FROM BALLROOM TO BATTLEFIELD

THE ROLE OF INTELLIGENCE IN THE CIVIL WAR
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This year on the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, there is a cascade of books, films, lectures, reenactments, and programs surrounding the events and significance of this tortured and bloody chapter in America's two centuries old saga. Throughout the war, marked by splintered families, divided loyalties, and casualties in the hundreds of thousands, each side maneuvered to gain an edge, an advantage that might change the course of the war to gain victory or avoid defeat.

That edge often lies in discovering the strengths and weaknesses of one's adversary, in learning his secret plans and subterfuges, and in seeking to deceive him. Today we call such knowledge intelligence and plans to deceive, covert action. The Civil War was rife with both. And as in military conflicts throughout history, the edge often depended on which side could win the race to develop winning technologies.

As a former Intelligence Officer, I vividly recall our strenuous efforts in the Central Intelligence Agency to develop leading edge communications technology during the Cold War. I was in the CIA unit engaged in clandestine operations to recruit Soviet officials as secret sources and to developing the technology for communicating with them secretly and securely. As the risk of working secretly with the CIA was often a matter of life and death to our sources, we in the Agency felt a special obligation to protect them at any cost. The Agency and its dedicated engineers and technical support staff worked tirelessly to develop new high tech, highly classified communications systems. In some cases those systems laid the groundwork for the later development of modern cell phone technology.

During the Civil War we see a similar race to develop winning technologies between the warring sides including the early glimmerings of technologies that would figure later in Twentieth Century intelligence-gathering.
Both sides attempted to use manned, helium-filled balloons to observe the battlefield from above, a technique that would evolve into camera-laden, reconnaissance aircraft in later wars and eventually into the supersonic, high-flying aircraft developed by the United States during the Cold War, a development that would prove a game changing “intelligence breakthrough” in the standoff between the United States and then Soviet Union. Today, of course, “overhead reconnaissance” technology has progressed even farther and can be seen in the pilotless drones hovering invisibly and undetected over suspected terrorist sites in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Another instance of Civil War efforts to master a winning technology was the crude but effective tapping of telegraph wires for information and deception during the Civil War, a technology that foreshadowed today’s formidable electronic surveillance capabilities used for intelligence and law enforcement. Only a hundred years later, of course, more refined but similar methods would be used in the intelligence exploitation of the newest information technology, the internet, it too having been originally developed for intelligence use.

In becoming familiar with some of the spies, intelligence technologies, and intelligence-gathering used during the Civil War, students will grasp the conflicted loyalties, hazardous missions, and competing technologies that characterize all armed conflicts from ancient times through our own Civil War and today’s engagements in the Middle East.
INTRODUCTION

Research and information about the Civil War abounds. Students learn details about significant battles as well as the major and minor players on both sides. But what about the “secret history?” What about the spies and the role of intelligence in the war? Although much information surrounding the role of spies during the Civil War has been lost, destroyed, or fabricated and embellished, there are still important and integral stories to tell. When the lens of intelligence and spying is used to view the events leading up to, during and even since the Civil War, a new history emerges. One that reveals battlefield strategies, loyalties, and secrets.

These classroom lesson-plans and resources will allow your students to see the Civil War in a new light. Both the Confederacy and the Union used intelligence tradecraft including code-breaking, deception, and covert surveillance. The stories behind the development and use of new spy tradecraft technologies such as telegraph wire tapping, enciphering techniques, and aerial surveillance will be explored. Add to that the stories of the individuals, including black slaves who risked their lives and reputations to uncover and disseminate vital intelligence throughout the war and you and your students will have a fresh perspective on the Civil War and the war winning and losing implications of spying and intelligence.

