Life of a Civil War Soldier

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

AntietamNational Battlefield
P.O. Box 158
Sharpsburg, MD 21782

Life of a Civil War Soldier Lesson Plan

Introduction

Theme: This lesson plan transmits 19th Century soldiers' experiences to 21st Century students.

Goal: To help students learn about the life of a common soldier and the Battle of Antietam.

Objectives-Students will be able to:

-Compare and contrast the life of a 19th Century soldier to a modern soldier.
-Comprehend the significance of the Battle of Antietam.
-Identify the clothing and equipment of a Civil War Soldier.

Tips: Please make copies of the worksheets and handouts before class.

Grade Level: This lesson plan is designed for grades 4-6.

Curriculum Links: National Center for History in Schools, UCLA, United States Era 5, Civil War and Reconstruction (1850-1877).

What a Soldier Wore

Soldiers were generally issued a pair of wool pants with braces (suspenders), a cotton shirt, a sack coat, a forage cap or kepi, a pair of brogans (shoes), wool socks, a wool greatcoat (overcoat), a belt with belt buckle and cap pouch, a cartridge box for holding ammunition, a rifle, and bayonet.

You can show your students the photos of the Civil War soldiers and dress one student in the uniform that has been provided.

Explain that soldiers wore several layers of clothing and had to carry everything with them. The first layer of clothing a soldier would wear would be his cotton drawers (they do not have to wear these). Then the soldier would wear wool socks and a cotton shirt. The wool pants go on next, with the suspenders (braces) over the soldiers' shoulders. Next the soldier would put on the brogans (shoes) and sack coat.

The cartridge box, with the sling would go over the left shoulder and the box resting on the right hip. The belt goes over the cartridge box to hold everything in place. The cap pouch should be just in front of the cartridge box. The soldier would then put on the forage cap. The haversack and canteen goes over the right should and hangs on the left side.

Braces: Suspenders were used instead of a belt to hold up a man's pants.

Brogans: Leather shoes usually with heel plates to extend their wear.

Cap Pouch: Small pouch worn on belt. It held percussion caps for firing the musket.

Cartridge: Small paper tube filled with gun powder and a lead bullet (Minie Ball).

Cartridge Box: Leather pouch with attached sling, worn over the shoulder that contained 40 rounds of ammunition (cartridges).

Drawers: Long, lightweight cotton (or flannel in winter) 19th Century underwear.

Forage Cap or Kepi: Dark blue wool uniform cap with leather brim.

Haversack: Tarred canvas bag that a soldier carried keepsakes from home, personal belongs, and three days worth of food when on the march.

What a Soldier Ate

A **ration** is the amount of food authorized for one soldier (or animal) for one day. The Confederate government adopted the official US Army ration at the start of the war, although by the spring of 1862 they had the reduce it.

According to army regulations for camp rations, a Union soldier was entitled to receive daily 12 oz of pork or bacon or 1 lb. 4 oz of fresh or salt beef; 1 lb. 6 oz of soft bread or flour, 1 lb. of hard bread, or 1 lb. 4 oz of cornmeal. Per every 100 rations there was issued 1 peck of beans or peas; 10 lb. of rice or hominy; 10 lb. of green coffee, 8 lb. of roasted and ground coffee, or 1 lb. 8 oz of tea; 15 lb. of sugar; 1 lb. 4 oz of candles, 4 lb. of soap; 1 qt of molasses. In addition to or as substitutes for other items, desiccated vegetables, dried fruit, pickles, or pickled cabbage might be issued.

The marching ration consisted of 1 lb. of hard bread, 3/4 lb. of salt pork or 1 1/4 lb. of fresh meat, plus the sugar, coffee, and salt. The ration lacked variety but in general the complaints about starvation by the older soldiers was largely exaggerated.

Generally the Confederate ration, though smaller in quantity after the spring of 1862 and tending to substitute cornmeal for wheat flour, was little different. But the Confederate commissary system had problems keeping rations flowing to the troops at a steady rate, thus alternating between abundance and scarcity in its issuances.

Soldiers of both armies relied to a great extent on food sent from home and on the ever present Sutler. *"The Civil War Dictionary" by Mark M. Boatner III*

A Day in the Life of a Soldier

Imagine you are no longer a student. You have joined the army as a private in the artillery. As a private in the Confederate army, you will be paid $132 a year, or $11 each month. You will be paid $156 a year, or $13 each month, if you are a Union soldier. Your enlistment (membership) in the army will last for three years.

Shortly after enlisting you are sent to a place called the Camp of Instruction (basic training. The Camp of Instruction will last several weeks. In the Camp, you will attend the School of the Soldier. This means instructors will teach you how to stand at attention, salute, march, and perform many of the other duties of a soldier.

As a soldier, you are on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You day will generally go like this:

5:00 a.m. A bugler will sound (play) "reveille" on a bugle. Everyone must get up, get dressed and prepare for morning roll call.

5:15 a.m. The bugler sounds "assembly" and everyone falls in for roll call.

6:00 a.m. The next bugle call is "breakfast call."

7:00 a.m. "Fatigue call" is played telling the soldiers to prepare for inspection. You must make sure your musket, uniform, bunk, and barracks are clean.

