankets."[172] At the same time, the civilians threw away their goods as well, desiring not to get caught in the retreating flood of blue. Confederate soldiers did not fail to pass up on any goodies and eagerly scooped up anything of value. One officer even stopped for a scoop of sugar.[173] Spectator John Taylor of New Jersey was appalled at the scenes he saw and believed one "could almost have walked to Centreville on bags of oats, bales of hay, and boxes of ammunition. Every sentiment of shame, and all sense of manhood was absent for the moment."[174] The amount of equipment lost was not insignificant, as the Union did not have large quantities of goods in their storehouses, and it took time to replace these goods. Other factors of the defeat were worse. The shame of the retreat reflected on the uniforms, the men who wore them, and the states they

[171] John Hennessy, *The First Battle of Manassas*, 101-102.

[172] Ibid, 140.

[173] Ibid, 139.

[174] Ibid, 141.

represented. It took time to reorganize the army and create an atmosphere where everyone could be proud of wearing the blue, and the men who started this process were General George B. McClellan and Quartermaster General Meigs.

McClellan Takes Command

Scholarship on McClellan has varied widely from works that consider him the best commander the Union ever had, to works that cannot admit he ever did anything right, and everything in between. Most recently, historians have come to an understanding that McClellan was a gifted soldier who displayed great promise but was never able to live up to any of the hype.[175] According to Stephen W. Sears, McClellan was a man "possessed by demons and delusions," who believed Confederate forces opposite to him always outnumbered his army and "that enemies at the head of his own government conspired to see him and his army defeated so as to carry out their traitorous purposes."[176] Any time he retreated, waited for reinforcements or supplies, or decided not to fight, he believed he was saving his army for an upcoming fight. He blamed others for his problems and the setbacks faced by his army. McClellan's abilities as a field commander fell far short of what the nation expected of him, and scholarship bears that out. However, when he took command of the Army of the Potomac, the soldiers were downtrodden after their defeat at First Manassas, and it took a Herculean effort to reorganize, equip, and train these men to become a formidable fighting force, and McClellan, for all of his faults, was able to build that military machine.

[175] Thomas J. Rowland, *George B. McClellan and Civil War History: In the Shadow of Grant and Sherman* (Kent, OH: Kent St. University Press, 1998).

[176] Stephen W. Sears, *George B. McClellan: The Young Napoleon* (New York: Ticknor and Fields, 1988), xi.

At the war's outset, George B. McClellan worked for the Illinois Central Railroad as chief engineer after resigning his army commission on January 15, 1857. He had graduated second in the West Point class of 1846, fought gallantly in the war with Mexico, and served as part of an American commission sent to study the Crimean War in Europe. He was a promising young soldier, and his abilities carried him to command of the state of Ohio's armed forces once war broke out. General Jacob D. Cox, an Ohio legislator, called McClellan "a very charming man, and his manner of doing business impressed every one with the belief that he knew what he was about."[177] McClellan certainly looked like a leader of men and an extremely intelligent and competent commander. At the end of May 1861, he moved soldiers into Western Virginia to counter a Confederate attempt to destroy the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, thereby securing the main link between the eastern and western states. It was a move he made on his own volition, and as he did so, he proclaimed to the citizens of that portion of the state to "fly to arms and support the general government. Sever the connection that binds you to traitors; proclaim to the world that the faith boasted by the Old Dominion is still preserved in Western Virginia, and that you remain true to the stars and stripes."[178]

McClellan continued to display great initiative in the face of heavily outnumbered Confederate forces. At Rich Mountain on July 11, he struck at the enemy, causing a general retreat and followed this success two days later at Corrick's Ford, where the Confederate commander General Robert S. Garnett was killed. Compared to Union activities against the enemy elsewhere, these were momentous actions and heroic feats. The press labeled him "The

[177] Quoted in Stephen W. Sears, *George B. McClellan,* 70.

[178] George B. McClellan, *McClellan's Own Story: The War for the Union, the Soldiers Who Fought It, the Civilian Who Directed it, and His Relation to It and to Them* (New York: Charles L. Webster and Co., 1887), 51.

Young Napoleon," and he lauded his soldiers saying "You have annihilated two armies…. You have proved that Union men, fighting for the preservation of our government, are more than a match for our misguided and erring brethren…. I have confidence in you, and I trust you have learned to confide in me."[179] Because of his success in Western Virginia, McClellan found himself summoned to Washington D.C. at the end of July to take command of what would become the Army of the Potomac.

Upon his arrival, General McClellan found everything in chaos. "The streets, hotels, and bar-rooms were filled with drunken officers and men absent from their regiments without leave."[180] There were many fears that the enemy was very close and would strike at any moment, but few works existed to prevent an attack and even fewer soldiers were organized to do anything about the issue. In the retreat from Manassas, some soldiers did not even bother stopping in D.C. to return to their regiments and simply went home. This dearth of manpower lasted only a short time, as President Lincoln had issued two new calls for three-year volunteers, totaling one million men, in the week after Manassas. With this manpower increase, the War Department felt new pressure to equip and prepare men for battle and a protracted war.

One of the major, immediate changes of McClellan was to mandate blue be the only color of uniforms for soldiers, due to the problems faced at Manassas. The *Emporia News* pronounced McClellan "very energetic in his hostility to all uniforms except the regulation blue," even though quite a few soldiers of his army protested the change from their greys.[181] He even ordered complete new uniforms for himself and his staff involving "buttons all over, and gold lace ad

[179] *OR* I, vol. 2, 236.

[180] George B. McClellan, *McClellan's Own Story*, 67.

[181] *Emporia News,* September 9, 1861, 2.

libitum. There is a necessity for this, as all military men will understand."[182] Though the general had been known to wear plain dress before then, it was argued that a change of dress was necessary for the men to know him at a moment's notice and tell him apart from other officers. Because of his clothing mandate, McClellan helped make the supply system easier for the Quartermaster's Department in the long run, but the system was facing problems because of a general lack of material and also because of the contracting system.

During the fall of 1861, this system came under more and more scrutiny due to the costs of supplying early volunteers and the shoddy equipment these men sometimes received. Desiring to spread contracts across a wide variety of states and small firms, he only allowed contracts to be let for specific quantities and "in no case were existing contracts to be simply extended but, instead, new bids were to be invited for each additional supply of articles required."[183] This proved to be an inefficient system as contracts at regional depots had unfilled contracts because they could not find enough firms willing and able to sell equipment, which meant the repercussions were felt by the men in the field. An Indiana regiment stationed near Cheat Mountain in Virginia pleaded with the department for overcoats, which had not been issued because of time and supply constraints, because the temperature plummeted in the middle of August, leaving them to suffer severely from the elements.[184] This event was even the subject of a number of telegrams reported in the *Evansville Daily Journal*. As of September 3rd, requisitions made a month earlier for several regiments were still on their way, and by the end of the month,

[182] *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 8, 1861, 1.

[183] Erna Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army*, 352.

[184] Ibid, 354.

ten thousand suits had not arrived.[185] More worrisome, the paper continued, large portions of the clothing contracted for were "packed in a warehouse on the Kanahwa, while our men are suffering, and the rise of the river inundated and ruined them."[186] The decentralized nature of the contract system led to losses of equipment and to confusion as to what went to which regiment. The states were not always ready to provide equipment to troops from other states. The irregularities of the system wreaked havoc with the army in the first 6 months of the war, but by the end of 1861, the War Department took control of procurement from the states.

The enthusiasm of Northern states for the war effort eventually led to administrations dealing with public accusations of mismanagement, fraud, and cronyism, all while independent state agents worked against one another to purchase more goods for their troops. By mid-October, Meigs began ordering governors to cease purchases and shift all procurement to the federal government. States with established depots, such as Pennsylvania and New York, were very willing to comply because procurement would continue in their states, but some governors, such as Israel Washburn of Maine, ignored the request. Meigs wrote the governor, who insisted that purchasing power was a state right, that such a position in opposition to the desires of the national government, was the same argument that caused the current conflict.[187] Indiana was also resistant to national control, even though Governor Morton requested an officer from the Quartermaster's Department to come aid the state's procurement efforts. The officer began pulling more and more control from the governor, until Morton eventually obtained the officer's removal. Still, events were in motion that the governor could not reverse, but the most stubborn

[185] *Evansville Daily Journal*, October 14, 1861, 2.

[186] Ibid.

[187] Mark R. Wilson, *The Business of Civil War*, 27.

state proved to be Illinois. Though Meigs sent quartermaster Asher Eddy to Springfield in late September to take charge, Governor Yates and other state officials simply felt Eddy was there to pay the bills on what they decided to buy. On November 9, Eddy wrote formally to the governor, asking that the state pass on responsibilities to the national government, but Yates simply ignored this request. Not until a month later did Yates reply that Illinois had no intention of stopping its procurement because he believed the state could provide for its soldiers better than the national government. Eddy decided to go over the Yates's head and announced that the federal government would no longer reimburse the state and posted advertisements in the papers. The dispute drew national interest in 1862, and Illinois administrators soon found themselves under pressure in January 1862 after a report found the state spent $734,000 for clothing in December alone, which turned out to be close to 20% less than the national government would have paid for the same goods.[188] Despite the state's advantages in purchasing local goods, it was the end of state procurement and the beginning of a national procurement project to secure the maintenance of the Union.

By the end of 1861, the Quartermaster's Department had contracted for over 275,000 infantry trowsers, 184,000 hats, 116,000 caps, 636,000 pairs of stockings, 431,000 flannel shirts, 329,000 flannel drawers, and 197,000 infantry great coats, in addition to buying hundreds of thousands of yards of cloth to make clothing at government arsenals.[189] This was on top of contracts made by the various states for supplying their own troops. Costs moved higher for many goods in the fall of 1861, as the market for military products thinned out due to demand.

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[188] Ibid, 29-30.

[189] "Abstract of Departmental Contracts Made," 1861-1866, NM-81 1239, vol. 1, *Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General*, National Archives, Washington D.C.

For example, in August 1861 the department contracted with the Indianapolis firm of Stadler Brothers and Co. for 4,000 infantry great coats at $7.75 per coat, but by November, the same great coat was contracted out for $9.95.[190] Competition between states and the federal government for goods proved too costly for a protracted war, and it proved necessary that the War Department take full control over the provisioning of the nation's soldiers. It was the beginning of a joint public/private enterprise that helped save the Union.

At the start of the conflict, the War Department faced serious deficiencies due to the nature of the nation's small standing army. The need for states to be the main contributors of equipment for regiments caused a rush on the market, creating increased prices over a lack of available goods, and also allowing contractors to sell poor quality goods for hefty profits. Individual regiments, especially those with militia units as cores, adopted wide varieties of uniforms to represent themselves, their state, and their cultural identities. While such a system allowed a level of autonomy for units and states, it also caused problems on the battlefield as inexperienced soldiers often could not tell friend from foe, contributing to a devastating defeat for the Union at First Manassas. The loss, however, reenergized the war effort and led to a series of changes for the army, including the appointment of George McClellan as commander of the Army of the Potomac and the decision by the Quartermaster's Department to take charge of all procurement projects for the military. The administrative engine was beginning to move, albeit slowly, and the men living and fighting in the field would need the strength of this system to supply them with clothing as they moved toward victory.

[190] Ibid, 236.

Chapter 3: The Climax of Our Fondest Dreams

Clothing played a vital role in making volunteers into soldiers, and it played a crucial part in how armies moved and fought as well. Men needed sufficient clothing to stay warm and dry, but clothing also needed to be comfortable and allow the wearer good movement. In addition, soldiers needed to feel united as a unit, and a singular uniform was the best way to help with that cohesion during initial training periods. The vast majority of unit histories and studies of individual soldiers has treated clothing as simply a part of the soldiering process. Little effort has been put into understanding the way in which clothing affected soldiers on an everyday basis. The most important work in understanding the daily lives of soldiers is still Bell Irvin Wiley's *The Life of Billy Yank*, but even this work does not look fully into clothing.[191] Government clothing was meant to be practical and not necessarily comfortable, and soldiers often had to alter articles to their taste. Clothing could also be expensive, and losing clothing, unless it came in actual service, meant soldiers had to buy replacements. Instead of clothing being a simple adornment, it actually affected how men fought, how armies moved, and how soldiers were able to provide for their families at home. The full centralizing process of melding individuals into armies could be facilitated by creating a form of unifying identification that precipitated men feeling as if they belonged to a coherent unit. In this role, uniforms excelled.

Once recruiters began filling up company and regimental rosters, they moved the volunteers into camp to begin the process of creating soldiers. Camp life was often tedious, especially for new recruits, but instruction and drill were a fundamental to creating soldiers who would follow orders. "We had enlisted to *put down the Rebellion*, and had no patience with the red-tape tomfoolery of the regular service. Furthermore, our boys recognized no superiors,

[191] Bell Irvin Wiley, *The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union Army* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1952).

except in the line of legitimate duty."[192] The words of William Hartpence of the 51st Indiana gave voice to common feelings held by soldiers across the Union. They were civilian volunteers who had answered the nation's call to arms in her hour of peril, not regular army soldiers who could be punished for perceived trivial offenses. But this belief belied a fact that, by the start of 1864, these men were certainly veteran soldiers, regulars in all but name.[193] They received training and supplies like the regular army, wore blue uniforms like the regular army, and conducted themselves in field operations like veteran regulars. While the clothing they wore did not always conform to army regulations, they wore the blue; it was a big contrast from the pre-war decades when militia units and volunteers wore grey uniforms to distinguish themselves from the regular army.

Union army volunteers received the same clothing allowance as regulars, $3.50 per month, but they went through clothing at a much faster rate.[194] The regular army before the war did not go through nearly as much clothing on a yearly basis, nor did it lose as much clothing as the Union army during the war. Returns of lost clothing found in the Quartermaster General's records in the National Archives indicate large quantities of supplies lost throughout the conflict, many which ended up being used against the nation by Confederate forces.[195] Regiments lost

[192] William R. Hartpence, *History of the Fifty-First Indiana Veteran Volunteer Infantry: A Narrative of its Organization, Marches, Battles, and Other Experiences in Camp and Prison; from 1861 to 1866* (Cincinnati: The Robert Clarke Company, 1894), 36, https://archive.org/details/veteranvolinf00hartrich/page/n7/mode/2up.

[193] For the purposes of this piece, regulars refers to those men who joined the army with the intent to make it their profession. The volunteers who came to the defense of the United States were more precisely citizen-soldiers – men who joined up for a specific period of time to aid the country.

[194] Adjutant General's Office, "General Orders no. 49," *General Orders Affecting the Volunteer Force* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1862), 15, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=chi.17195061&view=1up&seq=7.

[195] Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, "Clothing, Lost," RG92, entry 225.

clothing both in and out of battle, even as the War Department ordered ever more equipment to supply armies in the field. These losses took a financial toll on soldiers, as they bore responsiblity for losses that occurred outside of battle. This could placethem in debt to the government, all while privates earned only thirteen dollars per month. To combat these losses, soldiers adapted to wartime conditions, aided by orders from general officers to limit extra clothing and equipment taken on an active campaign.

As the Union decided to implement harder war policies, it took armies away from regular lines of supply. In General William T. Sherman's famous March to the Sea, he cut loose from supplies and lived off the surrounding land in Georgia, which also meant soldiers had no ability to replace worn out clothing. The same thing happened when his army moved into the Carolinas. The 3rd Wisconsin, for example, left Savannah, Georgia on January 17th and did not receive clothes again for more than two months. When the regiment was inspected just outside Chesterfield, South Carolina, around two hundred miles from Savannah, they were "found to be in rough condition, clothing in shreds, and shoes worn out."[196] Even in the last year of the war, the army found it difficult to fully supply the needs of soldiers in the field. In addition, soldiers did not wish to wear clothing disagreeable to their personal taste, even if army regulations did not allow it. It was important to be comfortable and to look like a soldier, but for some, neither was possible.

On both sides of the conflict, prisoners of war faced difficulties with food, clothing, and disease. Installations such as Andersonville and Libby Prison housed tens of thousands of Union

[196] E. B. Quiner, *The Military History of Wisconsin: A Record of the Civil and Military Patriotism of the State, in the War for the Union, with a History of the Campaigns in which Wisconsin Soldiers have been Conspicuous--Regimental Histories--Sketches of Distinguished Officers--the Roll of the Illustrious Dead--Movements of the Legislature and State Officers, etc.* (Chicago: Clarke & Co., 1866), 496, https://archive.org/details/militaryhistoryo00quin/page/n7/mode/2up.

soldiers throughout the war, many of whom did not survive. In the awful conditions, men survived as best as they could, including stealing from one another, especially because Confederate soldiers would often take quality clothing and equipment from prisoners. Other prisoners tried to escape and used clothing to their advantage. No matter what these men did, it was a terrible existence for those who remained prisoners for any length of time. While most volunteers in 1861 probably never dreamed they would end up as prisoners-of-war, it was still a possibility and part of the experience of soldiering during the Civil War.

Once the men joined up, their lives as soldiers began, and clothing was a vital part of the soldiering experience. Uniforms helped men form bonds with their regiment and the army as a whole. They had to worry about the cost of buying new clothing from the army as opposed to having pieces made by family members or purchased privately, because every cent spent on clothing was money not sent to families, many of whom experienced severe financial strain. Soldiers taught themselves to sew and wash clothing, tasks normally done by female family members. Clothing helped make men into soldiers and gave them a sense of community and purpose with one another as they fought for the Union. As William Hartpence said, "The climax of our fondest dreams was reached when we donned the blue uniform, and stood in the full panoply of war."[197]

Into Camp

One of the biggest lessons learned from First Manassas was the need to properly train the volunteer regiments. When companies met their quotas, they went into camp immediately

[197] William R. Hartpence, *History of the Fifty-First Indiana Veteran Volunteer Infantry*, 7, https://archive.org/details/veteranvolinf00hartrich/page/n7/mode/2up.

without waiting for a full regimental complement. When Owen Johnston Hopkins' company reached camp on September 20, 1861, they began training immediately, but were not assigned to a particular regiment until November.[198] This was a standard practice throughout the war because recruiting officers often traveled through multiple towns and counties, especially in more rural states, before filling company and regimental quotas. These recruiting officers were eloquent and drummed up support for the war, leading many volunteers to envision a glorious and romanticized army life. These illusions did not last, as learned by the 20th Connecticut, which, after a few weeks in camp, found all the luster of army life "faded out, leaving in its place, in the breast of many a tired and discouraged soldier, a feeling of homesickness."[199]

The regimentation and monotony of camp life was not particularly agreeable to most of the volunteers, as they worked to understand the intricacies of military instruction. For the earlier volunteers, those who joined in 1861, they sometimes had the additional responsibility of building their camps, and many did so without much equipment. This was more common in the western states than the eastern states, as was the disparity in clothing and supplies in general. As the 8th Iowa moved out of camp toward St. Louis in September 1861, the Davenport *Daily Democrat and News* reported that "There is not a company in the regiment uniformed, nor were there any arms among them."[200] Clothing was still difficult to come by in these states because so many manufacturers and clothiers were located in the east. Conversely, in New Hampshire, there was enough clothing readily available for localities to provide for their various companies. In

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[198] Otto F. Bond, ed., *Under the Flag of the Nation: Diaries and Letters of a Yankee Volunteer in the Civil War* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1961), 11-12.

[199] John W. Storrs, *The "Twentieth Connecticut": A Regimental History* (Ansonia, CT: Press of the 'Naugatuck Valley Sentinel,' 1886), 20, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044086282159&view=1up&seq=23.

[200] *Daily Democrat and News,* September 25, 1861, p.1.

Nashua, the citizens provided 222 shirts, towels, and handkerchiefs for two companies, while Claremont soldiers, each received "a revolver, knife, Bible, two pairs of flannel pants, two flannel shirts, woolen socks, towels and several handkerchiefs."[201] In addition, western state governors did not have the same level of bureaucracy in place to forge contracts with businesses. Instead, they relied on personal contacts and those with whom they were familiar; it was a sure way to keep business in the state and seemed safe, but it also meant clothing might not arrive as quickly nor from truly reliable businesses.

The major difference between the 8th Iowa and 2nd New Hampshire's musterings was the time they took place. The 2nd, equipped and outfitted in May 1861, fought at the First Battle of Bull Run, while the 8th mustered in after President Lincoln's call for 500,000 more three-year volunteers in the wake of Union defeat at that battle. Because so many people believed the war would be short, military clothing and equipment on the market had been stretched to its limits, meaning it took much longer to supply new regiments.[202] The same problems confronted the 24th Indiana, who mustered into service July 31, 1861, near Vincennes, Indiana. They received useless old Harpers Ferry muskets immediately and uniforms a week later, which "were gray and were about as appropriate as our old Harper's Ferry muskets. The guards soon beat the stocks off of the muskets and bent the ends of the barrels. These they used as canes."[203] Wide varieties of

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[201] Duane E. Shaffer, *Men of Granite: New Hampshire's Soldiers in the Civil War* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2008), 21.

[202] This belief caused a variety of issues for the nation as it wished to supply goods to soldiers. First, businesses did not want to switch over their machinery to produce army clothing for a short period of time, and some mills simply decided to close until the conflict ended. Second, sheep growers held back their wares from the market as well, fearing decreased profits and worrying over the loss of the Confederate states as a market. Third, imports of wool decreased as well, just as the federal and state governments were calling on clothiers for contracts. It was a decidedly bad combination for governments as they tried to provide proper clothing and equipment for the army.

[203] Richard J. Fulfer, *A History of the Trials* and *Hardships of the Twenty-Fourth Indiana Volunteer Infantry* (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Printing Co., 1917), 15, https://www.gutenberg.org/files/62981/62981-h/62981-h.htm.

equipment were completely useless for the recruits in the fall of 1861, leaving national and state governments reeling as to how to provide for them. This explains some of the lack of major Union operations until the start of 1862. The army and army contractors needed time to build up equipment and supplies to support the large number of soldiers called out by President Lincoln.

Contrast these experiences with that of the 25th Wisconsin, which mustered in on September 14, 1862, and received new uniforms the next day.[204] This regiment had the advantage of time before it mustered in, allowing the buildup of supplies. The same was true for the 184th New York, which mustered into service in 1864. William H. Galloway noted the regiment received uniforms and equipment immediately, stating "Our clothing were army shirts, pants, vests, blouses, dress coats, over coats, caps, socks and shoes."[205] Supplies became steady, bolstered by the Quartermaster Department's ability to predict the needs of the army and complete contracts with businesses. Even with the ups and downs of the supply system, camp life remained fairly consistent throughout the war.

At around 5 o'clock in the morning, 6 o'clock in winter, assembly sounded to start the day for men in camp, who "could be seen emerging from their tents or huts, their toilet in various stages of completion. Here was a man with one boot on, and another in his hand; here, one with his clothes buttoned in skips and blouse in hand, which he was putting on as he went to the line."[206] Complete dress was not always required at roll call, but for commanders looking to

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[204] Chauncey H. Cooke, William H. Mulligan, Jr., ed., *A Badger Boy in Blue: The Civil War Letters of Chauncey H. Cooke* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2007), 5-6.

[205] William H. Galloway, *Recollections of the Civil War* (Grand Rapids, MI: A. VanDort, 1906), 9, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015071162369&view=1up&seq=3&q1=clothing.

[206] John D. Billings, *Hardtack and Coffee: The Unwritten Story of Army Life* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 166-167.

break in new recruits, a brisk morning drill in full uniform, without equipment, was ordered.[207] A typical day in Camp Cairo, reported the *Chicago Daily* Tribune, looked as follows: "Reveille at 5, breakfast call at 7, guard mounting at 9½, dinner call at 12, company drl is from 1 to 3, dress parade at 6, tattoo at 9, and taps at 10 o'clock."[208] This was a fairly normal day of camp activity, with some variations throughout the war. According to Thomas Benton White's diary, between November 17, 1861, when his regiment arrived in camp, and December 15, of the same year, when the regiment left camp, they drilled seventeen days, which would have been more if poor weather had not cancelled exercises.[209] If drill made men into soldiers, dress parade, helped them feel like soldiers.

Dress parade was an occasion of pride for soldiers, as they usually wore full dress and developed more unit cohesion. Civilians were often invited to these events, and they "were colorful dignified affairs, conducted in a manner calculated to inspire in the soldiers a pride in the bearing of arms."[210] Acting as a unit was enhanced by the visuals of a sharp uniform worn by the full regiment, acting in concert with one another through maneuvers. Allowing the general public to attend the maneuvers made the spectacle more splendid and enhanced the men's vision of themselves as soldiers. A member of the Regiment of Ohio Volunteer Artillery, stationed at Camp Putnam in Marietta, Ohio, wrote the *Ashtabula Weekly Telegraph* that 5 p.m. dress parade

[207] Bell Irvin Wiley, *Billy Yank*, 45-46.

[208] "Letter from Cairo," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 6, 1861, 2.

[209] Charles G. Williams, "Down the Rivers: Civil War Diary of Thomas Benton White," *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 67, no. 2 (April 1969), 136-139.

[210] Bell Irvin Wiley, *Billy Yank*, 47.

was "thronged with visitors from town, who commence coming on the ground at 3 p.m."[211] Sometimes, particularly early in the war, dress parade was complemented by extra events, such as a religious service like that which occurred at Camp Taylor in Cleveland, where 15,000 people were reportedly present for the service and the dress parade of the Toledo regiment.[212] At other points, political leaders reviewed the men, providing more pressure for them to look good. This was a fairly common routine, as leaders with power and influence wished to view how well men were being trained. Even foreign dignitaries and correspondents viewed and detailed these events with interest.

William Howard Russell was a war correspondent, often viewed as the first one ever. He traveled through the United States and the Confederacy during the first years of the war, observing and writing. Having witnessed and reported on the First Schleswig War and the Crimean War, Russell had a strong knowledge of military matters, and his impression of Union forces was not favorable. Russell believed that ten thousand English or twelve thousand French regulars, with cavalry and artillery, could easily defeat the army assembled by the United States in late July 1861because "the American of this army knows nothing of discipline, and what is more, cares less for it."[213] It was a reasonable observation, given the Union's reliance on volunteers who had not been training very long. Russell was a bit more complimentary of Duryea's Zouaves as he watched them go through drill, but had little good to say of their uniforms. He thought the outfit ridiculous, with "discolored napkins tied round their heads,

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[211] J. B. B., "Camp Correspondence," *Ashtabula Weekly Telegraph*, May 11, 1861, 2.

[212] "Military Matters," *Cleveland Morning Leader,* May 13, 1861, 1.

[213] William Howard Russell, *My Diary North and South* (Boston: T. O. H. P. Burnham, 1863), 404, https://books.google.com/books?id=8DMnTGWpaoEC&q=zouave#v=onepage&q&f=false. Russell was later knighted by Queen Victoria for his services, but this was not until 1895.

without any fez cap beneath, so that the hair sometimes stuck up through the folds, the ill-made jackets, the loose bags of red calico hanging from their loins, the long gaiters of white cotton, made them appear such military scarecrows, I could scarcely refrain from laughing outright.[214] Russell's assessment of the men's lack of discipline proved true in the following weeks, but he fell prey to a contemporary argument that nations that relied too heavily on volunteers and militia as a foundation for an army did not actually possess a true army and had nothing to teach other militaries.

