



GOAL 2 | LESSON PLAN | HIGH SCHOOL **Life at War**

Grades: High School

Approximate Length of Time: 2 hours

Goal: Students will be able to discuss the life of soldiers during the American Civil War.

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to complete a graphic organizer, finding key information within primary and secondary sources.
2. Students will be able to address a question about a historic event, providing evidence from primary and secondary sources.

Common Core:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9

Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.3

Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.1

Write arguments focused on *discipline-specific content*.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.7

Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

NCSS STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL STUDIES:

- 1—Culture
- 2—Time, Continuity, and Change
- 3—People, Places, and Environment
- 5—Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

Description: This is an inquiry lesson where students will do research to answer the main, inquiry question about the life for soldiers during the American Civil War. Students will develop a hypothesis, search for evidence in multiple primary and secondary sources, and complete a graphic organizer. Through this process students will develop a strong answer to the inquiry question posed at the beginning.

Inquiry Question: What was the American Civil War for those who were the “boots on the ground?”

Material:

- Documents Packet
- Graphic Organizer
- Highlighters

Procedure:

1. Have students begin with a hypothesis to answer the inquiry question.
2. Students will then read through the *Document Packet*, filling out the *Graphic Organizer* as they progress.

Conclusion:

Students will answer the inquiry question either orally or in essay form. They should use evidence from their primary and secondary sources. They can use the documents, their notes, the video and their graphic organizer. Students can do additional research to bolster their argument.

Recommended Collections for Letters and Diaries:

Michigan State University - <http://civilwar.archives.msu.edu/collection/>
University of Washington -
<http://content.lib.washington.edu/civilwarweb/index.html>
University Notre Dame -
https://rarebooks.nd.edu/digital/civil_war/diaries_journals/index.shtml
University of Virginia Library, Valley of the Shadow -
<http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/VoS/lettersp2.html>

Students can share their responses with the class.

Assessment in this Lesson:

1. A completed graphic organizer
2. Notes taken on graphic organizer, documents, or other notes sheets
3. A complete answer to the inquiry question with quotes from the provided documents



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HISTORY

Life of the Civil War Soldier in the Army

Drill Drill Drill

Sharon Denmark



Gary Helm, historical interpreter, Pamplin Historical Park, Va.
Photography by James Salzano

The three million soldiers who served in the Civil War each represent a unique story waiting to be told. Although no two men had the exact same journey into the army, experience in battle or emotional response to their involvement, similar threads weave their way through a significant number of these narratives.

In studying the Civil War's common soldier — who he was and how the conflict transformed his life — we try to better understand the millions of men who risked their lives in virtual anonymity. What motivated the former innkeeper ordered to charge across open ground in the face of relentless gunfire? How did the factory worker who defended his trench line until the bitter end fare when he returned home with no more record of service than his name scrawled in a ledger? When we study the lives of men like these we gain insights into the courage and sacrifice demonstrated by each and every Civil War soldier. Time and again, they were asked to perform tasks that would have been unthinkable in their past lives as farmers, teachers, lawyers, shop owners, carpenters or iron-workers.

Although enlistment, medical and other official records can sometimes be spotty, they nonetheless allow us to analyze an astounding array of facts and figures to better comprehend an overwhelmingly destructive war. These dry documents, however, are augmented by a huge amount of correspondence, diaries and memoirs. Statistics can tell us something about the men in the ranks, but, thanks to a relatively literate society and the Victorian penchant for personal writing, we are lucky to have these first-person

narratives as a pathway into the lives of individual soldiers. The three million soldiers who served in the Civil War each represent a unique story waiting to be told. Although no two men had the exact same journey into the army, experience in battle or emotional response to their involvement, similar threads weave their way through a significant number of these narratives. Thus, as we examine the life of the common soldier, we do so through lenses of both commonality and individualism.

A soldier in the Union army was most likely a slim young man a little over 5'8" tall with brown hair and blue eyes. He was probably a farmer and a Christian. Precise statistical figures are more difficult for Southern enlistees, but most Confederate soldiers looked a great deal like their Federal counterparts — although they were even more likely to be farmers by trade. The war was largely a young man's fight — Union enlistment records indicate that more than 2 million soldiers were age 21 or under when they joined the cause — and some estimates place only 10 percent of the Federal force over age 30. There were, of course, cases on either extreme. Older soldiers typically filled more specialized roles or were officers; some teenagers lied about their age and saw front line combat, but many others served in other capacities, notably as musicians.

Recruitment tactics of the era typically raised companies from a single geographic area, meaning these units (and regiments they were combined into) reflected the demographics of those communities, often with a particular ethnicity or occupation predominating the ranks. Other units, especially those raised in urban areas, were remarkably diverse. Robert Watson, a Floridian originally hailing from the Bahamas who served with the Confederate army and, later, the Confederate navy, made this observation about the men with whom he served: "Truly this is a cosmopolitan company, it is composed of Yankees, Crackers, Conchs, Englishmen, Spaniards, Germans, Frenchmen, Italians, Poles, Irishmen, Swedes, Chinese, Portuguese, Brazilians, 1 Rock Scorpion Crusoe; but all are good southern men." It is the final pronouncement that undoubtedly mattered the most to Watson.