8:00 a.m. After inspection, the bugler plays "drill call." For the next four hours, until noon, you will practice all the things you learned at the Camp of Instruction.

12:00 p.m. "Dinner call" is sounded and you are allowed to eat your lunch.

1:00 p.m. "Drill call" is sounded again. Until 4:00 p.m. you drill, drill, and drill.

4:00 p.m. You will spend this time cleaning your equipment, barracks, cannons, and the fort.

6:00 p.m. "Attention" is called to give you a few minutes to get ready for roll call. Next, the bugler plays "assembly" and everyone falls in for dress parade roll call. This means everyone is in full uniform. You are carrying your musket and wearing all your equipment.

7:00 p.m. The bugler now plays "assembly of the guard." Those soldiers assigned to guarding the fort begin performing this duty. The remaining soldiers eat their evening meal and relax.

8:30 p.m. - "Attention" is played followed by "assembly." At this time roll call is taken and you are dismissed.

9:00 p.m. - "Tattoo" is sounded. This means everyone must go to bed. Your day is finally over.

Discussion Questions and Activities

Discussion questions:

1) How does the life of a Civil War Soldier compare to the life of a modern soldier. How are their uniforms, food, and daily activities the same or different?

2) How would eating the same food every day during the Civil War affect your health?

3) Disease killed more people during the Civil War that bullets. How would different aspects of camp life make soldiers more vulnerable to disease?

4) What were the three main phases of the Battle of Antietam? Why was the battle important?

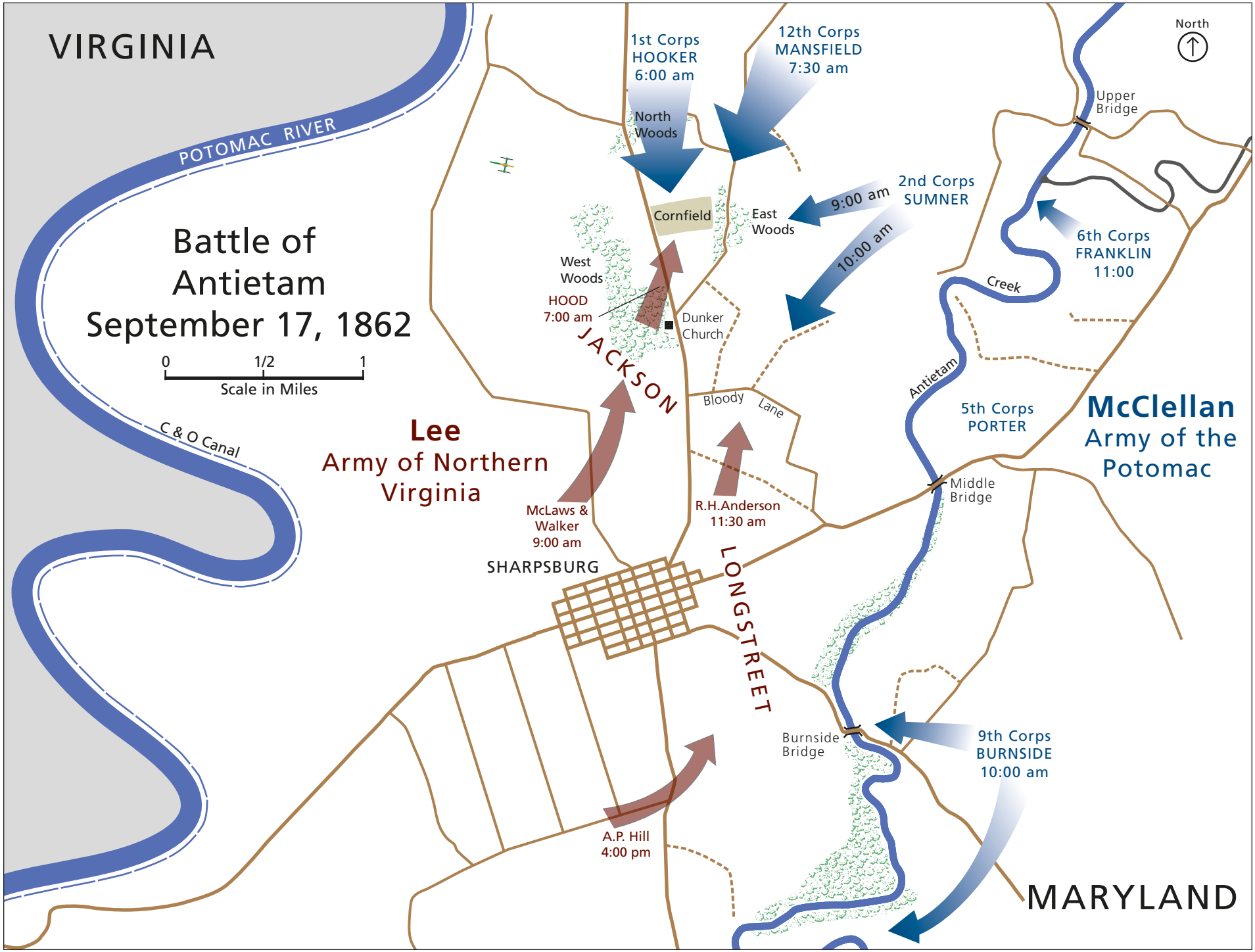
5) What proclamation did President Lincoln issue after the battle?