Please note that we did not specify grade level or the amount of time it will take to complete the lessons. Our intention was to give as much flexibility to you, the classroom educator, to use all or parts of the lessons and tailor them to your students’ needs and time allotment as you see fit. However, most of the lessons are designed to be completed in one class period (45 minutes).
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*Cover Photo: Confederate General Braxton Bragg*
CIVIL WAR SPIES
AND SPYING
MISSION BRIEFING

Keeping a cover identity (a false identity) is one of the most difficult tasks that a spy must undertake in the field. In this activity, students take on the cover identity of a Civil War spy. They memorize their cover details and are then “interrogated” on those details to test their ability both to retain the information and to “do, think, and act” like their cover persona. The following pages contain one-page dossiers of Civil War spies. This list comprises only some of the spies who operated during the Civil War. However it provides a glimpse into the lives of different individuals who conducted intelligence collection, analysis, and/or distribution activities. If students can successfully maintain their cover, their spy will be able to enter enemy territory (or gain access to enemy forces).

OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

1. State the basic historic information about a Civil War spy who is their assigned cover identity.

2. Demonstrate imaginative and analytic thinking in their responses.

3. Discuss the role that their assigned historic spy played during the Civil War.

4. State the purpose of a cover identity in the world of spying.
PROCEDURE

1. Review the “Life of a Spy” graphic image (page 9) with the students—either by distributing the image to each student or displaying the image for the entire class to review together.

2. Discuss as a group what spies do and how they do it according to information depicted the graphic.

3. Introduce your students to the concept of living a cover identity. Inform them that they are going to take on the cover identity of a Civil War spy and will have to “live” their cover in order to enter enemy territory (or gain access to enemy forces).

4. Copy and distribute one dossier to each student (you can give more than one student the same dossier if necessary). Alternatively, you may want to have students read all the dossiers and choose one.

5. Have students read their dossier thoroughly and instruct them to “become” that person. They need to memorize their cover details and be familiar with their legend (the background information). They should think about what it would be like to really be this person—how would this person think, look, act, and feel in different situations? If students have trouble with memorization, you can limit the mission to just two or three cover details.

6. To strengthen their knowledge of their cover identity students should pair up and quiz each other on their cover details. Teachers can also serve as “pickets,” soldiers posted to keep an eye out for enemy forces or spies. They can question students on their cover details. Use the questions from the Keeping Your Cover Worksheet for the interrogation. Curveball questions can be added to test their understanding.

Note: If the information is not available on the dossier, students should be prepared to make up their answer “on the fly”—but their answers need to be consistent with their cover details.

MATERIALS

The Life of a Spy image from Harper’s Weekly October 24, 1863 (page 9)
Dossiers of Civil War Spies (pages 11 to 37)
Keeping Your Cover Worksheet (page 10)
KEY TERMS

COVER: The background information that supports a cover identity.

LEGEND: A spy’s claimed background or biography; usually supported by documents and memorized details.

POCKET LITTER: Items in a spy’s pocket (receipts, coins, theater tickets, etc.) that authenticity to his or her cover identity.

DOSSIER: A file containing detailed records on a particular person or subject.

MISSION DEBRIEFING

Discuss with your students the following:

- Was it difficult to memorize your cover details?
- What did it feel like to “lie” about who you are and be undercover?
- What do you think it was like to operate as a spy during the Civil War?
- How is it different/similar to what spies do today?

MISSION EXTENSIONS

1. Students can develop a disguise to transform their appearance to support their cover identity.

2. Students can fabricate or collect appropriate pocket litter (items found in their pocket or bag that helps support their cover identity and mission). These can include theater ticket stubs, train tickets, receipts, etc.

3. Because the dossiers represent real historic spies, students can conduct additional research on their cover identity. You can also issue extra “spy points” if students can link their cover to others in the dossier collection (describe how they are connected to each other i.e.: they worked with or against each other).
"The Life of a Spy" as published in Harper's Weekly October 24, 1863
KEEPING YOUR COVER WORKSHEET

Can your cover stand up to interrogation?

Read over your dossier and fill in the answer to these questions. Remember, there may be answers that you will have to make up “on the fly” because the information is not provided in the dossier or just not historically available.