Soldiers Drilling

"All of this practice and repetition helped soldiers to survive on the battlefields."
Library of Congress

Each of these men, no matter his background, had to make a life-altering decision when the country fractured along fault lines that had long been present. In 1860, the United States was still a relatively young country — an evolving experiment in democracy in which both Northern and Southern states sought to protect their own interests. When discussing the motivations of soldiers we must distinguish soldier attitudes from the ideas their leaders espoused. A soldier's thoughts were his own and did not necessarily belong to Abraham Lincoln or Jefferson Davis: not every Northerner was an abolitionist, nor every Southerner a slave owner. The reasons an individual might enlist were complicated and shifting, ranging from the purely practical to the highly sentimental. Soldiers identified most strongly with their comrades, their states and their communities — with, perhaps, a few country-sized ideals thrown into the mix. Then, of course, there was the draw of war itself as a path to manhood and glory. For others, the promise of a (somewhat) steady paycheck was reason enough to don a uniform. A soldier with the 36th Wisconsin, Guy C. Taylor, upon hearing from his wife that people at home were questioning his motives for enlistment, told her succinctly: "You can just tell the folks that if they want to know what made me enlist they can find out by writing to me."

The daily struggles and the mundane details of soldier life allow us to relate to these men across a distance of 150 years. The risk of falling ill was highest for new recruits, with each passing year in service affording growing immunity. In his book, *Army Life: A Private's Reminiscences of the Civil War*, Theodore Gerrish recalls a time spent too long in camp and writes, "One of the most disastrous features of the gloomy situation was the terrible sickness of the soldiers...men were unused to the climate, the exposure, and the food, so that the whole experience was in direct contrast to their life at home." Common viruses and infections included typhoid fever, malaria, pneumonia, tuberculosis, pox (both small and chicken), scarlet fever, measles, mumps and whooping cough.

Camp provided a soldier's first test of survival, especially for men from rural precincts. A Civil War-era encampment was not known for its wide open spaces and fresh air. It took little time for an army to alter a landscape by the sheer mass of its presence. Verdant pastures became a muddy mess in no time under the feet of thousands of soldiers and horses. With little understanding of sanitation, camps were notoriously nasty abodes; lice were rampant, and dysentery, often caused by impure drinking water, killed more men than enemy bullets.

Once enlisted and encamped, a recruit soon learned that his time was no longer his own. Day and night, he was under orders, a shift that required constant practice and discipline. In the course of this process, men learned the particular brand of patience known to soldiers today as "hurry up and wait." A Civil War soldier would find that modern axiom very familiar. In his work *The 1865 Customs of Service for Non-Commissioned Officers and Soldiers*, August V. Kautz writes that a soldier "should learn to wait: a soldier's life is made up in waiting for the critical moments."

The soldier spent a majority of his time in camp drilling, with the occasional stint at guard duty or a long march. The diaries of Robert Watson document such an existence repeated tens of thousands of times in both North and South: "Drilled in the

afternoon....Inspection of arms....Commenced drilling....Drill as usual morning and afternoon.... Drilled and...inspected our arms, quarters, &etc....” Theodore Gerrish writes of his first experiences as a soldier: “It was a most ludicrous march. We had never been drilled....An untrained drum corps furnished us with music; each musician kept different time, and each man in the regiment took a different step....We marched, ran, walked, galloped, and stood still, in our vain endeavors to keep step.” All of this practice and repetition helped soldiers to survive on the battlefield when those “critical moments” arrive.

And those moments arrived year after year, longer than anyone in 1861 could imagine. Noble ideas and grand visions suffer greatly under the weight of bloody warfare, and yet the fighting men on both sides endured as best they could. The common soldiers of the Civil War shared typical weaknesses of the human condition. They were not without fear, panic and indecision. Still, we cannot help but look at their service with admiration and draw lessons and inspiration from their endurance, sacrifice and ideals.



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HISTORY

Life of the Civil War Soldier in Camp

Disease, Hunger, Death & Boredom

Gary Helm



Ryan Walker, historical interpreter at Pamplin Historical Park, Va.

Photography by James Salzano

Only a tiny fraction of any soldier's time was spent in front line combat. Instead, the vast majority of his existence revolved around the monotonous routines of camp life, which presented its own set of struggles and hardships.

Once in the ranks, military life turned out to be far different than what the majority of Civil War soldiers had expected. Patriotic zeal blinded most of these volunteers to the realities and hardships they were signing up to experience. The passage of several generations had muted the country's memory of the deprivations of the American Revolution. Few had participated in the war with Mexico, which left a popular legacy of glorious victory. Certainly, argued the conventional wisdom, this sectional crisis would be resolved in a few short, painless months.

Volunteers viewed the battlefield as a great stage upon which they would either "secure their liberty" or "save the Union." While they acknowledged that losses would occur, no one envisioned their potential demise in any but heroic circumstances, but four years of the daily struggle to survive in military camps would prove otherwise. Twice as many Civil War soldiers succumbed to death from disease as from bullets, shells and bayonets. By varying estimates, between 400,000 and 500,000 soldiers lost their lives on this less gallant of stages. What was the basis of this noncombat struggle, and how did the common soldier cope?