There is a consistent theme in Civil War historiography that the men who fought were "the worst soldiers and the best fighters that America has ever produced."[215] According to this theory, two rabble armies fought each other, often under-supplied and ill-equipped, and the only reason either side ever won was due to secondary, non-military characteristics. Historian Mark A. Weitz argues this is not true. Both sides spent a great deal of time performing drills and working on instructions to aid their performance in battle. He states "the level of training during the war, both in terms of time spent in a given day and the continued adherence to drill and training over the war's duration, support the notion that traditional methods of training and discipline contributed in great part to the combat performance of the Civil War soldier."[216] It was this sort of drill that had not been undertaken by the soldiers seen by Russell in 1861, because it took time to develop.

Camp life took some getting used to for new recruits. Men had to give up a great deal of the familiar freedoms available to them in their ordinary lives and subject themselves to military

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[214] Ibid, 416.

[215] James I. Robertson, *Soldiers Blue and Gray* (New York: Warner Books, 1988), 122.

[216] Mark A. Weitz, "Drill, Training, and the Combat Performance of the Civil War Soldier: Dispelling the Myth of the Poor Soldier, Great Fighter," *The Journal of Military History* 62, no. 2 (April 1998), 270.

discipline, a difficult proposition for some. From those camps close to a town, soldiers attempted to sneak out at night, usually for the company of a woman or the acquisition of alcohol. James T. Miller of the 111th Pennsylvania wrote his parents that even though there was a double guard every night, "some of the boys do run the guard and go to Erie and the most that do get most gloriously drunk."[217] As Peter Wilson of the 14th Iowa attested, "When there is a good many out, we sometimes have to go after them and have some fun bringing them back."[218] Punishment for these sorts of actions ranged from time in the guard house to extra duties to some form of corporal punishment. In one humorous instance, *The Daily Delta* in New Orleans published a story about two soldiers being punished for habitual indulgence of whisky. The men were making rounds of camp under guard "wearing as jackets whisky barrels, which left nothing of their persons visible but their heads and legs."[219] This punishment was designed to humiliate the men by removing their soldierly dignity. As they failed to behave like soldiers and follow orders, they were not treated as soldiers. The daily circulations of camp life and drill made the ordinary citizen into a soldier capable of taking the field.

The writings of soldiers themselves bear out Weitz's hypothesis that consistent drill made Civil War citizens into soldiers. "Training not only brought the ability to perform under fire, but provided the stamina necessary to fight a more fluid type of war, without the luxury of rest, that saw long marches end in intense fighting, not respite."[220] On the first day of the Second Battle of

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[217] Jedediah Mannis and Galen R. Wilson, ed., *Bound to be a Soldier: The Letters of Private James T. Miller, 111th Pennsylvania Infantry, 1861-1864* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2001), 5.

[218] John Ely Briggs, ed., "Peter Wilson in the Civil War," *Iowa Journal of History and Politics* 40, no. 2, (April 1942), 159.

[219] "City Intelligence," *The Daily Delta*, June 28, 1862, 2.

[220] Mark A. Weitz, "Drill, Training, and the Combat Performance of the Civil War Soldier," 288.

Bull Run, Union and Confederate forces blazed away at one another for several hours, sometimes as close as thirty yards, without withdrawing. As Earl J. Hess has shown, long-held assumptions that rifled muskets allowed fighting to occur at longer distances were incorrect, as most men held their fire until the enemy was closer in order to maximize accuracy.[221] Certainly rifles allowed greater use of sharpshooters and skirmishers during the war, but the training of soldiers did not allow for these kinds of tactics to fully come to fruition in the field. Many men had never fired rifles before, leading to accidents in camp. The men of the 21st Indiana were in camp almost a month before receiving their muskets, and when they did and went to practice on the firing line, some men failed to remove the ramrod before firing, leading to a barrage of the implements flying through the air.[222] The lack of firearms, meant that many new recruits did not receive proper firearm training, but because many commanders believed in using fire only long enough to allow a massed charge to move enemies from a position, rifle training was neglected for most of the war.

As Grady McWhiney and Perry D. Jamieson state, Civil War commanders had been shaped by experiences of the war with Mexico, where smoothbore muskets dominated the

[221] Hess's study pushed back against Perry D. Jamieson and Grady McWhiney's *Attack and Die: Civil War Military Tactics and the Southern Heritage*, which saw the rifle musket as influencing everything from high casualty rates to the lack of decisive battles. Their study was the culmination, and ultimate expression, of works that placed a great deal of emphasis on the power of the rifle musket during the war. Other historians such as Paddy Griffith, Mark Grimsley, and Brent Nosworthy also contributed to the questioning of the Jamieson and McWhiney thesis. Earl J. Hess, *The Rifle Musket in Civil War Combat – Reality and Myth* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008), 107-115; Perry D. Jamieson and Grady McWhiney's *Attack and Die: Civil War Military Tactics and the Southern Heritage* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1982); Paddy Griffith, *Battle Tactics of the Civil War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 146-47; Mark Grimsley, "Surviving Military Revolution: The U.S. Civil War," in *The Dynamics of Military Revolution, 1300-2050*, ed. Macgregor Knox and Williamson Murray (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 176; Brent Nosworthy, *The Bloody Crucible of Courage: Fighting Methods and Combat Experience of the Civil War* (New York: Carroll and Graf, 2003), 278, 573-77.

[222] Phillip F. Faller, *The Indiana Jackass Regiment in the Civil War: A History of the 21st Infantry/Heavy Artillery Regiment, with a Roster* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2013), 9-10.

battlefield.[223] Armies usually won battles by storming positions and fighting with the bayonet. McWhiney and Jamieson argue that the rifle musket, combined with these strategies, meant a greater loss of life on the battlefield, but this is not borne out by evidence. Earl J. Hess notes that most commanders believed it was more decisive to engage the enemy around one hundred yards, a claim supported by Brent Nosworthy's research that a decisive point at which an attack was repelled was 80-120 yards.[224] At Second Bull Run, the engaged Union brigades of Rufus King's division were well within that distance. They were new recruits, with only a handful having seen any fighting, yet they withstood continuous volleys from Confederate soldiers like veterans. The training of the men, to follow commands and make difficult maneuvers, was indispensable in their first fight. Hard training by good officers made this possible. This is a curious kind of life for one like me that has always been used to acting as he pleases and would bear no control."[225] Taylor Pierce echoed the sentiment of many men who enlisted to fight for the Union, and indeed the sentiments of many regular army officers. When General Irvin McDowell cautioned against using the army before the men were trained, it was this personal freedom that he was worried about. Men needed to submit themselves to commands and act in concert for success in battle, but the volunteers had not had enough time to properly submit themselves to military drill. Some even pushed back against such discipline, but officers did have some success. A Captain Kilpatrick, a veteran of British service, was "a very severe disciplinarian and handled his men

[223] Grady McWhiney and Perry D. Jamieson, *Attack and Die: Civil War Military Tactics and the Southern Heritage* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1984).

[224] Earl J. Hess, *Civil War Infantry Tactics: Training, Combat, and Small-Unit Effectiveness* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2015), xii.

[225] Richard L. Kiper, ed., *Dear Catharine, Dear Taylor: The Civil War Letters of a Union Soldier and His Wife* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2002), 23.

accordingly. Had he been otherwise, it is a question whether he would have been successful."[226] Hard discipline was not always liked by the men, but it kept them prepared for battle. One historian of the 42nd Ohio recalled that after the Battle of Chickasaw Bayou, the men believed the colonel's "rigid discipline, that had been arduous to many, was always appreciated after that day."[227]

Not all soldiers cared for this rigidity. Some threatened the lives of officers. Samuel Pierpoint, for instance, often proclaimed he would kill his company officers before the war was over.[228] This was a drastic measure, one that was not taken, but it does highlight the disgust soldiers could have for superior officers. The letters of George Bliss shed light on an example, where he calls his colonel "a God damned fussy old pisspot utterly incompetent for the position he holds.… Nearly all the officers of this regt. have submitted to insults from the Col which coming from a civilian would be indignantly resented, but all this could be endured did he only show military capacity but the utter imbecility and incompetency manifested since leaving [Providence] has called forth intolerable disgust."[229] While men professing insubordination could be severely punished and even dismissed from service, discipline from competent officers was accepted, and in time, appreciated.

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[226] John M. Paver, *What I Saw from 1861 to 1864: Personal Recollections of John M. Paver, 1st Lieutenant Company C, and R. Q. M. 5th Ohio Vol. Infantry* (Indianapolis: Scott-Miller Co., 1906), 16, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc2.ark:/13960/t1wd3q07g&view=1up&seq=26&q1=clothing.

[227] F. H. Mason, *The Forty-Second Ohio Infantry: A History of the Organization and Services of that Regiment in the War of the Rebellion; with Biographical Sketches of its Field Officers and a Full Roster of the Regiment* (Cleveland: Cobb, Andrews and Co., 1876), 127, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433081800199&view.

[228] John M. Paver, *What I Saw from 1861 to 1864*, 17.

[229] George N. Bliss, William C. Emerson and Elizabeth C. Stevens, ed., *"Don't Tell Father I have been Shot At:" The Civil War Letters of Captain N. Bliss, First Rhode Island Cavalry* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Co., 2018), 13-14.

Active, continuous drill by strong commanders readied soldiers for the field, but clothing helped men develop a sense of soldierly bearing and unit cohesion. Mark Weitz argues that "Uniforms and physical appearance are not the basis for evaluating an army's professionalism or its fighting ability," even though contemporary commentators felt it was. His argument has some merits, because as soldiers became veterans, they rid themselves of unnecessary equipment that hindered their fighting ability. However, this argument relies on viewing the Union army backwards, as if it were already a veteran force in 1861-62, rather than an army of amateurs. Uniforms provided an extra boost, particularly in the early stages of training and fighting, for regiments to form a more cohesive unit by putting aside a great deal of their civilian individuality and learning to become part of a national army. It is clear from soldiers' records that uniforms were important.

"The blue uniform, with its warlike belongings, were simply irresistible."[230] Here, William Hartpence linked the blue uniform to the call of the nation for soldiers, and it was an embodiment of the nation itself. Soldiers viewed poor uniforms and clothing as either a reflection of a lack of support from the government or a personal failing that they were not up to a military standard. In one example, when General Ulysses S. Grant reviewed the IX Corps in April 1864, the 11th New Hampshire had just returned from a grueling campaign in eastern Tennessee, where they were without extra supplies for months, as they worked to protect recently captured Knoxville. The men had "not yet been able to receive supplies of clothing enough to make a creditable appearance at this inspection, sandwiched as it was between two new regiments."[231] These veterans, toughened by battle and difficult campaigns, felt shame at

[230] Wm. R. Hartpence, *History of the Fifty-First Indiana Veteran Volunteer Infantry*, 5.

[231] Leander W. Cogswell, *A History of the Eleventh New Hampshire Regiment Volunteer Infantry in the War of the Rebellion, 1861-1865, Covering its Entire Service, with Interesting Scenes of Army Life, and Graphic Details of*

their appearance, an appearance which they believed spoke to their quality as soldiers. It did not always take hard work and dirty uniforms for soldiers to want to look their best.

The Salem Zouaves were a pre-war volunteer militia company that served ninety days at the war's outset with the 8th Massachusetts Regiment. The company wore a full zouave outfit, but when the company mustered at the state capitol in April 1861, more than half of the men did not have a full uniform. Many of the men, like John P. Reynolds, attempted to privately purchase different pieces once they were in camp in Maryland, but on June 1st, "a new uniform for every man, also a quantity of underclothing, soldier's companions &c." arrived for the company.[232] It was the same pattern uniform the company already had, but brand new. However, just over a month later, the company decided a new uniform was needed and formed a committee to take charge of the matter.[233] When a sample of the new uniform arrived, controversy arose because the pants had a red stripe, which had not been part of the original pattern, but was adopted after some discussion.[234] In a little over three months, the company clothed itself in three different uniforms, more clothing than some regiments had until the end of the year. The company wanted to appear in their new uniform when they returned home and mustered out, but the men received letters from home exhorting them to "wear the old uniform, suggesting that rags indicated service, and were the more honorable from this fact."[235] This was certainly a major difference of

Battle, Skirmishes, Sieges, Marches, and Hardships, in which its Officer and Men Participated (Concord, NH: Republican Press Association, 1891), 256.

[232] John P. Reynolds, Jeffrey L. Patrick, ed., *"In Her Hour of Sore Distress and Peril:" The Civil War Diaries, Eighth Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2013), 128.

[233] Ibid, 192.

[234] Ibid, 210.

[235] Ibid, 213.

opinion between the soldiers and those on the home front. The regiment had done practically nothing but drill and man defenses during its service, hardly a decorated record, but it was service nonetheless. These two groups held different perceptions of soldierly duty and what it meant to look like a soldier, and clothing was a significant part of that vision. When volunteers first received uniforms, they wished to show them off, and one of the ways they did this was through photographs.

"We asked for furloughs to go home, and see the girls in our new togery[sic], and when we got there we made a bee line for the photographers, and did not rest till we had our pictures taken in all the panoply of war."[236] For soldiers, a photograph was a new way of preserving themselves in martial regalia and providing mementos to friends, family, or in Hicks's case, eligible girls in town. It was also proof of service, and some wanted photographs of the entire unit, as was the case of John Reynolds' company of the 8th Massachusetts. On May 3, 1861, the men formed lines to look as if they were in the "ready' position of firing to have the picture taken.[237] Such a photograph was a bit more unusual, but it did highlight the prowess of the men, allowing them to show off a bit for those who received a copy. Photography also allowed vestiges of loved ones who died to remain with families and friends, especially since it was often very difficult for families to get the bodies of fallen soldiers. When they did, it was often just a few small remains, as soldiers who died during battle could be buried in mass graves. Men going into a particularly fierce fight would do their best to identify themselves in case they were killed. At the Battle of Fredericksburg, for example, several regiments pinned notes on their uniforms

[236] Borden M. Hicks, "Personal Recollections of the War of the Rebellion," *Glimpses of the Nation's Struggle, 6th Series* (Minneapolis: Aug. Davis, 1908), 522, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951p00407156l&view=1up&seq=5.

[237] John P. Reynolds, *In Her Hour of Sore Distress and Peril*, 81.

with their names attached. As morbid as this was, it exemplifies the carnage of battle and the deadly conditions men faced.

Most soldiers did not understand the tedious nature of soldiering, only seeing romantic visions of glory in fighting for the country. Days and weeks of marching, drilling, and living camp life in the field were sometimes interrupted with fighting, most of which was skirmishing or small engagements. When the Union division of General George W. Morgan retreated from the Cumberland in September 1862, it was forced to "literally cut and dig its way through nearly two hundred miles of broken, mountainous country, almost wholly barren of supplies, and in many places, for long distances destitute of even water."[238] Thomas Benton White attested to the difficulty of this march, noting the lack of food, constant enemy presence, and forced marches. A September 30 diary entry indicates a march that began at 2:30 a.m., dealt with obstructed roadways and covered twenty miles.[239] These were the daily drudgeries of army life for Union soldiers, and coupled with this was often the inability to clean clothing and bathe. After having no ability to clean themselves or their clothing for months, continually sweating through daily army life, the men were fighting off lice, and when they received new clothing on October 19, they burned their "old clothes and thousands of" lice.[240] A similar problem was faced by Charles A. Willison of the 77th Ohio during the Army of the Tennessee's campaign against Vicksburg in summer 1863. While on a transport, he had "no opportunity to wash clothing the last three weeks, so that my outfit consisted of two dirty shirts and a pair of dirty drawers in my knapsack,

[238] F. H. Mason, *The Forty-Second Ohio Infantry*, 127, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433081800199&view.

[239] Charles G. Williams, "Down the Rivers: Civil War Diary of Thomas Benton White," 167.

[240] Ibid.

and the suit I had on. Vermin infested our persons and quarters and it was utterly impossible to get rid of them."[241] It was all men could do to combat these pests.

When able, men tried to wash clothing and themselves, but it was difficult to do, as attested by Daniel Parvin of the 11th Iowa. "We have not even a good chance to keep ourselves clean, for we have to haul our water about five miles, and we are only allowed so much each day."[242] With such large armies, even water had to be rationed, as men could dry up a well or small pond very quickly. Even when water was available, it was not always possible to obtain soap. "We have not got any soap for a long time- about a month-and we cant wash shirts very well without it. The result is that the men dont wash at all and they are so lousy that they cant kill the half of what is on them."[243] The lack of cleanliness contributed heavily to diseases and death of the men in camp, with dysentery, malaria, typhoid, and pneumonia wreaking havoc among Civil War armies. Roughly two-thirds of all deaths during the war were due to disease, and in the Union army, soldiers from states west of the Appalachian Mountains died from disease forty-three percent more often than soldiers from the eastern states.[244] The inability to clean clothes regularly meant that germs and diseases stayed in clothing for lengthy periods of time, and the close proximity of the men to one another exposed them even more. Clothing also contributed to deaths in other ways. According to A. J. Robinson of the 33rd Wisconsin, his regiment suffered

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[241] Charles A. Willison, *Reminiscences of a Boy's Service with the 76th Ohio in the Fifteenth Army Corps, Under General Sherman, During the Civil War* (Menasha, WI: George Banta Publishing Co., 1908), 31, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=loc.ark:/13960/t8hd82f5w&view=1up&seq.

[242] Daniel J. Parvin, Phillip A. Hubbart, ed., *An Iowa Soldier Writes Home: The Civil War Letters of Union Private Daniel J. Parvin* (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2011), 122.

[243] John O. Holzhueter, "William Wallace's Civil War Letters: The Atlanta Campaign," *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 57, no. 2, (Winter, 1973-1974), 100.

[244] While 620,000 deaths has been the traditional estimate of Civil War deaths, recent research by J. David Hacker increases that number to 750,000 and possibly as high as 850,000; James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, p. 472.

three men frozen to death on picket duty on December 23, 1863 because of the extreme cold around their camp in Vicksburg.[245] Proper clothing was still difficult to come by at the end of 1863, so men had to work to keep what they had in as good of a condition as possible, including cleaning and mending garments. Some enterprising individuals made money by helping others with these tasks.

William Wallace of the 3rd Wisconsin was an industrious soldier, always thinking about how to earn and save more to help his growing family. In this vein, he made himself available to do washing for men in the army during General William T. Sherman's Atlanta Campaign. On July 30, 1864, Wallace wrote his wife, "I made 3 dollars this last 2 afternoons washing. If I could get soap I could make plenty of money. I only can get it when the officers wants washing."[246] Wallace was still able to do washing, even though he did not have soap, but his comment also highlights some of the disparities between officers and privates, as the lack of soap was mitigated because officers had more money and easier access to buy what was available. There was a business opportunity for someone willing to exploit it. Wallace was also frugal with buying new clothing to replace his own. On October 31 of the same year, he wrote his wife that he made himself a vest out of an old pair of pants and shirt and was in the process of knitting mitts out of old stockings.[247] He also used his knitting skills for others, for a price of course. As enterprising as Wallace was, other soldiers were not.

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245 Arthur J. Robinson, *Memorandum and Anecdotes of the Civil War, 1862 to 1865* (St. Paul, MN: Webb Publishing Co., 1910), 33, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=loc.ark:/13960/t4gm8fb3s&view=1up&seq=5.

246 John O. Holzhueter, "William Wallace's Civil War Letters: The Atlanta Campaign," 104.

247 Ibid, 111.

When the 51st Pennsylvania arrived in Centreville, Virginia after the disaster of Second Bull Run, the regiment was completely devoid of clothing and equipment after losing their knapsacks to the enemy. Upon seeking shelter from the weather, the men found some clothing meant for a German regiment and appropriated it for themselves. No amount of curses or complaining from the Germans had any effect on the Pennsylvanians, as they desperately needed clothing.[248] Soldiers sometimes prioritized their own regimental needs before worrying about others, to the detriment of others fighting for the Union. Even though the government continued to acquire equipment, it was not always able to provide things in a timely manner. Even when it did arrive, new clothing went against a soldiers' yearly allowance. This put men in a bind; they needed clothing to effectively campaign and live but did not always want to spend the money to do so. This brings up another important point about clothing: their losses in the field had a direct impact on soldiers financially. Clothing losses put a strain on the government and fighting men alike, sometimes causing friction between the two.

Losing Equipment

While it was expected that clothing would be lost through normal wear and tear, soldiers lost clothing through a variety of ways. When a unit was overrun during battle, it often lost its knapsacks containing the soldiers' personal goods. The same was true when the army was retreating. At the Battle of Chancellorsville, the 27th Indiana was ordered to "unsling thar(sic) knapsacks and was then directed to advance under the fire of the enemy to take a certain position," and then to fall back, where by doing so, "the knapsacks withe thare contents fell into

[248] Thomas H. Parker, *History of the 51st P.V. and V.V.; From its Organization at Camp Curtin, Harrisburg, PA., in 1861, to its being Mustered Out of United States Service at Alexandria, VA July 27th, 1865* (Philadelphia: King & Baird, 1869), 218, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=wu.89073072977&view=1up&seq=9&q1.

the hands of the enemy."[249] The twenty-three men of Company I lost a total of eighteen blankets, flannel shirts, and drawers, seventeen pairs of stockings, and thirteen gum blankets.[250] While this application for financial relief from the losses was only for the men of Company I, it is safe to assume that the rest of the regiment lost a similar amount of clothing. This was by no means an uncommon theme, and in fact whole brigades were susceptible to losing clothing and equipment in battle.

On May 31st, 1862, a brigade of the Union Army came under assault by Confederate forces at Fair Oaks. Though giving a stiff resistance, the regiments were "obliged to retire upon the second line and in rear of their camp," in the process losing "large quantities of clothing, mostly new, which fell into the hands of the enemy."[251] The men lost 752 coats, 183 jackets, 180 blouses, 2,024 overcoats, 856 pairs of pants, 3,252 shirts, 2,196 pairs of drawers, 549 pairs of shoes, 2,832 pairs of socks, 155 caps, and 2,507 blankets, all of which were picked clean by Confederate forces in need of their own clothing. This significant haul covered more than a few allotments for a private.[252] These men had a great deal of clothing for active campaigning, as they were part of General McClellan's Peninsular Campaign that began in March 1862. Quartermaster General Meigs assembled 400 ships to transport over 100,000 men, 300 cannon,

[249] Captain William H. Holloway, *National Archives Record Group 92: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General* (hereafter labelled as *RG92*), Consolidated Correspondence 1794-1915, "Clothing Lost, Civil War," entry 225, box 358.

[250] Ibid; this amounted to almost $144 at the time, which calculates to almost $3,700 in today's dollars.

[251] Board of Survey, October 3, 1863, *RG92*, Consolidated Correspondence 1794-1915, "Clothing Lost, Civil War," entry 225, box 355.

[252] Ibid; if the average price of these goods is taken by what the Quartermaster paid for contracts in 1862, the cost of all of this material is in excess of forty-four thousand dollars at the time, and over $1.1 million in today's dollars.

25,000 animals and "mountains of equipment" to the Virginia peninsula.[253] It was certainly a logistical success, but it also highlighted the difficulties of moving with large quantities of supplies. It took McClellan's encumbered army over two months to come within six miles of Richmond, allowing the Confederates time to prepare.

The Union army's commitment up the peninsula toward Richmond meant long supply lines, and it took a toll on the men who were as yet raw troops with little campaigning experience. Trudging up the peninsula toward Richmond "became a wretched crawl with sickness and a shortage of food."[254] The heavy rains and mud destroyed clothing and caused a variety of diseases such as malaria, scurvy, and typhoid. Wagons carrying supplies became impossible to move. According to historian Jeffrey Wert, the army needed 700 tons of food per day for men and animals, along with new articles of clothing.[255] In the retreat, the army "destroyed vast stockpiles of supplies" at White House, only to have Confederate forces come up quick, put out the fires, and capture the goods; at Savage Station, a forward supply base, McClellan ordered everything destroyed to keep equipment from falling into Confederate hands.[256] The loss of equipment was devastating, but the retreat even more so. The campaign's ultimate failure, due more to McClellan's incompetency than any other factor, made other commanders reconsider how they supplied their armies and what their men kept.

In the Western Theatre, General Don Carlos Buell of the Army of the Ohio issued his own orders in regard to clothing. To minimize the effect of excess baggage on his army, Buell

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[253] James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 424.

[254] Jeffrey Wert, *Sword of Lincoln*, 80.

[255] Ibid, 82.

[256] Ibid, 108, 110.

ordered his men could only carry in their knapsacks "one blanket, two shirts, two pairs of drawers, two pairs of socks, one jacket or blouse, one pair of pants, one pair of shoes, and one hat or cap." [257] Anything other than these articles was to be sent into storage with the Quartermaster's Department in the rear, and anyone found straggling was to have their knapsack searched, with contraband thrown out. Buell's order was meant to lighten the burden of soldiers, allowing, in theory, for longer and easier marches, but baggage sent to the rear or left in camp had a habit of getting lost or not coming entirely back.

When the 69th New York Artillery (serving as infantry and numbered the 182nd New York) moved toward the front on July 19, 1863, its men sent their knapsacks into storage in Washington D.C. The weather the previous day was wet and thoroughly soaked the men and their equipment. When the regiment received their knapsacks a month later, they were "found to be in a very bad condition, many of them having been rifled of their contents and the contents of others were found to be so rotten as to be unserviceable."[258] Losing one's personal belongings to the enemy was one thing, but losing them through the neglect and deficiencies of the Quartermaster's Department was something else. The 164th New York even had most of its knapsacks stolen on July 18 while in storage at a government warehouse in Washington D.C.[259] The 2nd division of IV Corps lost the entirety of its baggage when retreating during the Peninsula Campaign because the barge it was on sank. Though fished out and towed to Yorktown on

[257] Don Carlos Buell, "General Order No. 20," June 3, 1862, *RG92*, Consolidated Correspondence 1794-1915, "Clothing Lost, Civil War," entry 225, box 356.

[258] Col. Matthew Murphy to Capt. R. Chandler, August 14, 1863, *RG92*, Consolidated Correspondence 1794-1915, "Clothing Lost, Civil War," entry 225, box 358.

[259] Col. J. P. McMahon to Quartermaster General Meigs, September 23, 1863, *RG92*, Consolidated Correspondence 1794-1915, "Clothing Lost, Civil War," entry 225, box 357.

another barge, it was "found to be utterly useless" and condemned, leaving an entire division short of clothing.[260]

Destruction and theft were more the exception than the rule, but there was a difference between the eastern and western armies in terms of losses when clothing was sent to the rear. Unlike the eastern theatre of the war, the western theatre dealt with more dangers from Confederate cavalry or partisans to supply lines and tail ends of marching armies. Confederate commanders such as Nathan Bedford Forrest, John Mosby, and John Hunt Morgan preyed on small units and supply areas in order to disrupt Union plans. It did not help that railways and quality roads were few, and the area covered by the army was much vaster. During General Buell's summer 1862 drive to Chattanooga, Confederate cavalry under Forrest attacked the Union supply base and regiments at Murfreesboro Tennessee on July 13. The 3rd Minnesota was one regiment guarding the area, and although "gallantly defended by the camp guard the said camp was finally taken by a superior force of the enemy on that day, and by him immediately plundered and burned."[261] This raid diverted Buell's advance by cutting his supply line, and it was actions such as these that led to a great deal of equipment loss for soldiers and the army overall. At other times, soldiers were ordered to destroy equipment to keep it from falling into enemy hands.