What is your full name? ______________________________________________________

What is your cover or nickname? ______________________________________________

What is your birthdate? _______________________________________________________

Where were you born? _________________________________________________________

Where do you live now? ______________________________________________________

What is your profession? ______________________________________________________

What are the names of your immediate family members? __________________________

________________________________________

Name some people with whom you work? ________________________________________

________________________________________

Are you a Union or Confederate sympathizer? __________________________

________________________________________

Memorize your answers.
ARE YOU PREPARED TO BE QUESTIONED ON YOUR ABILITY TO REMEMBER YOUR COVER?
NAME: James Ewell Brown ("Jeb") Stuart
DATE OF BIRTH: February 6, 1833
PLACE OF BIRTH: Patrick County, Virginia
LOYALTY: Confederate
GENDER: Male
OCCUPATION: Confederate Army General

You are a native of Virginia who graduated from the US Military Academy at West Point in 1854 and became a cavalry officer in the United States Army. During your service to the United States you fought against Native Americans and participated in the capture of John Brown (a revolutionary abolitionist who fought against slavery) at Harper's Ferry. When Virginia seceded from the United States in 1861, you resigned from your position in the US Army and took a position in the Confederate Army.

At this time cavalry served two important functions for a commander. First, it was good for launching surprise attacks because its mobility allowed it to move rapidly around an enemy. Second, the cavalry served as the eyes and ears of a commander—in essence his intelligence force—able to detect approaching enemies early and thereby help protect the Army. Calvary could also roam far and wide looking for the enemy force, probing the enemy’s weak points, or scouting out unknown territory.

During the Peninsula Campaign in Virginia, General Robert E. Lee asked you to conduct reconnaissance (a close inspection to determine an enemy’s capability or weakness) to determine the vulnerability of the Union Army. You set out with 1,200 cavalrymen on the morning on June 12, 1862 and not only found that the Union was vulnerable, but you actually led your force on complete circumnavigation of the Union Army (encircling them without their knowledge) returning on July 15th. This stunt made you a Confederate celebrity.

In June 1863, General Lee ordered his Army north up the Shenandoah Valley toward Pennsylvania. Lee wanted your cavalry to guard the passes leading into the valley so the Confederate Army’s main force could move north secretly and unobserved by Union cavalry. However, troops were forced farther to the east and for some ten days, you and Lee were out of touch. The result was that Lee’s Army had to advance blind (without advance intelligence or reconnaissance) into Union territory. Some people think that if Lee had had access to scouting reports from you he would have moved forces more quickly and decisively into Gettysburg which might have allowed the Confederates to win the important battle there. Certainly, the lack of cavalry meant that Lee was not fully familiar with the ground around Gettysburg, a fact that hindered the execution of the Confederate battle plan. You did arrive at Gettysburg on the evening of July 2nd, the end of the second day of the battle. On the third and last day of the battle, Lee ordered you to take your force behind the Union Army and attack it from the rear, but Union cavalry forces stopped this move.

During the 1864 Overland Campaign, Union cavalry forces mortally wounded you at the Battle of Yellow Tavern. You died on May 12, 1864.
NAME: Ulysses S. Grant
DATE OF BIRTH: April 27, 1822
PLACE OF BIRTH: Point Pleasant, Ohio
LOYALTY: Union
GENDER: Male
OCCUPATION: Union Army General

You are renowned as one of the greatest generals of American history. You were born in Ohio and as a young man went to the United States Military Academy at West Point, where you excelled in mathematics, writing, drawing, and horsemanship. After graduation in 1843, you fought in the Mexican War and served at Army outposts in Detroit, New York, what is now Washington State, and in California. You resigned from the Army in 1854 and had a string of unsuccessful business ventures.

When the Civil War broke out in 1861, you volunteered to serve and the governor of Illinois assigned you to command a rebellious volunteer regiment. You were successful in making a solid fighting unit out of this regiment and this led to a promotion to general. You went on to win a string of victories in the “West.” The most important was the capture of Vicksburg on the Mississippi River in July, 1863. With Vicksburg in Union hands, the Union was now able to control the Mississippi River. This cut off Texas from the rest of the Confederacy, allowing the Union to occupy Louisiana, and cause economic and military damage to the Confederacy by preventing the use of the river for trade and the movement of supplies.