During the fair-weather campaign season, soldiers could expect to be engaged in battle one day out of 30. Their remaining days were filled with almost interminable drilling, punctuated with spells of entertainment in the form of music, cards and other forms of gambling. The arrival of newspapers or mail from home — whether letters or a care package — in camp was always cause for celebration. Despite such diversions, much time was still left for exposure to the noncombatant foes of poor shelter, unhealthy food, and a lack of hygiene, resulting in waves of sickness and disease.



What a camp cabin might have looked like
Photography by James Salzano

After the first months of the war, the shelter half, or “dog tent,” became the most practical means of overnight shelter. While portable and lightweight, shelter halves provided minimal protection for their two inhabitants. Sgt. Austin C. Stearns of the 13th Massachusetts described his shelter as “simply a piece of cloth about six feet square with a row of buttons and button holes on three sides; two men pitched together by buttoning their pieces together and getting two sticks with a crotch at one end and one to go across at the top and then placing their cloth over it and pinning it down tight.” To protect the soldier from the damp ground, a tarred or rubberized blanket could be used. A stout wool blanket kept the chill off. Unfortunately, many soldiers discarded these heavy items on a long march or when entering combat, and lived (or died) to regret it when the weather changed. As the war moved forward, an exhausted soldier often merely lay on his blanket at night in an effort to simplify his life and maximize periods of rest. Such protracted exposure to the elements boded ill for his life expectancy.



The basics for every soldier, shown here, including hard tack.
Photography by James Salzano

Rations on the march varied from plentiful to scarce. On paper, the Union army enjoyed the best rations of any army in history up to that time, but logistical difficulties inherent in feeding armies of tens of thousands resulted in occasional shortages. The Confederacy, while fighting on predominately “home turf,” often found it difficult to consistently deliver full rations to its troops on the march, largely due to procurement and transportation problems.



Pork or hardtack was the standard face of a soldier
Photography by James Salzano

The full Union marching ration consisted of one pound of hard bread (the infamous hardtack), three-quarters of a pound of salted pork or one-and-a-quarter pound of fresh meat, along with coffee, sugar and salt allotments. At the beginning of the war, the Confederacy adopted the Union ration, but reduced it by 1862. Fresh meat and coffee became increasingly scarce. As fresh fruits and vegetables disappeared from military diets, soldiers' immune systems deteriorated and vitamin deficiency diseases such as

scurvy proliferated. The Union army responded by issuing desiccated vegetables. As described by Corp. Joseph Van Nest of the 101st Ohio, these delicacies consisted of “a combination of corn husks, tomato skins, carrots and other kinds of vegetables too numerous to mention.” This bounty had been dried and compressed into a sheet or block and, when boiled, expanded to many times its previous size. While denigrated as “desecrated vegetables” by the boys in blue, they consumed them with alacrity as a variation in an otherwise bland diet. Unfortunately, unbeknownst to the culinary science of the era, most of the needed vitamins disappeared during processing.



Grease was poured onto cornmeal to make a "skillygalle."

Photography by James Salzano

Confederate soldiers usually had to forage for fresh vegetables. During the deprivations of the 1864 Atlanta Campaign, one Johnny Reb wrote, “Our men get a vegetable diet by cooking up polk, potato tops, May pop vines, kurlip weed, lambs quarter, thistle and a hundred kind of weeds I always thought poison. I thought it trash...but the boys call it ‘long forage’...” On the march, “foraging” — a convenient euphemism for theft — would be employed by both sides in an attempt to improve the daily diet. Despite orders to the contrary, some Confederates liberally practiced this thievery during their forays into the North and even when marching and camping in friendly territory.

The commissary took a back seat on the march to the needs of the ordinance department, but still trumped the quartermaster, whose top priority was to provide forage for draft animals, not replacing uniform components. Threadbare patriots consequently appeared, particularly in the Confederate armies, and the “battlefield requisition” became a prime means of supply for the South. As Sgt. John Worsham noted at the end of the war:

“Nearly all equipment in the Army of Northern Virginia were articles captured from the Yankees.... Most of the blankets were those marked ‘US,’ and also the rubber blankets or cloths. The very clothing that the men wore was mostly captured, for we were allowed to wear their pants, underclothing and overcoats. As for myself, I purchased only one hat, one pair of shoes, and one jacket after 1861.”

Soldiers North and South also shared in the infestation of body lice in their clothing and bedding. Due to constant outdoor living, often under poor sanitary conditions, the “grey back vermin” became a visible manifestation of all of the invisible bacteria and germs whose presence was unknown to mid-19th-century science.



Union Soldiers at Brandy Station, Va.
Library of Congress

The seasonal movement to permanent winter camps would simultaneously improve and harm the physical condition of the Civil War soldier. While the men remained in one place, the supply chain of wagons and railroads caught up to their daily needs. Union logisticians employed their superior resources in overcoming commissary and quartermaster problems, but the Confederates also managed to supply their men in winter camp under more challenging conditions.