As with the case of General McClellan's retreat from the Peninsula Campaign, soldiers sometimes received orders to destroy their clothing out of necessity, though it was avoided as much as possible due to supplies being government property. The 20th Indiana was one such

[260] 1st Lt. J. B. Partridge to Quartermaster General Meigs, November 6, 1863, *RG92*, Consolidated Correspondence 1794-1915, "Clothing Lost, Civil War," entry 225, box 358.

[261] Lt. Col. C. C. Andrews, *RG92*, Consolidated Correspondence 1794-1915, "Clothing Lost, Civil War," entry 225, box 355.

regiment ordered to "destroy their dress coats and blankets that their knapsacks might be less cumbersome."[262] As if that were not enough for the regiment, the next day they unexpectedly fought another Confederate attack while on fatigue duty, "leaving all with a knapsack overcoat or change of clothing."[263] The 20th was extremely unlucky with equipment.[264] Because this equipment had been provided by the national government and destroyed under orders, the 20th applied for relief from having to pay for the goods out of their pockets. If it had been personal property, provided by the state, or provided by another group, the federal government would not have accepted their petition. Actions like this were not relegated to one theatre of operations. During the Union evacuation of Louisville, Kentucky in September 1862, all baggage and clothing was ordered burned by the commander of the post, including individual clothing "amounting to about $16.00 or $17.00" per man.[265] Initially, a replacement allowance did not go against the soldiers' accounts, but that decision was soon reversed, a ruling met with frustration by the men because they "asked the privilege of carrying their clothing rather than have them burned, which was not granted."[266] It is no wonder the men protested, as a loss of sixteen or seventeen dollars was calamitous for many.

"I lost my knapsack containing clothing to the amount of $11.93. My clothing bill for this year is $60.80. Now I wish to ask you if it is right that I should pay for my clothing lost in

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[262] Col. J. Van Valkenburg to Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, December 5, 1862, *RG92*, Consolidated Correspondence 1794-1915, "Clothing Lost, Civil War," entry 225, box 357.

[263] Ibid.

[264] The 20th had already been the victim of equipment losses at Hatteras Inlet in fall 1861, where Confederate forces captured dozens of the regiment's soldiers and all of its clothing.

[265] Capt. John A. Allen to Adjutant General Lorenzo Thomas, Jun3 14, 1863, *RG92*, Consolidated Correspondence 1794-1915, "Clothing Lost, Civil War," entry 225, box 355.

[266] Ibid.

action."[267] The words of William Redheffer voiced concerns of most soldiers throughout the army. Money was always a concern, especially for those men needing to take care of families at home; owing money to the government for clothing was a difficult proposition for men who volunteered to maintain the government's integrity. Redheffer continued, "I have been in the service of the United States 2 years and am willing to serve 2 years longer, but I want to see justice done to the *Enlisted Man*."[268] These men were sacrificing a great deal for the country, many of them their lives, and simply asked for what they felt was minimum care in order to prosecute the war. Even Major General William Rosecrans looked to the Quartermaster's Department to aid soldiers who lost clothing due to no fault of their own, including having to destroy it from falling into enemy hands, baggage being lost in or on the way to storage, or in one case where "men voluntarily gave their blankets to the wounded, who were without any."[269] Calls such as Rosecrans's forced the War Department to reconsider how it took care of soldiers, and while most cases were not solved quickly, systems were put in place to adjudicate cases on behalf of soldiers.

For the first year of the war, there was a great deal of confusion over clothing and equipment losses. Some regiments still had parts of their original state-issued clothing, while other units were wholly supplied by the federal government. The army's regulation handbook made no mention of clothing losses due to combat or negligence, meaning the army had to

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[267] Corp. William H. Redheffer to Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, August 14, 1863, *RG92*, Consolidated Correspondence 1794-1915, "Clothing Lost, Civil War," entry 225, box 356; Redheffer's clothing bill is the equivalent of over $1,250 in today's dollars.

[268] Ibid; Redheffer did not end up serving after his term expired, being discharged September 16, 1864, http://www.pa-roots.com/pacw/infantry/82nd/82dcoi.html

[269] General William Rosecrans to Quartermaster General Meigs, November 20, 1862, *RG92*, Consolidated Correspondence 1794-1915, "Clothing Lost, Civil War," entry 225, box 355.

develop governing rules. Not until July 1862 did Congress pass a resolution addressing the issue. It authorized the War Department "to furnish extra clothing to all sick, wounded, and other soldiers who may have lost the same by the casualties of war, under such rules and regulations as the department may prescribe."[270] This broad language allowed soldiers who lost clothing through no fault of their own to apply for extra allowances of clothing through a Board of Survey. Most of the applications did not begin until fall 1862, but the amount of inquiries received by the War Department by soldiers in the field facing hardships was instrumental in moving the government toward a system that aided soldiers instead of punishing them.

A Board of Survey was a commission of officers convened at the brigade or division level to take action on the loss of public property and hear soldiers' claims. Depending on the extent of the losses, either field-grade or company-grade officers heard testimony and passed judgement. For example, the officers detailed on March 25, 1863 for hearing claims of the 3rd Kentucky were Col. M. Shoemaker of the 13th Michigan, Lt. Col. M. Barnes of the 97th Ohio, and Maj. W. H. Squire of the 26th Ohio, each of whom were from different brigades in the division.[271] Because the board was for an entire regiment, the members could not be part of the same brigades, and it was also important to have different officer ranks so as to avoid any sort of bias. In contrast, cases of particular individuals were most often held within the regiment, such as that of Private Soloman Walker of the 92nd Illinois mounted infantry. His committee was made of two captains from other companies in the regiment and a 1st lieutenant from Walker's own

[270] George P. Sanger, ed., "A Joint Resolution authorizing the Secretary of War to furnish extra clothing to Sick, Wounded, and other Soldiers," *Public Laws of the United States of America, Passed at the First Session of the Thirty-Seventh Congress; 1861* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1861), 624, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.35112203964954&view=1up&seq=7.

[271] Col. Wagner, "Special Order No. 38," March 25, 63, *RG92,* Consolidated Correspondence 1794-1915, "Clothing Lost, Civil War," entry 225, box 356.

Company I. Confederate troopers captured Walker attempting to return to his regiment after relaying a message to the 3rd Minnesota and robbed him of a cavalry great coat, two woolen blankets, one canteen, and one rubber poncho.[272] It was a small amount of clothing but still necessitated the calling of a board of survey, due to? the cost of clothing, and most of these appeals happened more than six months after their events took place.

When Capt. Henry Krausenech of the 74th Pennsylvania wrote the Adjutant General in January 1864 concerning his regiment's clothing losses, the losses were from February and June 1863. He said all extra clothing had been ordered into storage by General Hooker, then commander of the Army of the Potomac, in order to "facilitate long and forced marches and to pack themselves instead with provisions."[273] A similar command came from their corps commander in early June. At both points, the regiment had just drawn fresh clothing, only to have it sent to storage. At the time of Krausenech's letter, the regiment's clothing "had never been recovered and the enlisted men had in consequence thereof overdrawn their yearly allowance."[274] Even though the original losses were in Virginia, the men were stationed at Folly Island, South Carolina. The transfer of units and equipment to various military posts exacerbated the problem of keeping property in the hands of soldiers and account books in order. It is no wonder that it took months, and even years, to reimburse troops for losses in the field. Additionally, the new rules regarding gratuitous issuances of clothing were not always transmitted to soldiers in the field. When Lt. Col. Joseph H. Newbold wrote Quartermaster

[272] Col. S. D. Atkins, "Special Oder No. 17," March 11, 1864, *RG92*, Consolidated Correspondence 1794-1915, "Clothing Lost, Civil War," entry 225, box 356.

[273] Capt. Henry Krausenech to the Adjutant General, January 3, 1864, *RG92*, Consolidated Correspondence 1794-1915, "Clothing Lost, Civil War," entry 225, box 357.

[274] Ibid.

Meigs regarding clothing losses of the 14th Iowa at the Battle of Shiloh, he said, "All the men lost the greater part of their clothing, and in absence of War Department orders relating thereto I am compelled to address you."[275] Even though the Congressional resolution providing extra allowances to soldiers who lost equipment in battle was almost one year old, not everyone was aware of the rule. To make matters worse, each board of survey decision had to be approved by the Secretary of War, and though most board decisions were upheld, not everyone was quite so lucky.

"In the case of the 11th Wisconsin Vols, the United States should not replace the articles lost through the negligence of Capt. Whitbeck, A. Q. M., unless the amount is stopped against his own pay."[276] Because Whitbeck was acting as an agent for the government in his position as a quartermaster, the government was not responsible for the clothing losses, only Whitbeck himself. It was not the government's policy to "insure property, left for convenience, temporarily in the hands of its agents."[277] As a matter of policy, this was a hefty blow for soldiers in the field, as clothing sent into storage sometimes did not come back or came back ruined. What was worse, these articles most often went into storage on the order of a commanding general to make marching and fighting easier for the troops. But the Quartermaster's Department did not see it that way; soldiers were issued clothing and became responsible for that property. Similarly, the Quartermaster's Department recommended the 37th Indiana's situation demanded further

[275] Lt. Col. Joseph H. Newbold to Quartermaster General Meigs, June 13, 1863, *RG92*, Consolidated Correspondence 1794-1915, "Clothing Lost, Civil War," entry 225, box 358.

[276] Meigs to Stanton, March 18, 1864, *RG92*, Consolidated Correspondence 1794-1915, "Clothing Lost, Civil War," entry 225, box 355.

[277] Assistant Quartermaster General Charles Thomas to Stanton, November 27, 1863, *RG92*, Consolidated Correspondence 1794-1915, "Clothing Lost, Civil War," entry 225, box 355.

investigation because it was "not clear that the clothing was lost in obedience" to an order.[278] If it was not, the clothing should not be replaced. Proof of specific orders for destruction or battle losses needed to be supplied in order to support equipment claims. In the same letter, other regiments waiting on War Department approval for clothing were listed and given recommendations, most of whom had been waiting more than a year for answers. At the same time, pay was irregular as well, meaning that pay for several months came into the hands of the men all at once and often went to paying off debt.

Though the army was supposed to pay men regularly, it rarely if ever happened. Paymasters had to travel great distances with money for armies that were often on the move. For that reason, soldiers received anywhere from two to six months' pay at one time. When James Todd Miller wrote his parents that he received two months' pay in February 1863, he also said, "I had to throw away so much clothing during the forced marches and retreats of last summer and had to draw new clothing in place of that I was ordered to throw away that I over drew my share of clothing to the amount of $15.95."[279] Miller also had to settle his account with the sutler as well, meaning that he had no money left to send home to his wife and children. Miller was not the only one to toss out equipment and clothing to lighten his load. Overcoats, dress coats, blankets, and even knapsacks were often the first things thrown away by soldiers desperate to lighten their loads, but these were also some of the most expensive items to replace, as evinced by Private John M. Keogh's application for clothing relief. On June 30, 1862, Keogh, part of the 40th New York infantry, abandoned several pieces of clothing at Charles City Crossroads,

[278] Meigs to Stanton, March 18, 1864, *RG92*, Consolidated Correspondence 1794-1915, "Clothing Lost, Civil War," entry 225, box 355.

[279] James T. Miller, Jedediah Mannis and Galen R. Wilson, eds., *Bound to Be a Soldier: The Letters of Private James T. Miller, 111th Pennsylvania Infantry, 1861-1864* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2001), 57.

Virginia as the Union army retreated to the coast. He listed his overcoat costing $7.20, a uniform jacket costing $5.84, a wool blanket costing $2.95, and a knapsack with straps costing $2.57.[280] These prices, however, reflected what the items cost Keogh when he initially received them, instead of their cost at the time. Because of this, Keogh would not have been given gratuitous clothing in kind or receive the full monetary value of the clothing, instead making up any cost difference out of his pocket. As the Army of the Potomac moved to contain Confederate forces in June 1863, Charles Sprague recalled, "The loads carried on our shoulders also varied, and suited each man's idea of comfort at the expense of exertion. Some clung to their knapsacks-I think only one of these got to Gettysburg in our company; some kept their overcoats, but these were soon adorning the roadsides during that hot summer."[281] As men carried on through forced marches in difficult weather conditions, they made decisions about what to keep and what to throw away in order to keep up with the army. The weather played key roles in how men acted and how armies fought.

Mentions of the weather are a common theme amongst soldiers' letters and diaries, especially when it was particularly hot or cold. For example, in a June 6th diary entry, William H. Carroll of the 24th Indiana said it was "very hot and sultry" outside of Vicksburg as Grant's army worked to capture the city in 1863.[282] A fellow soldier in the regiment concurred with Carrol's assessment, saying the regiment was "all almost played out by the time we had marched through

[280] Col. J. W. Egan, June 1864, *RG92*, Consolidated Correspondence 1794-1915, "Clothing Lost, Civil War," entry 225, box 357.

[281] Col. Charles E. Sprague, "Military Life as Seen from the Ranks of the Army," *The Fort Scott Weekly Tribune*, July 8, 1886, 3.

[282] "The 1863 Diary of William H. Carroll, Mess No. 2, Company D, 24th Indiana Volunteers," *Indiana Magazine of History* 105, no. 1 (March, 2009), 54.

the city and two miles down the river" after the surrender.[283] The weather, coupled with the strain of fighting, preyed on soldiers throughout the war. At First Bull Run, Union soldiers, green as they were, suffered from heat exhaustion and even heatstroke. The dry weather and need to move quickly meant most men were unable to rest and keep themselves hydrated. As historian Michael Burns has pointed out, heatstroke was a very real threat to Civil War soldiers generally, because medical knowledge did not understand the need for hydration.[284] The soldiers' thick wool uniforms and extra equipment exacerbated the situation, so men threw away perfectly good equipment. But when the weather turned cooler, men found they no longer had adequate clothing and cover to stay warm. Andrew Bush wrote his wife in October 1862, "It snowed prety hard on Saturday night and wee had to lay all night in the snow on the banks of Salt river. Some of the boys suffered very much."[285] These men had blankets but no true shelter, allowing for everything they wore to become wet and even more burdensome. Weather conditions forced men to make decisions about how much they carried and threw away, and with each decision being a financial one, veteran soldiers adapted to these new conditions.

Around mid-1863, two changes occurred that affected clothing losses: the Union began actively implementing a policy of hard war, and soldiers began actively carrying less in the field, two seemingly different but interrelated parts of the war. At the war's outset, leaders such as General-in-Chief Winfield Scott and Secretary of State William Seward, along with others,

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283 Richard J. Fulfer**,** *A History of the Trials and Hardships of the Twenty-Fourth Indiana Volunteer Infantry* (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Printing Co., 1917), 84, https://www.gutenberg.org/files/62981/62981-h/62981-h.htm.

284Michael Burns, "War and Nature in Northern Virginia: An Environmental History of the Second Manassas Campaign" (PhD diss., Texas Christian University, 2018), 111-116.

285 Vivian Zollinger, ""I Take My Pen in Hand": Civil War Letters from Owen County, Indiana Soldiers," *Indiana Magazine of History* 97, no. 2, (June, 1997), 155.

believed a conciliatory attitude needed to be held toward the seceded states in order to persuade them to rejoin the Union. This meant that the government and military needed to work as hard as possible to prevent destruction of private property and depredations against the enemy civilians. Such a policy was scorned by abolitionists, but it seemed a prudent strategy, given the belief that a majority of southerners were silent Unionists that only wished for federal support. When Scott wrote McClellan in early May, 1861, he outlined his plan of blockading the southern coasts, invading down the Mississippi River and eastern seaboard, and occupying strategic points and cities in those areas, desiring "to envelop the insurgent States and bring them to terms with less bloodshed than by any other plan."[286] In Missouri, General Henry W. Halleck issued General Orders No. 3, banning fugitive slaves from entering Union lines and thus becoming free.[287] In addition, Halleck ordered, "No private property will be taken, except where necessary for the subsistence or transportation of the troops." Anything taken would be paid for or replaced in kind.[288] Halleck's order also stated, "Any unauthorized and unnecessary seizure or destruction of private property will be punished with the extreme penalty imposed by the laws of war, which is death."[289] As historian Mark Grimsley has shown, the Union's hard war policy grew out of the failures of conciliation and the political and military needs to emancipate slaves, thereby depriving the Confederacy of slave labor.[290]

[286] Winfield Scott to George McClellan, May 3, 1861, *OR* ser. 1, vol. 51, pt. 1, 369.

[287] "General Orders No. 3," November 20, 1861, *OR* ser. 1, vol. 8, 370.

[288] "General Orders No. 8," November 26, 1861, *OR* ser. 1, vol. 8, 380-381.

[289] Ibid.

[290] Mark Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War*, 122-23.

According to Charles Royster, the level of destruction wrought by both sides in the Civil War was extreme, even for the time, as "The lives and property swept away, as well as other forms of harms, far exceeded most early predictions."[291] Drew Gilpin Faust takes this further, arguing that perceptions of death changed as well, as both sides contemplated the value of life and its meaning because the war ruptured fundamental ideas about living and dying. There were certainly large areas of land destroyed due to war, with parts of cities shelled and burned. When the Union army under General William Sherman entered Columbia, South Carolina in February 1865, soldiers, for a moment, lost their control and exacted revenge on the state for its role in secession and the war, destroying property and allowing fires to burn a large part of the city. And yet, Mark Grimsley has shown that the Union's hard war policy was not nearly as destructive as many have made it out to be. Except for a few specific instances, the army carried out very systematic and targeted practices to hinder Confederate war-making abilities. A centralized national policy went in effect through de-centralized means. To do this, soldiers carried less equipment to be lighter and move faster. They took a great deal of what they needed by scavenging and foraging and went without new clothes for much longer periods of time than in the first two years of the war.

Union armies carried a great deal of baggage and equipment with them in order to stay well-supplied. As shown, soldiers could hardly depend on the government to keep stored equipment safe and in good condition. This meant individual soldiers, along with the army as a whole, took as much of their personal belongings with them as possible. This practice was evident as early as First Manassas, where all kinds of extra accoutrements accompanied the

[291] Charles Royster, *The Destructive War: William Tecumseh Sherman, Stonewall Jackson, and the Americans* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), xi.

army. Col. Israel B. Richardson's wife Fannie accompanied her husband on the march and carried an active beehive.[292] When General McClellan began his aborted Peninsula Campaign, the army established several supply depots as it marched in order to keep the army provisioned. This was in addition to those that already existed, and when the army retreated, the equipment that did not get destroyed fell into Confederate hands to be used against their former owners. Consider the amount of clothing lost at Bristow Station in 1862 by one brigade of General Pope's Army of Virginia. Made up of the 51st Pennsylvania, 51st New York, 21st Massachusetts, and 35th Massachusetts, this brigade lost 288 overcoats, 1,569 shirts, 1,052 pairs of drawers, 1,801 pairs of stockings, 1,118 wool blankets, 1,253 knapsacks, and countless other articles when the supply depot had to be abandoned to counter a movement by Confederate General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson.[293] Confederate forces were always in need of clothing and took every opportunity to take supply areas and pick clean the debris left by Union soldiers. At times, Confederates stripped dead soldiers and washed and cleaned their uniforms to be used again by threadbare soldiers.[294] By cutting down on the equipment carried with them, Union soldiers were able to deprive Confederates of these resources, but it had an effect on Union soldiers as well.

As part of the 105th Ohio, John Hartzell found himself in Chattanooga, surrounded by Confederates in fall 1863. It was a miserable affair, with little food or warmth for the men for a month, until a supply line was reestablished by Union reinforcements. In the subsequent battles of Lookout Mountain, Missionary Ridge, and Rossville Gap, the fighting was fierce, and the

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[292] Hennessy, *The First Battle of* Manassas, 8.

[293] "Clothing Lost at Bristow Station, VA," *RG92,* entry 225, box 355.

[294] William A. Fletcher, *Rebel Private Front and Rear: Memoirs of a Confederate Soldier,* (New York: Dutton, 1995), 67.

Confederate dead were often left on the field. Coming across one of these departed soldiers, Hartzell noticed he carried similar equipment to his own, and as he attempted to pull a blanket over the man, a new pair of wool socks fell out. Hartzell state that as the Confederate had "no particular use for use for them in his condition, and my necessities were pressing in that matter, I stripped the holey, shapeless rags from my feet and encased them in the warm, new, hand-knitted socks."[295] Hartzell admitted that this behavior might shock the reader, robbing a dead men as he did, but "neither fine points of ethics or theology enter largely into the articles of war," and as his mind was not afflicted by his action, and he would leave the reader to their own judgment.[296] The 35th Massachusetts, too, looked to thrown aside Confederate equipment to replenish themselves, rummaging through knapsacks and blankets to replace their lost goods, even taking the dead's food, though "some preferred to go hungry rather than do anything which seemed like robbing the dead."[297]

By cutting down on equipment and provisions carried by the army in the field, Union forces could move more quickly and use what they found through foraging. However, the practice also placed more strain on soldiers As Drew Gilpin Faust pointedly explains, the war created questions about what should be done with bodies left in the field. To contemporaries, the body was "the repository of human identity in two senses: it represented the intrinsic selfhood and individuality of a particular human, and at the same time it incarnated the very humanness of

[295] John Calvin Hartzell, *Ohio Volunteer: The Childhood and Civil War Memories of Captain John Calvin Hartzell, OVI*, Charles I Switzer, ed. (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2005), 157.

[296] Ibid.

[297] A Committee of the Regimental Association, *History of the Thirty-Fifth Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers, 1862-1865. With a Roster* (Boston: Mills, Knight & Co., 1884), 31-32, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc2.ark:/13960/t5z60c910&view.

that identity."[298] Pillaging dead bodies, then, was a sacrilege and against norms of decency and respect for the dead, but as has been shown, the necessities of the living took precedence. Needy soldiers, hungry for warmth and replacement clothing and even food, did what was necessary for their survival. At other times, mere curiosities or trinkets caught their fancy, as reported by John Hartzell. At Missionary Ridge, a young soldier died right next to him, shot in the forehead, and Hartzell "noticed the ball had split the visor of his cap just where the cap and visor joined. I thought once of keeping the cap as a memento of the battle, and because it showed such a true shot," but he decided against this because mementos simply burdened the soldier with more weight to carry.[299] Even men who fought on the same side were not afforded the same niceties given the dead during peacetime. It was a morbid but practical observation. By lessening individual burdens, armies moved quicker, but individual soldiers might suffer unintended consequences.

Just as clothing played a role in developing strategy, it also played a role in deciding outcomes of individual battles and skirmishes. At the September 1862 Battle of Antietam, the dramatic arrival of A. P. Hill's Confederate division reversed the tide of battle and saved the Confederate right, in part, because Hill's men were wearing Union uniforms they had recently captured at Harpers Ferry and thus were taken as friendly troops by the Federals on whom they descended at Antietam. At a final critical point in the battle, it was captured clothing that made the difference. The Union men held their fire, believing the Confederates to be friends, allowing Hill's men to hit Burnside's flank hard, roll it up, and save Lee's army and escape route. Even

[298] Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War*, Vintage Civil War Library Edition (New York: Vintage, 2009), 32.

[299] John Calvin Hartzell, *Ohio Volunteer*, 152.

though Burnside's right still held, McClellan once again failed to push forward any reserves, letting the fighting die down. It was a dramatic turn of events, given his confidence in being able to crush the Confederate army, and it ended when lost clothing found its way onto the backs of Confederate soldiers. Similar situations occurred at the Battles of First Manassas and Shiloh and elsewhere, but they did not play as large a role as at Antietam.

Lost Union clothing also helped southern spies and partisans, as each side attempted to gain advantages on the other. In one scenario, William Hartpence recalls a story where two Confederates, wearing Union uniforms, attempted to impersonate officers to ascertain army positions around Franklin, Tennessee. "Their object was to gain such knowledge of the post as to enable [General Nathan Bedford] Forrest to dash in and capture it."[300] The men were quickly found out, sentenced to a court martial as spies, and summarily hanged. Execution was standard practice for non-combatants impersonating officers, and hence spying. This clothing could have come from anywhere, even Union prisoners-of-war.

When A. L. Marks of the 13th Illinois found himself captured, he believed fortune smiled on him when the Confederates allowed him to retrieve his extra clothing from his quarters, but within twenty-four hours all of it had been confiscated except the clothing on his back.[301] Even worse, a Confederate soldier wanted to switch shoes with Marks several days later, even offering $150 Confederate money. Marks laughed at the proposition, only to have the man take them at

[300] William R. Hartpence, *History of the Fifty-First Indiana Volunteer Infantry*, 151, https://archive.org/details/veteranvolinf00hartrich/page/n175/mode/2up?q=uniform.

[301] Regimental Committee, *Military History and Reminiscences of the Thirteenth Regiment of Illinois Volunteer Infantry in the Civil War in the United States, 1861-1865* (Chicago: Women's Temperance Publishing Association, 1892), 418, https://books.google.com/books?id=UwUTAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0.

gunpoint later that night.[302] Marks' experience underscores the problems Confederates had in properly outfitting its army throughout the war. Soldiers had to rely on stealing goods from prisoners to clothe themselves. Union prisoners had to protect themselves from their comrades because prison life was so deplorable. According to members of the 35th Massachusetts, there was an atmosphere of selfishness at Andersonville Prison, with the strong preying on the weak. A prisoner who had been there awhile described "an organized band, termed 'raiders' by their fellow prisoners, who were in league to rob and plunder each new arrival."[303] It is no wonder, then, that so many men died in captivity at Andersonville. Between Confederate soldiers and other prisoners stealing clothing and other goods, unsanitary conditions, and a lack of nutrition, Union prisoners were at an extreme disadvantage, but not all Confederate prisons were so bad. It was even possible for Union soldiers to escape.

Prisons often allowed letters and packages to move back and forth between prisoners and their families at home. This allowed clothing and other goods to get to needy prisoners, or possibly Confederates looking for quality goods. It also allowed money to come in, as described by William Hartpence. When a package arrived at Libby Prison in Richmond, Captain M. T. Anderson noticed a particularly large pair of pants, and "On ripping the lining, great was his joy to see a liberal roll of greenbacks tumble out; the key to liberty."[304] Anderson used that money to bribe a Confederate guard into helping him and another man escape. The guard may have incorrectly assumed the two would be recaptured quickly since the prison was in Richmond, but

[302] Ibid.

[303] A Committee of the Regimental Association, *History of the Thirty-Fifth Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers*, 335.

[304] William Hartpence, *History of the Fifty-First Indiana Volunteer Infantry*, 159.

