U.S. Civil War FAQ, Part 1/2

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Newsgroups: alt.war.civil.usa,soc.history.war.us-civil-war,alt.answers,soc.answers,news.answers
Subject: U.S. Civil War FAQ, Part 1/2
Supersedes: <civil-war-usa/faq/part1_927896080@rtfm.mit.edu>
Followup-To: alt.war.civil.usa,soc.history.war.us-civil-war
Date: 29 Jun 1999 11:46:48 GMT
Organization: University of South Alabama
Expires: 13 Aug 1999 11:47:37 GMT
Message-ID: <civil-war-usa/faq/part1_930656857@rtfm.mit.edu>
Reply-To: jsanders@jaguar1.usouthal.edu
Summary: This article contains a list of frequently asked questions and
         answers about the Civil War in the United States (1861-1865).
X-Last-Updated: 1999/02/22

Archive-name: civil-war-usa/faq/part1
Posting-frequency: monthly
Last-modified: 1999/2/19
Version: 6.10

U.S. Civil War FAQ v6.10 (19 Feb 1999)

This is part 1 (of 2) of a collection of answers to frequently asked
questions (and some not-so-frequently, too!) about the Civil War. It is
posted on or about the 20th of each month. It was compiled by Justin M.
Sanders (jsanders@jaguar1.usouthal.edu) who tried to be as complete and
accurate as possible, but who is definitely human and has probably made
several errors.

Please send comments, suggestions, or corrections to the address above.

The topics covered are (a plus means a new entry, an asterisk means a
    revised entry):
                ---Part 1---
Section 0: alt.war.civil.usa, soc.history.war.us-civil-war, and net stuff
    Q0.1: What are these groups anyway?
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Section 1: Secession and the beginning of the War
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           that brought it into the Union?
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           the war?
Section 2: Battles and fighting forces

Answers

Section 0: alt.war.civil.usa, soc.history.war.us-civil-war, and
net stuff

Q0.1: What are these groups anyway?

   The USENET newsgroup alt.war.civil.usa was created in the Spring
of 1992 at the suggestion of Patrick L. Dunn (Thanks!). The charter of
alt.war.civil.usa reads:
     The purpose of this group is the discussion of topics
   related to the United States Civil War (1861-65). Topics can
   involve military, political, social, economic or other factors
   which impacted upon this period of history. This newsgroup will
   also serve as a source of information, assistance, or referral
   for persons seeking guidance via responses from more
   knowledgeable subscribers.

The USENET newsgroup soc.history.war.us-civil-war is a moderated group
created in June 1995. Andrew McMichael spearheaded the drive to create
the group (thanks Andrew!). Its purpose is very similar to
alt.war.civil.usa; the whole panoply of topics related to the U.S. Civil
War may be discussed. However, it is moderated. This means that articles
are screened by volunteer moderators to insure that they remain on topic,
do not excessively quote other articles, are not flames, and do not
contain racial or other attacks. A more detailed explanation of the
moderation policy is posted in the group at the beginning of each month.
It is also available at the soc.history.war.us-civil-war Web Page at

http://www.geocities.com/BourbonStreet/Delta/7002

Q0.2: Are the FAQ and Reading List archived somewhere?

    Yes, the latest versions of the FAQ and Reading List are available for
anonymous ftp at:

ftp://rtfm.mit.edu/pub/usenet/news.answers/civil-war-usa/faq/part1
ftp://rtfm.mit.edu/pub/usenet/news.answers/civil-war-usa/faq/part2
ftp://rtfm.mit.edu/pub/usenet/news.answers/civil-war-usa/reading-list

    An HTML version of this FAQ and Reading List is at

http://www.geocities.com/BourbonStreet/Delta/7002/faqidx.htm

The HTML version is a little behind the posted version, since it takes
some time to make the conversion.

Q0.3: Where can I find Civil War images, documents, and so forth on-line?

[Your humble FAQ maintainer asks the net cruisers among you to keep him
notified of changes and errors.]
    A large collection of e-texts relating to the Civil War including the
Confederate Constitution, secession ordinances, Lincoln's Inaugurals, the
Emancipation Proclamation, lists of CS Navy ships, the autobiography of
CSA Gen. D.H. Maury, plus images of famous people on both sides are
available at the anonymous ftp archive site

ftp://sunsite.unc.edu/pub/academic/history/marshall/military/civil_war_usa

Here is list of URL's that will lead to dozens more
[Compiled with assistance from Steven Rohr]:

The American Civil War Homepage (Univ of Tennessee)
http://sunsite.utk.edu/civil-war/

U.S. Civil War Center (LSU)
http://www.cwc.lsu.edu

Civil War Page (Jim Janke)
http://homepages.dsu.edu/jankej/civilwar/civilwar.htm

Civil War Information, Documents, and Archives (Bryan Boyle)
http://www.access.digex.net/~bdboyle/cw.html