Periodic shortages did exist, but were vividly remembered by the Southerners. Both sides shared the difficulties that emerged from remaining in one place for an extended period of time. The majority of soldiers, being from rural backgrounds, had not been exposed to such a wide cross section of the human population and its communicable diseases. When accumulated in camps of tens of thousands, soldiers without natural immunities would succumb to the likes of measles and chickenpox. Those same large numbers, residing in one spot for more than a month, caused horrendous situations in relation to sanitation. The use of "sink pits" as latrine mechanisms ultimately led to the presence of human fecal bacteria in the water supply. That water supply, in many instances, did not need much help in the area of contamination. Swift running, clear water would be the exception more often than the rule. These conditions created the greatest killer of the war: amoebic and bacterial dysentery.



In some cases, women accompanied the army to do their laundry.
Photography by James Salzano

Whimsically called a case of the “quickstep,” dysentery did more damage than the infernal killing creations of man. The creation of penicillin and other antibiotics was still decades away, leaving medical staffs of the Civil War few tools to combat the war’s greatest killer. By the end of the war, the Union Sanitary and Christian Commissions made great strides in improving camp hygiene and clean water. The Confederacy had nothing on such a scale, although experience also improved camp conditions for the boys in gray.

After four long years of war, the military encampments had taken their toll. Although the 2:1 rate of death from disease over combat may seem alarming to us today, it represented a significant improvement from earlier conflicts, like the American Revolution and Napoleonic Wars, when that number was closer to 5:1. Not until World War II did the number of battle casualties approach the losses from disease.

HISTORY

Life of the Civil War Soldier in Battle

... And Then We Kill

Edward Alexander



Shooting a cannon on location at Pamplin Historical Park, Va.

Photography by James Salzano

Just like the soldiers of every conflict before and since, the men who fought in the American Civil War enlisted for a multitude of reasons. To claim any universality for these soldiers and the divided nation they represented would be a mistake, with perhaps one exception — their expectations were vastly different from the actual experience of military engagement.

Due to the wide background of experiences and attitudes and the transformative nature of combat, soldier motivation ultimately should be viewed as a progression. Historians have generally broken this down into three fundamentals: what spurs men to enlist, what steadies them on the firing line or pushes them forward in the assault and what keeps them in the service through the end. Analyzing the war through the lens of one individual can illustrate the variety of motivational factors and different fates a Civil War soldier realized.

Charles Carroll Morey, from a large family in Royalton, Vt., enlisted as a corporal in the 2nd Vermont Infantry in 1861, just before his 21st birthday. No driving personal ideology rationalized his service. Instead, like many around him, he believed the pending war to hold great importance, even if he could not particularly define the patriotic instinct or adventurous excitement that spurred him into the ranks. Throughout his service, Morey captured his experiences through meticulous diary entries and honest letters home.

He did not seem to think much of his first experience “seeing the elephant” at Bull Run. “[S]ince the fight there seems to be considerable discontent,” he wrote his sister, “but it is all caused I think by the hard march which we have not got over and the poor fare we have had....” Many soldiers, after experiencing battle, believed that civilians back home could have no way of understanding the events and emotions of combat and focused their writing to more relatable occurrences. “I cannot write it therefore will not try,” Morey admitted to his mother after another fight.

Unexpected adversity tested Morey’s resolve, as danger lurked even where the enemy did not. After the Seven Days’ Battles near Richmond in 1862, one of his friends, Sgt. George E. Allen, drowned in a creek near the regiment’s campsite. Morey described this loss, just on the heels of an especially trying engagement, as “the most severe blow this company ever sustained.” Such sudden, inexplicable tragedies were tough to handle, even in a war in which twice as many soldiers died away from the battlefield as on it. “[H]e was always at his best in time of danger and did not fear to sell his life dearly if necessary in the cause in which he was engaged,” Morey eulogized.

Nineteenth-century Americans accepted a certain rubric for the proper way to face death. A dying individual should be at home with family around to see them off into the next world. The battlefield clearly denied realization of this standard, but a surrogate could be attained through mortally wounded soldiers offering last words home to comfort and reassure their families. During the battle of Second Fredericksburg on May 3, 1863, a minié ball struck Pvt. Frederick W. Chamberlin in the neck as the 2nd Vermont aided the Union assault on the Confederate lines. Chamberlin’s friends surrounded him and urged him to communicate a message back to his family, as his wound seemed fatal. “Tell them that I was a good soldier,” Chamberlin asserted, before succumbing, a statement that Morey could vouch for. Morey wrote, “he was one of the best soldiers in the company and he came to his end in the line of duty defending that ‘old flag which so proudly waves’ ore the land of the free and the home of the brave.”

As the war progressed, the frequency of combat escalated with no reduction in intensity. Nearly a year to the day later, the Vermont Brigade faced the task of defending a crucial intersection on the Wilderness Battlefield. During the fight, one of Morey’s comrades knew immediately of the mortality of his wound, crying, “Oh! I am killed!” before falling. Now serving as orderly in his company, Morey felt responsibility for searching the deceased’s pockets for items worthwhile to send home.