Activities:

Union privates were paid $13 per month until after the final raise in 1864, when they got $16. Confederate privates made $11 dollars per month until their pay was raised to $18.00 per month in 1864. Research how much food, clothing, and other prices were during the Civil War. Have the students discuss what types of extras they would have bought from the sutlers in addition to what the army issued them and how much they would have sent home to their families.

Have the students look at the photographs of one of the soldiers. Have them imagine what this soldier did during the Civil War and what their experience was like. Have them write a short biography about that soldier.

Have the students read two entries from the "Letters and Diaries of Soldiers and Civilians." Have them write a letter home as a soldier experiencing the war or possibly a civilian or doctor helping to take of the wounded.


VIRGINIA
POTOMAC RIVER
Battle of Antietam September 17, 1862
0 1/2 1
Scale in Miles
C & O Canal
Lee
Army of Northern Virginia
McLaws & Walker 9:00 am
SHARPSBURG
HOOD 7:00 am
JACKSON
West Woods
Cornfield
East Woods
North Woods
1st Corps HOOKER 6:00 am
12th Corps MANSFIELD 7:30 am
9:00 am
2nd Corps SUMNER
10:00 am
Dunker Church
Bloody Lane
R.H.Anderson 11:30 am
LONGSTREET
A.P. Hill 4:00 pm
Burnside Bridge
9th Corps BURNSIDE 10:00 am
Antietam Creek
Middle Bridge
5th Corps PORTER
Upper Bridge
6th Corps FRANKLIN 11:00
McClellan
Army of the Potomac
North
MARYLAND

The Battle of Antietam

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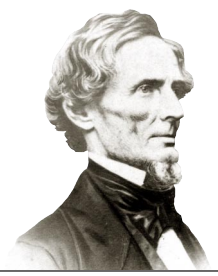
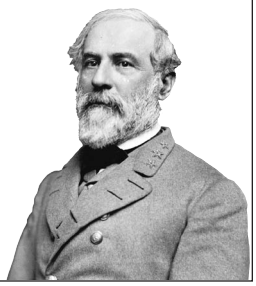
Dawn approached slowly through the fog on September 17, 1862. As soldiers tried to wipe away the dampness, cannons began to roar and sheets of flame burst forth from hundreds of rifles, opening a twelve hour tempest that swept across the rolling farm fields in western Maryland. A clash between North and South that changed the course of the Civil War, helped free over four million Americans, devastated Sharpsburg, and still ranks as the bloodiest one-day battle in American history.



"…we are driven to protect our own country by transferring the seat of war to that of an enemy who pursues us with a relentless and apparently aimless hostility."
Jefferson Davis
September 7, 1862

"The present seems to be the most propitious time since the commencement of the war for the Confederate army to enter Maryland."
General R.E. Lee
3 September1862

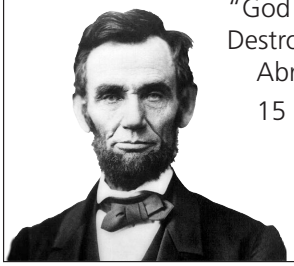


The Battle of Antietam was the culmination of the Maryland Campaign of 1862, the first invasion of the North by Confederate General Robert E. Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia. In Kentucky and Missouri, Southern armies were also advancing as the tide of war flowed north. After Lee's dramatic victory at the Second Battle of Manassas during the last two days of August, he wrote to Confederate President Jefferson Davis that "we cannot afford to be idle." Lee wanted to keep the offensive and secure Southern independence through victory in the North; influence the fall mid-term elections; obtain much needed supplies; move the war out of Virginia, possibly into Pennsylvania; and to liberate Maryland, a Union state, but a slave-holding border state divided in its sympathies.

After splashing across the Potomac River and arriving in Frederick, Lee boldly divided his army to capture the Union garrison stationed at Harpers Ferry. Gateway to the Shenandoah Valley, Harpers Ferry was a vital location on the Confederate lines of supply and communication back to Virginia. The 12,000 Union soldiers at Harpers Ferry threatened Lee's link south. Gen. Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson and about half of the army were sent to capture Harpers Ferry. The rest of the Confederates moved north and west toward South Mountain and Hagerstown, Maryland.

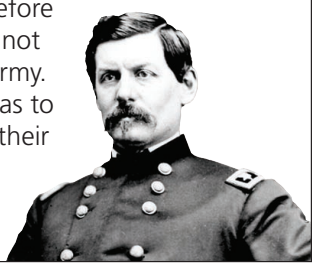
Back in Washington D.C., President Abraham Lincoln turned to Major General George B. McClellan to protect the capital and respond to the invasion. McClellan quickly reorganized the demoralized Army of the Potomac and advanced towards Lee. The armies first clashed on South Mountain where on September 14 the Confederates tried unsuccessfully to block the Federals at three mountain passes – Turner's, Fox's and Crampton's Gaps.