Anderson and his companion made it to Union lines with the help of several slaves they encountered along the way. In another episode, Henry C. Damon of the 11th Michigan fell into enemy hands while caring for injured comrades during the Battle of Chickamauga. He ended up in Andersonville Prison where, after nine months of imprisonment, he donned a passable Confederate uniform assembled over his tenure and "nonchalantly marched out the prison gate with a formation of departing Rebel guards."[305] A similar experience was had by a Captain Reed of the 3rd Ohio as he was being transferred from Salisbury, North Carolina to Macon, Georgia. He procured a grey suit and "pretended to engage the guard in conversation; but, supposing him, from his dress, to be a citizen of the town, he (the guard) ordered him outside of the lines."[306] These escapes are thrilling and almost Hollywood-esque. The ingenuity and thoughtfulness of the men is astonishing, and their use of clothing is a fascinating story of the way clothing had an impact on the lives of Union soldiers.

The lives of Union volunteers were full of the ordinary trappings of the regulars. They wore blue uniforms, drilled hard and fought hard, and suffered through horrible conditions in the field and in prison. They were often underfed and poorly clothed, but they nonetheless persevered. Clothing had a material impact on the lives of soldiers, causing both health problems and financial hardship, so the volunteers adapted and made do with what they had. If there was a difference between the regulars and volunteers at the start of the conflict, by 1863, the volunteers had proven their military prowess, going even beyond the capabilities of the regulars. The government did not wish to short-change soldiers and worked to aid those who lost clothing in

[305] Eric R. Faust, *The 11th Michigan Volunteer Infantry in the Civil War: A History and Roster* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2016), 141.

[306] William Hartpence, *History of the Fifty-First Indiana Volunteer Infantry*, 167.

the field, but not every petition was granted. To cover the exorbitant needs of the field armies, the once overwhelmed Quartermaster's Department worked in concert with private contractors to produce growing quantities of equipment.

Chapter 4: "Surely Uncle Sam is a Powerful Fellow"

On December 1, 1863, Henry Morford published a novel, *The Days of Shoddy: A Novel of the Great Rebellion in 1861*. By that point, the Civil War had been raging for two and a half years, though the title does not make it appear so. For this otherwise forgettable tale, Morford invented Charles Holt, a conniving merchant from New York, who plots to sell shoddy to the government at the war's outset; joined by coarse, adulterous wife Ophelia, the two stood as a metaphor for a profiteering class that owed its rise to the start of the war.[307] While there was certainly profiteering going on, the scholarship on its proclivity has generally reinforced Morford's particular stereotype by accusing contractors of blatant extortion at the expense of the public treasury and the men actually fighting. The traditional trope about the fleecing of the public treasury at the expense of the everyday soldier fighting for his measly thirteen dollars per month has been ongoing since the early months of the war. Newspapers, such as the *New York Herald*, actively searched for evidence of graft and fraud. Reports from the soldiers did not aid matters, as men in the field complained about the poor quality of clothing and equipment provided by state and national governments.[308]

The earliest of the major works on the bureaucracy of the Union Army came from Fred Shannon and A. Howard Meneely. Meneely wrote of "speculators, rogues, [and] conniving dishonest men" who took government contracts, but it was Shannon's Pulitzer Prize-winning account that charged these men with being the original Robber Barons, who "reveled in a

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[307] Henry Morford, *The Days of Shoddy: A Novel of the Great Rebellion in 1861* (Philadelphia: T. B. Peterson and Brothers, 1863), https://books.google.com/books?id=YUIYAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA174&dq=The+Days+of+Shoddy+morford&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiPzbLw0-PgAhVLr1QKHetbDIEQ6AEIKjAA#v=onepage&q&f=false.

[308] Many of these complaints came through newspapers, which did not always have names attached, so it is difficult to say definitively that soldiers complained that much. It is possible that editors, desirous of making certain political points, heard small complaints and exaggerated them.

saturnalia of graft" at the start of the war.[309] The charges levelled by both of these historians went generally unquestioned for decades and were often repeated at length.[310] The first crack in these arguments came in 1959, with Russell F. Weigley's *Quartermaster General of the Union Army: A Biography of M. C. Meigs*, presents corruption in the early months of the war, but Meigs streamlined the Quartermaster's Department, making it more efficient and eliminating the vast majority of fraud and waste.[311] But even with this new work, the majority of histories maintained the level of fraud during the war was unconscionable. These historians cite such examples as the Hall Carbine Affair, Simon Cameron's appointment of a close friend as a purchasing agent, Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles' appointment of his brother-in-law George D. Morgan as a special agent to purchase and charter vessels, and the wide array of stories from soldiers about poor clothing and equipment. Recent scholarship, however, has shed more light on the relationship between the government and its contractors, creating a more nuanced story.

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[309] A. Howard Meneely, *The War Department, 1861: A Study in Mobilization and Administration* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1928), 269-71; Fred A. Shannon, *The Organization and Administration of the Union Army, 1861-1865* (Cleveland: Clarke, 1928), 73.

[310] For support of Shannon and Meneely's scholarship, see James A. Frost, "The Home Front in New York during the Civil War," *New York History* 42 (July 1961); Maury Klein, "The War and Economic Expansion," *Civil War Times Illustrated* 8 (January 1970); Earl K. Molander, "Historical Antecedents of Military-Industrial Criticism," in *War, Business, and Society*, ed. Benjamin F. Cooling (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat, 1977); Samuel Richey Kamm, *The Civil War Career of Thomas A. Scott* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1940); George Edgar Turner, *Victory Rode the Rails: The Strategic Place of the Railroads in the Civil War* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1953), and Erwin Stanley Bradley, *Simon Cameron, Lincoln's Secretary of War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1966). See also James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 321-324 for criticism of Simon Cameron's handling of the War Department in 1861 and his involvement in frauds. An updated work on Cameron, Paul Kahan's *Amiable Scoundrel: Simon Cameron, Lincoln's Scandalous Secretary of War* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2016) provides a more balanced assessment of Cameron's time as Secretary of War and absolves him of many of the accusations against him.

[311] Russell F. Weigley, *Quartermaster General of the Union Army: A Biography of M. C. Meigs*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959); see also Robert O'Harrow, Jr., *The Quartermaster: Montgomery C. Meigs, Lincoln's General, Master Builder of the Union Army* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 2016).

In a 1990 work titled *Mastering Wartime: A Social History of Philadelphia during the Civil War*, J. Matthew Gallman delves into Philadelphia specifically to understand the broader economic and social impact of the war period and after. He finds that while the city grew economically during the war decade, most of that came once the war ended, and there was even a net decline of manufacturing output between 1860 and 1866.[312] Gallman carefully notes several instances of corruption in the city, including a fraudulent grain deal, poor state uniforms early in the war, substandard kersey provided the Schuylkill Arsenal, and the arrest and trial of William B. Cozens for contracted tents that did not meet government specifications, but he does not reiterate the accusations of scholars before him and even undermines their conclusion.[313] Stuart D. Brandes, in *Warhogs: A History of War Profits*, went farther, making the case that accusations of profiteering and fraud had been overblown.

One of the first scholars to analyze the history and development of war profiteering in the United States, Brandes only devotes one chapter to the Civil War, but his work is important for analyzing distinct sectors of the military economy to see if the charges of corruption ring true. While Brandes finds instances of corruption, he says many charges were not substantive, and there were ample instances of businessmen sacrificing financial success to support the war effort.[314] A final work from Mark R. Wilson demonstrates that while the contracting process at the start of the war was very hit or miss, the administrative system developed by the Quartermaster's Department in prior decades allowed it to eventually smooth out the contracting

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[312] J. Matthew Gallman, *Mastering Wartime: A Social History of Philadelphia during the Civil War* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 255-256.

[313] J. Matthew Gallman, *Mastering Wartime*, 286-290.

[314] Stuart D. Brandes, *Warhogs: A History of War Profits in America* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 105-107.

process. Even though the public perceived contracting as a dirty business, the Quartermaster's Department believed it was the best way to supply equipment for the war.[315] Even with these pushbacks on the scholarship of Shannon, Meneely, and others, the urge to echo earlier criticisms appears irresistible. A 2020 work by Hanna Rose Shell looks at shoddy and the outcry against it during the early part of the war but provides no treatment of the subject after early 1862.[316] Finally, even a law firm blog post gets in on the act by providing an overview of the Hall Carbine Affair, in light of modern day attempts at war profiteering.[317] It is fair to say that the work of Shannon and Meneely is still alive, but viewed in the context of newer studies, their history deserves more scrutiny.

Each of the works that scrutinized the proponents of widespread fraud offer pieces of evidence that, individually, do not appear to hurt the arguments of Shannon and Meneely, but taken together, they raise serious questions about the breadth of fraud and corruption perpetrated by government officials and contractors during the Civil War. Clothing, particularly, does not appear to have been as bad as historians have made out, even though the frantic nature of the war in 1861 did lead to soldiers being clothed in poorer quality goods. Both Meneely and Shannon wrote their histories in the wake of World War I and the Progressive Era, when works such as Gustavus Meyers' scholarship on the great American fortunes came out and tales of war profiteering during the Great War left people aghast. Shannon even said that profiteering on the

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[315] Mark R. Wilson, *The Business of Civil War: Military Mobilization and the State, 1861-1865* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006). In his line of argument, Wilson echoes some of Weigley's earlier work about the growing efficiency of the Quartermaster and its success as the war develops.

[316] Hanna Rose Shell, *Shoddy: From Devil's Dust to the Renaissance of Rags* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020).

[317] "This Week in Whistleblower History: The Hall Carbine Affair and Defense Procurement Fraud," Constantine and Cannon blog, October 2, 2020, https://constantinecannon.com/2020/10/02/the-hall-carbine-affair-and-defense-procurement-fraud/.

Civil War scale "seems small to the present generation, so familiar with the pestilence of profiteers of 1917-1918 and since, but considering the wealth, population, industrial conditions, and available resources of the two periods, World War One does not present a larger degree of profiteering activities than the Civil War."[318] He went on to say that the level of corruption found by Congress during investigations after World War One was not even close to the excesses of the Civil War, and the majority of historical studies have taken his word as gospel ever since.

Poor equipment certainly plagued the volunteers of 1861, as their accounts attest, but a great deal of those problems lay with the United States' lack of an expansive military establishment in the vein of European nations. The government mainly relied on its own supply systems rather than purchase finished goods in the marketplace.[319] This left the nation with no immediate source of supplies to sustain a large force in case of a sudden onset of war. In fact, the traditional reliance on a militia system placed the nation at an even greater disadvantage, because states relied on the national government for arms and other accoutrements, even though they provided their own uniforms, but once mustered into national service, the militia were to be fully supported by the War Department.[320] It was a very serious deficiency of the system that was only truly overcome by the process of contracting out for finished equipment, but the contracting process had its own flaws.

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[318] Fred A. Shannon, *The Organization and Administration of the Union Army, 1861-1865,* 71.

[319] There are certain exceptions to this, such as the private purchase of Colt pistols for sidearms, but it was generally a rule that the Army made most of its own equipment.

[320] See Paul Tincher Smith, "Militia of the United States from 1846 to 1860," in *Indiana Magazine of History* 15, no. 1 (March 1919), 20-47, for analysis about the downfall of the militia system and the problems with national government support.

Due to the large demands of the military, businesses had to expand to meet those requisitions, but even when they did so, it often was difficult to find raw materials to make finished products. By the end of 1861, wool prices had increased dramatically because of the needs of the army, and domestic stocks were exhausted, forcing manufacturers to rely on imported stocks. These imports were harmed, in turn, by increased privateering by Confederate ships thatpreyed on Union merchants. This increased a myriad of costs across the board, that hurt government finances. Finally, the war affected the economy as the national government suspended specie payments and introduced greenbacks as a national form of currency. This made it easier to pay for the war in some ways but hurt trade with other countries. When viewed alongside these factors, traditional charges of war profiteering and graft appear somewhat more dubious. They certainly existed, but it is unfair to continue to make broad assertions about a complicated process based on a small sample size. Private contracting was a necessary step in waging the kind of expansive conflict the Civil War became. Though the Union struggled in the first year to equip the men, the mixed military economy that it became certainly made it the best equipped army at the time. By the end of the war, Daniel Parvin was certainly right when he said, "It is astonishing to see the amount of clothing and provisions brought here for distribution, and this is only a small portion of the army. Surely Uncle Sam is a powerful fellow judging from the rise of his family and the amount of clothing and material he supplies us with."[321]

The Quartermaster's Department Goes to War

The Schuylkill Arsenal in Philadelphia was the government's only depot for manufacturing clothing at the war's outset, and only had the capabilities to equip and maintain an

[321] Daniel J. Parvin, *An Iowa Soldier Writes Home*, 128.

army of 13,000 men.[322] Prior to the Civil War, the small peace-time army depended fully on the support of the arsenal for clothing and other accoutrements. While the Quartermaster's Department contracted out for cloth and material, it had its own cutters and seamstresses on location in Philadelphia to actually make the clothing. The depot also contracted out piece work in Philadelphia to seamstresses. This system was quite efficient for the army during times of peace, but as the war with Mexico showed, it would take more direct purchases from private businesses to supplement what the department made. As historian Mark Wilson has pointed out, the challenges of procurement and logistics of that conflict and of doing the same for the nation's new territory made quartermasters "even more important as political and economic actors than they had been before 1846."[323] The quartermasters, located at regional depots and small outposts across the country, were not responsible for extensive supplies and purchases, but they nevertheless had to manage clothing and equipment for several hundred soldiers at any given time. They sometimes needed to make small purchases from local merchants to supplement other supplies, but most of their equipment came directly from the main arsenal in Philadelphia. This practice was a precursor to what the Quartermaster's Department would do during the Civil War, only at a greatly expanded rate.

Until 1818, the position of Quartermaster General had been a position that ebbed and flowed whenever the military was needed, rather than a static administrative position. When the nation went to war, Congress appointed a Quartermaster General and subordinate officers from the army, and it was assumed these men knew the business of providing for the army. The

[322] Montgomery Meigs, *Report of the Quartermaster General of the United States Army to the Secretary of War for the Year Ending June 30, 1865* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1865), 15.

[323] Mark R. Wilson, *The Business of Civil War*, 44.

establishment of permanent military bureaus in 1818 by Secretary of War John C. Calhoun created a bureaucratic system within the army that more resembled European nations than the civilian led organizations that dominated the American military landscape before the War of 1812.[324] The first Quartermaster General, Thomas S. Jesup, was responsible for fully shaping the department, especially because he served in that capacity from the department's inception to his death in June 1860. His more than four decades of work in shaping the department into a national bureaucracy that connected far-flung outposts to Washington D. C. made him "a pioneer in the field of bureaucratic management in the United States."[325] He set up a department with regular procedures for the submission of reports and communications, required quartermasters to have no financial interest in companies given contracts, and scrutinized every form that came in, often requiring forms to be resubmitted. These regulations for the department allowed it to operate smoothly and with little interference from politicians or contractors, though they did try. In one instance, Captain George Gibson, Jr., the military storekeeper at the Schuylkill Arsenal, returned one dozen bottles of wine, one overcoat pattern, and one blouse pattern to Peter Clogher of the Utica Steam Woolen Company because it "would not be compatible to [his] sense of propriety to accept" from a contractor.[326] While this practice had been in place for decades, worries over patronage and graft grew with the accession of Simon Cameron as Secretary of War in 1861.

[324] For more on this development and how the United States combined aspects of British and French military administration, see Wayne Wei-Siang Hsieh, *West Pointers in the Civil War: The Old Army in War and Peace* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

[325] Mark Wilson, *The Business of Civil War*, 40.

[326] Peter Clogher to Capt. George Gibson, Jr., January 4, 1859, RG 92, "Consolidated Correspondence File, 1794-1915," box 354.

Born in Pennsylvania in 1799, Simon Cameron was an ambitious man, active in state politics and business until his election to the Senate in the fall of 1844. He had a reputation for corruption, earned from his dealings with the Winnebago Indians as a commissioner, something that plagued him the rest of his life even though no evidence of wrongdoing was produced. In 1860, many considered him the main challenger to William Seward of New York for the Republican nomination for president, but in a shrewd move, Cameron's supporters negotiated an early deal that promised a Cameron a cabinet position in exchange for supporting Abraham Lincoln.[327] In the wake of Lincoln's electoral success, Cameron's enemies urged the president-elect not to appoint Cameron to a post, citing his corruption. Newspaper editor Joseph J. Lewis said he did "not verify the charge [that Cameron bribed Pennsylvania senators to vote for his election to the U.S. Senate in 1854] for I have no personal knowledge on the subject; but I trust it is enough for you to know that his character is subject to the most serious suspicions of the want of political integrity."[328] These criticisms worked, leading Lincoln to rescind his offer, but after several months of maneuvering, Lincoln offered Cameron the War Department. It was an ironic posting, because "the political skills that had secured for him a place in the cabinet—a large political following based on personal attachment and judicious distribution of patronage—worked against him as secretary of war."[329] The needs of a nation at war were not the same as a nation at peace, and the new Secretary, worried as he was about patronage, did not seem up to the task.

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327 Paul Kahan, *Amiable Scoundrel: Simon Cameron, Lincoln's Scandalous Secretary of War* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2016), 141.

328 Ibid, 149.

329 Ibid, 155.

Cameron's appointment of close friend Alexander Cummings as a special purchasing agent for the War Department directly bypassed the army's bureaucracy, causing frustration and suspicion among quartermasters and politicians. It is true that Quartermaster General Joseph E. Johnston was torn between remaining loyal to the flag and his home state of Virginia, but there is no evidence that he deliberately or accidentally sabotaged the Union war effort in the early weeks. In fact, it was Johnston who ordered Colonel Charles Thomas at the Schuylkill Arsenal to prepare equipment for the 75,000 militia called for by President Lincoln, including 69,842 knapsacks and straps, haversacks, and canteens and straps, among other articles.[330] Nonetheless, Cameron preferred to lean on personal connections rather than the established system, a fact which would haunt him as the war progressed.

At the start of 1861, the Quartermaster's Department was facing something of a financial crisis. The last decade had seen Congress continually cut the budget of the War Department, and in December 1860, the chairman of the Senate Military Affairs Committee inquired if services could be further reduced, without injuring public service, to cut more costs.[331] These prevailing attitudes forced the Quartermaster's Department to cut down further on its supplies, but the biggest problem that kept it from building up reserves was a law that forced it to purchase only what would be used in the fiscal year.[332] In theory, this kept the department from spending too much money, but in practice it meant the department was hamstrung and could not make up for

[330] QMG Joseph E. Johnston to Col. Charles Thomas, April 17, 1861, RG 92, "Letters Sent Relating to Clothing Returns and Vouchers (to 1841) and to Clothing and Equipage Generally (from 1841), 1821-1870," 427. Johnston ultimately joined the Confederacy once Virginia seceded.

[331] Erna Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army, 1775-1939* (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, 1989), 338. For a breakdown of yearly U.S. expenditures, see Mark Wilson, *The Business of Civil War*, 38.

[332] George P. Sanger, ed., *The Statutes at Large, Treaties, and Proclamations of the United States of America, From December 5, 1859 to March 3, 1863*, vol. 12 (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1863), 104, https://www.loc.gov/law/help/statutes-at-large/36th-congress/c36.pdf.

deficiencies. After the resignation of Johnston, the War Department had to move quickly and find a replacement. Several parties were put up for the post: Colonel Charles Thomas by General Winfield Scott, William T. Sherman by his brother Senator John Sherman, and Captain Montgomery C. Meigs of the Engineer Corps by Secretary of State William Seward and Postmaster General Montgomery Blair.[333] After considerable maneuvering, that even involved promoting Meigs several ranks in order to soothe any hurt feelings, Lincoln appointed Meigs Quartermaster General on June 12. Meigs was proud of this appointment and told his father, "A major general commanded a corps d'armée on a single line; a lieutenant general commanded the whole army; but the Quartermaster General supplied the means of moving that army and his command extended from the Atlantic to the Pacific."[334] Little did he or anyone else realize how true this statement would prove to be.

By early 1862, the Union war effort looked to be in dire straits. There had hardly been any movement in the army, as General George B. McClellan was busy building an army and planning how to attack the Confederacy. Though there had been a few small victories, there had been as many defeats, and morale of the populace was very low. There were also worries in the Quartermaster's Department over the costs associated with the war. Meigs wrote to Secretary of War Edwin Stanton in January that his department faced deficiencies of almost twenty-nine million dollars in the previous November, and the floating debt of the department exceeded that estimate. In addition, the department had only estimated equipment for an army of 300,000 men, and had appropriations for such, but by then, there were an estimated 660,971 men under

[333] Erna Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army*, 335-336.

[334] Ibid, 336.

arms.[335] With an army of that size, Meigs estimated that he would need one hundred and forty-eight million dollars for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1863, a substantial increase over what Congress already appropriated.[336] The cost of the war was increasing on a daily basis, meaning new strategies were needed to keep up with the changing nature of the war. Meigs said it best when he told Stanton, "We have no experience of the cost and contingencies in carrying on war on a great scale, and it is beyond any human foresight to estimate it with accuracy."[337] That was where the expansive contracting system arose.

By the start of the war, the military bureaucracy was an expansive, albeit small, system whose responsibilities stretched across the continent. Indeed, more than half of the federal budget went to military expenditures in the decades immediately before the war, even though the nation fought only one major conflict. The establishment of the administrative system allowed the U.S. Army to have officers occupying posts experienced with purchasing and providing equipment. These processes were the hallmarks of a nation-state that maintained a professional army with veteran officers, even as the nation as a whole held tight to martial traditions that glorified the civic and military virtue of the unprofessional soldier. As Wayne Hsieh has noted, the two Civil War belligerents fought as nation-states, and to do this, both sides relied on the expertise of professional soldiers who held the majority of high-ranking positions.[338] This expertise extended to the bureaucracy, where many depot commanders had more than a decade

[335] Meigs to Stanton, January 28, 1862, *OR* series 3, vol. 1, 866-867.

[336] Ibid, 868.

[337] Ibid, 867.

[338] Wayne Hsieh, *West Pointers in the Civil War*, 5.

of experience providing for the army. They understood the rules and regulations regarding the system itself, though the exigencies of the immediate crisis of 1861 tested their abilities.

Prior to the war, contracting occurred mostly for raw materials or pieces of goods so the army could make up its own equipment. In times of need, the department even reached out personally to various companies to inquire after goods. In 1843, for example, Assistant Quartermaster General Henry Stanton wrote S. J. Solms about supplying cloth for the Schuylkill Arsenal. Solms replied that he did not currently manufacture the requested material but had made up a similar product the previous winter, hoping to obtain a government contract, which he sold the public for two dollar per yard, but he would provide Stanton one thousand yards for one dollar and eight cents per yard.[339] This was a substantial discount from what Solms charged the public, but he was hoping this deal would lead to future contracting opportunities. Usually, the government advertised contracts in advance that looked like the one found in the *Minnesota Pioneer* for sixty-five hundred bushels of corn and two thousand bushels of oats. Sealed proposals had to be delivered by a specific date and time in order to be considered, and the presiding quartermaster had great leeway to reject any he considered bad and increase or decrease the amount of goods needed. Most importantly, the goods had to be delivered "without expense to the United States, and the contractor will be required to give bond, with approved security, in the penalty of half the amount involved for the faithful fulfillment of his contract."[340] Here were several keys to these contracts. First, the contractor had to figure transportation into his cost, as the government did not pay for shipping. Second, every contractor surrendered half

[339] Solms to Stanton, September 18, 1843, RG 92, Office of the Quartermaster General, "Philadelphia General Supply Depot Contracts and Proposals," entry 2210, box 1, National Archives – Philadelphia, PA.

[340] S. B. Buckner, "Notice," *The Minnesota Pioneer,* June 5, 1851, 3.

the price of the contract for a bond. This insured the government from fraud, to a reasonable extent. If a contractor failed to meet his obligations or if the quality of goods provided fell below government standards, it allowed the army the possibility to refuse the goods and possibly keep the payment. The majority of these contractors borrowed money to meet these bonds and repaid them once the agreement had been met. In the pre-war years, it was easier for merchants to obtain capital for these purposes, but things became more complicated afterward.

Initially, processes went by the wayside as different groups competed for resources and equipment, and the carefully developed administrative system of the Quartermaster's Department fell prey to unscrupulous businessmen. Meigs did not desire to create a system supported by government manufacturing only, believing that only the contracting system could fully supply the forces being raised and providing "employment to many large, well-organized establishments whose business had been cut off by war and whose workers were suffering."[341] He wanted to provide government material to business to make clothing, a system set up in 1812 but found to be unsatisfactory, but military storekeepers and quartermasters believed the garments produced that way were ill-fitting because contractors skimped on material to save money and kept scraps of government material to sell or use privately. In the end, a mixed system developed; the department issued contracts but still made its own clothing, a process termed by Mark Wilson as a "mixed military economy."[342] Even as this went into effect, Meigs believed more needed to be done to help his department succeed in better equipping soldiers without doing permanent harm to the treasury.

[341] Erna Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army*, 352.

[342] Mark R. Wilson, *The Business of Civil War*, 72.

Instead of allowing the extension of existing contracts, Meigs demanded new ones be made each time, and he directed that all large contracts had to be inspected by the office in Washington D.C., rather than just the assistant quartermaster general in Philadelphia. This gave the department leeway to curtail production from a specific manufacturer to let others have contracts. It also gave the department a chance to peruse any contracts that appeared too good to be true, as Meigs warned of proposals involving "loss to the contractors, oppression to the working hands or stealing and cribbage of materials."[343] Attempted fraud was a real threat to the department's ability to properly supply the army, but Meigs' proposed changes to the department's processes allowed it to adapt to the moment, which included the use of contracts.

When the department advertised contracts, it allowed one week for suppliers to submit bids before it examined and awarded them. The advertising process was somewhat haphazard, as the regional quartermasters published only what was needed at a given time rather than publishing one large advertisement presenting all the army's anticipated requirements for the next year. In one edition of the *New York Herald* four postings were side-by-side, one asking for hats, while another asked for their accoutrements.[344] It is important to note that successful bids did not indicate the department accepted the full amount of the bid. Some companies were cut off from contracts, especially smaller and medium-sized houses, in favor of larger firms. By slightly decreasing the totals of large contracts and handing out a few tinier amounts to small companies, Meigs and the department staved off criticism that they played favorites. Still, the department actively sought to sign bigger contracts at lower prices. Meigs looked to established

[343] Meigs to D. H. Vinton, September 9, 1861, RG 92, Office of the Quartermaster General Letter Book, Clothing, vol. 8, 407, found in Risch, 354.

[344] "Army Supplies," *New York Herald*, August 8, 1862, 7.

and respected firms, but that came from a desire to purchase quickly and cut down on fraud. For example, William H. Rockfellow's contract proposed to provide the department with 120,000 flannel shirts at $1.50 per article and "will provide 10,000 in five days and 1,200 per day until complete."[345] In the end, Rockfellow accepted an award for 100,000 shirts at that price, one of a handful of companies that received such a large order for shirts in 1862. But the contracts of that year were somewhat special due to extenuating circumstances.