Civil War Resources
http://www.usafa.af.mil/dfeng/cwarres.htm

The Gettysburg Discussion Group
http://www.arthes.com:1030/gettys.html

Causes of the Civil War site (Jim Epperson)-- lots of documents from
  the period leading to secession)
http://members.aol.com/jfepperson/causes.html

The Library of Congress has a Civil War image collection at
http://rs6.loc.gov/amhome.html

An archive of articles previously posted in alt.war.civil.usa (since
  about 1 Jan 1996) and soc.history.war.us-civil-war (since about 1 Apr
  1996) is available at
http://www.dejanews.com

Section 1: The beginning of the War

Q1.1:   When did state X secede?

Before Lincoln's call for troops, the following states seceded:
 1. South Carolina, Convention passed Ordinance of Secession, 20 Dec 1860
 2. Mississippi, Convention passed Ordinance of Secession, 9 Jan 1861
 3. Florida, Convention passed Ordinance of Secession, 10 Jan 1861
 4. Alabama, Convention passed Ordinance of Secession, 11 Jan 1861
 5. Georgia, Convention passed Ordinance of Secession, 19 Jan 1861
 6. Louisiana, Convention passed Ordinance of Secession, 26 Jan 1861
 7. Texas, Convention passed Ordinance of Secession, 1 Feb 1861, to
    take effect 2 Mar 1861 provided it was ratified by the voters
    on 23 Feb 1861 (approved 46,153 to 14,747). Texas admitted to the
    Confederacy, 2 Mar 1861.

After Lincoln's call for troops on 15 Apr 1861, the following states
seceded:
 8. Virginia, Convention rejected secession 4 Apr 1861, Convention
    passed Ordinance of Secession 17 Apr 1861 and ratified C.S.A.
    Constitution, both subject to ratification of voters 23 May 1861
    (approved 132,201 to 37,451). Virginia admitted to CSA 7 May 1861.
 9. Arkansas, Convention rejected secession ordinance on 18 Mar 1861
    and called for referendum in August, Convention passed Ordinance
    of Secession 6 May 1861. Arkansas admitted to C.S.A. 20 May 1861.
 10. North Carolina, Voters narrowly rejected (47,705 to 47,611) calling a
     Convention 28 Feb 1861. Legislature called Convention 1 May 1861.
     Convention passed Ordinance of Secession 20 May 1861. North Carolina
     provisionally admitted to CSA 17 May 1861.
 11. Tennessee, Voters rejected (69,772 to 57,708) calling a Convention
     9 Feb 1861. On 6 May 1861 Legislature passed "Declaration of
     Independence" and ratification of CSA Constitution subject to
     referendum on 8 June 1861 (approved 104,471 to 47,183). Tennessee
     admitted to CSA 17 May 1861.

The following two states never seceded via any mechanism provided by a

"regular" government:
   12. Missouri, Convention rejected secession 9 Mar 1861; Convention
       reconvened in July 1861 and declared offices of governor and
       legislature vacant; rump legislature, meeting in Neosho, passed
       Ordinance of Secession 31 Oct 1861 and requested admission to CSA.
       Missouri admitted to CSA 28 Nov 1861.
   13. Kentucky, southern sympathizers called for convention Oct 1861,
       Convention passed Ordinance of Secession 18 Nov 1861. Kentucky
       admitted to the CSA 10 Dec 1861.

Sources: Civil War Day-by-Day; Official Records, Ser. IV, Vol 1; D.W.
Crofts, *Reluctant Confederates* (1989); W.L. Buenger, *Secession and the
Union in Texas* (1984).

Q1.2: Was there a declaration of war or something?

   1. The United States never declared war. This was in keeping with its
position that the rebel states did not form a new nation, rather they were
states in which a rebellion was taking place. Abraham Lincoln issued a
Proclamation that an insurrection existed in the states of SC, GA, FL, AL,
MS, LA, and TX on 15 Apr 1861 (Messages & Papers of the Presidents, vol. V,
p3214). He also proclaimed a blockade of Southern harbors on 19 Apr
1861, and the date of this proclamation was taken by the Supreme Court in
several cases to be the official beginning of the insurrection.
   2. The Confederate States passed "An Act recognizing the existence of
war between the United States and the Confederate States" on 6 May 1861.
This act exempted MD, NC, TN, KY, AR, MO, DE, and the territories of AZ
and NM, and the Indian Territory south of KS.

Sources: McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom; Official Records, Ser. IV,
 Vol. 1

Q1.3: Was Texas given a right to secede by the Treaty of Annexation
        that brought it into the Union?