Reenactors act out the battle of Antietam
Photo by Carl Staub

At Spotsylvania's Bloody Angle, Morey offered one of his most personal recollections of combat. "[S]oon after we arrived on the ground we were firing and just after I had discharged my piece at a Johnnies head I turned to reload and while in the act of charging cartridge I saw a Reb who had got sight of me across his musket, and I can assure you my legs grew very short in a very short space of time or else there was a joint in them, that is to say I dropped down out of his sight just in time to hear his bullet whistle over my head. Then knowing the danger had passed I straightened up and finished loading." Having survived the horrors of the start to the Overland Campaign, Morey reflected on his ordeal. "It is with gratitude to God that I am permitted to write you a few lines once more. I don't know what to say first but will say praise God for his goodness in sparing my life while so many of our brave comrades have fallen victims to the enemy's shots..."

With no end to hostilities in sight, and the armies engulfed in constant daily fighting, Morey, now a lieutenant, strove to keep his presence felt at home, consistently inquiring about minute domestic details and offering his advice in any matter. This compartmentalization helped maintain a civilian identity and served to rationalize the violence in which he participated. Nevertheless, the psychological transformation required of the citizen soldiers who composed both armies concerned Morey. "[S]ociety will not own the rude soldier when he comes back, but turn a cold shoulder to him, because he has become hardened by scenes of bloodshed and carnage," he worriedly expressed in a letter. "I tell you, dear sister, there are feelings, tender feelings, down deep in the soldier's breast, which when moved will prove that all that is good is not quite dead."

Thoughts of home continued to dominate his thoughts, yet he understood the only proper way he could return. After Cold Harbor, he told his mother that he would be very happy to return home "if there was no war to call me into the field but as it is the war must be settled then I will come home and try to be content with a quiet citizen's life." Having transferred to the Shenandoah Valley, Morey suffered a wound in August that forced him to the hospital. "I think it is wrong for one who is able to do duty to stay away," he wrote, "yet it is not my fault that I am here." Duty often compelled soldiers to

take early leave from the hospital to reunite with their comrades in the field. Upon his return to his unit, which saw his promotion to captain, Morey felt “as though I had got home.”

As the war progressed into 1865, Morey could only speculate on when his service would be fulfilled. In late March he wrote, “I think I would enjoy being home very much if the war was ended and an honorable peace once more established but this little job must be accomplished first....” Just a few days later, Ulysses S. Grant had the Union army lined up in anticipation of shaking the Confederate grip on the city of Petersburg. “We hope and pray that we may be able to strike the death blow to the rebellion before many days but perhaps we may fail,” Morey confided, “yet we hope for the best and will work hard for it and trust in God for the accomplishment of the remainder, now is the time that we need divine assistance, pray for us that we may accomplish all.”

In the early morning darkness on April 2, the 2nd Vermont, and the VI Corps to which it belonged, pierced the Confederate defenses on the grounds now preserved by Pamplin Historical Park. Surrender and the cessation of hostilities lay just one week in the future – but Captain Morey would witness neither. As the VI Corps connected the Union lines west of Petersburg, shrapnel from a battery near Robert E. Lee’s headquarters struck Morey in the head. Thirty minutes later, and just seven days from the end, the wound proved fatal. “It seems a hard fate to perish in the last struggle, after having passed safely through so many,” wrote a fellow Vermonter.

Morey’s remains now rest in Poplar Grove National Cemetery, in a rare, marked grave among thousands of unknown soldiers. To Charles Morey and all who fought alongside or against him, the war’s outcome would remain a mystery, but their legacy continues to inspire new generations of Americans.



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David H. Bertram's Letter

Murfreesboro
Tenn
March 2, 1862

Veary Dear Father & mother & famley [sic],

I again seat my Self to infor [sic] you that I am well truly hoping those lines to find you all well. The moset [sic] of the boyes [sic] is well. The helth [sic] in general is good. I beleave I hav [sic] no news of importance to writ [sic] to you at the present. Times is peasabel hear know [sic]. Their [sic] has bin [sic] no fighting near our lins sence [sic] you was at Nashvill [sic] and I suppose there is no prospect of a fight eny wayse [sic]. Shortely [sic] General Roeycrantz [sic] has ishued [sic] an order that we shall all be forlowed [sic] home by squades [sic]. I suppose four or fiv [sic] from a co. at a time. I saw the order last night my Self. I suppose that will commence in a few dayes [sic]. There is only one non-commishend [sic] officer to loder [?] the Co. at a time bair [?] an axident [sic] us. Three will not get off together he gides furlows [sic] for 20 dayes [sic] nad that is longe a nough [sic]. I hope to sea you all in the coarse of 2 months & mabey soner [sic] and mabey hardely so soon, I can't tell. We will chang [sic] our sugect [sic]. I recieved [sic] your leters last eavning [sic] which was dated the 24th of feb. I was truly glad to hear from you all & to hear that you was all well. I hope to get newse [sic] from you often. from the wreading [sic] of your your leter & other newse that I hav got from that cuntiry [sic]. The excitement is veary high a bout the abolition partey but the sucesh calk as that will tha cant afeet [?] nothing buy their chat. Thier is no dont bit what tha think that consiarvetive partey will hafte to tak sides as long as I am a living bean. I never will onless a grat change. I am not in for freeing the negro rather am I in for desolving the union. I wish that all the disloyal mens negroes to be taken and colonized on some ilant [sic] or sell them to help pray the expence of this war & thin [sic] treat the abolition party the same way. There is a nough, a nough loyal men to protect the old constitution if the will tak hold of the thing wright [sic] and I think it will be don [sic] if the abolition partey comes out. I considder [sic] my Self a volentiar [sic] for three year longer if nesenary [sic] and my part will be under the old Stairs and strips and in the defence of the old constution [sic] if I am permitted to liv [sic]. This rebellion cold [sic] be put down in a hurry if it wasint [sic] for the love of money. The love of money is the gratest [sic] evil hat the human man poseses [sic]. This war has caused the life of many true patriates [sic] and we should simpathise [sic] with their friend in their lonsom [sic] and didstresing [sic] hours so we change the subject [sic].