Following the Confederate retreat from South Mountain, Lee considered returning to Virginia. However, with word of Jackson's capture of Harpers Ferry on September 15, Lee decided to make a stand at Sharpsburg. The Confederate commander gathered his forces on the high ground west of Antietam Creek with Gen. James Longstreet's command holding the center and the right while Stonewall Jackson's men filled in on the left. The Confederate position was strengthened with the mobility provided by the Hagerstown Turnpike that ran north and south along Lee's line; however there was risk with the Potomac River behind them and only one crossing back to Virginia. Lee and his men watched the Union army gather on the east side of the Antietam.



"God bless you and all with you. Destroy the rebel army if possible."
Abraham Lincoln
15 September 1862

"…if we defeat the army arrayed before us, the rebellion is crushed, for I do not believe they can organize another army. But if we should be so unfortunate as to meet with defeat, our country is at their mercy."
Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan
11 September 1862



Thousands of soldiers in blue marched into position throughout the 15th and 16th as McClellan prepared for his attempt to drive Lee from Maryland. McClellan's plan was, in his words, to "attack the enemy's left," and when "matters looked favorably," attack the Confederate right, and "whenever either of those flank movements should be successful to advance our center." As the opposing forces moved into position during the rainy night of September 16, one Pennsylvanian remembered, "…all realized that there was ugly business and plenty of it just ahead."

The twelve hour battle began at dawn on the 17th. For the next seven hours there were three major Union attacks on the Confederate left, moving from north to south. Gen. Joseph Hooker's command led the first Union assault. Then Gen. Joseph Mansfield's soldiers attacked, followed by Gen. Edwin Sumner's men as McClellan's plan broke down into a series of uncoordinated Union advances. Savage, incomparable combat raged across the Cornfield, East Woods, West Woods and the Sunken Road as Lee shifted his men to withstand each of the Union thrusts. After clashing for over eight hours, the Confederates were pushed back but not broken, however over 15,000 soldiers were killed or wounded.

While the Union assaults were being made on the Sunken Road, a mile-and-a-half farther south Union Gen. Ambrose Burnside opened the attack on the Confederate right. His first task would be to capture the bridge that would later bear his name. A small Confederate force, positioned on higher ground, was able to delay Burnside for three hours. After taking the bridge at about 1:00 p.m., Burnside reorganized for two hours before moving forward across the arduous terrain—a critical delay. Finally the advance started only to be turned back by Confederate General A.P. Hill's reinforcements that arrived in the late afternoon from Harpers Ferry.

Neither flank of the Confederate army collapsed far enough for McClellan to advance his center attack, leaving a sizable Union force that never entered the battle. Despite over 23,000 casualties of the nearly 100,000 engaged, both armies stubbornly held their ground as the sun set on the devastated landscape. The next day, September 18, the opposing armies gathered their wounded and buried their dead. That night Lee's army withdrew back across the Potomac to Virginia, ending Lee's first invasion into the North. Lee's retreat to Virginia provided President Lincoln the opportunity he had been waiting for to issue the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. Now the war had a dual purpose of preserving the Union and ending slavery.

Freedom at Antietam

"In giving freedom to the slave, we assure freedom to the free—honorable alike in what we give and what we preserve. We shall nobly save, or meanly lose, the last best hope of earth."
-Abraham Lincoln

As the glowing sun set over the bloody fields and finally brought an end to the fighting at Antietam, the Civil War became a different war. Five days after the battle, armed with pen and paper, Abraham Lincoln changed the course of the war when he issued the preliminary draft of the Emancipation Proclamation.

The proclamation reflected Lincoln's new way of thinking about the conflict. Until this time it was seen as a rebellion, a fight to preserve the Union without touching slavery. Now Lincoln promised to crush the Confederacy by destroying slavery, the basis of its economy and society. The North was now waging a moral crusade to free the slaves. While the Emancipation Proclamation reflected Lincoln's high-minded morality, the president was under great pressure to act. Congress was urging emancipation. Escaped slaves were fleeing to the Union army as it advanced in the South, complicating military operations. The enlistment of black Americans as soldiers could give the Union's ailing war machine a much-needed boost.

Forever free, but when?

Lincoln's preliminary proclamation, issued on September 22, 1862, declared that on New Year's Day 1863 slaves in areas then "in rebellion against the United States shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free." For areas not deemed to be in rebellion, slavery would be unchanged. The final proclamation, issued January 1, 1863, identified those areas "in rebellion." They included virtually the entire Confederacy, except areas controlled by the Union army. The document notably excluded the so-called border states of Maryland, Kentucky, Delaware, and Missouri where slavery existed side by side with Unionist sentiment. In areas where the U.S. government had authority, such as Maryland and much of Tennessee, slavery went untouched. In areas where slaves were declared free — most of the South — the federal government had no effective authority.

By the summer of 1862, Congress was pushing for emancipation. Now Lincoln's proclamation, a vital step on the gradual path to freedom for American slaves, articulated emancipation as the government's new policy. Although his famous proclamation did not immediately free a single slave, African Americans saw Lincoln as a savior. Official legal freedom for the slaves came in December 1865 with

the ratification of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution abolishing slavery.