   Texas *was not* brought into the Union by treaty. There was an attempt
to do this in 1844, but the U.S. Senate refused to ratify the treaty.
Texas was annexed by a Joint Resolution of Congress in 1845.
   Neither the failed annexation treaty nor the Resolution of Annexation
reserved any right for Texas to secede. In fact, the treaty would have
made Texas a mere territory, but the Joint Resolution gave immediate
statehood. In addition, the Resolution provided that Texas might divide
itself into as many as five states, if it so desired. In 1845, Texas did
not avail itself of this provision of the Resolution, and it is not clear
whether the provision would still be operable after that time.

Q1.4: Did the Supreme Court ever rule on the legality of secession?

   Yes, it did-- after the war. Perhaps the clearest statement is in
the case Texas v. White (74 U.S. 700). Chief Justice Chase, writing
for the court in its 1869 decision, said:

   "The Constitution, in all its provisions, looks to an indestructible
Union, composed of indestructible States. ... Considered, therefore, as

transactions under the Constitution, the Ordinance of Secession, adopted
by the convention and ratified by a majority of the citizens of Texas, and
all the Acts of her Legislature intended to give effect to that ordinance,
were absolutely null. They were utterly without operation in law. ... Our
conclusion, therefore, is, that Texas continued to be a State, and a State
of the Union, notwithstanding the transactions to which we have referred."

The entire decision is available on the Web at
http://supct.law.cornell.edu/supct/cases/historic.htm

Q1.5: What were the populations of the states at the outbreak of the war?

   The following statistics are from J.C.G. Kennedy, Supt. of Census,
Population of the United States in 1860 (Washington, G.P.O., 1864)

	State	White	Free Colored	Slave	Total[1]	Military[2]
	AL	526,271	2,690	435,080	964,201	99,967
	AR	324,143	144	111,115	435,450	65,231
	CA	323,177	4,086	0	379,994	169,975
	CT	451,504	8,627	0	460,147	94,411
	DE	90,589	19,829	1,798	112,216	18,273
	FL	77,747	932	61,745	140,424	15,739
	GA	591,550	3,500	462,198	1,057,286	111,005
	IL	1,704,291	7,628	0	1,711,951	375,026
	IN	1,338,710	11,428	0	1,350,428	265,295
	IA	673,779	1,069	0	674,913	139,316
[3]	KS	106,390	625	2	107,206	27,976
	KY	919,484	10,684	225,483	1,155,684	180,589
	LA	357,456	18,647	331,726	708,002	83,456
	ME	626,947	1,327	0	628,279	122,238
	MD	515,918	83,942	87,189	687,049	102,715
	MA	1,221,432	9,602	0	1,231,066	258,419
	MI	736,142	6,799	0	749,113	164,007
	MN	169,395	259	0	172,023	41,226
	MS	353,899	773	436,631	791,305	70,295
	MO	1,063,489	3,572	114,931	1,182,012	232,781
	NH	325,579	494	0	326,073	63,610
[4]	NJ	646,699	25,318	18	672,035	132,219
	NY	3,831,590	49,005	0	3,880,735	796,881
	NC	629,942	30,463	331,059	992,622	115,369
	OH	2,302,808	36,673	0	2,339,511	459,534
	OR	52,160	128	0	52,465	15,781
	PA	2,849,259	56,949	0	2,906,215	555,172
	RI	170,649	3,952	0	174,620	35,502
	SC	291,300	9,914	402,406	703,708	55,046
	TN	826,722	7,300	275,719	1,109,801	159,353
	TX	420,891	355	182,566	604,215	92,145
	VT	314,369	709	0	315,098	60,580
[5]	VA	1,047,299	58,042	490,865	1,596,318	196,587
[5]	VA1	691,424	55,269	472,494	1,219,299	129,786
[5]	WV	355,875	2,773	18,371	377,019	66,801
	WI	773,693	1,171	0	775,881	159,335
	Territories					76,214 (all terr.)
	CO	34,231	46	0	34,277	
	DK	2,576	0	0	4,837	
	NE	28,696	67	15	28,841	

```
[6] NV       6,812          45          0       6,857
[7] NM      82,979          85          0      93,516
    UT      40,125          30         29      40,273
    WA      11,138          30          0      11,594
    DC      60,763      11,131      3,185      75,080      12,797
```

The bottom line:

```
              White     Free Colored    Slave      Total      Military
   Union*  21,475,373    355,310      432,650  22,339,989  4,559,872
   CSA      5,447,220    132,760    3,521,110   9,103,332  1,064,193
       *includes MO and KY, DC, and territories
```

The following statistics are from J.C.G. Kennedy, Supt. of Census,
Preliminary Report on the Eighth Census, 1860 (Washington, G.P.O., 1862)
and from Annie Abel, _The American Indian as Slaveholder and
Secessionist_ (1915, repr 1992: U of Nebraska Pr)

```
   The Five Civilized Tribes
      Tribe      White    Free Colored  Slave     Indian
      Choctaw    802         67        2,297     18,000
      Cherokee   713         17        2,504     21,000
      Creek      319        277        1,651     13,550
      Chickasaw  146         13          917      5,000
      Seminole     8         30            0      2,267
```