In early 1864, President Lincoln named you commander of all Union forces. You then moved east to take on the Confederate forces under Robert E. Lee. Your direct and relentless tactics led to high casualties and earned you the nickname of “The Butcher” among Lincoln’s political enemies, but you didn’t care about these criticisms and Lincoln continued to support your efforts. You fought against Lee’s Army from the north. Eventually, your troops trapped Lee’s main force west of Richmond, Virginia, and forced surrender on April 9, 1865, at Appomattox Court House, effectively ending the war.

Even before you came east, you showed a great appreciation for using intelligence. Although not officially appointed, your intelligence officer, Brigadier General Grenville Dodge reportedly ran agents from Mississippi to Georgia. When you came east and assumed overall command, you inherited the “Bureau of Military Information” (BMI) under Colonel George H. Sharpe and Sharpe’s star subordinate John C. Babcock. You depended on the BMI throughout the war to help keep track of the state of Lee’s Army.

When the war ended, you were hailed as a hero in the North. You rode this wave of popularity into the White House, being elected President in 1868 and reelected in 1872. You died in 1885 shortly after completing your memoirs.
You are one of the Confederacy's most notorious spies. You were born in 1844 in Martinsburg, Virginia, to a wealthy family with strong ties to the South. Three of your relatives were convicted of being Confederate spies and your father served in the Confederacy’s famous Stonewall Brigade that fought at the First Battle of Bull Run. When the Civil War came to Martinsburg in 1861 you were 17 years old. On July 4, 1861, you shot a Union soldier who was speaking offensively to you and your mother. It is at this time that you began your career as a spy for the Confederacy. The Union Army nicknamed you “La Belle Rebelle,” “the Siren of the Shenandoah,” “the Rebel Joan of Arc,” and “Amazon of Secessia.”

As a spy for the Confederacy you traveled to Union camps so that you could gather information and act as a courier (a carrier of documents and information). You were a lady who used your beauty to help the Rebel cause. Your flirtations with Union officers have, on more than once occasion, provided you with valuable information that you were able to pass on to Confederate leaders.

On six occasions you were arrested for spying but were able to avoid being incarcerated. On July 29, 1862 your luck ran out. You were finally caught and imprisoned in Old Capitol Prison in Washington, DC. They released you after one month, but your freedom was short lived when a year later you were caught again for spying, arrested, and imprisoned for a second time.

To say you were a model inmate would be a bit of overstatement. You spent your days singing “Dixie”, waving Confederate flags, and developed covert forms of communication with the outside world. One of your known methods of communication involved the use of a rubber ball. You somehow got some rubber balls into which you sewed secret messages and threw them to your contact on the outside.

By December 1863 you were released from prison and banished to the South. You continued spying and were once again arrested. In 1864 you finally escaped to Canada where you married your first of three husbands, Lieutenant Sam Hardinge, the naval officer who helped you during your escape.

After the war you spent the remainder of your life mothering your four children and lecturing to audiences about your spy experiences during the war. Your life ended suddenly on June 11, 1900 when you died of a heart attack during a tour of Kilbourn, Wisconsin. You are buried in Wisconsin at the Spring Grove Cemetery.
In 1833 you were born as Harriet Wood in New Orleans, Louisiana to a Spanish merchant and a French woman. You and your seven brothers were raised in Grand Rapids, Michigan. At the age of 18 you returned to New Orleans and joined the performance group: New Orleans Varieties. Eventually you relocated to New York where you adopted your stage name, Pauline Cushman.

Before the outbreak of the war you fell in love with a music teacher and theater musician named Charles Dickinson. After marrying Charles and moving to Cleveland, you had two children, Charles and Ida. Sadly neither Charles nor Ida survived to reach adulthood. Your husband joined the Union Army in 1861. Within a year he died from dysentery (a water-borne disease).

Your involvement in the Civil War did not begin until 1863 when you traded your acting career for a chance to spy for the Union. Two of your friends, who were Confederate officers, offered to give you $300 if you publically toasted the Southern cause in the Union supporting city of Louisville, Kentucky. Born Southern but a pro-Union citizen, you informed a Union provost marshal of the offer. Union officials saw the toast as an opportunity to use your acting skills for a new role—the role of a spy. As you toasted the South in front of a largely Rebel audience, the Union knew that secretly you supported their cause.