Political Tightrope

Like everything else in Lincoln's administration, the slavery issue was fraught with political pitfalls. On one hand Lincoln was under pressure to attack slavery from Congress and from some of his own generals. Lincoln was beholden to the border states where some slave owners were loyal Union men. Lincoln was afraid to seize their private property (their slaves) and lose those states to the Confederacy, so he exempted them from his Emancipation Proclamation. The timing of the proclamation was also political. Lincoln penned his first copy in July 1862, when Union armies were losing one battle after another. Secretary of State William Seward persuaded Lincoln that emancipation then would look like the last measure of an exhausted government. Lincoln decided to wait for a victory on the battlefield. Antietam gave him his opportunity.

Military Necessity

After the proclamation, Union troops became an army of liberation as they advanced in the South. During the war, one out of every seven Confederate slaves (about 500,000) escaped to the Union army. The South was thus deprived of desperately needed labor to till fields, build forts, and fix railroads. The Emancipation Proclamation also paved the way for the enlistment of black Americans as soldiers. During the summer of 1862, as Lincoln pondered emancipation, the North was facing a shortage of soldiers. Lincoln even offered volunteers enlistments for only nine months instead of the usual three years, hoping that a shorter enlistment would attract more recruits. One solution was to enlist African Americans, whether free men from the North or freed slaves from the South.

Despite deep and widespread prejudice, the Union began recruiting African Americans in earnest in early 1863. Believed by many at the time to be physically and spiritually unfit as fighting men, they were initially confined to non-combat jobs. African-American soldiers proved their mettle on the battlefield. They distinguished themselves in May 1863 when they bravely attacked across open ground against Port Hudson on the Mississippi River in Louisiana. A month later, black troops made another valiant charge when they stormed Fort Wagner near Charleston, S.C. This famous attack was depicted in the movie *Glory.* About 186,000 African-Americans served in the Union army, making up about ten percent of Union army forces. The North's advantage in military manpower was a critical factor in its victory in the Civil War. Some northerners supported Lincoln's measure on moral grounds. Many endorsed emancipation because they favored any action that would help defeat the enemy and end the war. "At last the outspread wings of the American eagle afford shelter and protection to men of all colors, all countries, and all climes," said Frederick Douglass, the African American statesman, "and the long oppressed black man may honorably fall or gloriously flourish under the Star - Spangled Banner."

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Life of a “Civil War Soldier” Student Worksheet

Fill in the chart below after looking at different items of clothing a Civil War soldier would have worn. After each item of clothing write down two or more words in column that describe the item of clothing. (You can touch the uniform). In the next column write down what the item is made of. In the last column write down an item that you wear today that is similar to the item the soldier would have worn long ago.

Item of clothing from the Civil War	**Descriptive words**	**Material**	**Item of clothing from today that is used for the same purpose**
Example: ***Drawers***	*Warm, Soft*	*Cotton*	*Underwear*
Sack Coat			
Brogans			
Forage Cap			

Examine the items in the haversack. Write down two things that are the same on the modern soldier as the Civil War soldier and two things that are different.

Same:	**Different:**
Same:	**Different:**

“President Lincoln’s Visit to Antietam Battlefield”

President Lincoln visited Antietam Battlefield on October 1-4, 1862 just days after the terrible battle of September 17 was over. He met with General McClellan, the man in charge of the Union Soldiers. One job the president has is “Commander-in-Chief.” This means he is in charge of the American military and all the soldiers including the generals. President Lincoln also visited both the Union and Confederate soldiers who had been hurt during the battle. After the Battle of Antietam was over, President Lincoln decided it was time to issue the Emancipation Proclamation. This proclamation would bring an end to slavery and freedom to many African-Americans. President Lincoln’s actions many years ago to free enslaved people made it possible over 150 years later for the American people to elect their first African-American President.

Look at the photograph of President Lincoln meeting with General McClellan in 1862.

Name two ways President Lincoln could have travelled from Washington, DC to Sharpsburg, Maryland in 1862.

Name two ways the President can travel from Washington, DC to another place today.

Write down three emotions that you think a president would experience when visiting the soldiers.

- **Title:** [Antietam, Md. President Lincoln and Gen. George B. McClellan in the general's tent]
- **Creator(s):** Gardner, Alexander, 1821-1882, photographer
- **Date Created/Published:** 1862 October 3.
- **Medium:** 1 negative: glass, wet collodion.

Common Soldier Activity

Instructions: You are a Civil War soldier getting ready for your first major campaign. You may be "on the road" for several months — sometimes marching over twenty miles/day, perhaps fighting several major battles with the enemy. The army has issued you a U.S. Model 1861 "Springfield" Rifle-Musket, bayonet, belt, bayonet scabbard, cap box, cartridge box, haversack and canteen. These weigh 13 1/2 pounds. In addition, you will be expected to carry five pounds of ammunition. From the list of personal items, decide what else you will take with you on your marches. Answers will vary.