The following statistics are from J.C.G. Kennedy, Supt. of Census,
Agriculture in the United States in 1860 (Washington: G.P.O., 1864)
[ratios calculated by JMS]

```
State    Slave-      Slaveholders in   slaves per
         holders     white pop. (%)    slaveholder
 AL      33,730        6.4                12.9
 AR      11,481        3.5                 9.7
 DE         587        0.65                3.1
 FL       5,152        6.6                12.0
 GA      41,084        6.9                11.2
 KY      38,645        4.2                 5.8
 LA      22,033        6.1                15.0
 MD      13,783        2.7                 6.3
 MS      30,943        8.7                14.1
 MO      24,320        2.3                 4.7
 NC      34,658        5.5                 9.6
 SC      26,701        9.2                15.1
 TN      36,844        4.4                 7.5
 TX      21,878        5.2                 8.3
 VA  [5] 52,128        5.0                 9.4
 VA1 [5] 48,523        7.0                 9.7
 WV  [5]  3,605        1.0                 5.1
 Total  393,967        4.9 [8]            10.0
```

    The number of free households in the 15 slave states was 1,515,605.
Since the census generally counted only one slaveholder per household, the
number of slaveholding households will be roughly equal to the number of
slaveholders. So there were roughly 393,967 slaveholding households in
1860. Taking the ratio shows that 26% of Southern households were
slaveholding households.

Notes:

[1] Total includes other racial/ethnic groups.
[2] White males aged 18-45
[3] KS became a state in 1861; it was a territory during the Census.
[4] "Slaves" are "colored apprentices for life."
[5] VA includes the present state of WV, VA1 is just the present state of
    VA, and WV is just the present state WV. The whole of VA in 1860
    (i.e. VA1 plus WV) was used in later calculations.
[6] NV became a state in 1864.
[7] White includes "half-breeds."
[8] White population used was the total of the 15 states (WV included
    with VA) in the table.

Section 2: Battles and fighting forces

Q2.1: What are the alternative names of various battles?

    Union   Confederate
Bull Run, VA   Manassas   21 July 1861
Wilsons Creek, MO   Oak Hills   10 Aug 1861
Logan's Cross Roads, KY Mill Springs   19 Jan 1862
Pea Ridge, AR   Elkhorn Tavern 6-8 Mar 1862
Pittsburg Landing, TN   Shiloh   6-7 Apr 1862
Fair Oaks, VA   Seven Pines   31 May-1 Jun 1862
Bull Run, VA (2nd)   Manassas   29-30 Aug 1862
Antietam, MD   Sharpsburg   17 Sept 1862
Chaplin Hills, KY   Perryville   8 Oct 1862
Stones River, TN   Murfreesboro   30 Dec 1862-2 Jan 1863
Elk Creek, Ind. Terr.   Honey Springs   17 July 1863
Ocean Pond, FL   Olustee   20 Feb 1864
Sabine Cross Roads, LA Mansfield   8 Apr 1864
Opequon Creek, VA   Winchester   19 Sept 1864

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*Q2.2: Who were the U.S. Generals at the out-break of the war, and who
        were the first Generals appointed after the war began?
            [Contributed by Carlton Andrews (andrews@mls.ed.ray.com)]

        USA Generals - Prior to Army Expansion

Name   Rank *Commission Date   Age 7/1/61
----   ---- ---------------   ----------
Winfield Scott   M.G. 6/25/1841   75
John Ellis Wool   B.G. 6/25/1841   77
David Emanuel Twiggs   B.G. 6/30/1846
  [Twiggs was dismissed 3/1/1861 for handing/surrendering all men and
   equipment in Texas to the state of Texas]
William Selby Harney   B.G. 6/14/1858   60
  [Harney was removed from his command in Missouri 29 May 1861. He was
   not reassigned and retired 1 Aug 1863.]
Joseph E. Johnston   QM-B.G. 6/28/1860 [staff appt.]
Edwin Vose Sumner   B.G. 3/16/1861   64

              ARMY EXPANSION May 1861

              Regular Commissions

```
George Brinton McClellan    M.G.   5/14/1861                    34
John Charles Fremont        M.G.   5/14/1861                    48
Henry Wager Halleck         M.G.   5/19/1861                    46
Joseph K. F. Mansfield      B.G.   5/14/1861                    57
Irvin McDowell              B.G.   5/14/1861                    42
Robert Anderson             B.G.   5/15/1861                    56
William Starke Rosecrans    B.G.   5/16/1861                    41

              Volunteer Commissions
John Adams Dix              M.G.   5/16/1861                    62
Nathaniel Prentiss Banks    M.G.   5/16/1861                    45
Benjamin Franklin Butler    M.G.   5/16/1861                    42
37 officers                 B.G.   5/17/1861
```

* Commission Date is date to rank from, not date appointed.