By the start of 1862, Meigs appeared to have a better grasp on the supply problems, as demands finally had been met, with ample supplies left over. So great had been Meigs' fears in the previous Fall that there would not be enough cloth available domestically for the army that he sent Assistant Quartermaster Charles Thomas and George P. Smith, a retired merchant from Pennsylvania, to England to purchase cloth. When news of this leaked, the public was incensed, stirred up by newspaper reports that anywhere from twenty-five to sixty million dollars was to be spent in foreign markets, when the real amount was only eight hundred thousand dollars.[346] George Bond of the Boston Board of Trade wrote Secretary Cameron asking for a cessation of foreign purchases, citing the irreparable harm to the Union's banking system due to the loss of specie and the danger that the move would "throw distrust upon the government securities, stop individual subscriptions, and spread confusion and panic where now are only confidence and prosperity."[347] Bond asserted that deficiencies in goods were due only to mills switching machines over to wool and army clothing production rather than to a general lack of output

[345] Rockfellow to Crosman, October 16, 1862, RG 92, Office of the Quartermaster General, "Philadelphia General Supply Depot Contracts and Proposals," entry 2211, box 2, National Archives – Philadelphia, PA.

[346] Meigs to Cameron, October 22, 1861, *OR*, ser. 3, vol. 1, 582.

[347] Bond to Cameron, October 18, 1861, *OR*, ser. 3, vol. 1, 584.

capacity. Bond proved correct, as Meigs rescinded foreign contracts at the start of the year, seeing that he had an abundant supply, and by the summer, he had enough clothing for the army for six months, with an ample supply of cloth in storage. Contracting was put on hold, but not for long, as President Lincoln issued a new call for 300,000 volunteers in July and a call for 300,000 militia one month later. This time, businessmen, procurement officers, and even wool growers were ready, after learning from the problems of the previous year. It was the start of massive increases in wool production that bolstered the nation's arms and kept soldiers clothed in the field.

Uniform Wool

Since the Union lost the ability to obtain cotton from Confederate states, wool was one of the most important raw materials for the war. It was the basis for all of the army's clothing and was vital for maintaining armies in the field. Sheep arrived in the English colonies of North America as early as the settlement of Jamestown, and because they could be improved through selective breeding and did not need to be killed for harvest, they were a welcome commodity. By 1651, there were three thousand sheep in Massachusetts alone, with thousands more in other colonies.[348] This early production was mostly for home use or a cottage industry that made cloth.[349] The American Revolution set back the production of wool and cloth in the United

[348] Susan M. Ouellette, "Divine Providence and Collective Endeavor: Sheep Production in Early Massachusetts," *The New England Quarterly* 69, no. 3, (Sep. 1996), 355.

[349] For an extensive history of wool production in 17th and 18th century America, see Arthur Harrison Cole, *The American Wool Manufacture, Vol. 1* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926); Rolla Milton Tryon, *Household Manufactures in the United States, 1640-1860: A Study in Industrial History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1917); Elizabeth Hitz, "A Technical and Business Revolution: American Woolens to i832" (Ph. D. diss., New York University, I978); Victor S. Clark, *History of Manufactures in the United States, Vol. I*: *1607-1860* (New York, I949); Adrienne D. Hood, "The Material World of Cloth: Production and Use in Eighteenth-Century Rural Pennsylvania," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 53, no. 1, Material Culture in Early America (Jan., 1996), pp. 43-66, and L. G. Connor, "A Brief History of the Sheep Industry in the United States," *Agricultural History Society Papers* 1, (1921), 89-197.

States, because even as herds grew, the clip did not grow at the same rate, mainly due to the loss of European sheep imports for breeding purposes. In addition, the British knew to attack the commodity to hurt soldiers in the field, taking more than 9,000 thousand of the animals in a September 1778 raid on Martha's Vineyard.[350] The patriot army was in dire straits for clothing and materials throughout the conflict. If possible, the post-Revolution world was even worse, as Britain reintroduced a ban on exporting to Europe and America all tools related to the manufacture and production of wool and cloth. This was on top of Spain's ban on exporting Merino sheep, the breed that, for centuries produced the finest wool. The wool produced in the United States was not of the highest quality, being much coarser and shorter than anything produced in Europe.[351] Wealthier Americans turned to Europe for finer woolen goods, even as their own government urged Americans not to look abroad for manufactured goods. Some enterprising individuals, including Jefferson, turned to smuggling in Merinos and other breeds to improve native stocks, but to no avail as merchants and customers continued to rely on Europe for fine goods on the eve of the War of 1812.[352] Not until the introduction of Merinos into American herds and the implementation of high tariffs did the wool industry develop rapidly.

In 1809, William Jarvis, American consul in Lisbon, received permission to export two hundred Merinos to the United States, selling some of them for as much as one thousand dollars

[350] Brett Bannor, "Republic of Wool: Founding Era Americans' Grand Plans for Sheep," *Journal of the American Revolution*, March 21, 2017, https://allthingsliberty.com/2017/03/republic-wool-founding-era-americans-grand-plans-sheep/#_edn17.

[351] Victor S. Clark, *History of Manufactures in the United States, Vol. I*, 80.

[352] Margaret Byrd Adams Rasmussen, "Waging War with Wool: Thomas Jefferson's Campaign for American Commercial Independence from England," *Material Culture* 41, no. 1, (Spring 2009), 18-19.

apiece.[353] It took time, but by slowly developing flocks through selective breeding, farmers improved their stocks. Yet as Arthur Cole pointed out, the technological developments of wool manufacture were behind that of cotton manufacture by fifteen or twenty years.[354] Fine woolens were still the most desired and were the only ones that could be made advantageously at mills, but early attempts at spinning woolen yarn for the making of fine cloths revealed that "in power spinning, the machinery could not be sufficiently controlled to preserve the looseness necessary for effectual fulling."[355] This, coupled with coarse wool being homespun, was an impediment to the rise of wool manufacturing industries generally, meaning the world of wool dreamt of by the Revolutionary generation became instead a nation of cotton.[356]

As Sven Beckert has shown, cotton was already a growing global commodity during the 18th century and had been produced for clothing for millennia in parts of Asia and South America.[357] It was not, however, a heavily grown crop in the English colonies until the American Revolution, when British markets closed to goods such as rice, tobacco, and indigo, and wool imports diminished. At this point, developments in cotton agriculture and industrial production

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[353] Robert F. Balivet, "The Vermont Sheep Industry, 1811-1880," *Vermont History* 33, no. 1, The Proceedings of the Vermont Historical Society (January 1965), 243. For descriptions of other breeds developed in lieu of the Merino, see L. G. Connor, "A Brief History of the Sheep Industry in the United States."

[354] Arthur Harrison Cole, *The American Wool Manufacture, Vol. 1*, 133-135.

[355] John Lord Hayes, *American Textile Machinery: Its Early History, Characteristics, Contributions to the Industry of the World, Relations to Other Industries, and Claims of National Recognition* (Cambridge, MA: John Wilson and Son, 1879), 22, https://archive.org/details/americantextile00hayegoog/page/n28/mode/2up.

[356] According to information compiled from the 1860 census, the product of cotton cloth, excluding mixed goods, was over 1.14 billion yards, with more than 5.2 million spindles involved, using over 422 million pounds of raw cotton. (ix) Conversely, the manufacture of woolen goods, excluding wool-carding and cloth-dressing, consumed only 83.6 million pounds of wool, producing a little under 125 million yards of cloth. (xxii) United States Census Office and James M. Edmunds, *Manufactures of the United States in 1860: Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census, Under the Direction of the Secretary of the Interior* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1865), ix; xxii.

[357] Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (New York: Knopf, 2015), 6-8.

increased dramatically into the 19th century, aiding westward expansion in the American South and the growth and maintenance of slavery. The lack of quality wool meant that Americans continued to import from abroad, even as sheep herds increased, and while the Revolution hurt the wool industry, it aided cotton, negating any kind of advantage wool may have had over cotton in terms of development of a national product. A July 1830 article in the *Virginia Free Press and Farmer's Repository* published a letter from Thomas Jefferson to a northern manufacturer of woolen goods, in which Jefferson said he always believed "the people of this nation should manufacture all the fabrics that their exigencies demand."[358] Wool manufacture did expand beginning in 1830 and had over two decades of tremendous growth, but it was never able to fully compete with the output of cotton.

By 1832, mechanical processing using waterpower had doubled the production of broadcloth to almost ten yards per twelve-hour day per broad loom, over the four- and one-half yards produced during the same time in 1820.[359] The quality of the wool had not particularly improved, so manufacturers relied instead on the uniformity of the finished product to increase profits. While they did not increase substantially, the process would be important in the future production of army cloth, which the military required to be uniform. In the meantime, production developments and low costs spurred the growth of flocks. One editorial in the *Maine Farmer* called for more sheep to be raised "upon lands that must otherwise be nearly if not wholly useless" because sheep "give us both food and shelter."[360] New Englanders were at the forefront

[358] "Variety," *Virginia Free Press and Farmer's Repository*, July 21, 1830, 3.

[359] Elizabeth Hitz, "A Technical and Business Revolution," 220.

[360] "Sheep Husbandry," *Maine Farmer and Journal of the Useful Arts* 1, no. 34 (Sept. 7, 1833), https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.tcu.edu/docview/135690241/6D5205F949934B31PQ/14?accountid=7090.

of the sheep industry in the early nineteenth century, with sixty percent of all sheep being located there or the Middle Atlantic States.[361] Their flocks were large and close to factories, cutting down on transportation costs, but this did not last. Westward expansion carried sheep to newer lands, allowing numbers to increase. Western towns grew to cities, allowing for better transportation systems to send cheaper wool eastwards. Eastern farmers, unable to obtain as much new land as was available in western states, decreased their flocks and moved on to more profitable ventures to cater to growing urban centers.[362] This moved raw material further from most of the production centers of the East, but also allowed the development of some manufactories in western states.

By the start of 1861, wool had experienced a decade of erratic growth and decline but ended with two years of increased production on the eve of the Civil War. The 1859 clip produced 45,858 bales, while the 1860 clip produced 48,974 bales, but even these increased numbers did not satisfy domestic requirements, as manufacturers imported 36,708 and 30,160 bales, respectively, in those years.[363] Most of the wool used by the army was domestically produced, as the military required a coarser wool, even for clothing, but the army still did not need the same large amounts of woollike it did once the war began. The army actually used a combination of wool and cotton goods, a measure that looked to the interests of different sections of the nation, but which was also practical. Wool has greater insulation properties, making it ideal for colder conditions, and it naturally pulls moisture away from the body. Cotton, on the

[361] L. G. Connor, "A Brief History of the Sheep Industry in the United States," 112.

[362] See L. G. Connor, "A Brief History of the Sheep Industry in the United States," Arthur Harrison Cole, *The American Wool Manufacture, Vol.* 1, and Harold F. Wilson "The Rise and Decline of the Sheep Industry in Northern New England," *Agricultural History* 9, no. 1 (January 1935).

[363] *Annual Report of the Boston Board of Trade*, vol. 7 (Boston: T. Marvin and Son, 1861), 91.

other hand, provides more air flow through the fibers, giving the wearer more breathability and making for good attire in warm weather. The army used each article for a variety of other purposes as well, including flags, cartridges, tents, and other accoutrements. While this was useful during peace, the Civil War created immediate problems for the army in terms of restructuring its supply chain, and the onset of hostilities came at a time in the year when certain supplies were at their lowest.

The wool clip of 1860 did not grow much from the previous year, mainly due to "late and severe frosts of June," which killed grass and hay-crops in some sections of the country, forcing farmers to use their corn to feed animals and leading to smaller herds.[364] On the surface, this does not appear to have been a major obstacle for Union efforts at supplying soldiers in the first months of the war, but one has to consider the exhaustion of the previous year's supply of wool, the time of year when sheep are sheared, and increased efforts by Confederate agents to obtain their own supplies before the war began. Wool is usually clipped in spring, meaning that it did not usually make its way to factories until the summer. The shearing season of 1861 occurred during the middle of a national crisis, when volunteers flocked to the flag, and the states experienced high levels of war fever. Farmers were certainly not exempt from these disruptions, and according to Bell I. Wiley, roughly half of all Union soldiers were farmers.[365] The Union also dealt with the loss of goods from the seceded states, including wool and cotton.

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[364] *Annual Report of the Boston Board of Trade*, vol. 7, 169. There is some evidence that corn is not the best majority feed for sheep, as it does not contain enough protein to be a primary source of nutrition and is more suitable as a supplementary grain. Because of this, the overuse of corn could lead to less wool per head and smaller lambs, which would affect future clips. See R. M. Jordan, "RP367 Strategies for Feeding the Ewe Flock," *Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension* (1990), https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2331&context=extensionhist.

[365] Bell Irvin Wiley, *The Life of Billy Yank*, 304.

According to the Boston Board of Trade, the estimated loss of wool from these areas was 8,597,805 pounds.[366] This was in addition to the loss of cotton generally, which affected the public more than the military, but its loss meant that wool had to make up the difference. The amount of cotton used by manufacturers in the United States in 1860 was 422,704,975 pounds, but the nation also exported more than 1.76 billion pounds of cotton.[367] The war disrupted these numbers and forced more raw material to be diverted to military purposes, but because of a general lack of wool on the market and loss of cotton when the war began, both federal and state governments paid higher prices for goods when they went to supply regiments. Costs rose when wool and other goods had to be imported, because the Morrill Tariff of 1861 increased import duties across the board. This was a major initial cause of government expenditure. Having relatively little domestic wool on hand at the start of the war, manufacturers looked abroad for wool and cloth, which cost an additional 25-30% because of tariff rates.[368]

The tariff question has long been a subject of Civil War study, and is often, erroneously, provided as evidence that the war was not about slavery but about economics and northern oppression of southern states. To say that the tariff adversely affected the Union's ability to fight the war in the first year is not an acceptance of that argument; rather it is a statement based upon wool production and importation in the previous years when the nation was at peace. The national government's use of a contracting system meant that private firms had to buy raw

[366] Lorenzo Sabine, *Annual Report of the Boston Board of Trade*, vol. 9 (Boston: Alfred Mudge and Son, 1863), 125. This number assumed only one-third of the clip from Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri, and Virginia was lost to the Union.

[367] *Manufactures of the United States in 1860; Copied from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census, Under the Direction of the Secretary of the Interior* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1865), xv.

[368] "Effect of the Tariff Upon Iron and Woolen Goods," *New York Herald*, February 8, 1861, 2.

material abroad because so little was available locally, leading to import duties and ultimately to higher prices until the shortage could be shored up from the 1861 clip. The cries of fraud and thievery were reactions to the reality of the moment: the timing of the war's onset meant that there was not nearly enough wool on the market, leading to increased importations and taxes, and thus higher prices and even subpar clothing. The importation of foreign goods continued through 1862 but doing so meant that merchants had to deal with the spectre of Confederate raiders hunting and destroying their vessels.

Names such as the C.S.S. *Sumter*, *Alabama*, and *Shenandoah* etched themselves into Civil War history through their abilities as commerce raiders for the Confederacy. Their actions, and those of other raiders, effectively disrupted American commerce, even as the strategy they were born from was almost dead. The 1856 Declaration of Paris, which ended the Crimean War, effectively ended commerce raiding for the major powers of Europe, but the United States did not sign the treaty, desiring to use the strategy during war, if needed. The Confederate Secretary of the Navy, Stephen Mallory, used this strategy as a major part of the Confederacy's drive to win the war. It proved successful, as early victories "provoked a series of increases in marine insurance rates that would continue throughout the war and eventually threaten the whole industry."[369] These financial considerations carried over costs to both imports and exports, making it more expensive to purchase and produce equipment for the army. The *Sumter*, for example, cruised the Atlantic for roughly six months and captured seventeen vessels before it was sold in port at Gibraltar. Captain Raphael Semmes estimated that he destroyed ten times the value of the ship's cost to the Confederacy and "gave such an alarm to neutral and belligerent shippers, that the enemy's carrying-trade began to be paralyzed, and already his ships were being

[369] Craig L. Symonds, *The Civil War at Sea* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 79.

laid up, or sold under neutral flags."[370] He also drew the attention of several Union vessels that left the coastal blockade to give chase, allowing the possibility that more blockade runners or raiders could make it to sea with fewer ships on guard. Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles ordered the U.S.S. *Niagara*, *Powhatan*, *Keystone State*, *Richmond*, *Iroquois*, and *San Jacinto* to search for and destroy the vessel, but to no avail.[371] Other commerce raiders had even greater success.

The *Florida* was another ship that struck fear into American shipping, destroying its being capture by the U.S.S. *Wachusett*.[372] The most famous of these commerce raiders was the C.S.S. *Alabama*, which took a total of sixty-six Union vessels, turning some of them to the purposes of the Confederacy. Altogether, the eight most successful Confederate commerce raiders captured and destroyed 284 merchant ships valued at $25 million, on top of the cargo each one carried.[373] The immediate value of the strategy was absolute, as the raiders cost businesses a great deal of money and forced the Union navy to divert resources to hunting the raiders, but it certainly did not force the type of capitulation envisioned by the Confederate government. The economic disruption certainly had the greater impact and probably drove up costs for the Union military. For example, the *Star of Peace*, returning to Boston from Calcutta with a cargo of saltpetre, became a victim of the *Florida*. Both ship and cargo were destroyed,

[370] Raphael Semmes, *Memoirs of Service Afloat, During the War Between the States* (Baltimore: Kelly, Piet & Co., 1869), 345. Semmes estimated the cost of the *Sumter* to be $28,000.

[371] Spencer C. Tucker, *A Short History of the Civil War at Sea* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2002), 114. This particular search led to the infamous Trent Affair, which almost brought Great Britain into a war with the United States.

[372] Spencer C. Tucker, 120.

[373] Craig L. Symonds, *The Civil War at Sea*, 104.

with the cargo alone appraised at half a million dollars, of which less than a third was insured.[374] Maritime insurance companies in New Bedford lost sixty-five thousand dollars on cargo carried between five ships sunk by the *Alabama* and *Florida* in May 1863.[375] According to George W. Dalzell, insurance rates for shipping fluctuated between one and three percent during 1861, rising as high as nine percent in 1863, the height of commerce raiding, and stayed above six percent until the war ended.[376] In the scenario of the aforementioned *Star of Peace*, a nine percent insurance rate added $45,000 dollars onto the cargo alone. While merchants recovered some losses with the aid of insurance, this simply passed the buck to insurance companies, who passed it onto banks and middlemen that provided capital for underwriting. Banks were willing to take some risks, but too many losses hurt their abilities to finance other parts of the war. Finally, wool producers themselves deserved some blame for the high cost of materials as the war progressed.

"He who adds to the products of the soil, as surely fulfills a patriot's duty as he who takes his life in hand and goes forth to battle."[377] The *Weekly North Iowa Times* spoke directly to the farmers and growers of the western states when it made such a remark, noting war often brought high prices for goods, especially those desired for the military, and urged farmers to plant heavily. The immediate obstacle to this was the loss of farm labor, as many young men, caught

[374] *The Alexandria Gazette*, April 4, 1863, 1.

[375] *The Alexandria Gazette*, June 1, 1863, 4.

[376] George W. Dalzell, *The Flight from the Flag: The Continuing Effect of the Civil War upon the American Carrying Trade* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1940), 239. Importantly, Dalzell links the actions of commerce raiders to the general decline in American shipping in the post-war period, noting that the United States lost half of its tonnage to other nations because fears of the raiders caused ship owners to sell their vessels to foreigners.

[377] *The Weekly North Iowa Times*, May 8, 1861, 1.

up in war fever, paused their regular lives to put on army blue, believing the war would only last a little while. This proved incorrect, and the extended nature of the conflict pulled ever more men to the army, forcing farmers to rely more on mechanical equipment and animal-driven implements than manual labor.[378] Woolgrowers, too, faced difficulties in the first months, as wool prices were very low. To counter this, growers held on to their spring clip longer than they would have normally, waiting until August to put it in the market. At that point, prices began to increase swiftly as manufacturers reacted to Lincoln's call for more volunteers, knowing the government would soon submit orders for a wide variety of goods. Between July and October in Boston, prices for coarse wool used in army goods increased from thirty-two to fifty-cents cents per pound, a price not seen since coarse wool hit fifty cents per pound in 1853.[379] High prices made growers willing to hold on to their wares for greater prices, but it also caused them to increase their flocks in the long term.

An 1863 article by *The Wisconsin Farmer* advocated woolgrowers "buy every sheep that their means would admit of, and to sell none, nor kill any, except the aged" and import the Leicester and Cotswold breeds from Canada.[380] These breeds would improve the American stock by developing a sheep that produced much more wool per head with a better length than what was currently available. There was certainly no shortage of demand from the military, and the domestic market had to make wool available for the general public as well and make up for the loss of cotton products in the northern states. According to the *Genesee Farmer*, the average

[378] R. Douglas Hurt, *Food and Agriculture During the American Civil War* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2016), 11-14.

[379] *Annual Report of the Boston Board of Trade*, vol. 8 (Boston: Alfred Mudge and Son, 1862), 135.

[380] J. W. Hoyt, ed., *The Wisconsin Farmer and Northwest Cultivator* 15, no. 9 (September 1863), 325, https://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/WI/WI-idx?type=article&did=WI.WIFarmerV15.i0013&id=WI.WIFarmerV15&isize=M&q1=wool.

Union soldier needed twenty-five pounds of raw, unmanufactured wool for a full uniform, and the harsh conditions of army life meant that each soldier needed three full outfits per year.[381] If those rates were correct, or even close, the Union army looked to consume upwards of seventy-five million pounds of wool in the next year. Farmers' realizations that the war would continue for a lengthy time sent them scurrying to increase flocks in the free states (excluding the far west states) from just over fifteen million head in 1861 to over thirty-two and a half million in 1866.[382] Prices continued to climb throughout the war, but that caused clothing manufacturers to pay higher prices for the raw materials they needed to make army goods. In the early part of the war, manufacturers resorted to clippings, or "shoddy," to make cloth for clothing because there was a dearth of wool, leading to vociferous claims of fraud on the part of merchants. The unwillingness of farmers to let go of wool at prices they deemed unacceptable measurably increased the cost of the war for the government, but it was the clothing manufacturers that received the brunt of public criticism for prices and the quality of the goods produced.

The Shoddy Question

At the end of fiscal year 1864-65, Quartermaster General Meigs reported to Secretary of War Stanton that the Quartermaster's Department had purchased $91,504,141.04 of clothing, cloth, and other materials. This was an enormous increase from the War Department's pre-war outlay of $16,410,000, of which the Quartermaster's Department received $6.5 million.[383] Such

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[381] "Consumption of Wool for the Army," *The Genesee Farmer: A Monthly Journal Devoted to Agriculture and Horticulture, Domestic and Rural Economy* 23, second series, no. 9 (Rochester, NY: Joseph Harris, 1862), 290, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=wu.89063121453&view.

[382] Paul W. Gates, *Agriculture and the Civil War* (New York: Knopf, 1965), 61.

[383] *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970*, pt. 2 (Washington D.C.: GPO, 1975), 1114, https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/1975/compendia/hist_stats_colonial-1970/hist_stats_colonial-1970p2-chY.pdf; Mark Wilson, *The Business of Civil War*, 38.

drastic increases naturally raised questions about both the quality of the goods provided the government and the amount paid for those articles. Newspapers were some of the first entities to bring these issues to light. It was in response both to the debacle of Ball's Bluff, in which sitting Senator Edward Baker was killed while leading his brigade, as well as to questions about the government's use of funds in the purchase of war materials, that Congress set up the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War in December, 1861. Two of the major points of contention between the committee and the War Department were the issue of the purchase of "shoddy" materials by government officials and the contracting process generally.

Shoddy referred specifically to a type of clothing that used "a wool material spun together from the shredded fibers of recycled wool" and virgin wool, all held together by glue.[384] Though the process itself had been around for a few years, it was not until Benjamin Law of Batley, England developed a machine in 1813 to mass produce the material that it became widely used. The process was to relieve the loss of wool imports due to the Napoleonic Wars, which caused heavy increases on the price of clothing and disproportionately hurt the working poor. It was an economical and even environmental use of scraps that helped keep costs and prices low, especially at a time when proper material was in short supply.[385] By the start of 1860, shoddy had become a staple of the English mercantile market, being actively used in domestic goods as well as exported goods. An 1860 work by Samuel Jubb calculated that the township of Batley produced 5,785 tons of rag-wool in 1858, while England as a whole produced 17,357 tons of rag-

[384] Hanna Rose Shell, "Shoddy heap: a material history between waste and manufacture," *History and Technology* 30, no. 4 (2014), 377.

[385] For more details on the history of shoddy before the Civil War and its development as clothing, see Hanna Rose Shell "Shoddy heap: a material history between waste and manufacture" and *Shoddy: From Devil's Dust to the Renaissance of Rags*, Samuel Jubb's *The History of the Shoddy-trade: Its Rise, Progress, and Present Position*, and N. C. Gee's *Shoddy and Mungo Manufacture: Its Development, Ancillary Processes Methods, and Machinery*.

wool, which equated to £756,000.[386] Shoddy was actively traded and dealt and was one article the Secretary of the Treasury proposed to allow into the United States free of duties at the start of 1855.[387] The material itself was not new, but once the war began, it became a catch-all word for a substandard product.

Because of the lack of proper army clothing in the northern states in 1861 and the need to quickly supply the volunteers, shoddy was an obvious choice to many clothing manufacturers. In addition, the vast majority of these companies had no experience making army materials, and because most people believed the war would be short, the clothing should not need to last too long. One of the earliest complaints about shoddy clothing came from the volunteer regiments from New York, whose uniforms had been contracted out to Brooks Brothers. There were many problems with the contract, not least of which was the company's inside knowledge that a contract would be forthcoming and their failure to share the contract with other companies to get the uniforms out faster. The contract was for an initial 12,000 suits, at $19.50 per suit; upon the agreement, Brooks Brothers bought all available army kersey on the market, but when found short, the company made arrangements with the Military Board to use lower quality cloths to make up the difference.[388] They did not, however, offer to lower the agreed-upon price, even though the material was inferior. A soldier claimed that "A gentle wind would blow a man's coat

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[386] Samuel Jubb, *The History of the Shoddy-trade: Its Rise, Progress, and Present Position* (London: Houlston and Wright, 1860), 21-22, https://books.google.com/books?id=vs4oAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA5&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=4#v=onepage&q&f=false. This number equates roughly to $3.67 million in contemporary dollars and $99.5 million in modern dollars. It should be noted that a little over forty-two percent of this price came from mungo. Shoddy was wool from loosely knit goods, while mungo was made from tightly knit goods. There was an active difference between the two in England, but this does not appear to have translated to the United States, meaning that shoddy was used for bath types of material.

[387] "Reductions of the Tariff," *The Daily Union*, December 13, 1853, 3.