Well you requested me to xpress [sic] my fealing [sic] to you. I am ashamd [sic] almost to say eny thing [sic] about it if it cold [sic] be the will of the almitey [sic] to pardin [sic] me then I cold [sic] hav [sic] the fase [?] and sadisfaction [sic] but as I am I cant giv [sic] sadisfaction [sic]. A man in my condition and of my turn is liabel [sic] to be lead astray whin [sic] the are so many attracting thing of the world for man to [?]. I want you to know that I gard [sic] aganst [sic] that as much as I can and I entend [?] to without a chang [sic] being hear and being at home. Their

[sic] is a grat difrence [sic] we never show no preaching. I hant [sic] heard a searmont [sic] preacht [sic] since we weas at battle creak [sic]. I [t]hink that if I cold [sic] be at meating [sic] and hear good preashing [sic] it wold [sic] be a sadisfactin [sic] to me. I hav [sic] often [sic] thought that my day has past are and my [?] is fixt [sic] for that affil [sic] world to be my home though I hope for the beter [sic]. I intend to try as long as I liv[sic] to bege [sic] for mursey [sic] without a grat [sic] change. It looks to me that it tis imposabel [sic] for a man to keep his mind on the things that he ort to & a very easy matter for him to kep [sic] his mind on the thinges [sic] that he shold [sic] mat but it tis the nature [sic] of man. I cold [sic] expres [sic] my feealinges [sic] and mind better if I cold [sic] see you when I set down to write a letter to you. My mind is all ways scattered and torne [sic] up so that it tis imposabel [sic] for me to giv [sic] you my sadisfaction [sic] about eny thing [sic] attal [sic].

Well Mother I know your condition renders you unhapey [sic]and it tis a nough [sic] to. I know but you must bair with it the best that you can and not tak [sic] thinges [sic] to hart [sic] Ma maur [sic] than you can help and don't suffer you mind to be filld [sic] up with the newse [sic] of the world. If a person will beleave [sic] all the newse [sic] that tha hear, tha will always be in misrey [sic]. Mother your condition is good so fair to what some is all thre [sic] of us boyes [sic] is aliv [sic] and hartey [sic] and enjoyes [sic] good helth [sic] while nombers [sic] of othrs [sic] wimen [sic] hav [sic] lost the only child that tha hav [sic]. I dont pertend [sic] to say but what our chance is the same as those that hav [sic] past [sic] away. We must look look to him for peas [sic] and eas [sic] mind and happeners [sic] al. So tell Martha that I wasn't hur [?] to writ [sic] to me. I will clos [sic] by requesting you to writ son [sic] and often and I will the same. Tell [?] and the balents [?] of the children I hav [sic] not forgot them yet. Tell Brand and Mary hodey [sic] for me. I Close your Son Tell dethe [?]

D.H. Butram to

E. Butram & famley [sic]

When you write tell me how your propertey [sic] is & whether you hav [sic] got Andey & my cow yet or not.

"David H. Bertram Letter to His Parents." Letter from David H. Bertram. March 2, 1862. Accessed March 19, 2018. <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/civilwar/id/720/rec/31>.
[David H. Bertram](#), a [sergeant](#) in the [9th Kentucky Infantry Regiment](#)

John G. Roller Diary Entries July 7-31, 1864

Thurs, 7th Laid in camp fixed our tents up, formed in Co. Colum Deserters coming in every day. the flanks of our army rest on the river. Weather good and warm.

Fri. 8th Policed our camp. Reported that the mail train was burnt. Weather warm.

Sat. 9th Still in camp, drew a pair of shoes canonading all along our line Weather warm.

Sun. 10th The rebs fell back to the south side of the Chattahoochee, they burnt the R.R, Bridge about daylight our men advanced their skirmishline to the river bank moved about 1/4 of a mile and returned to camp again marching order. Cannonaded, Weather warm and showery had divine service in camp.

Mon, 11th Still in camp, our boys trading with the rebel skirmishers. Tobacco, knives, matches, guns, blankets and such like. Weather clear and pleasant.

Tues, 12th Not much news in camp. Weather warm and showery.

Wedn, 13th Nothing of importance going on in camp. Weather warm and clear.