Q2.3: Who were the first C.S. Generals appointed?

[31 Aug 1861 will be the cut-off date for this answer.]
   Generals in the CS Army (all were appointed on 31 Aug 1861, to date
from the date given below):
```
 Samuel Cooper                  16 May 1861 (Adjt & Insp. Gen)
 Albert Sidney Johnston         30 May 1861
 Robert Edward Lee              14 Jun 1861
 Joseph Eggleston Johnston       4 Jul 1861
 Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard 21 Jul 1861
```

Prior to 16 May 1861, the highest rank in the CS Regular Army was
Brigadier General (5 were authorized):
```
 Samuel Cooper                  16 Mar 1861 (Adjt & Insp. Gen)
 Robert Edward Lee              14 May 1861
 Joseph Eggleston Johnston      14 May 1861
```

In addition to the CS Regular Army, there was the Provisional Army (PACS).
Which had the ranks of Brigadier and Major General.
Major Generals (PACS):
```
 David Emanuel Twiggs  22 May 1861
 Leonidas Polk         25 Jun 1861
```
The first Brigadier General (PACS) was
```
 Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard  1 Mar 1861
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at least 35 others appointed between Mar and Aug 1861

The rank of Lieutenant General was authorized for the PACS on 18 Sep 1862.

Q2.4: What were the naval ranks during the Civil War?

[Information from Richard Staley with amendments from Justin T. Broderick]

 Admiral (grade created for David Farragut 25 Jul 1866)
 Vice Admiral (grade created 21 Dec 1864, Farragut being the
   first to hold this rank)
 Rear Admiral (created 16 July 1862, the only flag rank that has been
   maintained continuously to this day)
 Flag Officer (title created 16 Jan 1857, replaced by Commodore on 16 Jun
   1862)
```

Commodore (courtesy title until 16 Jul 1862 when the grade was
  formally adopted to replace Flag Officer)
Captain
Commander
Lieut. Commander (grade created 16 Jul 1862)
Lieutenant
Master (originally "sailing master"; after the period was changed to
  Lieutenant Junior Grade.)
Ensign (title for a passed Midshipman after 16 Jul 1862)
Passed Midshipman (Midshipman who had passed his examination for
  promotion to Lieutenant;  called Ensign after 1862 although the term
  continued in use.)
Midshipman (grade given undergraduates of the U.S. Naval Academy;
  not strictly in the line of the Navy in the latter part of the century).
Master's Mate
Shipped or Rated Master's Mate (usually a warrant officer).

References:
_Todd's American Military Equippage: 1851-1870_
W.B. Cogan, _Dictionary of American Admirals_, US Naval Institute Press,
1989
C.G. Reynolds, _Famous American Admirals_, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1978
C.O. Paullin, "Naval Administration, 1842-1861", _USNI Proceedings_, vol.
33
J.C. Tily, _The Uniforms of the United States Navy_, Thomas Yoseloff,
1964

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Q2.5:  What were the organization and strengths of various units in the
       armies?

[Compiled with the assistance of Stephen Schmidt
 <schmidsj@unvax.union.edu> and Dominic J. Dal Bello
 <tecump@fido.ucsb.edu>]

(A good source of information is Richard Zimmermann, _Unit Organizations
of the Civil War_.)

   First, always remember that most Civil War units in the field were only
at anywhere between 20% to 40% of their full strength. Thus, while in
theory a company contained 100 men, and would be recruited at that size,
by the time they reached the army they'd be down to 60 or so and after the
first battle down to 40 or so. The full-strength sizes are given below, so
remember to knock them down by 50% or more when reading about units
engaged in battles.
   Second, due to casualties among the officers, frequently units would
find themselves commanded by an officer one or two grades below the rank
he should have for the job (e.g., a regiment commanded by a lieutenant
colonel or major).
   Third, keep in mind that in the early stages of the war and in the more
remote areas (such as the Trans-Mississippi), unit organizations tended to
deviate more from the norm.  What follows will be the ideal, your mileage
may vary.

I. Infantry.

COMPANY.

The basic unit is the company, commanded by a captain
   100 men = 2 platoons = 4 sections = 8 squads
A company has the following officers (commissioned and non-coms):
   Captain (1), 1st. Lieut. (1),  2nd. Lieut. (1)
   1st Sgt. (1), Sgts. (4) and Corporals (8).
When the company was divided into platoons, the captain commanded one and
the 1st Lt. the other.  There was a sergeant for each section, and a
corporal for each squad.  The 1st Sgt. "ran" the whole company.