[388] "The Brooks Brothers' Clothing Contract," *New York Herald*, August 18, 1861, 3.

into rags in half a day; while if he ventured out of doors in a stiff breeze his breeches would tear out into long red flags."[389]

Even though every state and local government was dealing with supply deficiencies, this was an appalling case for New Yorkers because a reputable clothing company with a large contract provided New York soldiers with poor quality goods. Brooks Brothers was one of the largest clothiers in the nation, employing thousands of seamstresses and doing almost a million dollars in business each year until the start of the war. If they could not find suitable alternatives to army kersey it was close to impossible for other establishments to do so as well, and because the federal government had its own supply problems, it was unable to help. The Quartermaster General of Ohio conceded this problem in the early part of the war in his annual report to the governor. "Such was the condition of the market and the pressing demand for clothing at the commencement of the war, that no *human exertion* could have supplied the troops of the state with regular army clothing within the time limited for the first enlistment."[390] He continued, arguing, "little time was given for the inspecting the clothing before its issue, and had its real character been known, time could not have been taken to procure a better article."[391] His statement underlines the urgency of the first few months of the war. There were few Regulars available for extensive military action, and the volunteers were only ninety-day soldiers that needed training. Combine that with the belief that the war would be over quickly, and it stood to

[389] "Doesticks On Shoddy," *Wood County Reporter*, October 5, 1861, 1.

[390] Ohio Quartermaster General, *Annual Report of the Quartermaster General*, 1861, Exec. Docs., pt. 1,1861, 594, https://books.google.com/books?id=wIZDAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA587#v=onepage&q&f=false.

[391] Ibid.

reason that any clothing, no matter the quality, would suffice. Besides, shoddy was already a standard part of American clothing by that point.

While the general public may not have known much about shoddy, the national government appeared to, as the Tariff of 1842 prescribed for "rags, of whatever material, waste or shoddy, a quarter of one cent per pound" ad valorem import tax.[392] Shoddy appeared again in the Walker Tariff of 1846 with an ad valorem tax of five percent, so there was clearly a market for the product in the United States.[393] An 1857 advertisement in the *New York Daily Tribune* by Thomas Holt puts fifty thousand pounds of shoddy and mungo up for sale while also saying he was a buyer of wool rags.[394] The *Evansville Daily Journal* sought to educate readers on shoddy and its use when it stated that there were numerous mills in the East that produced the material "which could be retailed here at 75 cents each; a warm and serviceable garment for a laboring man."[395] The paper's statement made it appear as if shoddy was a quality alternative to new wool clothing, which was more expensive. Those persons with less income would benefit from the inclusion of shoddy because it lowered the price of cloth, while allowing quality products to exist in the marketplace. The paper continued, "With careful economy nothing need be lost; the vilest old wollen [sic] rag, by the help of art and machinery is made into most beautiful cloths."[396] While these items in and of themselves do not evince widespread use of shoddy, general

[392] "An Act to provide revenue from imports, and to change and modify existing laws imposing duties on imports, and for other purposes," *Acts and Resolutions Passed at the Second Session of the Twenty-Second Congress of the United States* (Washington D.C.: Madisonian Office, 1842), 189, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.35112203964988&view=1up&seq=85.

[393] "The New Tariff Bill," *New York Herald*, July 7, 1846, 3.

[394] Advertisement, *New York daily Tribune*, April 7, 1867, 2.

[395] "Local and Miscellaneous," *Evansville Daily Journal*, October 26, 1858, 3.

[396] Ibid.

members of the public wrote to inform both newspapers and readers about the benefits of the wool.

In a letter to editors of *The Press and Tribune* in Chicago, signed simply "Manufacturer," the writer said shoddy was manufactured in large quantities throughout New England, New York, and Pennsylvania, and "when well made, it is at least half the price of wool of some qualities for actual service."[397] While the author clearly supported the use of shoddy in clothing manufacture, he also hinted at the problem that when clothing made with the substance was not made well, it would wear out faster. Another defender of shoddy agreed with this assessment, saying "if it is put into the cloth in Reasonable Parportion (sic), it is a Benefit to the cloth…. i can Prove that it will wear Just as well as all wool cloth."[398] He went on to assert that a great deal of clothing held between twenty-five and thirty-five percent of the stuff, which would most likely have shocked the reader.[399] According to Congressman J. S. Morrill of Vermont, the value of rags imported in 1856 to be made into shoddy was $1,239,168 for 38,727,017 pounds, and nearly equaled the $1,665,064 value of the 14,737,393 pounds of wool imports.[400] Morrill was certainly critical of excessive imports and wanted to protect American manufactures, but his mention of shoddy as problematic once again underscored its prevalence across the country as an additive in clothing. If that was the case, why were so few people aware of its use, and how did

[397] "What is Shoddy?", *The Press and Tribune*, May 23, 1859, 2.

[398] "A Defence of Shoddy," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 29, 1861, 3.

[399] Ibid.

[400] The Tariff. Speech of Honorable J. S. Morrill of Vermont," *Vermont Watchman and Daily Journal*, March 13, 1857, 1.

such a backlash against it occur? According to historian Stuart D. Brandes, the reasons stemmed more from political rivalries and disagreements rather than caring about soldiers' well-being.

The editor of the powerful and influential *New York Herald*, James Gordon Bennett, had "a strong dislike for the merchant classes of New York City, for the Republican Party, and for the early war policy of the Lincoln administration."[401] The *Herald* was one of the first to report on the problems with the Brooks Brothers contract and the uniforms it produced, but Bennett was not inclined to simply report the matter. Many of the men involved for the contract, including Governor Edmund D. Morgan, Treasurer Philip Dorsheimer, newsman Thurlow Weed, and George Opdyke, were Republican leaders whom Bennett loathed, and he used this opportunity to attack them. Bennett was known for sensational journalism, and his attacks on what he termed the "shoddy aristocracy" were truly exceptional.[402] When describing the new living arrangements of the shoddy aristocracy, Bennett wrote:

> Shoddy carpets, with brilliant colors and little wool, are being put down. Shoddy mirrors, all gilt frames and flawed glasses, are being hung up, to reflect and be broken by Shoddy's good looks. New suits of shoddy furniture, handsome to look at, but treacherously weak, are preparing for Shoddy to lounge, sit and lie upon. The bay windows are hung with shoddy curtains and crammed with shoddy knick-knacks, so that the aristocracy may sit there, as in a store window, on exhibition, and all the world may see how elegantly Shoddy lives. Shoddy pianos, all case and no music, are brought in. Shoddy portraits, with more paint than likeness, adorn the walls…. Down stairs shoddy cooks, more French than skillful, are getting up shoddy dishes, better to look at than to eat; and shoddy wines, with all their excellence on the labels, are being binned…. In the courtyard, a shoddy

[401] Stuart D. Brandes, *Warhogs: A History of War Profits in America* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 72.

[402] "Social Revolutions – Advent of the Shoddy Aristocracy," *New York Herald*, November 6, 1861, 6. In addition to his attacks, Bennet was the first to use the term "shoddy" to reference contractors specifically, rather than the material. For more on Bennett, his sensationalism, and his newspaper, see James L. Crouthamel and Andrew Jackson "The "New York Herald", and the Development of Newspaper Sensationalism," in *New York History* 54, no. 3, and Douglas Fermer *James Gordon Bennett and the New York Herald: A Study of Editorial Opinion in the Civil War Era, 1854-1867* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 1986).

> coachman, disguising his Hibernian origin in an English livery, is rubbing down the shoddy horses, which prance more than they go.[403]

It was a vindictive and scathing description; one that was bound to be noticed, but it was full of hyperbole due to Bennett's personal animosities rather than extensive facts. He conveniently ignored advertisements for shoddy that were published in his own paper! In addition, the shoddy trade was also partly responsible for something that affected his business directly: the price of paper.

By the start of 1862, there was a severe shortage of paper in the country, leading to prices rising by one hundred percent, and as Bennett was likely the largest buyer of newsprint in the country, this hit him particularly hard. He was not the only one who blamed shoddy merchants. The *Chicago Daily Tribune* blamed speculators in New York and the northeast, while *The Raftman's Journal* blamed the scarcity of cotton rags because "The high rate of exchange shuts out importations, and the country is thus deprived of $2,000,000 worth of foreign rags."[404] Compound that with the loss of cotton imports from southern states and the increasing purchases of paper by the federal government, and it should not have been a surprise that the cost of paper increased. Even more outrageous was the assertion of the *Chicago Post* that "the radical fanatics claim that the rise in paper is all owing to African slavery!"[405] It was certainly a stretch to make it to that point, but most newspapers were not above exaggerating statements in order to make a

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[403] Social Revolutions – The Shoddy Aristocracy Begins Housekeeping," *New York Herald*, November 16, 1861, 6.

[404] "The Paper Question," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 25, 1862, 2; "The Paper Panic," *The Raftman's Journal*, December 10, 1862, 2.

[405] "Rags, Greenbacks, Paper, and Slavery," *Daily State Sentinel*, November 27, 1862, 2. They linked the cost to the loss of rags to the shoddy industry, which arose because imports were limited because Europe would not accept greenbacks for payment. Greenbacks, in turn, were necessary because of the shoddy contractors, who were engaged due to the war, which was "owing to the wrath of heaven; which is owing to the "oppression of God's poor;" which is owing to slavery."

political point. This was the aim of Bennett, and once he began linking shoddy with contractors, Republicans, and the swindling of the public, it soon became synonymous with any product or person deemed to be of a lower quality. This mix of variables created an environment hostile to war contractors in which the *Chicago Daily Tribune* determined, "There are no class of scamps that more richly deserve the hangman's services than the fellows who fatten on contracts filled with shoddy clothing."[406]

Public outcry against shoddy, especially from the press, increased substantially in the summer and fall of 1861. The *New York Herald* reported the situation in Pennsylvania that large portions of the state's supplies were worthless, even though "Pennsylvania has been most liberal with war appropriations. It appears from bills presented that cassinet pants are supplied the volunteers many of which wear out in two days or a week. They cost the State $5, and blouses, made of shoddy, with pants, $10."[407] The *Chicago Daily Tribune* reported that during a skirmish at Hainesville, Virginia, Pennsylvania regiments were unable to ford a river and aid their comrades in an attack because they stripped out of their uniform before fording, for fear of the water disintegrating the material.[408] Such descriptions of the poor quality of shoddy and the apparent swindling of the government caused great excitement and alarm, and when soldiers added their own descriptions to the mix, it created an outrage. It was certainly one thing for businesses and individuals to get rich off government contracts, but to do so at the expense of the volunteers fighting for the preservation of the Union was outrageous. A member of the 3rd Vermont wrote the editor of the *Green Mountain Freeman* with an update from Camp Lyon and

[406] "The Uniform Swindlers," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 25, 1861, 4.

[407] "The Pennsylvania Military Contractors in Trouble," *New York Herald*, Morning Edition, May 24, 1861, 1.

[408] *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 9, 1861, 1.

gave a description of men in the 2nd Vermont, a sister regiment. He said, "They appear worn and jaded, and their uniforms look about one month worse than ours, faded and stained, with "shoddy" written all too plainly in every rent … damn the contractor in louder words than energetic profanity is capable of."[409] Due to the accusations of newspapers and politicians, the House of Representatives formed the Select Committee on Government Contracts, led by Charles Van Wyck of New York.

There were several major episodes in 1861 that led to investigations by the committee. One of the first cases involved Simon Cameron's friend, Alexander Cummings, who made a variety of expensive and quick purchases in New York. In fact, the War Department provided two million dollars to John Dix, George Opdyke, and Richard M. Blackford of New York, but Cummings was the main disperser of these funds. At one point, Cummings purchased $21,000 worth of linen pantaloons and straw hats because warm weather was on its way.[410] He also bought 280 dozen pints of ale and porter, twenty-three barrels of pickles, boxes of cheese, scotch ale, and boxes of herring and codfish at the national government's expense.[411] Cameron had provided Cummings and Governor Edwin D. Morgan of New York a wide array of power, authorizing them to make "all necessary arrangements for the transportation of troops and munitions of war in aid and assistance to the Army of the United States," but most of these purchases appeared to be frivolous.[412] Alcohol was certainly not allowed in camp, though

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[409] "From the 3rd Vermont Regiment," *Daily Green Mountain Freeman*, August 19, 1861, 2.

[410] Erna Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army*, 342.

[411] John C. Rives, *The Congressional Globe: Containing the Debates and Proceedings of the Second Session of the Thirty-Seventh Congress* (Washington D.C.: Congressional Globe Office, 1862), 308, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=osu.32437011509383&view.

[412] Cameron to Cummings and Morgan, April 23, 1861, *OR* ser. 3, vol. 1, 104, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.49015002001254&view.

soldiers were still able to acquire it one way or another, while the clothing and food were impractical for an army in the field. The purchases, therefore, seemed to be more personal in nature rather than for the military. It did not help that Cummings was also involved in the next major event looked into by the committee, the Hall carbine affair.

Among Cummings's purchases was a lot of 790 Hall's carbines at fifteen dollars per firearm. Though developed in 1819, the carbines were still actively used by the army, but in June 1861, Chief of the Bureau of Ordnance, Brigadier General James Wolfe Ripley, determined them to be obsolete and sold five thousand of them to arms dealer Arthur M. Eastman for $3.50 each.[413] At this point, Eastman sold them to Simon Stevens for $12.50 each, after converting them to percussion-cap weapons. Stevens then sold them to General John C. Frémont, commander of the Union Department of the West, in August for twenty-two dollars each, a very high mark-up, even for weapons that had been modified.[414] A report by the *New York Daily Tribune* said the Ordnance Bureau had not given permission for the purchase and felt it was overpriced, especially since the bureau sold them two months earlier, and that Frémont was paying too much for goods generally without following army protocols for contracting.[415] It was a fair criticism, as Frémont was hastily purchasing a wide variety of military goods, without announcing contracts. It brought him into conflict with one of his colonels, Frank P. Blair of the powerful Blair family, who expected contracts to go to his allies in St. Louis. Instead, Frémont looked to others that he knew from California, leading Blair to accuse him of surrounding

[413] The lot purchased by Cummings ended up being part of the 5,000 sold to Eastman.

[414] Eastman converted them to percussion cap for roughly $.75 to $1 each, while Stevens bored them out to .58 caliber for roughly the same price. The appraised market value of the carbine after such a modification was $17.50.

[415] "Gen. Fremont's Purchases," *New York Daily Tribune*, September 26, 1861, 5.

himself "with a swarm of peculators from California" and thinking "too much of making contracts for their enrichment, and too little of taking active measures for the defence of Missouri."[416]

Consternation had been growing with Frémont for several months, as some Republican politicians and members of the public blamed him for the death of General Nathaniel Lyons at the Battle of Wilson's Creek. He also drew the ire of Democrats for proclaiming all slaves in his department belonging to Confederates were henceforth free. The issue of excessive expenditures was simply another of a growing list of problems a wide variety of people had with Frémont, but it was also an issue with the government quartermaster. Major Justus McKinstry, the army quartermaster in St. Louis, spent more than $800,000 at the firm of Child, Pratt, & Fox, in an attempt to bring in supplies for the army, without predetermining a set price for goods and services.[417] St. Louis, though a hotbed of secession, was still on the edges of the war and received less attention and fewer supplies than other areas of more concern. Because of this, McKinstry had to rely on what was available. At the same time, Frémont pressed him for more goods, even writing Postmaster General Montgomery Blair in late July to urgently forward McKinstry's requested funds and multiplying them "by three to meet urgent demands of service here."[418] Frémont understood the importance of the state but too often made unreasonable requisitions from McKinstry, even asking for 500 sets of cavalry equipage the next day and outfits and equipment for twenty-seven regiments of infantry within two weeks.[419] It was no

[416] "The Fremont Difficulty," *The New York Herald*, September 19, 1861, 1.

[417] Risch, 343.

[418] Frémont to Blair, July 28, 1861, *OR* ser. 1, vol. 3, 410.

[419] Stuart D. Brandes, *Warhogs*, 82.

wonder that McKinstry simply bought what he could at any price. The uproar over Frémont's expenditures soon cost him his position, and while he did pay more for goods than market value, it was not inherently wasteful. He was attempting to meet the exigencies of the emergency.[420]

The major crux of the argument used by McKinstry was that middlemen were the only ones willing to risk available capital in order to meet the needs of the army in St. Louis. He stated middlemen "invested their money or credit in providing the Government with these things when the latter had very little of money or credit to spend in St. Louis. It is fortunate that the government found "middlemen" – capitalists – who could wait for payment."[421] This undercut the political assumptions about the way the war should be supplied, causing rifts between politicians and professional officers. McKinstry, like most of the other depot commanders, had been in the army at least a decade, had experience in the war with Mexico, and knew the urgency of getting equipment to an army on time. It was a point that non-military observers failed to understand, seeing only the failures to contract directly with producers. Similar arguments were made by Colonel James Belger, quartermaster at the Baltimore depot, when a congressional commission censured him.

Led by Senator James A. Grimes of Iowa, the committee investigated mismanagement and profiteering involved in transporting men and equipment on ships, and Belger had purportedly failed to sufficiently advertise and deal directly with ship owners, referring everyone to broker Amasa C. Hall, who collected upwards of forty-five thousand dollars in commissions

[420] Instead of Frémont taking most of the blame, his political connections and the popularity of his anti-slavery stance helped him simply move to another command. McKinstry on the other hand, took the majority of the blame; he was court-martialed and drummed out of the army. Congressman Van Wyck of the Contracts Committee called him "the high priest at this festival of robbery." *The Congressional Globe: Containing the Debates and Proceedings of the Second Session of the Thirty-Seventh Congress*, 714.

[421] Justus McKinstry, *Vindication of Brig. Gen. J. McKinstry* (St. Louis, 1862), 20, https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/moa/adg8880.0001.001/3?page=root;size=100;view=image.

from military charters.[422] This was a large sum for a broker who, to the eyes of many outsiders, actually did nothing, but according to Hall, his service saved the government undue expense. He acted as agent for owners of vessels who lived in "six or seven different states," supplying the vessels with "ship stores, ropes, anchors, and necessary material."[423] Instead of the government needing to negotiate with multiple owners over prices, and then the owners having to negotiate the purchase of stores and equipment, the government negotiated with one single broker who was responsible for all the supply issues. This allowed Hall to make larger purchases in bulk at one given time, as opposed to the many smaller purchases by many owners, who received and outfitted their ships at varying periods. It was these sorts of deals that kept the Union military in motion and allowed it to move and react quickly to the demands of the moment. The middlemen, according to Belger, were the real producers of the Union's military power because they were willing and able to take the necessary financial risks for the uncertain possibility of profit. In his defense, Belger asserted to the judge that "Without such men this Republic could not carry on this war for a day."[424] Unfortunately for Belger and McKinstry, most government officials did not see it that way, and both were dishonorably discharged.

"The shoddy contractor feels that his day is over; the speculator in mules, in stores, in army clothing, in cotton, in everything peculative and speculative, are beginning to show elongated countenances to the public. The day is at hand when the people will demand a thorough investigation of all departments of the Government, a rigid overhauling of all accounts,

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[422] "Employment of Transport Vessels," Senate Report 84, 37th Congress, 3rd session, ser. 1151, 1-59, 152, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.b3984876&view.

[423] Ibid, 59.

[424] Mark Wilson, *The Business of Civil War,* 172.

an inventory of the profits of the gentlemen who have been denouncing the Democracy as "traitors" for keeping a watchful eye upon them in their speculative raids."[425] The work of Congress investigating possible fraud aided in eliminating the majority that occurred, but it led to distrust between professional military men and public leaders. In addition, while there certainly were merchants and companies who defrauded the government, there is little evidence to suggest it was as widespread as the works of Fred Shannon and A. Howard Meneely claimed. Accusations of shoddy manufacturing reeked of politics by other means, and the oft-despised middleman took on the burdens of financing clothing and equipment at personal expense, in the hopes of future profit. The pre-war ideal of the virtuous manufacturer supplying the needs of the citizen soldier gave way under the burdens of the vast needs of the military; and yet the contracting system remained, changed somewhat, but it was the old practices of professional soldiers that laid the foundation for its success.

[425] "Long Faces," *Holmes County Farmer*, May 11, 1865, 2.

Chapter 5: "They Have Ceased to Be Regarded as Novelties"

Writing after the Civil War, Charles J. Stillé said, "The power of the public opinion of a free people in controlling the military policy of a country has been remarked in other nations and in former wars."[426] The Civil War was no different, as myriad civilian leaders and the general populace attempted to steer the course of the general government and the military in certain directions, leading to greater interaction among these groups. Because of this and the nature of the war, the ideological climate of the time put a premium on obedience and obligation rather than engagement in civic life, and this was true across all lines of race, class, and gender.[427] Much of the decentralized nature of everyday life, for most northerners, became subsumed under a centralized vision that sacrificed these for the sake of the war and the national government. The national government and its war policies became more involved in daily life, and the effects were felt a great deal by women and African Americans as the roles they played in the war became more centralized as well.

According to historian Nina Silber, the war "brought women into a new relationship with a broad spectrum of economic, political, and even military activity. It also raised new questions about women's traditionally subordinate roles in society."[428] This was especially true as women headed up the large procurement and distribution efforts of the United States Sanitary Commission and became more involved in military hospitals. The traditional notion of "republican motherhood," cultivated since the American Revolution, relied on women

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[426] Charles J. Stillé, *History of the United States Sanitary Commission, Being the General Report of its Work During the War of the Rebellion* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1866), 18.

[427] Nina Silber, *Daughters of the Union: Northern Women Fight the Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 11.

[428] Nina Silber, *Daughters of the Union,* 9.

supporting the polity through familial relationships, but with the expanded nature of the Civil War, this became impossible, leading women to support men in the military as a whole. There was a tension between what individual soldiers asked of women and what the federal government asked of them, but it was still rooted in a supporting role. The growth of the ready-made clothing industry made it possible for the federal government to use private industry as its main supplier, but it also undercut women's role as clothing suppliers for soldiers. At the same time, women were a driving force in the creation and maintenance of the "brass manhood" developed during the war.

According to historian Sarah Weicksel, the "most public performance and expression of clothing's power took the form of a manhood that was created by and expressed through military uniforms, brass buttons and gold braid."[429] The spit and polish of this brass manhood dominated the early months of the war, when neither side had any inkling of the bloody toll the war would take on the nation. Clothing was symbolic; a properly equipped soldier exemplified the care of government authorities, be they local, state, or federal, to look after the men who patriotically volunteered to fight for the country. This brass manhood also managed to define manhood and womanhood in the context of the war, with men and women providing critical support in their gendered roles for the war itself. Women were critical in working in manufactories that made clothing and other war equipment, and others spun and knit clothing to send to family members fighting at the front. Yet even as the war attempted to solidify these gendered roles, women found ways to subvert them, acting as contractors for the War Department, disguising themselves as men to join the army, and taking part in the dangerous spy profession. Clothing served as a vehicle for women to involve themselves in the wider war, but it also served as a foil to

[429] Sarah Weicksel, 31.

traditional notions of womanhood, as the federal government took over the roles of providing clothing, a job normally performed by women.

Women in the War

Part of the underpinnings of brass manhood was the role of women in the process of militarization. While women had been involved indirectly in warfare for hundreds of years, as camp followers and supporters on the home front, the Civil War allowed women to experience warfare in different ways. As more and more men left the workforce for the army, women took their places in industries that supported the war effort, especially the clothing industry. At the same time, even women who did not take jobs still knit and sewed at home in order to send homemade goods to family members in the field, or just donate them to an aid society that distributed them at need. One Connecticut newspaper addressed the women of the town and said, "Our mission is not to spread wide the desolations of war, but to prevent as far as possible its ravages."[430] This was a key component in maintaining a gender difference in the war. Women were more supposed to support clothing efforts directed at sick and wounded men rather than provide large amounts of clothing for men who were actively campaigning. True, smaller articles such as a few pairs of socks or drawers and possibly a shirt would be acceptable, but to provide more clothing that was intimately connected with fighting would cross the line into the realm of more direct participation in fighting. Some of this did occur, and a few women did fight, either by happenstance or by disguising themselves as men and volunteering.

By the start of the Civil War, it was hardly uncommon, historically speaking, for women to be involved in armies in some fashion, but as Elizabeth D. Leonard points out, as European

[430] "Call to the Ladies," *Litchfield Enquirer*, May 30, 1861, 2.

armies became more bureaucratic, professional, and masculine, both the formal and informal roles for woman began to shrink.[431] At the same time, the women who remained in positions within armies saw an increasing militarization of their positions. Historian H. Sinclair Mills, describes the typical garb of a women in the French army in 1809 as "a grey jacket, a canvas shirt, high gaiters, and a hide belt. A knotted handkerchief held on an old felt hat," but by the middle of the century, women's' uniforms had become more sophisticated and resembled the uniforms worn by the men of their units, with some women frequently carrying swords and pistols and receiving formal pay and awards for service.[432] In the war with Mexico, the United States Army did hire laundresses, which they referred to as "camp followers," to help regiments with a variety of daily tasks, and wives sometimes followed their husbands when they joined the army.[433] Still, the number of women involved with the American army was much less than European counterparts, but the Civil War saw American women put on uniforms, some in secret, in much greater numbers.

One of the official positions that placed women close to the front was that of vivandière, or daughter of the regiment. Born out of the French army in the eighteenth century, vivandières became increasingly popular in the nineteenth century and started to wear a standardized version

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[431] Elizabeth D. Leonard, *All the Daring of the Soldier: Women of the Civil War Armies* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999), 100.

[432] H. Sinclair Mills, *The Vivandière: History, Tradition, Uniform, and Service* (Collinswood, NJ: C. W. Historicals, 1988), pp. 1-3.

[433] "Women in the U.S.-Mexican War," *Palo Alto Battlefield*, National Park Service, https://www.nps.gov/paal/learn/historyculture/women-in-mexican-war.htm. See also John M. Belohlavek, *Patriots, Prostitutes, and Spies: Women and the Mexican-American War* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2017) for more on this subject.

of their regiment's uniform as they became ever more involved in the French army.[434] Their use during the Crimean War caught the attention of American military observers, and the position became somewhat romanticized, in the same way that the Zouave did, when it came to the United States. Among the most famous vivandières were Kady Brownell, Anna Etheridge, and Marie Tepe. In the style of their French counterparts, these women wore uniforms designed like those worn by the men of their regiment, but even though this was the case, vivandières still wore a dress or skirt, sometimes over pantaloons. Though these women wore a uniform as an official part of the army, it was important to differentiate them as women—tokeep them safe, as they were not true soldiers, though they sometimes got involved in the fighting. As a member of the 1st Rhode Island, Brownell was armed with a sword and rifle and learned to use both proficiently. At First Manassas she guarded the regimental colors at the front, and after the unit's disbandment, she joined the 5th Rhode Island and went on Ambrose Burnside's North Carolina expedition, where she was wounded.[435] Brownell was not the only woman who put themselves into danger due to the uniforms they wore.

One of the most dangerous occupations in the war was that of a spy. Capture meant certain death for men, but the case was trickier when women were involved. In one instance, a Georgia woman joined a Union Kentucky regiment as a private to smuggle information to Confederate forces, and when initially found out by a comrade, killed the man, which led to her discovery. When discussing the case, one newspaper said, "We hope Jeff. Davis will keep these

[434] Thomas Cardoza, *Intrepid Women: Cantinières and Vivandières of the French Army* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 120-122.