Thurs. 14th The army reported all across the river except the 14th and 20th corps. Weather rainy, had prayer meeting in the evening.

Fri. 15th Slight skirmishing and canonading on our right. Weather clear, got a letter from Jake.

Sat. 16th Had inspection of arms in camp. I and Charley wrote letters to Jake Charley sold his watch to George Cooper of Co. "H"

Sat, 17th Received marching orders to march at 3 o'clock P.M. marched to the left, crossed the Chattahoochee River about dark, and camped about 3 miles south of the river, came nearly playing out. Weather warm

Mon. 18th Got a letter from Lazenbys folks, bought a watch of Joel Ball for #20. moved 2 or 3 miles to the right and built breastworks, after night not much rest for us. Weather rainy,

Tues, 19th Laid over. Sharp canonading in front, a part of the 4 corps took some Rebel works in the P.M. had a good prayer meeting in the evening saw the first wild cucumbers. Weather very warm,

Wedn. 20th Moved to the left in the A.M. Made a short halt in a cornfield and eat a bite, moved to the ript in the P.M. heavy skirmishing going on all the time, the rebels attacked us at 4 o'clock P.M. We met them and a fierce battle raged until sundown, the loss in our Regt 58, in our Co. 14. Our orderly Merry

Mcmillan, John Botts our color-bearer, William Sister got killed. J. Wells, George Oldham, John Stevens, R. Haed, Wiatt and Henry King, Peter Shonover, Henry Deck, John Andrews, Theodor Ellis, got wounded, built breastworks after the battle was over, rebel loss terrible. Weather exceedingly hot. The rebels had 3 lines and we had but one we held our ground the rebels fell back in great confusion, no relief for us.

Thurs. 21st Was on picket no rest last night drew rations in the morning Charley was with me. Burried our dead. One of our Regt. got some whisky Burried over U00 Rebs in front of our Brigade. Weather warm Col. Doan went to the Hospital

Fri. 22nd Advanced our line about 2 1/2 miles and built breastworks, the 15th the 16th and 17th corps heavily engaged on our left. The rebs drove them back about 1 mile but they rallied and drove the rebs in turn taking their breastworks. the loss was heavy on b oth sides Gen McTherson killed we are within 2 1/2 miles of Atlanta the enemy has fallen back
Weather cloudy the rsbs shelled us after night.

Sat. 23rd The rebel batteries busy all day shelling us, but doing us but little harm, the rebs charged our skirmishline driving our skirmishers from their posts and wounded Sergt. c a of Co. "B" Weather warm, had no tents up the rebs made another point in our skirmishline.

Sun 21ith The rebs are still wasting ammuniton shelling us. Wrote 2 letters one to R. Haed's wife and his brother and for myself to John Lazenbys. was detailed for picket drew rations Charley took sick Weather warm

Mon. 25th The rebs attacked our skirmishline last night, but held our posts firing about 15 rounds, was on the line after night and on the reserve in the daytime was relieved about dark. Weather warm

Tues. 26th Charley still sick, getting worse, the Regt moved to the right after night. I stayed with Charley till morning. Weather cloudy in the daytime and rainy after night.

Wedn. 27th Went with Charley who was conveyed to our Div. Hospital in the A.M. got back to the Regt about noon. Drew rations the 16th and 17 corps moved to our right. Weather warm and rainy.

Thurs. 28th Gen Hooker left us in the A.M. He having resigned Gen. Williams took command of our corps, got orders to get ready to march. A heavy fight on our right the rebs repulsed with fearful loss Lieut. Wilkerson come back, did not march. Weather warm rainy.

Fri. 29th Our Div moved to the extreme right, wrote a letter for Long of co. "B" bunked with B. Hunter considerable of rain after night.

Sat. 30th Was detailed for fatigue duty in the A.M. moved about 3/k of a mile to the right and built breastworks, was detailed to go out in front with 10 more of our Regt. Weather warm

Sun. 31st The 2nd Div. of the 11th corps went out to reconnoiter encountered the rebel skirmishers and returned in the evening, we had orders to keep ourselves in readiness for a march but did not march. A heavy rain.

[John G. Roller Civil War diary transcript](http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/cwd/id/19694/rec/6) Diary of John G. Roller. 1864-1960. Accessed March 20, 2018.
<http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/cwd/id/19694/rec/6>.