BATTALION and REGIMENT.
   Battalions and regiments were formed by organizing companies together.
In the volunteers (Union and Confederate), 10 companies would be organized
together into a regiment.  The regiment was commanded by a colonel. A
regiment has the following staff (one of each):
   Col.; Lt. Col.; Major; Adjutant (1st Lt); Surgeon (maj.);
   Asst Surgeon (capt.); Quartermaster (lieut); Commissary (lieut);
   Sgt-Major; Quartermaster Sgt.
There were also volunteer organizations containing less than 10 companies:
if they contained from 4-8 companies, they were called battalions, and
usually were commanded by a major or lieutenant colonel.
   The (Union) Regular regts organized before the war (1st-10th) were 10
company regiments like the volunteers.  When the NEW Regular regts. were
authorized, a different organization was used. The new Regular regts were
organized 8 companies to a battalion and 2 battalions to the regiment.
Thus new Regular regts contained 16 companies.  These regiments frequently
fought as battalions rather than as single regiments.  However, often the
2nd battalion could not be recruited up to strength, in which case they
fought as a single regiment.

BRIGADE.
   A brigade is formed from 3 to 6 regiments and commanded by a brigadier
general.  The South tended to use more regiments than the North, thus
having bigger brigades.  At some times in the war, some artillery would be
attached to the infantry brigade: see the Artillery section below. Each
brigade would also have a varying number of staff officers.

DIVISION.
   A division is commanded by a major general and is composed of from 2 to
6 brigades. In the North usually 3 or 4, but in the South normally 4 to 6.
Thus, a Southern division tended to be almost twice as large as its
Northern counterpart, if the regiments are about the same size. At some
times in the war, some artillery or, less often, cavalry might be
attached: see the Cavalry and Artillery sections below. Each division
would also have a varying number of staff officers.

CORPS.
   A corps is commanded by a major general (Union) or a lieutenant general
(Confederate) and is composed of from 2 to 4 divisions. Again the North
tended to have 2 or 3, while the South had 3 or 4.  Each corps would also
have a varying number of staff officers.

ARMIES.
   Corps within a geographic department were aggregated into armies. The
number of corps in an army could vary considerably: sometimes an army
would contain only 1 corps and other times as many as 8. Armies were
commanded by major generals in the North, and usually by full generals in
the South. Corps and armies usually had some artillery and cavalry

attached: again, see below.  Each army would also have a varying number of
staff officers.

To summarize, the nominal strengths and commanding officers were:
```
 UNIT   MEN Commander Example NAME
 Company   100 Captain   Co. A (but not J, looks like I)
 Regiment   1000 Colonel   5th N.Y. Infantry
 Brigade   4000 Brig Genl 3rd Brigade (US) **
 Division 12000 Maj. Genl Cleburne's Division (CS) **
 Corps   36000 Maj. Genl* IIIrd Corps (US) **
 Army   Maj. Genl+ Army of Tennessee (CS) ++
  * or Lt. Gen. in the South
  + or Gen. in the South
  ** Numerical designation was used in the North, the Commander's
     name was typically used in the South, e.g. Forrest's Corps.
  ++ The South mainly used the name of the area or state where the
     army operated. Rivers were used primarily as names in the
     North, e.g. Army of the Cumberland.
```

II. Cavalry.

COMPANY or TROOP.
   The basic unit is the troop or company, organized pretty much the same
way as an infantry company.  The nominal strength was 100.  If the troop
dismounted for battle, 1 man in 4 would stay behind to guard the horses.

BATTALION and REGIMENT.
   In the Union volunteers, 12 cavalry troops form a regiment commanded by
a colonel.  The Confederate Cavalry used a 10 company regiment. Again, the
(Union) Regulars had a different organization: in the Regular units 2
troops form a squadron, 2 squadrons form a battalion, and 3 battalions
form a regiment.  And again, there were groups of 4-8 companies of
volunteer cavalry which are called battalions.

BRIGADE, DIVISION, and CORPS.
   Initially, each Union cavalry regiment was assigned to an infantry
division.  The Confederates brigaded their cavalry together. The Union
eventually adopted this organization as well. As the war progressed, both
sides formed cavalry divisions (again the South took the lead).  The North
also formed cavalry corps, and the South later also adopted this
innovation.

III. Artillery.

BATTERY.
   The basic unit of artillery is the battery, which has 4 to 6 guns, is
commanded by a captain, and has 4 lieutenants, 12 or so noncoms, and 120
or so privates. It typically had 4 guns in the South and 6 guns in the
North. Batteries were a subdivided into gun crews of 20 or so, and into
sections of 2 gun crews, 2 or 3 sections per battery. A gun crew was
commanded by a sergeant and a section by a lieutenant.