List of Personal Items

Item	Weight of Item	(X) Quantity	(=) Total Weight
Pants	1 lb.	_____	_____
Forage cap	1/2 lb.	_____	_____
Shirt	1/2 lb.	_____	_____
Jacket	3 lbs.	_____	_____
Socks	1/2 lb. (pair)	_____	_____
Shoes	2 lbs.	_____	_____
Cup	1/4 lb.	_____	_____
Utensils	1/4 lb.	_____	_____
Cooking Pan	1 lb.	_____	_____
Canteen	4 lbs.	_____	_____
Soap	1/4 lb.	_____	_____
Shaving razor	1/4 lb.	_____	_____
Comb	1/8 lb.	_____	_____
Blanket	3 lbs.	_____	_____
Candle	1/4 lb.	_____	_____
Playing Cards	1/8 lb.	_____	_____
Bible	1/2 lb.	_____	_____
Stationery	1/4 lb.	_____	_____
"Dog" Tent	12 lbs.	_____	_____
Knife	1/4 lb.	_____	_____
Coat	4 lbs.	_____	_____
Rifle, cartridges, etc. required by Army			+ 18 lbs.

TOTAL WEIGHT _____

How much are you going to carry? If you would like, use a scale, backpack, and weights (books?) and load your total weight into a backpack and walk around the room to see what it would feel like to be a common soldier on the march. (Imagine marching 20 miles with that weight on your shoulders).

[Portrait of Pvt. George A. Stryker, New York Regiment, U.S.A.], Library of Congress

Portrait of Pvt. William S. Askew, Company A, (Newman Guards) 1st Georgia Infantry, C.S.A., Library of Congress

[Enoch Hooper Cook, Jr., Pvt, Co. H. 38th Alabama Infantry, C.S.A., half-length portrait, facing front holding rifle], LOC

Johnny Cook

Johnny Cook enlisted as a bugler with Battery B, 4th United States Artillery. During the Battle of Antietam, 15 year-old Johnny served as a messenger. He and the other men in his unit came under heavy fire from Confederate soldiers along the Hagerstown Pike near the infamous Cornfield. When Johnny returned from helping his wounded commander to safety, he discovered that the other men serving on the cannon had been killed. Johnny began to load the cannon by himself until General Gibbon rode by, saw what was happening, jumped off his horse, and began to help the brave young cannoneer. The Confederate soldiers came dangerously close, but Johnny and General Gibbon were able to man the cannon and push them back towards the West Woods.

For his bravery at Antietam, Johnny Cook became one of the youngest soldiers ever to receive the Medal of Honor. His official Medal of Honor citation reads: "Volunteered at the age of 15 years to act as a cannoneer, and as such volunteer served a gun under a terrific fire of the enemy." The Medal of Honor is our Nation's highest recognition for bravery. Johnny went on to serve at Gettysburg and several other battles. After the war, he moved back to his hometown of Cincinnati, Ohio. He died in 1915 and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

Johnny Cook
and the Medal
of Honor

Antietam National Battlefield
Letters and Diaries of Soldiers and Civilians

Please Note: These primary sources retain the wording, spelling, punctuation, and lack of punctuation as written by the eyewitnesses of the Battle of Antietam and those who experienced its aftermath.

Teachers: This handout contains excerpts of eyewitness accounts, diary entries, and letters for you to read to your students or to assign to your students as an independent reading activity. Afterwards, have the students imagine that they are Civil War soldiers or civilians. Have them compose their own journal entries or letters to loved ones.

4th N.C. Volunteers

September 30th, 1862

Camp near Bunker Hill

Dear Father, Mother and Sisters,

It has been some time since I wrote to you all. I have heard from you two or three times. I have been in Maryland since I wrote to you and have been in two very hard battles in Maryland and came out unhurt. I see a great deal and could tell you more than I write if I could see you.

Our regiment did not have many wounded nor killed but a good many taken prisoners…Our regiment used everything we had. I have no blanket nor any clothes but what I have got. I have got the suit on that you sent me. They came in a good time. I like them very well. If I had a good pair of shoes I would be the best clothed man in the regiment.

Pa, I want you to have me a pair of boots made. Those shoes you had made for me ripped all to pieces. Our regiment used everything we had. I have no blanket nor any clothes but what I have got. I have got the suit on that you sent me. They came in a good time. I like them very well. If I had a good pair of shoes I would be the best clothed man in the regiment.
Cousin Dr. Hill is wounded in the knee very bad. I have nothing more for my paper is scarce. Write soon to your only son.

W. Adams

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Sunday Sept. 21, 1862

Dear Folks,

On the 8th we struck up the refrain of "Maryland, My Maryland!" and camped in an apple orchard. We went hungry, for six days not a morsel of bread or meat had gone in our stomachs - and our menu

consisted of apple; and corn. We toasted, we burned, we stewed, we boiled, we roasted these two together, and singly, until there was not a man whose form had not caved in, and who had not a bad attack of diarrhea. Our under-clothes were foul and hanging in strips, our socks worn out, and half of the men were bare-footed, many were lame and were sent to the rear; others, of sterner stuff, hobbled along and managed to keep up, while gangs from every company went off in the surrounding country looking for food. . . Many became ill from exposure and starvation, and were left on the road. The ambulances were full, and the whole route was marked with a sick, lame, limping lot, that straggled to the farmhouses that lined the way, and who, in all cases, succored and cared for them. . .