You were an expert in disguise. One moment you were a gorgeous woman who caught the eye of Confederate generals, but the next you were a young male Confederate soldier. These skills developed early in your acting career when you were cast in a role that required you to play both a woman and a man. On more than one occasion your ability to disguise yourself as a male soldier let you slip behind enemy lines and gain the trust of Southern soldiers and supporters.

The most dangerous assignment you ever received was to spend an extended period of time behind enemy lines using the cover story that you were a Confederate woman searching for your brother, A. A. Cushman. Using this cover you moved from one Confederate encampment to another, gathering intelligence as you moved. Eventually you were caught for spying and taken to Confederate General Bragg’s headquarters in Shelbyville, Kentucky where they discovered maps and classified documents hidden in your boots and satchel. The evidence was stacked against you, and a military court found you guilty of spying. You were sentenced to hang, but luckily the Union Army marched into Shelbyville and the Confederate troops retreated the day after your sentencing, and you were rescued.

Following the war you were made an honorary “Major of Cavalry” for your services as a Union scout and spy. For six years you traveled the country as “Miss Major Pauline Cushman” describing your adventures during the war.

By the 1870s your fame began to fade. You settled in San Francisco, California. As your health began to deteriorate due to rheumatoid arthritis you became dependent on painkillers. On December 1, 1893 you died after taking a lethal overdose of pain medication. You were buried with full military honors under a gravestone inscribed “Union Spy.”
At the start of the Civil War you were 23 years old and living a quiet life in Fairfax Court House, Virginia, twelve miles from Washington, DC. Your father, Edward Ford, died eleven years before the war. He had been a merchant and had provided your family with the finest home in the village. You were also well educated, attending Coombe Cottage finishing school and Buckingham Female Collegiate Institute where you earned a degree in English.

The wealth and status of your family placed you in the upper rank of society. Some of your closest family friends were Confederate Generals, and your father had been a Secessionist (a believer in leaving the Union), so it wasn’t surprising that you pledged your allegiance to the Confederacy.

Most accounts describe you as a proper and beautiful woman who could hold the attention of a room with your seductive ways and intriguing conversation. You used these skills to spy on Union officers on many occasions. Your family often hosted Union troops in your home. While your loyalty was to the South, your guests believed you supported the Union. Your tactics for spying were simple: be seductive, never talk about military affairs, listen carefully, and report as much as possible to the Confederates.

Your spy work was recognized by Confederate Brigadier General Jeb Stuart for providing the direction of the Union attack at the First Battle of Manassas on July 21, 1861. You were awarded the title of being Stuart’s honorary aide-de-camp (personal assistant). While a great honor, the citation eventually led to your arrest in 1863. The letter that honored you and your efforts was used against you to prove your position as a spy for the Confederacy. You were imprisoned in the Old Capitol Prison in Washington, DC.

You served several months in prison for espionage. Your release was partly due to the lobbying efforts of your arresting officer, Joseph Willard, a Union Major. Major Willard had won your affection during your incarceration. The next year you married Major Willard at the hotel he partly owned in Washington DC, the Metropolitan Hotel. You once expressed how ironic your marriage to the Major was by joking, “I knew I could not revenge myself on the nation, but I was fully capable of tormenting one Yankee to death, so I took the Major.” You had three children, but only one survived past infancy.

You died on February 14, 1871, at the age of thirty-two. You had only been married seven years. Your obituary expressed your beliefs and willingness to spy, stating: “Whatever she thought to be right she considered no sacrifice too great to accomplish it.”
NAME: Rose O’Neal Greenhow
DATE OF BIRTH: 1814
PLACE OF BIRTH: Port Tobacco, Maryland
LOYALTY: Confederate
GENDER: Female
OCCUPATION: Socialite, Spy

You were born in 1814 on a farm in Maryland. Your father, John O’Neal, was a wheat and tobacco farmer who owned fifteen slaves. He died tragically when he fell from a horse and then was apparently beaten to death by one of his slaves. Following the death of your father you and one of your five sisters were sent to live with your aunt and uncle at their boarding house in Washington, DC. It was in DC that you got your first taste of the political elite of the nation’s capital and became close acquaintances with ardent supporters of slavery and states’ rights, including former Vice President and US senator John C. Calhoun.