BATTALION or BRIGADE.
   At the start of the war, each side assigned one battery attached to
each infantry brigade, plus an artillery reserve under the army commander.
By mid-1862, larger organizations were used.  The basic unit contained 3
or 4 batteries of artillery; it was called a battalion in the South and a

brigade in the North (same unit, just a different name) and it was
commanded by a colonel, lieutenant colonel, or major.

ARTILLERY RESERVE.
    After 1862, it was typical for each infantry division to have an
artillery battalion attached, and each corps or army to have a reserve of
two to five battalions. Each division's artillery usually fought along
side the infantry, while the corps/army reserves were used to form the
massed batteries. The artillery reserve was commanded by a brigadier
general or colonel.

IV. Other Units.

LEGION.
    The Confederacy organized a number of units known as legions. They were
mixed-arms units, usually containing 6-8 companies of infantry, 2-3
companies of cavalry, and a couple artillery pieces. Generally as soon as
they reached the battlefield they were broken apart, the infantry forming
a battalion, the cavalry being reassigned to some other unit, and the
artillery joining the reserve.  Sometimes the infantry retained the name
legion, more frequently it got renamed to battalion.

MARINES.
    Both sides had a rudimentary Marine Corps which fought along the
Atlantic coast. The US Marines contained about 3,000 men and were
organized into companies. There doesn't seem to have been any organization
higher than that: they rarely operated in larger units than a few
companies anyway. The Confederate Marines had a strength of about 300 men
organized in four companies and was nominally commanded by a colonel.

HEAVY ARTILLERY.
    The Union organized some "heavy artillery" units, regiments containing
10 artillery batteries (about 1800 men) which had training both as
infantry and as artillerists.  They were organized in much the same way as
infantry units, but were quite a bit larger to provide enough men to run
the guns.  Originally raised to man the defenses of Washington, in 1864
they joined the Grant's army, and then served more as infantry.

ENGINEERS.
    Both sides raised special regiments of engineers. They were organized
similarly to the infantry regiments and were expert in building forts,
entrenchments, bridges, and similar military construction. They were
combatants but usually didn't do any fighting, instead continued to work
on construction even when under fire.

SHARPSHOOTERS.
    Both sides raised special sharpshooter units. The Confederate units
tended to be independent companies, but the Union raised two sharpshooter
regiments (Berdan's 1st and 2nd US Sharpshooters). These regiments were
organized as infantry.  Usually they were assigned to skirmish duty, or
they would be allowed to roam around the battlefield to find good
positions from which to shoot at enemy officers in the rear.

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Q2.6:  What is the difference between grapeshot and canister?

    Here is a list of the various ammunitions used in the war. The main

division is between shot (did not carry its own explosive charge) and
shell (carried an explosive charge).

For shot:
 1. solid shot-- the standard cannon ball (or bullet shape in the in case
of a rifled gun)
 2. canister-- smaller shot placed in a sheet iron cylinder.  The
cylinder disintegrated when the gun was fired.
 3. grape-- smaller shot layered between iron plates and held together by
a central bolt. Presumably the bolt broke when the gun fired allowing the
shot to scatter.  Examples of grape shot can be seen in [2] pp. 76, 76,
and 191.
 4. quilted grapeshot-- small shot covered in canvass and tied up with
rope which a gave it a quilted look.  An example of quilted shot can be
seen in [2], p. 177.
 5. chain shot-- two shot joined by a chain.  Used to destroy rigging of
sailing ships.
 6. bar shot-- two shot joined by a solid bar (like a dumbbell).  Used to
destroy rigging to sailing ships.
 7. red hot shot-- shot heated before firing.  Used to start fires on
ships.

For shell:
 1. standard shell-- hollow iron projectile filled with explosive
 2. shrapnel shell-- hollow iron projectile filled with explosive and with
small solid shot which scattered upon explosion.  The spherical version
ofthis was called "spherical case" or simply "case." The term "case" was
also used for the name of the class of rounds which scattered small shot,
thus canister, grape, and spherical case were all classified together as
"case shot." (confusing, isn't it?)
   Shell was fitted with either a timed fuse (which ignited the charge
after some fixed delay) or a percussion fuse (which ignited the charge
upon impact).

   Standard solid shot and standard shell were primarily for destruction
of materiel (viz. fortifications or ships).  Canister, grape, quilted shot
and shrapnel were used against personnel.  However, there were also
varieties of (non-shrapnel) shell designed for use against personnel (the
hollow was shaped so the shell would split into a relatively few large
pieces about the size of small shot).

References:
 [1] "Ammunition", in Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th ed (1911).
 [2] F.T. Miller, ed., "Photographic History of the Civil War," vol. 5,
      "Forts and Artillery" (1957 edition).
 [3] "Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War"

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Q2.7:  How did prisoner exchanges and paroles work?