In an hour after the passage of the Potomac the command continued the march through the rich fields of Maryland. The country people lined the roads, gazing in open-eyed wonder upon the long lines of infantry . . .and as far as the eye could reach, was the glitter of the swaying points of the bayonets. It was the ragged Rebels they had ever seen, and though they did not act either as friends or foes, still they gave liberally, and every haversack was full that day at least. No houses were entered - no damage was done, and the farmers in the vicinity must have drawn a long breath as they saw how safe their property was in the very midst of the army.

Alexander Hunter

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Captain Bachelle had a fine Newfoundland dog, which had been trained to perform military salutes and many other remarkable things. In camp, on the march, and in the line of battle, the dog was his constant companion. The dog was by his side when he fell.

Union Major R. R. Dawes, 6th' Wisconsin

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William Child, Major and Surgeon with the 5th Regiment New Hampshire Volunteers

September 22, 1862 (Battlefield Hospital near Sharpsburg)

My Dear Wife;

Day before yesterday I dressed the wounds of 64 different men - some having two or three each. Yesterday I was at work from daylight till dark - today I am completely exhausted - but stall soon be

able to go at it again.

The days after the battle are a thousand times worse than the day of the battle – and the physical pain is not the greatest pain suffered. How awful it is - you have not can have until you see it any idea of affairs after a battle. The dead appear sickening but they suffer no pain. But the poor wounded mutilated soldiers that yet have life and sensation make a most horrid picture…

W.C.

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11th Connecticut (Fought at Burnside Bridge)

Sunday Sept. 21, 1862

Sharpsburg, MD

Dear Wife,

Your letters 3 in number reached me 1st evening, and it gave me much pleasure to hear from you. I should have written you before, but did not know for a certainty where to direct. You will doubtless have learned the details of this great battle before this reaches you. The loss of the 11th is dreadful.

I followed in the rear of the Regt. Until it reached the fatal bridge that crosses the creek, this bridge is composed of 3 stone arches and the stream is about the size of that one just west of Berlin. The enemies sharpshooters commenced the action being posted in trees and under cover of a wall on the high ground on the other side of the creek…I took off my coat to dress wounds and met with a great loss.

Some villain riffled my pockets of several packages of medicine, my fine tooth comb and what I valued most my needle book containing the little lock of hair you put in. No money would have bought it. It was not the value that I cared for, but the giver. Can you replace it. I should be pleased with your photograph which you spoke of…

Give me love to all our friends.

Very Truly yours

George

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October 14, 1862 Harper's Ferry

Dear Brothers and Sisters

I wish that I was home today; I have got a very mean job. You know that we lost our good Captain and now they think they must put me on guard, and I sit right down on the ground and write just as fast as I can to let you know how I am getting along. Not much you had better believe. My hearing is not as good as it was when I left Madison, and my health has not been good since I was on this hill not far from Harper's Ferry, but I keep about and train all the time is wanted of me. It seems rather hard to be a soldier, but I have got to be one after all, I think. But I can tell you one thing: If I ever live to get home, I won't be another I can tell you, but I suppose that you are making some cider. If you get a chance to send me anything, send me some cider put up in bottles, and some apples and a little bottle of pain killer,

and don't try to send me any cake or anything that will get smashed, but I want anything that will keep a week. I have not any news to send you today because I wrote to you the other day and suppose that you will get that first. Give my love to all the neighbors and tell Mister Hill that I received his letter and was glad to hear from him and will try and answer him as soon as possible.

Tell little Charley that I think a great deal of his letter. I used to say that he could read better than I could read better than I could and he beats me at writing and spelling both, and I could read it very fast, his letter. I am glad to hear that your crops are as good and I hope that all the folks are good because we don't have nothing to eat here, and so I hopes you have got something to eat there. I will try and answer as fast as I can, but won't you answer me as fast you can because that it makes me feel pleased to hear from home. Give my love to all the folks and tell them I want to see them all.

From a brother,

John Redfield, 13th New Jersey

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A strong, sturdy-looking Reb was coming laboriously on with a Yank of no small proportions perched on his shoulders. Wonderingly I joined the group surrounding and accompanying them at every step, and then I learned why all this especial demonstration; why the Union soldiers cheered and again cheered this Confederate soldier, not because of the fact alone that he had brought into the hospital a sorely wounded Federal soldier, who must have died from hemorrhage had he been left on the field, but

from the fact, that was palpable at a glance, that the Confederate too was wounded. He was totally blind; a Yankee bullet had passed directly across and destroyed both eyes, and the light for him had gone out forever. But on he marched, with his brother in misery perched on his sturdy shoulders. He would accept no assistance until his partner announced to him that they had reached their goal - the field hospital. It appears that they lay close together on the field, and after the roar of battle had been succeeded by that painfully intense silence that hangs over a hard-contested battlefield; where the issue is yet in doubt, and where a single rifle shot on the skirmish line falls on your ear like the crack of a thousand cannon. The groans of the wounded Yank reached the alert ears of his sightless Confederate neighbor, who called to him, asking him the nature and extent of his wounds. On learning the serious nature of them, he said: "Now, Yank, I can't see, or I'd get out of here mighty lively. Some darned Yank has shot away my eyes, but I feel as strong otherwise as ever. If you think you can get on my back and do the seeing, I will do the walking, and we'll sail into some hospital where we can both receive surgical treatment." This programme had been followed and with complete success.