In 1835 you married one of Washington’s most eligible bachelors, Dr. Robert Greenhow. The doctor held both medical and law degrees and was one of the three highest-paid officials in the State Department. Your marriage to Dr. Greenhow cemented your status as one of the most privileged citizens of Washington. Unfortunately fifteen years later, Dr. Greenhow suddenly died after an accidental fall. You were left to care for your seven children alone.

Your ties to the political elite in Washington continued even after the death of your husband. Eventually you became so closely tied to various politicians that you were seen as the go-to person for anyone needing political favors or promotions. When the War Between the States erupted, you did not retreat to the South. Instead, you stayed in Washington, ready to serve the South from the Union capital.

You used your beauty and status to get information from various members of the Union military and the government. In 1861 you learned of Lincoln’s order and McDowell’s plan for a surprise attack on the Confederate lines that would come to be known as the Battle of Bull Run. You quickly sent Union information through a network of spies, which carried coded messages. Your twenty-six symbol cipher code helped protect your identity and any information that could fall into enemy hands. For your intelligence gathering work you were personally thanked by Confederate States of America President, Jefferson Davis.

At the height of the war you had developed the most extensive Confederate spy ring that existed, consisting of fifty men and women. While your network moved smoothly and quickly, you became careless in transferring intelligence and destroying evidence. Union Secret Service Director, Allan Pinkerton began to suspect you as a spy and had you followed. In 1861, you were caught transferring intelligence and placed under house arrest.

Throughout your imprisonment, members of your spy ring were revealed through intelligence paperwork and other evidence left in your home. Even as your spy network grew smaller you still managed to gather information to send to the Confederate government using concealment devices and with the help of family members with whom you were allowed to take guarded daily walks.

In March 1862, you were banished to Richmond, the Confederate capital. You were greeted warmly by Jefferson Davis, who sent you to Europe to gain support for the Confederate cause. In August 1864, on your return trip to America you died when your blockade-runner boat ran ashore and your life-boat capsized as you attempted to make your way to shore.
Before the Civil War, you worked as an architect in Chicago. When the Civil War broke out, you went to work for Union General George B. McClellan’s spymaster Allan Pinkerton who assigned you to draw sketches of Confederate fortifications as described by prisoners, deserters, and Union spies. However, McClellan soon put your talents to work making maps. In this job, you personally scouted the ground to be mapped, usually on your trusty horse, Gimlet. This was risky work that frequently exposed you to enemy fire. You also made some of your observations from up in the air in one of Thaddeus Lowe’s hot air balloons. The maps you created set new standards for accuracy in mapping. Allan Pinkerton even sent one of your maps to President Lincoln, but Pinkerton listed himself as the cartographer (map maker) and named you only as an “assistant.”

When President Lincoln fired General McClellan in November 1862, Pinkerton departed as well, but you stayed with the Union Army. In January 1863 General Joseph Hooker took command of the Union Army in the east and directed Colonel George H. Sharpe to replace Pinkerton and to create a “Bureau of Military Information.” Sharpe put you to work in this organization. Under Sharpe, your main job was determining the “order of battle” (the size, organization, and composition) of General Robert E. Lee’s Confederate Army. You did this by carefully analyzing reports from scouts and spies, interrogating prisoners, and reading captured Confederate documents.

Your work proved its value in the Battle of Gettysburg in July 1863. The Union Army, under command of General George B. McClellan, stood up to two days of battering by the Confederates, but Meade was not sure that it could take a third day of battle. However, you were able to report that the “prisoners have been taken today, and last evening, from every brigade in Lee’s Army excepting the four brigades of Pickett’s Division.” Meade realized that though his Union Army was tired, Lee’s Army, too, was almost spent. The Union Army stood its ground and the next day won a major victory over the Confederates.