   Prisoner exchanges were a way for captors to avoid the responsibility
and burden of guarding, housing, feeding, clothing, and providing medical
care for POW's.
   Exchange of prisoners began with informal agreements between the
commanders of the armies after particular battles, but the practice was
codified by a cartel between the USA and CSA in July 1862.  The cartel was
suspended by the US in May 1863, but individual commanders again arranged

exchanges and paroles until the US called a halt to all exchanges in early
1864.  When the CSA agreed to correct some irregularities in its earlier
exchanges, and when it agreed to treat captured black troops equally with
whites, the 1862 cartel was again put into operation in early 1865.
   Commissioners of exchange were appointed by each government, and they
exchanged and compared lists and computed how many on each side were to be
exchanged.  There were official points where prisoners were to be taken
for exchange:  City Point, VA in the East and Vicksburg in the West.
Equal ranks were exchanged equally, and higher ranks could be exchanged
for some number of lower ranks according to an agreed upon list of
equivalents (e.g. 1 colonel equaled 15 privates). If one side still had
prisoners left, after the other side had exhausted its supply of prisoners
by exchange, those excess prisoners would be released on parole.
   Paroled prisoners were returned to their side, but were prohibited by
an oath of honor from taking up arms or performing any duty that soldiers
normally performed (like garrison or guard duty) until they were properly
exchanged.  Generally each side maintained parole camps where their
paroled soldiers were kept while they awaited exchange, but in other cases
the parolee was allowed to return home until exchanged.
   [Sources: Boatner, Civil War Dictionary; Miller, ed, "Prisons and
     Hospitals", vol 8, Photographic History of the Civil War]

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Q2.8:  What did a brevet promotion indicate, and what did an officer gain
by being given a brevet?

[By Stephen Schmidt (schmidsj@unvax.union.edu) with assistance from Jim
Epperson and J.M. Sanders]

A brevet rank was an honorary promotion given to an officer (or
occasionally, an enlisted man) in recognition of gallant conduct or other
meritorious service.  They served much the same purpose that medals play
today (our modern system of medals did not exist at the time of the Civil
War).

A brevet rank was almost meaningless in terms of real authority. For
example, a major who was a brevet colonel collected the pay of a major,
wore the uniform of a major, could not give orders to lieutenant colonels,
and was only eligible for commands that normally fell to majors. But he
was allowed to use the title of colonel in his correspondence.

In addition, there were some unusual circumstances where brevet rank
carried authority.  For instance, when a force consisted partly of Regular
troops and partly of state militia, command would go to the officer with
the highest brevet rank (who might neither the highest ranking regular
officer nor the highest ranking volunteer!).  This came up during the
Mexican War on some occasions, and seems to have been designed to allow
Regular officers with brevets (implying experience) to assume command over
higher-ranking militia officers who had neither experience nor brevets.

An officer could also claim his brevet rank when serving on court-martial
duty. Since an officer cannot be tried by officers ranking lower than
himself, using brevet ranks allowed more people to qualify as possible
court members.

During the war itself, brevets were very difficult to get and were a sign
of valor, but on March 13, 1865, the War Department gave one brevet and

sometimes two to nearly every officer on duty with the army. This angered many officers and men, who saw it as trivializing the efforts of men who won brevets in combat. (J.L. Chamberlain mentions this in his memoirs, for instance.)

Like regular ranks, brevets were kept separately for the U.S. Volunteers and the U.S. Army. Thus one man could have four ranks: an actual Volunteer rank, a brevet Volunteer rank, an actual Regular rank, and a brevet Regular rank. Brevets in the Regular army were sometimes used to honor men who had already been brevetted Major General in the Volunteers and could not be brevetted again (in the Volunteers), as no brevet Lieutenant Generals were created during the war (Winfield Scott had been made Brevet Lieutenant General [of Regulars] during the Mexican War).

Brevet ranks were authorized for the Regular Army in the Articles of War of 1806; they were authorized for the US Volunteers on March 3, 1863. Partly as a result of dissatisfaction with the end-of-war brevet giveaway, brevet promotions were discontinued in 1869; although officers who had been given brevets before that date continued to use them. They were reinstated for the Spanish-American war and continued in use until after World War I.

The Confederate army did not award brevet promotions.

Sources: Boatner's *Civil War Dictionary*, the *Historical Times Encyclopedia of the Civil War*, the 1806 Articles of War, and a very helpful discussion of several Mexican War situations involving brevet ranks in *The Mexican War 1846-1848* by K. Jack Bauer.

*** End of Part 1 of U.S. Civil War FAQ ***

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Justin M. Sanders           "I shot an arrow into the air.  It fell
Dept. of Physics             to earth I know not where." --Henry
Univ. of South Alabama        Wadsworth Longfellow confessing
jsanders@jaguar1.usouthal.edu    to a sad ignorance of ballistics.
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Part1 - Part2

Send corrections/additions to the FAQ Maintainer:
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Last Update July 06 1999 @ 02:52 AM

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