We assisted the Yank to alight from his Rebel war-horse, and you can rest assured that loud and imperative call was made for the surgeons to give not only the Yank, but his noble Confederate partner, immediate and careful attention.

J. O. Smith

(Roulette Farm Field Hospital)

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Union private of Lieutenant White's Company (Account of his own experiences in the fighting near the Cornfield)

My ramrod is wrenched from my grasp as I am about to return it to its socket after loading. I look for it behind me, and the Lieutenant passes me another, pointing to my own, which lies bent and unfit for use across the face of a dead man. A bullet enters my knapsack just under my left arm while I am taking aim. Another passes through me haversack, which hangs upon my left hip. Still another cuts both strings of my canteen, and that useful article joins the debris now thickly covering the ground. Having lost all natural feeling I laugh at these mishaps as though they were huge jokes, and remark to my nearest

neighbor that I shall soon be relieved of all my trappings. A man but a few paces from me is struck squarely in the face by a solid shot. Fragments of the poor fellow's head came crashing into my face and fill me with disgust. I grumble about it as though it was something that might have been avoided.

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September 26, 1862 (In a hospital near the Battlefield of Antietam)

Dear Wife,

Thinking perhaps that you would like to hear from me. I now have a few moments in writing to you to let you know of an accident which happened to me on the evening of the 18th. One of the 135 P.V. boys accidentily shot me through the back. The ball passed through my lungs and lodged some where and is in me yet. I suffered considerable pain for the few first days but now I am more comfortable now and am not in much pain. Our brigaid did not get along from Washington soon enough to be engaged in the Battle of the day before. There was a hard fought battle and many lives lost on both sides but I think the loss of the Rebels were more than double our loss. I hope that you will not grow uneasy about me for I am doing as well as can be and have good care for brother William is with me taking care of me and as soon as I get well enough I am coming home and to be with you again, I do not want you to write until you hear from me again for a letter would not come through. I am now 10 miles from Middletown Md and as soon as we get moved I will write to you to let you know where we are moved to. As I do not think of any thing more that will interest you I will bring this letter to a close and write to you again in a few days.

From your affectionate and loving husband,

Erred Fowles

(Erred Fowles died on October 6, 1862. He is buried in Grave #3724 in the cemetery at Antietam. His daughter, Ida May Fowles, was born October 10, 1862.)

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September 21, 1862

8th Florida Volunteer Infantry Regiment

Shepherdstown, Jefferson County Virginia

My dear wife,

I write to let you know that I am now in this place badly wounded, was shot on

Wednesday the 17th near Sharpsburg Washington County Maryland, about three miles from this place. The ball entered my left shoulder and lodged in my brest here it still is. I want you or my brother to come to see me Come by Richmond in Virginia then on to Winchester where you will only be twenty two miles from here. You can then get a conveyance to this place probably by the railway which comes down to Harpers Ferry where a connection is made to a station called Kearneys Ville that is only five miles from here and by the time can here from me and get to this region of country the stage which runs to that place in times of quiet about here, may be running again. **We** have had hard marching to do, and desperate fighting, our Captain was killed the same day I was shot.

I remain as ever your

Devoted husband

Bird B Wright

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From the memoirs of Henry Kyd Douglas

I was crossing the main street of town, when I saw a young lady, Miss Savilla Miller, whom I knew, standing on the porch of her father's house, as if unconscious of the danger she was in. At the time the firing was very heavy, and ever anon a shell would explode over the town or in the streets, breaking windows, knocking down chimneys, perforating houses and roofs. Otherwise the village was quiet and deserted, as if it was given up to ruin. It gave one an odd sensation to witness it. Knowing the great danger to which Miss Savilla was exposed, I rode up to protest and ask her to leave.

"I will remain here as long as our army is between me and the Yankees," she replied with a clam voice, although there was excitement in her face. "Won't you have a glass of water?"

Before I had time to answer, she was gone with her pitcher to the well and in an instant she was back again with a glass in her hand. As she approached me, a shell with a shriek in its flight came over the hill, passed just over us down the street and exploded not far off. My horse, "Ashby," sank so low in his fright that my foot nearly touched the curb, some cowardly stragglers on the other side of the street,

trying to hide behind a low porch, pressed closer to the foundations of the house, but over the face of the heroic girl only a faint shadow passed through the house from the gable, she took refuge for a little while in the cellar; but when the battle ended, she was still holding the fort.

A "green" Confederate soldier described the shelling of Sharpsburg that took place during the artillery bombardment of September 16: Every shell went screaming, whistling, whining over our heads, and not a few burst near by us. Sometimes shell after shell would burst in quick succession over the village. . . . None of our soldiers were in the town, except the cooks and a few stragglers who hid themselves in the cellars as soon as the bombardment began, and told us afterwards of the wonderful escapes they made from 'them bursting lamp-posts.

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