[435] Larry G. Eggleston, *Women in the Civil War: Extraordinary Stories of Soldiers, Spies, Nurses Doctors, Crusader, and Others* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2009), 130-133.

fair and gentle rebelesses at home; we can neither love nor fight them."[436] Their phrasing highlighted the difficult nature of how to deal with women taking active military roles, especially ones as dangerous as spying. Government officials had problems figuring out how to deal with these women, but they eventually settled on imprisonment for varying lengths of time. A list of prisoners at the Capitol Prison in 1862 shows at least three women being held on charges of spying for the Confederacy.[437] Confederate spies such as Rose Greenhow, Belle Boyd, and Antonia Ford garnered a lot of press, but Union spies, such as Elizabeth Van Lew, Harriet Tubman, and Pauline Cushman, were just as effective.

Pauline Cushman began her espionage career in 1862, after her husband died in the Union army. As a member of a theatrical company, she saw an opportunity to help the Union cause when Confederate sympathizers offered her three hundred dollars to propose a toast to Jefferson Davis. She worked with the Union provost to set up the situation that made her appear to be a Confederate sympathizer, allowing her to access vital Confederate information, uncover spies, and pass that information along to Union forces.[438] At one point leading up to Union General William Rosecrans's Tullahoma Campaign, Cushman came under suspicion by several Confederate scouts and tried to make an escape but eventually found herself in front of Confederate General Braxton Bragg. An initial search found no evidence Cushman was a spy until "a secesh woman stole her gaiters, under the inner sole of which were found important

[436] "Romance of War," *Weekly North Iowa Times*, August 28, 1861, 1.

[437] William Rosecrans to Lorenzo Thomas, March 17, 1862, *OR* ser. 2, vol. 2, 270-272.

[438] Larry G. Eggleston, *Women in the Civil War*, 125-127.

documents which clearly proved her to be a spy."[439] This episode illustrates certain differences in women and men understanding spying during the war. It took another woman to think about the spy situation and understand where Cushman might hide documents and secret information on her person. The uncertainty of how to treat female spies that existed early in the war was no more, and Cushman received a death sentence, though she was ill, and received assurance from Bragg that "he should make an example of her, and that he should hang her as soon as she got well enough to be hung decently."[440] Fortunately for Cushman, a Union army offensive captured the city where she was held, but her story illustrates the way female spies used clothing as an essential part of their profession and how the changing nature of the war no longer exempted women from military punishments on the basis of their sex.

Women's fashion of the period was extremely useful in allowing spies and smugglers to transfer important messages and goods across enemy lines. Large hoop skirts had extra pockets sewn inside to carry money and other goods, and elaborate hairdos and "reticules," cloth bags that held necessities such as mirrors and perfume, hid secret documents.[441] Subterfuge put women in danger in other forms. For example, Confederate spy Rose O'Neal Greenhow drowned after the boat rowing her to shore overturned in the surf, after her blockade runner ran aground, due to having two thousand dollars in gold wrapped around her waist under her dress.[442] Women's clothing, mixed with the morals of the period, allowed women more freedom

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[439] "A Thrilling Narrative: Miss Maj. Pauline Cushman, Federal Scout and Spy," *Civilian and Telegraph*, June 9, 1864, 1.

[440] Ibid.

[441] Elizabeth D. Leonard, *All the Daring of a Soldier*, 74.

[442] Ishbel Ross, *Rebel Rose: Life of Rose O'Neal Greenhow, Confederate Spy* (New York: Harper and Brothers,1954), 234.

of movement to conceal things and take part in espionage, but it was not long before these morals shifted.

As early as July 1861, newspapers called for some removals of the limitations on what could be done to find out female spies. According to the *New York Herald*, so many pistols had been smuggled into the Confederacy under crinoline that it was time to do away with certain niceties. If a woman, carrying weapons under her dress that were to be used against "our people, blushes at being examined in a private room by another woman, let her blush."[443] Women acting as spies had the effect of bringing more women into a military role as examiners of suspects. The newspaper was willing to have women searched to limit subterfuge, but it was not willing forego all propriety. This did not keep newspapers from making accusations against those it suspected of espionage and actively reporting on the subject. Women of all classes were subject to this, and no number of connections staved off accusations. In one instance, Adjutant General of the Union Army Lorenzo Thomas's family were indicted by a paper, which additionally reported him to be under arrest as well, until further investigation and revealed the suspected spy was a neighbor.[444] Northern-born women who married southerners and came south found their actions elicited even more scrutiny.

Margaret Summer McLean came under suspicion in Richmond, even though she was close friends with the Davis family and had a husband high in the Confederate army, because she was from the North and had a father and brothers in the Union army.[445] It was a complicated web of suspicion, deceit, and anger, and southern newspapers were very ready to punish Union spies.

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[443] "Female Rebels – How to Handle Them," *New York Herald*, July 12, 1861, 3.

[444] "Disloyal Females Arrested," *New York Herald*, January 7, 1862, 1.

[445] Mary Elizabeth Massey, *Bonnet Brigades* (New York: Knopf, 1966), 88.

A Confederate newspaper denounced a Mrs. Allen of Richmond for passing along information to the North by way of blockade runners. "The evidence shows she's an ungrateful wretch, and deserves the severest punishment."[446] Mrs. Allen's great crime was not so much that she was a spy, but that she was northern born. Female spies blurred the lines of nineteenth-century gender norms. They took an active role in military affairs and worked to deceive others to help their respective sides. It is no wonder that the epitaph on Elizabeth Van Lew's grave reads, "She risked everything that is dear to man – friends, fortune, comfort, health, life itself, for the one absorbing desire of her heart – that slavery might be abolished and the Union preserved."[447] The Union women who worked as spies and informants faced all of these consequences by taking on their mantle, and even though many of them worked in secret, other women took to uniforms in a more secretive fashion to fight for their nation.

"The official records show that more than one hundred and fifty female recruits have been discovered in the Union army and made to resume the apparel of their sex."[448] This statement by the *Charles City Intelligencer* appeared in a June 1864 edition and supports the contemporary belief that women were not supposed to be part of military action, but their active involvement in espionage contradicted that belief, only without the wearing of uniforms. While the newspaper noted the number of women who had been found out, it did not expound on the possibility that many other women disguised themselves as men to fight. Because of the nature of war itself, it is difficult to get a firm grip on the number of women who were able to

[446] "A Female Spy," *Western Sentinel*, July 30, 1863, 3.

[447] "Elizabeth Van Lew," http://elizabethlew.weebly.com/biography.html.

[448] *Charles City Intelligencer*, June 9, 1864, 2.

successfully join the army and fight, but estimates suggest anywhere from 400 to 750.[449] Some of that number were not uncovered until long after the war ended, and others died without revealing their secret. In every case, the clothing these women wore concealed who they were and the changes they went through from the domestic sphere into the military sphere.

In one of the first reported instances of a woman being caught in uniform, the *Cincinnati Daily Press* said a woman was caught after her voice raised suspicion after she had joined the army in order to be near her lover.[450] The paper expounded on the story the next day and said the young woman approached the regimental colonel, asking for a transfer to a different company, to be nearer her lover, upon which the colonel outed her and subjected her to an examination that confirmed her sex.[451] Several months later, the same woman found herself outed after joining a Kentucky company that became part of an Ohio regiment.[452] The paper went on to say that the woman was considered to be a good soldier and a good scout, a startling admission by a newspaper on such a delicate topic. Needless to say, the number of women making this decision was not so insignificant as to it being labelled odd or scandalous.

The movement of men to the battlefront and away from the home front removed a great deal of the moral authority from home. This placed women in a difficult situation and as a result, "Northern women often felt a sense of purposelessness and emptiness when their men left for the

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[449] Larry G. Eggleston, *Women in the Civil War*, 2; De Anne Blanton, "Women Soldiers of the Civil War, Part 3," *Prologue* 25, no. 1 (Spring, 1993), https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1993/spring/women-in-the-civil-war-3.html. The number of suspected women has fluctuated over the years, but Blanton's number of 750 is generally accepted.

[450] "A Female Soldier," *Cincinnati Daily Press*, May 13, 1861, 3.

[451] Steve, "Camp Correspondence: Special Letters from Camp Dennison," *Cincinnati Daily Press*, May 14, 1861, 3.

[452] "Local Matters," *The Ohio Statesman*, August 7, 1861, 3.

war."[453] The traditional gender dynamic of the home gave way to the needs of the war, leading some women to question their traditional roles in the household. Since they could no longer provide a moral voice for their men and had to take over many of the responsibilities the men left behind, some women took to following their loved ones. Most of these had to stay in camp and were related to officers, but a few, as in the previous woman in the Ohio regiment, disguised themselves as soldiers. Annie Lillybridge of Detroit joined a Michigan regiment in order to follow a Lieutenant W. that she became acquainted with, where she "managed to keep her secret from all," taking part in all the regiment's hardships and the Battle of Pea Ridge. She received a wound on picket dutythat ended her military career by putting her in the hospital, where her sex was discovered by the surgeon. "She still clings to the lieutenant, and says she must be near him if he falls, or is taken down sick; that where he goes she will go; and when he dies she will end her life by her own hand.[454] Annie was a little more extreme than most cases, but she was certainly a determined individual who held strongly to her love of the lieutenant. Most other women who disguised themselves simply wanted to fight for the Union and not be expected to express their loyalty to the nation through domestic means.

Many reports about women disguising themselves are sketchy at best, and of the two published memoirs that came out after the war, only Sarah Emma E. Edmonds' account can be confirmed as substantially true.[455] In addition, newspapers did not always publish the names of women who were caught, and it is probable that many who were caught gave aliases. In one

[453] Nina Silber, *Daughters of the Union*, 91.

[454] "A Female Soldier of the Twenty-first Michigan: What Love Will Drive a Woman To," *The Weekly Pioneer and Democrat*, May 29, 1863, 1.

[455] Lauren Cook Burgess, ed., *An Uncommon Soldier: The Civil War Letters of Sarah Rosetta Wakeman, Alias Private Lyons Wakeman 153rd Regiment, New York State Volunteers* (Pasadena, MD: The Minerva Center, 1994), 7.

report in the *Gallipolis Journal*, a woman in the ranks was known as "Frank Martin" and would not give her true identity, even when pressed by the paper.[456] Doing so could have had very real social repercussions for that woman or her family, something that women took into account. One sad story of a woman simply known as Private Charley illustrates this problem. Enlisting with the 14th Iowa in November 1861, Charley fought in several engagements and was even a prisoner for a time before being discovered in April 1863. Her company captain bustled her into his quarters to keep a scene from happening, but soldiers throughout the camp began gathering to see her. Fearing the embarrassment and eventual discharge, she took the captain's pistol, stepped outside in front of the other men, and shot herself in the heart.[457] This was an extraordinary episode but highlights what might occur if women were discovered, a possibility that grew each day they were in the ranks.

Contrary to what might be believed, it was in fact somewhat easy for women to hide themselves in military units, at least for a little while, as several facets of army life allowed for this. So much of the clothing the army received was baggy and loose-fitting, and the lack of cleanliness that often existed in camp meant that women did not have to clean clothes or themselves very often. The other thing that allowed women to make their way into uniform was the lack of full medical examinations given to recruits when they enlisted. To pass a recruit, army regulations required an enlistee strip and have a doctor "see that he has free use of all his limbs; that his chest is ample; that his hearing, vision, and speech are perfect; that he has no

[456] "A Female Soldier," *Gallipolis Journal*, May 7, 1863, 2.

[457] Larry G. Eggleston, *Women in the Civil War*, 75-76.

tumors, or ulcerated or cicatrized legs," along with a variety of other conditions.[458] The government's desperate need for soldiers meant that these regulations were rarely followed, and the lack of medical examiners generally meant staff were overworked. The description given by Leander Stillwell of his examination was a good example of what the process ultimately looked like. A doctor named Leonidas Clemmons performed the inspection, and Stillwell said, "He requested me to stand up straight, then gave me two or three little sort of "love taps" on the chest, turned me round, ran his hands over my shoulders, back, and limbs, laughing and talking all the time, then whirled me to the front" and pronounced him a perfect specimen for service.[459] With such practices being the standard, it would have been easy for a woman to make it into camp. Once there, the monotony of camp life took over and unless fellow soldiers closely scrutinized them, female soldiers were difficult to pick out.

As Colonel O'Meara of the 90th Illinois was making rounds one day, he observed a soldier that appeared to be younger than the enlistment age and began questioning him, eventually demanding the soldier remove his clothes. Before fully doing so, the soldier declared "I am a woman!" and was arrested and discharged.[460] In another episode, Captain Ira B. Gardner of the 14th Maine recalled enrolling a soldier who served for two years before he noticed she was actually a woman. He said, "I did not learn of her sex until the close of the war. If I had been

[458] United States War Department, *Revised United States Army regulations of 1861, with an appendix containing the changed and laws affecting Army regulations and Articles of war to June 25, 1863* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1863), 313.

[459] Leander Stillwell, *The Story of a Common Soldier of Army Life in the Civil War, 1861-1865* (Erie, KS: Press of the Erie Record, 1917), 14, https://www.loc.gov/resource/dcmsiabooks.storyofcommonsol00stil_0/?sp=9.

[460] "The Romance of Camp Life: A Female Daughter, The Irish Legion Finds a Daughter," *The Weekly Pioneer and Democrat*, October 10, 1862, 9.

anything but a boy, I should probably have seen from her form that she was a female."[461] Because Victorian gender identification linked attire to physical characteristics, Union soldiers had no reason to believe any of their comrades were women since norms dictated that women did not wear pants. In fact, it was much more likely that women recognized one another than men did. Women knew how to spot one another and would even approach each other in confidence. Mary Cook of the 2nd Kentucky cavalry knew of two females in another Kentucky regiment, and one of these had been elected a lieutenant.[462] Another woman named Nellie Williams, of the 2nd Iowa, had served in the regiment for several months before being found out, and she told authorities several "other boys" had also joined the regiment in the time she had been there.[463] Furthering the ability of women to hide was the very large number of young men and underage boys who joined the army.

In his work on vital statistics of over one million Union soldiers, Benjamin A. Gould found that 10,233 volunteers in his study were under eighteen at the time of their enlistment, with 127 being age 13.[464] Though these numbers appear low, when put into the context of the entire army, younger, beardless boys would not have been unusual in any regiment, diverting suspicion from women who joined. The youthful appearance of regiments wore off after several weeks of training and drill, as the forty to fifty pounds of material soldiers carried treated men and women the same. Some female enlistees were that young as well. Lizzie Compton of the 11th

[461] Lauren Cook Burgess, ed., *An Uncommon Soldier*, 3.

[462] "More Female Soldiers," *Hillsdale Standard*, February 25, 1862, 2.

[463] "A Romantic Girl," *Muscatine Weekly Journal*, August 30, 1861, 4.

[464] Benjamin A. Gould, *Investigations in the Military and Anthropological Statistics of American Soldiers* (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1869), 38; Research by Bell I. Wiley into ninety-six different Union regiments revealed comparable numbers, with 1.6 percent of his subjects being under age eighteen. Bell I. Wiley, *The Life of Billy Yank*, 299.

Kentucky cavalry was only sixteen when she was discovered. She had been discovered a total of seven or eight times and "served a term of eighteen months in the army, and, were it not that she dreads the annoyance of being detected and mustered out," she would join the army again.[465] Like many of her fellow women, Lizzie was determined to be a soldier and devoted to the nation, but some saw enlisting as an opportunity for a better life and a chance of adventure.

When Sarah Emma Edmonds was a teenager, she ran away from the marriage arranged by her father. "Cutting her curly hair and donning male clothing, she adopted the identity of Franklin Thompson" and began living as man.[466] Sarah's life before running away was defined by the gender mores of the period, and it did not help that she was the youngest of six children. She longed for the freedom associated with masculinity, which included men's clothing. A similar situation faced Sarah Rosetta Wakeman who joined the 153rd New York. As the eldest of eight children, and with a father who had taken on a considerable amount of debt, Sarah's work as a domestic was not near enough financial help for the family, so she disguised herself as a man and went to work on a coal barge. While in this position, she enlisted and received a bounty of $152 and sent it to her family saying, "All the money I send you I want you should spend it for the family."[467] The woman found by Colonel O'Meara as part of the 90th Illinois attested she "had long been accustomed to wearing the apparel of the male sex, because her father, who was poor, was unable to furnish herself and her sisters with such clothing" as was suitable for

[465] "Another Female Soldier," *Chicago Tribune*, December 25, 1863, 3.

[466] Richard Hall, *Patriots in Disguise: Women Warriors of the Civil War* (New York: Paragon House, 1993), 76.

[467] Lauren Cook Burgess, ed., *An Uncommon Soldier*, 18.

women.[468] Pressure from family finances or to conform to gender norms played a significant part in the reasoning of some female soldiers. As the war drug on, it became more common for women to be found in the ranks, and newspapers were quick to point out this fact.

"There seems to be a strong *penchant* on the part of the 'patriotic women of America,' as Artemus Ward or Orpheus C. Kerr would say, to get into soldier clothes."[469] The newspaper was certainly correct in this assessment, but it was not so much that women were enlisting or attempting to enlist as newspapers were actively reporting on every instance of women in the ranks. They were also responsible for perpetuating a wide array of opinions to the public in order to push public opinion one way or another on the matter. A large of number of reports indicated that women joined to follow a man. One report of a failed enlistment said the woman did so to join a "Johnny who has gone for a sol-gi-er."[470] In another example, a provost guard found a woman dressed as a veteran on board the steamer *Missouri* and arrested her. *The Alleghanian* said, "It seems to be the old story, told anew, of how love is more strong than discretion, forcing her to don the apparel of her country to follow him who she loved to the tented field."[471] It was important for these women to be painted as being deceived into joining the army, since it was, of course, impossible for women to want to join the army of her own volition. This is not to say all women joined of their own volition, but these stories reinforced the gender norms of the period.

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[468] "The Romance of Camp Life: A Female Daughter, The Irish Legion Finds a Daughter," *The Weekly Pioneer and Democrat*, October 10, 1862, 9.

[469] "Female Soldiers," *Daily Evansville Journal*, January 30, 1863, 2.

[470] "A Recruit that Wouldn't Do," *Cleveland Morning Leader*, July 26, 1862, 3.

[471] "A Female Veteran," *The Alleghanian*, June 2, 1864, 1.

In other instances, newspapers made women out to be insane or crazy if they joined the army. The *Cleveland Morning Leader* told the story of a young woman killed at the Battle of Lookout Mountain, who had enlisted in a Michigan regiment. Prior to this, the paper reported she believed herself a "second and modern Joan of Arc, called by Providence to lead our armies to certain victory in this contest," after which a physician ordered her confinement to eliminate her mania.[472] The portrayal of this woman as insane was important to maintain gender delineations, emphasizing that it was not the proper place for sane women to join the army. Newspapers were responsible for setting the tone for perceptions of soldiers and women who also served, and there was a wide variety of opinions expressed in print. Even when a newspaper praised a woman's service it was in the light of her relationship with men.

The Iowa Transcript said, "We almost daily read accounts of the valorous deeds of females who have fought in the ranks for months without their sex being divulged."[473] In most cases, the paper went on to say, there had "been connected with their history some love romance that had an important bearing upon their action."[474] There were certainly examples of women following men into the army for love, such as Frances Day, Mary Owen Jenkins, and Elizabeth A. Niles. In Frances's case, she followed a man she loved into a Pennsylvania regiment, and when he died after several weeks with the regiment, she deserted, only to later join another regiment.[475] So she enlisted again for reasons besides love?Mary initially enlisted out of love, to

[472] "A Romantic Incident – Strange Insanity – A Female Soldier – Her Sad History," *Cleveland Morning Leader*, February 25, 1864, 1.

[473] "A Female Soldier," *The Iowa Transcript*, March 17, 1864, 1.

[474] Ibid.

[475] Larry G. Eggleston, *Women in the Civil War*, 77-78.

join her husband, but even after he was killed, she fought for another eighteen months, earning the praise of a medical officer who said, "A more faithful soldier never shouldered a musket."[476] Elizabeth Niles similarly followed her husband into a New Jersey regiment and fought with them for three years before mustering out without being discovered.[477] The reasoning of both Frances and Mary transformed from centering on a man to a determination to fight for the Union cause and victory. The uniforms these women put on were part of that transformation, just as it was for the men who fought.

In James McPherson's groundbreaking *For Cause and Comrades,* he delved into the reasons men, on both sides, fought in the Civil War, including religious and nationalistic motives, comradeship, and the desire to rid the nation of slavery. As men spent more and more time in the army, their motives often shifted. The same reasons, and same shifts occurred for women as well, as it did for Frances and Mary. Another woman, Henrietta Spencer, enlisted simply to exact revenge on Confederates for the deaths of her father and brother in battle.[478] Women enlistees were not immune from the same reasonings of their male counterparts, and it was their experiences in the uniform that swayed their motives. The army uniform was more than just clothing. It was the embodiment of military service to the state, one of the obligations of citizenship. The rupture of home life for women allowed for them to take part, putting on the blue uniform and fighting for the nation. Women's determination to continue enlisting and

[476] Ibid, 76-77.

[477] "Woman Who Fought in Civil War Beside Hubby Dies, Aged Ninety-two," *Washington Times,* October 4, 1920, 15.

[478] Ibid, 71-72.

fighting was a continuing topic of discussion of newspapers, and even though they reported positively on some occasions, they mostly held a low opinion of women joining the military.

The *Daily Ohio Statesman* did not hide its opinions of women serving when it said, "The fair sex have thus far proved failures as soldiers, and it is hoped the fact has become well enough known to prevent such unpleasant discoveries in the future."[479] The newspaper did not mince words in this assessment, reflecting the opinions of a large majority of the nation that soldiering was beyond the capabilities of a woman. Female soldiers was beyond the scope of acceptable gender norms . Cities even had ordinances against women wearing men's clothing, as the *Daily Ohio Statesman* reported when a Major Sykes found a woman in the camp barracks in Columbus.[480] He handed her over to the police, who did not know what to do with her either. The criticism leveled by the *Statesman* had little to do with the actual performance of female soldiers.

The evidence provided by male soldiers, and even newspapers themselves, contradict the notion that women were poor soldiers. Most of the women outed had served for some length of time in a regiment, meaning they had undergone the same hardships as the male soldiers, drilling, marching, carrying fifty pounds worth of gear, and indeed fighting. Marian McKenzie served for three years in multiple regiments, always reenlisting soon after her sex was discovered, and she was kicked out of the army.[481] Marian was a veteran with a great deal of experience, the same as men who served similar amounts of time, but she was never treated with the same respect by the authorities. In Pauline Cushman's case, it took the intervention of

[479] "Female Soldiers," *Daily Ohio Statesman*, April 6, 1864, 3.

[480] "A Female Soldier," *Daily Ohio Statesman*, March 25, 1864, 3.

[481] Larry G. Eggleston, *Women in the Civil War*, 67-68.

President Lincoln to get her the back pay she was owed for serving two years in an Indiana regiment after the paymaster said he had no authority to pay a woman.[482] Women were even subject to the same punishments as any other soldier when captured by the enemy. Several women found themselves residents of the notorious Andersonville Prison, one of whom, Janie Hunt, had a baby while there, and an unknown woman died in captivity, having not had her secret discovered until afterward.[483] The dangers of the soldiering life were not lost on the women who enlisted, but the dangers were worth it. For some, the freedoms associated with living as a man were ends to themselves, but others believed in the cause of Union and serving in a military capacity was how they wanted to support the cause. The donning of army clothing transformed women into active military participants, and while there were several hundred of these women, they were dwarfed by those women who served the army and individual soldiers in other capacities.

Women as Clothing Suppliers

"Women of Fairfield! You are called upon to contribute your mite toward the preservation of the Union … by contributions of blankets, socks, drawers and undershirts and other comforts to our suffering soldiers in the field."[484] By far the largest portion of women's service during the Civil War centered on the production of war material, especially clothing, either by working in a factory that produced that material or making it privately at home to send to soldiers at the front. Local aid societies sprung up quickly to begin supporting the first wave of volunteers and their families. These small efforts grew exponentially as the war went on, and

[482] *The Alexandria Gazette*, September 13, 1864, 1.

[483] Larry G. Eggleston, *Women in the Civil War*, 6-9, 10-11.

[484] "To the Patriotic Women of Fairfield County," *The Lancaster Gazette*, October 17, 1861, 3.

with the large number of soldiers continuing to stream into the ranks, it became more difficult to get clothing to the front. Smaller societies started to link themselves to larger networks, eventually developing into a nationwide system with women being responsible for thousands of dollars in goods and money to dole out. The major recipients of these goods were soldiers in hospitals, but large portions still made it to other men. Though national and state governments tried their best to fully equip troops, it was a difficult task, especially early in the war, and the efforts of women on the home front and those serving closer to armies took some of the pressure away from the military to provide everything for soldiers, allowing the War Department to focus more resources on winning the war.

On February 22, 1865, A. O. Atwood of the 20th Wisconsin wrote a letter to Abraham Lincoln asking, "Can you not have our shirts made a little longer?"[485] It was a very simple request to address to the president, but it highlights both the importance of clothing to men in the field and the struggle of the national government to provide clothing that the men deemed adequate. Shirts were a particular problem, as the army only had one size. The army was not overly concerned with comfort and focused more on ease of procurement. By eliminating extra sizes, the army cut down on the time needed to take measurements and get clothing made. The same was true of all pieces of the uniform issued by the Quartermaster's Department, with pants, jackets, sack coats, and frock coats only coming in four sizes. During times of peace this would have posed no problem to soldiers who had the ability to take clothing to a seamstress or tailor and have it altered to their specifications, but the mass production needed for the Civil War and the continuous movement by armies meant that this became difficult and sometimes impossible.

[485] O. A. Atwood to Abraham Lincoln, Feb. 22, 1865, RG92, "Contracts and Proposals," entry 2210, box 1, Philadelphia National Archives.

According to Harry M. Kieffer, the shirt was "a revelation to most of us both as to size and shape and material. It was so rough, that no living mortal, probably, could wear it, except perhaps one who wished to do penance by wearing a hair shirt."[486]

The combination of poor fitting and ill feeling clothing was difficult for many men to overcome, so sending away for clothing from home or buying something from a sutler or local merchant became the only option. Each of these options cost money and took the power out of the hands of the government when providing clothing. "Daily through the gates of Benton [Barracks]," recalled one Union soldier, "came in regiments of volunteers still clad in citizen's attire; then, casting aside their home-made clothes, they came out on the beautiful grounds arrayed in the royal blue of Uncle Sam."[487] Contrary to this statement, men did not truly give up their civilian clothes, in a very literal sense. They continued to wear those things that were more comfortable to them before they joined the army, only within their newfound military regulations. There was a disconnect between the expectations of the soldiers and what the military bureaucracy provided. This was a feature of the push and pull of centralization versus decentralization that existed throughout the Civil War. Both the creation and development of the United States Sanitary Commission (USSC) and the production of clothing at home by women was a good example of that conflict.