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W.H. Gaston's Letter

1st Texas Vol. November 28, 1862

Pa

I received your letter of the 5th Nov. a few days ago but have not had opportunity of writing until now. I am surprised at you not receiving my letters written after the Sharpsburg fight. I cannot see why my letter should not reach home as soon as others. I wrote you soon after the fight & gave you all the information I could about Robert. I have been inquiring and hunting for him ever since he was lost. I can hear nothing from him. I feel that he was slain although I cannot give him up yet. There is some chance for him to be alive yet. He may have been badly wounded and still in the hands of the enemy. There has been some of my boys sent back to Maryland that I thought was killed. They saw nothing of Robert but say he may be there somewhere as our boys were scattered all over Md. I hope he may turn up yet someday. I have felt miserable since he has been gone and it is with deep regret that I have to communicate his loss to you. I hope you all will not think hard of me for not giving you all the particulars of his fate when it was out of my power and as my letters failed to reach you. We were overpowered by the enemy and compelled to give up the battlefield leaving behind our killed and wounded with some prisoners & were not permitted to go on the field after the fight. Consequently I cannot tell the result of the missing. We are not lying in sight of the Yankee tents. Only the Rappahannock River behind us. May expect a fight any day but I do not think they will attempt to cross this winter. The weather is very cold but we stand it very well. Have plenty of clothes. Some shoes wanting. Our boys are in fine health and our army is in good condition. We expect to go into winter quarters shortly. I intend to come home this winter if I can. I may have to resign to do so but I intend to come. My health has not been good for some time & I think I have tried it long enough here to satisfy me. You spoke of coming here. I would advise you not to come as you cannot accomplish anything by the trip. If Robert can be found I will find him before I come. If killed, we will have to give him up for a time. I'm glad you sold Jake as Negroes are cheap. I think it my duty to come home awhile at least. Excuse my writing with pencil as ink is scarce in camp. Write to me often. I will do the same. I close, This from your Son W.H. Gaston

"W.H. Gaston Letter." W. H. Gaston to Pa. November 28, 1862. Accessed March 22, 2018.
[https://www.nps.gov/anti/learn/education/upload/letters and diaries of soldiers and civilians.pdf](https://www.nps.gov/anti/learn/education/upload/letters%20and%20diaries%20of%20soldiers%20and%20civilians.pdf).

Henry Welch's Letter

WASHINGTON D. C.
Jun 13 1863
Mr Franklin Tanner
South Granville
Washington Co.
NY

Camp. William's near Stafford Courthouse
June.12th.1863.

Dear Uncle and Aunt

I received a letter from your (you) yesterday, and I cannot pass my time more pleasantly for a few hours than answering it! I am well and so is Dowd Francis Thair ([Thair, Dowd Francis](#)) and all the boy's from Granville! we are haveing (having) very warm weather down here now days, but I guess we can stand it! we received marching order's a few day's ago but we have not marched yet we keep three day's ration's in our haversacks ready to march at one hour's notice! there has been a great cavalry fight up near Kelly's ford our men gained the victory! I think they intended to have had our Brigade march up there if the reb's had been likely to crossed the river! but as our men drove them back I hardly think we shall march very soon! our men captured their papers which contained all their plans Stuart ([Stuart](#)) 's plan was to make a raid into Maryland with 12 thousand cavalrymen my mind is that he has failed in his calculations! we are doing picket duty in the woods the picket line extend's across the hill's through thick pines and ceder's (cedars) with here and there a small clearing! one of Co: E boy's was shot a few nights ago while on picket the ball passed through his arm! the bush whackers are spying around our line all the time! Dowd and I are going to try and get permission to go beyond our lines as scouts if we get the chance we will be just in our element for no business would suit us better! we do not have chance to sleep but very little when we are on picket the last time I was out I slept about 45 minute's we saw nothing of any rebs that night but a pesky wildcat was prowling about my post the most of the night its yell's did not sound very pleasant! Its against orders to shoot unless at a reb but if I get a chance to take good aim at the beast I shall halt Mr wildcat and then fire. if the oficer's (officers) say anything I will make them believe that I thought it was a reb shure (sure)!

"Letter Written by Henry Welch." Henry Welch to His Aunt and Uncle. June 12, 1863. Accessed March 22, 2018.
[http://cwl.dhinitiative.org/islandora/object/HamiltonCivilWar:1093?solr_nav\[id\]=daa64f67a3c93642b041&solr_nav\[page\]=0&solr_nav\[offset\]=16](http://cwl.dhinitiative.org/islandora/object/HamiltonCivilWar:1093?solr_nav[id]=daa64f67a3c93642b041&solr_nav[page]=0&solr_nav[offset]=16).

Samuel Cabbie's Letter

Massachusetts
1863

Dear Wife i have enlisted in the army i am now in the state of Massachusetts but before this letter reaches you i will be in North Carlinia and though great is the present national dificulties yet i look forward to a brighter day When i shall have the opertunity of seeing you in the full enjoyment of fredom i would like to no if you are still in slavery if you are it will not be long before we shall have crushed the system that now opreses you for in the course of three months you shall have your liberty. great is the outpouring of the colered peopl that is now rallying with the hearts of lions against that very curse that has seperated you an me yet we shall meet again and oh what a happy time that will be when this ungodly rebellion shall be put down and the curses of our land is trampled under our feet i am a soldier now and i shall use my utmost endeavor to strike at the rebellion and the heart of this system that so long has kept us in chains . . . remain your own afectionate husband until death—Samuel Cabbie



"Samuel Cabbie Letter." Samuel Cabbie to Wife. 1863. Accessed March 22, 2018.
<https://www.civilwar.org/learn/primary-sources/samuel-cabbie-letter>.

Samuel Cabbie, a private in the Fifty-fifth Massachusetts Infantry (colored), was a slave before he joined the army. He was twenty-one years old.



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Letter Title	Description of the soldier	Location while writing	Insight given on a soldier's life	Major events in the war at this time	Other features of note