When describing the actions of the USSC in his history of the program, Charles J. Stillé said, "Never has there been an instance of history such as that presented in this country during the late war, in which everything that was accomplished, good or bad, was due to the impulse of

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[486] Harry M. Kieffer, *The Recollections of a Drummer-Boy* (Boston: James R. Osgood & Co., 1883), 40-41.

[487] Charles Wright, *A Corporal's Story: Experiences in the Ranks of the Company C, 81st Ohio Vol. Infantry* (Philadelphia: James Beale, 1887), 7.

popular ideas."[488] The USSC was certainly very popular and appealed to the public at large, but it did not spring up overnight. As we have seen, small groups of women banded together in the first few months of the war to aid in the outfitting of individual units from specific locales. These small groups then grew into local aid societies, formed around aiding select regiments from their state. An advertisement for the formation of one in Keokuk, Iowa stands as an example for how these formed. "The Ladies of the city are requested to meet on Saturday afternoon at 3 o'clock in the Medical College Hall, for the purpose of forming a Volunteer Aid Society."[489] The actions of these societies developed from the social associations women formed during the antebellum period. These ladies met the needs of the moment with gusto, but there was an overall lack of communication, especially to women in smaller towns and more remote areas, leading to the loss of a great deal of what was collected for soldiers.

The lack of coordination threatened to upend the efforts of women almost before they had begun. Some came to the conclusion that "the uprising of the women of the land was in need of information, direction, and guidance."[490] The creation of this organization fell to Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell, at that time most famous for being the first female graduate of a medical school in the United States. She saw this as an opportunity for women to insert themselves into the war and make their own claims for greater involvement in broader society. This, after a meeting in New York City on April 25, a committee announced the formation of the Women's Central Relief Association (WCRA). Here was "a voluntary structure that applied women's political loyalties to their household labors in order to produce cost-free supplies for the army and allowed ordinary

[488] Charles J. Stillé, *History of the United States Sanitary Commission*, 18.

[489] "Volunteer Aid Society," *The Daily Gate City*, May 31, 1861, 3.

[490] Jeanie Attie, *Patriotic Toil*, 39.

women to achieve a national presence in the conflict."[491] If the organization was successful in producing desired outcomes, it would enhance the labor of women in their homes and on a national scale. Unfortunately, the presence of men in high positions on the board of the WCRA led to their wresting of broad control of operations to their will, and Rev. Henry Bellows, Vice President of the board, set out to develop the USSC with the cooperation of the national government in the summer of 1861, noting that he believed the WCRA was an abject failure. The work women had done for decades could no longer be entrusted in their hands because the work focused on the military, a masculine entity, but it took time for the USSC to bring around all of the smaller associations into the fold.

On September 16, the Ladies Aid Society of Keokuk addressed its sister societies across the state. We "invite you to organize in your respective districts and cooperate with us in providing the Iowa volunteers and especially in furnishing their hospitals with such comforts and conveniences" not provided by the government."[492] This effort, led by Annie Wittenmeyer in Iowa, developed from the realization that local societies needed to coordinate their efforts, and she made these overtures without the urging of any national organization. This was an important development because these societies expected that the goods and funds they donated went to Iowa soldiers. Iowa provided a total of sixty-one infantry, cavalry, and artillery regiments during the Civil War, with different ones serving across every theatre of the war. This was not a cumbersome number to deal with, but it did mean that it might be difficult to get specific goods to a specific regiment in a timely manner. But compare those numbers to New York, which provided close to three hundred total regiments. If Iowa's aid societies had difficulty with

[491] Jeanie Attie, *Patriotic Toil*, 52.

[492] "To the Ladies of Town," *The Daily Gate City*, September 16, 1861, 3.

provisioning, New York's aid societies faced an impossible task, and here was an issue that often divided rural and urban women wishing to support the war.

According to Rejean Attie, for rural women "the idea of a large-scale plan and a relationship with a prestigious national center may have offered special appeal," but urban women "accustomed to working in established charity networks appeared to feel the USSC threatened to supplant their own philanthropic power base."[493] This was a return to an older struggle between rural and urban life, where one needed more investment for development and growth while the other wished to sustain itself and its position. This is not to say that the trope held true in every case. Indeed, the example of Iowa shows how it was not. The societies actively ignored the USSC calls to come under their jurisdiction, soliciting donations themselves in the fall of 1861 and determining to retain local control over their philanthropic contributions.[494] Doing so allowed women to know who received their goods, putting a face with the sacrifices they were making to provide for soldiers. In a society where household production was still the dominant economic force, community needs had to be met before doling out surpluses to outsiders. The growth of the Union army meant that it became somewhat amorphous, distilling soldiers down to simply men in blue uniforms. The centralization that took place within the army had a direct effect on the same process when it came to aid societies. Goods that were once meant for locals became national goods meant for the national army, but women were still the leading providers of a wide array of goods for the army.

[493] Rejean Attie, "A Swindling Concern: The United States Sanitary Commission and the Northern Female Public, 1861-1865" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1987), 126.

[494] The situation in Iowa was a special case that saw a back-and-forth fight for control play out over several years. For a very detailed description of the situation in Iowa, see Elizabeth D. Leonard, *Yankee Women*, 51-103.

When the state and federal governments failed to fully provide Union soldiers with clothing and other provisions in the first year of the war, it was women who came to the aid of the men in the field. In Middlebury, Vermont, "one hundred and thirty patriotic women spent the entire day last Sunday in sewing and preparing clothing" for a company from the town.[495] The *Delaware State Journal and Statesman* said, "the patriotic women of Delaware have set the First Delaware Regiment in motion, and too much praise cannot be awarded to them," as the ladies provided clothing when none was forthcoming from the state.[496] Government officials even appealed directly to women, calling on their patriotism and sacrificial natures to make the difference in what goods were lacking. Governor Erastus Fairbanks of Vermont called on his state's women to provide woolen socks "for our own soldiers as far as necessary, and next for the soldiers in our Western armies," while Quartermaster General Meigs pleaded for woolen blankets.[497] The War department had to depend on private charity more than even private industries for support in the first year of the war, undermining the belief that the federal government would provide adequately for soldiers, but they successfully transformed this deficiency into a call for the public to perform their patriotic duty and provide material support for the war.

Providing clothing was a patriotic endeavor, and one of the most patriotic pieces women felt they should provide at the war's outset was havelocks. The havelock was the invention of Sir Henry Havelock of Great Britain for soldiers stationed in India, to keep off the sun and heat .

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[495] "Local Intelligence," *Vermont Phoenix*, April 25, 1861, 2.

[496] Ensign, "From Our Volunteers at Bush River," *Delaware State Journal and Statesman*, June 4, 1861, 2.

[497] "Blankets for the Army! Stockings for the Army! Comforts and Delicates for Wounded Soldiers!" *Lamoille Newsdealer*, October 11, 1861, 2.

When the Civil War began, they became the perfect piece of clothing for women to sew and give to men marching off to fight. There were even associations formed around this particular article. In New York City, several branches of The Ladies Havelock Association provided eleven hundred havelocks for the 7th New York and fourteen hundred for the 69th New York.[498] Support for this measure spread quickly through the public, and newspapers quickly picked up on it. The *Rutland Weekly Herald* published a report supporting the creation of more ladies associations until "all our troops shall be protected from needless exposure and hardship on the scorching plains of the South."[499] The havelocks proved popular with the public because it was easy to sew quickly, added a personal element to soldiers' equipment, and served a practical purpose. Women were taking care of an actual need for the soldiers instead of providing something superfluous, as it made sense that the heat and sun of the south would put many Union men out of commission, and these wonderful accouterments would solve that problem.

Havelocks may have seemed a useful accessory by many on the home front, but this was not the practical reality of life for men in the field. Because it was so large and covered the head and neck, a havelock deprived its wearer of "any air he might otherwise enjoy [and] prompted [its] immediate transfer to the plebian uses of a dishcloth or a coffee-strainer."[500] Clothing crafted with love for the soldiers, in the belief that it was a useful item, was either discarded or turned into a cloth satchel for men to carry around other goods. Havelocks turned out to be impractical, but the organizing that went into their production by women across the country was

[498] "The Havelock Cap-covers," *New York Times*, May 20, 1861, 4.

[499] "Protection of the Troops from Sun-Stroke," *Rutland Weekly Herald*, May 16, 1861, 4.

[500] Sidney B. Brinckerhoff, "Military Headgear in the Southwest, 1846-1890," *Arizoniana* 4, no. 4 (Winter 1963), 9.

the beginning of a private clothing system that operated with the national government to provide for soldiers.

"The Ladies of Delaware County are each requested to knot one pair of woolen socks for our needy soldiers now in the mountains of Md., where the nights are very cold, and they are suffering with cold feet."[501] This direct appeal to women of the county displayed the urgent need of the county's men in an Ohio regiment. Though the war was several months old, the War Department's remained unable to properly supply the nation's soldiers. This was highlighted by the fact that the Ohio volunteers were in Maryland and the paper was asking the women of Ohio to send socks. It would have been much closer to get supplies from Washington D.C. or the Schuylkill Arsenal, if they had been available. The paper went on to say, "Any lady that may wish to send to any particular friend, may do so by sewing a ticket with directions on the socks."[502] Such a system, while thoughtful, was impractical. This was a continuance of the personal nature of clothing that existed before the war, but it was beginning to give way to a pre-made clothing industry. The federal government relied more on the pre-made industry, but the USSC took advantage of the personal industry and created a centralized system that, instead of sending individual items to individual soldiers, pooled resources to send large amounts of goods to regiments, brigades, and even whole armies, but the men who benefitted most from the USSC were the soldiers in hospitals.

Wounded and sick soldiers had terrible times during the Civil War, with more soldiers dying of disease than in battle. Because the Quartermaster's Department was so fixated on supplying men in the field, it did not always provide the proper needs for hospitals. Women and

[501] "Relief for Our Soldiers," *Delaware Gazette*, September 13, 1861, 3.

[502] Ibid.

the USSC filled this void by focusing their efforts in that direction. Normal donations to the commission included typical textiles used in hospitals: "2 pillows, 1 bed tick, 1 quilt, 2 double gown, 2 flannel shirts, 11 morning shirts, 1 woolen wrapper, 1 pair woolen drawers, 16 pillow cases, 2 cotton flannel shirts, 14 towels, 2 pairs cotton socks" and a wide variety of other goods, especially foodstuffs.[503] Writing to Senator Charles Sumner after the war, Alfred J. Bloor estimated that the USSC handled more than fifteen million dollars of supplies, not to mention the monetary donations that came in to support the cause.[504] In addition, the USSC put women in another kind of clothing to serve in the military, that of a nurse.

Leading women such as Dorothea Dix and Elizabeth Blackwell were at the forefront of pushing for women to become nurses during the conflict, a proposal that should not have been problematic since the care of the sick and ill fell within the gender norms of the time. However, most male leaders believed the brutality of warfare made the army no place for women, even in a position they normally occupied. Frederick Law Olmsted, one of the leaders of the USSC, wrote, "even the care of the sick and wounded in war is not a feminine business. It must have a masculine discipline, or as a system, as a sustained and "normal" arrangement, it must have a bad tendency."[505] Olmsted believed the brutality of the war would harm feminine sensibilities and lead to a breakdown of the entire hospital system. He was not far off, but he severely underestimated the determination of women to serve the cause of Union. In her history of

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[503] "List of Contributions of Hospital Stores to the Chicago Sanitary Commission for the Week Ending October 11, 1862," *Chicago Tribune*, October 16, 1862, 4.

[504] Judith Ann Giesberg, *Civil War Sisterhood: The U.S. Sanitary Commission and Women's Politics in Transition* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2000), 84.

[505] Fredrick Law Olmsted to Henry Whitney Bellows, August 16, 1861, in Frederick Law Olmsted, *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted*, ed. Charles E. Beveridge, 5 vols. (Baltimore: 1977-90), vol. 4, *Defending the Union*, ed. Jane Turner Censer (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 148.

wartime service Sophronia Bucklin recalled the first time she saw wounded men coming into the hospital from the front. "A strange sense of suffocation oppressed me," she wrote, "as if the air by which I was surrounded was filled with poisonous vapors, and for a few minutes I doubted my own strength."[506] Even though Sophronia hesitated, she mastered herself and determined to continue becoming a nurse. Instead of women being able to take advantage of their position as arbiters of health and healing, they became subject to testing and the will of the federal government and the USSC. Their work became centralized when they put on a nurse's clothing, a sacrifice they made for the Union.

The final way in which women used clothing to involve themselves in the war was through making it for soldiers, both at home and in manufactories. The inconsistent nature of the Union's supply line early in the war meant that individuals at the front depended on their families to make things for them, engaging in a "domestic supply line."[507] Such supplies were a foundational part of the "brass manhood" developed during the war. A base layer of undergarments, socks, and shirts ended up covered by the centralized layer of becoming a soldier when donning the blue uniform. Women were directly part of this process that made men into soldiers, but they also helped men maintain a sense of individualization and personalization with the garments they sent. Not all of the clothing met the soldiers' satisfaction.

After William Willoughby's wife sent him several shirts, he wrote back saying "the woolen and some of the cotton shirts gave way across the back and at the corners of the wrists

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[506] Sophronia Bucklin, *In Hospital and Camp: A Woman's Record of Thrilling Incidents Among the Wounded in the Late War* (Philadelphia: John E Potter and Co., 1869), 44, https://www.google.com/books/edition/In_hospital_and_camp/Gk0IAAAAQAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1.

[507] LeeAnn Whites, "Forty Shirts and a Wagonload of Wheat: Women, the Domestic Supply Line, and the War on the Western Border," *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 1, no. 1 (March 2011): 56-78.

and neck bands."[508] Willoughby's wife was not a novice at sewing, and neither were most women who sent clothing to the front, but she still had a hard time making the shirts in such a way that they lasted for a lengthy period. Some of this had to do with the lack of suitable raw material, with Willoughby's wife possibly not being able to get quality wool and cotton. The blockade of Confederate ports, threat of Confederate privateers, the needs of the military, and inflation rates affected what was available to her, the same way it affected everyone else on the home front. Even when families could make clothing there was no guarantee the garments would arrive at the front in a timely fashion. When Andrew Bush received a package from home, he was somewhat disappointed because, as he told his wife, "the Socks that you sent to me came to late the weather is to warm for socks. I would bin glad if I had them last winter they would of done me some good. I did not have any socks for better than six months."[509] The mail was inefficient and often did not arrive until months after it had been sent, meaning that food sometimes spoiled and clothing was no longer needed. Efforts of family were appreciated and rarely went unused, but women sometimes resorted to other means to acquire clothing.

Women often worked as the go-between for soldiers and a tailor who already knew their measurements and sizes. This was not always an ideal arrangement because it required a preexisting relationship with a tailor in a community, and even then, a man's dimensions might have changed some while in the army. Tailoring required an extensive knowledge of the body and a good deal of training to develop the skills necessary to take measurements. In a diagram of Genio Scott's 1859 *Cutter's Guide,* there are descriptions on how to properly measure for a

[508] Sarah Weicksel, *Fabric of War,* 29.

[509] Vivian Zollinger, "I Take My Pen in Hand: Civil War Letters from Owen County, Indiana, Soldiers," *Indiana Magazine of History* 93, no. 2 (June 1997), 159.

uniform, and the coat alone takes seven different measurements to obtain the proper proportions.[510] Tailoring was meant to correct disproportionate bodies and make them more uniform, giving a man a clean look. Finding a tailor who could quickly fit a man was not optimal and actually ran somewhat counter to the army's desire to create a unified army. Army clothing, while not always the highest quality, put men on a certain level playing field by providing them the same goods. The individualized nature of the tailoring process undermined the army's efforts. This option was usually only available to middle and upper class men, many of whom were officers. In another case, Vincent Anderson and his brother, soldiers from Indiana, did not care for regulation army shoes, claiming they were too awkward because they were heavy, broad heeled and soled, and sewn. The men had only been used to wearing whatever the shoemaker had made for them, and just before they marched to the front, they "bought us each a pair of cloth shoes and threw away our heavy shoes, thinking cloth shoes would be much lighter to march in," a mistake they soon came to regret.[511] After the first day of marching, the men developed heavy blisters on their feet, which popped the next day, leaving their skin sticking to their wool socks. They then had to march one hundred and fifty miles in such a condition. There was no guarantee that clothing obtained outside of the government system would be better, but for many men it was preferable. Women remained the main source of clothing for a large number of men, especially because they began working in more jobs in the ready-made-clothing industry that provided garments for the army.

[510] Genio C. Scott, *The Cutter's Guide: Being a Series of Systems for Cutting Every Kind of Modern Garment* (New York: 1859), 11.

[511] Vivian Zollinger, "I Take My Pen in Hand," 124-125.

In 1863, two wives of Union soldiers, Mary Morris and Lizbeth Moore, wrote to Secretary of War Edwin Stanton over their frustration for not getting a job at the Schuylkill Arsenal. "i think it is time now that thare whase somping done fore the sufing Solders wifes at home it is some time cince our husbent whare pade off and whe have not some times any thing to eat."[512] The inability of the government to provide the army with steady payment had a heavy impact on those men with families, as attested by these women. The Schuylkill Arsenal was one of the largest employers of women during the war, so it was no surprise the women applied. Prior to the war, the arsenal employed several hundred women for the purpose of sewing uniforms, mostly as outwork. By 1864, Col. G. H. Crosman reported that he employed 5,127 "sewing women"and about seven hundred men, including at least fifty cutters of material.[513] The history of the Schuylkill Arsenal hiring women set a precedent of hiring more women during the war, in private industry as well as in government industry. Wartime employment meshed well with traditions of "working-class respectability that anticipated women moving in and out of the workforce at different stages in their lives."[514]

It was acceptable for women to be involved in certain industries, such as the clothing industry, but even at Schuylkill the jobs were gendered, as only men were cutters. There were also problems with who was entitled to work in what positions. Both Mary and Lizabeth had husbands serving in the army, leaving their families suffering from not having an active breadwinner at home, but neither could find a paying job. These women were often competing

[512] Sarah Weicksel, *The Fabric of War*, 125.

[513] Mark Wilson, *The Business of Civil War*, 86.

[514] Judith Giesberg, *Army at Home: Women and the Civil War on the Northern Home Front* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 76.

for jobs with women who did not have family fighting the war. There was a substantial public outcry against hiring women who did not have an immediate relation in the army. In July 1863, Colonel Crosman discharged from the Schuylkill Arsenal "all women who cannot furnish satisfactory evidence that they are the wives, mothers and sisters, or other near relations of soldiers or sailors who have been, or who are now, in the army or navy of the United States."[515] Clothing and its production had become a political act that affected families on a deeper level than before the war. An October 1861 letter from Sarah Jacobs to Abraham Lincoln attested to this. Jacobs complained of the closure of St. Louis's government-run clothing halls in favor of the contracting system. With the city already beleaguered by the war, surely Lincoln would not wish further distress on the people of the city, especially the women.[516] Jacobs rejected the notion that she and her compatriots go work for a private business for fear that they would pay a lower wage and keep most of the money themselves. Fears over the private sector cheating its workers connected the government and the public at large, leading to many of the claims against private contracting. Thousands of women worked for a variety of government arsenals across the nation, but it was never enough to satisfy the critics of the contracting system, nor was the amount of labor hired enough to help all the women looking for work. Some enterprising women took it upon themselves to aid women in less fortunate circumstances.

In New York City, Kate P. Warmeley, Louisa G. Arnold, and Sarah B. Willetts took contracts with the army to make and trim shirts. Kate charged $.145 for each one in 1861, the most paid by the Quartermaster's Department, while Louisa and Sarah charged $.135 in 1862,

[515] "A Premium On Patriotism," *Delaware State Journal and Statesman*, July 31, 1863, 2.

[516] Mark Wilson, *The Business of Civil War*, 72.

the standard charge for that year.[517] What made these contracts so important was that the women who made them did so in order to provide work for a large number of women in different areas who had been affected by the war. Kate Warmeley contacted the War Department directly to inquire about work for women, and Col. D. H. Vinton eventually gave her an open-ended contract. She was able to rent rooms at low rates and find volunteers for some work in order to pay more money to the women who made and trimmed shirts. During the winter of 1861-62, about "fifty thousand army shirts were thus made, not one of which was returned as imperfect, and she was thus enabled to circulate in about one hundred families, a sum equal to about six thousand dollars."[518] Other women across the country did the same thing. Mrs. C. R. Springer of St. Louis created a similar system, and through her efforts, about four hundred women were kept consistently employed throughout the war.[519]

While these women took great initiative in developing systems to aid local women with employment, they were each small parts of a nationwide system of aid societies, helped and coordinated by the United States Sanitary Commission. The USSC was also responsible for providing some jobs. In Chicago, a branch set up a system to hire the destitute wives of soldiers as "seamstresses upon soldiers' clothing, and several are now at work in the large hall at McVicker's Theatre."[520] Such attempts, albeit small, provided financial assistance to those who desperately needed it while also helping the commission's mission of providing for soldiers.

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[517] "Abstract of Contracts Made in the Quartermaster's Department," RG92, entry 1239, vol. 1, p. 353.

[518] Linus Pierpont Brockett, *Woman's Work in the Civil War: A Record of Heroism, Patriotism and Patience* (Philadelphia: Zaigler, McCurdy & Co., 1867), 319.

[519] Brockett, 80.

[520] "Employment for Soldier's Wives," *The Workingman's Advocate*, September 17, 1864, 4.

In what is possibly the most interesting episode, a Mrs. H. J. Moore received a contract from the Quartermaster's Department for a variety of articles, including ten thousand pairs of mittens, fifty thousand lined sack coats, twenty thousand unlined sack coats, and one hundred thousand stockings.[521] Her contracts were not a pittance either, as she secured some of the highest numbers of sack coats and stockings given out by the department, and her earnings totaled more than $206,000, a very generous sum for any contractor. Within the same year, another contractor, H. J. Moore, took several contracts on flannel shirts and lined sack coats. None of the contract dates overlap, so it is highly likely that these two people were married. If that is the case, one wonders why Mrs. Moore was the one to bid on contracts and win if her husband also did so. It is possible that with each making bids, they enjoyed better chances of getting a contract. In any case, Mrs. Moore is the only woman listed in the "Abstract of Contracts" for finished goods, unlike Warmley, Arnold, and Willetts, who contracted to finish clothing. Moore had a small contribution to the overall war effort, but it was important because she was the active agent making a contract with the government. Her involvement was a sign of the expansive way in which women took part in the war.

The clothing of Union soldiers played a powerful role in both gendering men and women and helping women break out of some of those gender norms. They were not passive actors, waiting on news of the war, but rather instrumental in the full process of prosecuting the war. By disguising themselves in uniforms to fight, they revealed strong Union loyalties, breaking the norms of the time that did not accept women as soldiers. The hundreds of women who made this decision did not impact the outcome of the war or even battles, but their existence in the face of contemporary gender norms and their actions were important. The blue uniform transformed

[521] "Abstract of Contracts Made in the Quartermaster's Department," RG92, entry 1239, vol.1.

their lives, giving them more access to full citizenship enjoyed by men, but most women took a different approach. They worked within traditional gender roles, reinforcing them by making clothing at home and sending it to the front. Other women joined the labor force, making clothing for the military in factories or as part of the government's system. Still others worked on a more national scale, developing the United States Sanitary Commission linking local aid societies to a national network responsible for staffing hundreds of hospitals and supplying men with clothing and the comforts of home. Women were even entrepreneurs in the clothing industry, providing jobs for poorer women and even developing their own companies. Clothing connected men and women in a very real way, but the war transformed the meaning of clothing by highlighting the ways gender norms came into conflict. The struggle of centralizing pitted local aid societies against a national force, undermining traditional roles for women, and causing them to seek newer roles within the framework of the war.

Conclusion

By the end of the war, more than two million men had donned the blue uniform for some period of time.[522] Such numbers had never before been seen in the United States army, which developed new strategies to provide and support its new military bureaucracy. Initial problems of the first year of the war, lack of raw materials and competition between states and the War Department, only resolved themselves by the War Department wresting control of supplying the volunteers from the various states. This centralizing process went much further than in any previous conflict, leading some governors to protest about their state's rights , but the War Department won out. Yet the Quartermaster's Department then decentralized the process by contracting for the vast majority of supplies to keep costs down and allow the market to support the army. The contracting system, though criticized heavily throughout the war, was a great success. The process of centralization and de-centralization affected individual soldiers as well, allowing them to be their own man but breaking them down into a soldier who was part of the larger army.

In the years following the Civil War, the blue uniform was a common sight, as chapters of the Grand Army of the Republic sprang up across the states to memorialize those who served and help those that lived maintain contact with one another. Holidays, with parades and other gatherings, were times when veterans proudly donned their uniforms once more in recognition of their status. It held meaning for the men who fought for the preservation of the United States, and it helped bring these states together in a tighter union than they were before the war.

[522] Let us reasonably assume that each man pulled one full year's allowance of clothing from the federal government. That would mean over 8 million shirts, pants, drawers, and pairs of shoes, and over two million overcoats, blankets, jackets, uniform coats, hats, caps, and a variety of other goods. This assumes no man receives any clothing from home and never goes over his allotment. Just with these numbers, the amount of clothing used throughout the war were astronomical!

Through struggle of the war itself, the Union also had to deal with the struggle between the forces of centralization and de-centralization, which manifested itself in a myriad of ways. The Quartermaster's Department wished to have an expansive contracting system that took some power away from the federal government, while Congress and the general public often contended that the contracting system hurt the war effort. A more centralized system, controlled by Congress, was needed to keep expenses in check and make sure businesses did not cheat taxpayers. At the same time, the army had to deal with how to make volunteers into soldiers, a task that involved breaking them down and creating a cohesive unit that operated as one system. Putting men in the same uniform was a key part of this drilling. Clothing was not just an afterthought for these men either; it was a daily struggle to keep themselves clothed in a way that made them look like soldiers but did not hurt them or their families financially. Women also dealt with clothing as a threat to their traditional role as clothing providers for men in their family and as a way to become more involved in the war itself. A few even went so far as to disguise themselves as men to join the army. Clothing not only played a role in the war but played a role in how men fought, how armies moved, and how the government envisioned its war powers during a conflict.

As a subject, clothing has been a discarded and often misused piece of material culture. Some historians have used evidence of poor uniforms as evidence that the contracting system was corrupt and wasteful, while others treat it as a side piece to larger histories of soldiers and armies. Still others have written it off entirely, seeing it only as the arena of the armchair historian or reenacting enthusiast. It has been a mistake to continually allow this thinking and accept poor history as fact. By studying clothing during the Civil War, and indeed other time

periods, historians have an opportunity to delve further into the material culture of the conflict and explore news ways to see the war and how it was fought.

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East Texas Historical Association Conference - Fall, 2015
"Read All About It! Newspapers and Lynchings in Texas, 1890-1920"
Texas State Historical Association's Annual Conference - Spring, 2016
"The Union Blockade of the Texas Coast"