After the war, you worked again as an architect, co-founded the New York Athletic Club, and designed the sliding seat used in the sport of competitive rowing. You died in 1908.

NAME: John C. Babcock
DATE OF BIRTH: Approximately 1837
PLACE OF BIRTH: Unknown
LOYALTY: Union
GENDER: Male
OCCUPATION: Architect
NAME: David Hunter Strother
DATE OF BIRTH: September 26, 1816
PLACE OF BIRTH: Martinsburg, Virginia
LOYALTY: Union
GENDER: Male
OCCUPATION: Magazine Writer and Illustrator

You were born in Martinsburg, in what is now West Virginia. As a young man you studied drawing and travelled extensively in both the United States and Europe. In the mid-1840s you returned from a five year stay in Europe and began publishing in Harper’s Monthly under the pen-name of “Porte Crayon,” French for “Pencil Carrier.” You also became an artist for The Crayon, the leading American art journal at the time. Most of your early work was landscapes of Virginia and the southern United States.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, you were well positioned to do intelligence work. You knew many Union sympathizers in Virginia, especially in the lower Shenandoah Valley. In mid-June, 1861 General Joseph Johnston’s Confederate Army in the Shenandoah Valley had marched through Charlestown while you were present. Having the practiced eye of an artist and a journalist, you noted the Confederate strength, organization, morale and equipment.

A month later, you joined the US Army (supporting the Union), though you were a native Virginian. Because of your detailed knowledge of the Shenandoah Valley, you were assigned as a topographer under General Robert Patterson. You explained to your superiors that Johnston’s Army had perhaps 15,000 troops, a number you revised upward to 17,000 a couple of days later after interviewing two Confederate deserters. Patterson and his senior staff members, however, thought Johnston had double that number or more.

You survived the war and eventually rose to the rank of Brigadier General. After the war, you resumed your previous career and published a well-regarded account of your wartime experiences. In 1879, President Rutherford B. Hayes named you the Consul General in Mexico City, where you served for six years. You died in March, 1888 in West Virginia.
NAME: Allan Pinkerton  
DATE OF BIRTH: August 25, 1819  
PLACE OF BIRTH: Glasgow, Scotland  
LOYALTY: Union  
GENDER: Male  
OCCUPATION: Detective

You were an immigrant, born in Glasgow, Scotland, and you came to the United States, settling in Illinois. Though you worked at first as a barrel maker (cooper), in 1850 you teamed up with a Chicago lawyer to form the Pinkerton National Detective Agency. The agency took the logo of an eye with the caption “we never sleep.”

The Agency investigated a number of train robberies in the 1850s that brought you in contact with George B. McClellan, who was a civilian railroad official at the time. Assigned to guard President-elect Abraham Lincoln on his way to Washington in 1861, you were able to stop an alleged assassination plot in Baltimore by smuggling Lincoln into the capital on a secret night-time train ride.

When the now General McClellan took command of Union forces in Ohio, he asked you to work for him and when he came east, you followed him. In your work for General McClellan, you took the pseudonym of Major E. J. Allen, though in fact you were a civilian businessman under contract to the Army. You were responsible for espionage and counter-espionage (spy catching) duties in Washington, DC, with Lafayette Baker who had his own organization. You were most famous for arresting Confederate spy, Rose Greenhow. Your highly unreliable memoirs perpetuated the fiction that Greenhow had access to high-level Union military secrets. However, Greenhow’s extensive papers captured in her house did not support this claim. Instead, you seem to have been writing for sensationalism and perhaps to show how bad the spy situation had been before you came to town.

When General McClellan took the Union Army to the Virginia Peninsula in March 1862 in an effort to capture Richmond, you went with him. Because it was difficult to get spies inside Confederate military headquarters, you concentrated most of your organization’s efforts on getting spies into the Confederate capital of Richmond. You never had a spy permanently placed there, but you were able to get many to pass through the town on apparently innocent business. You also interrogated Confederate prisoners and deserters, pumping them for information about their units. Using these means you were able to identify all 178 of the Confederate regiments facing McClellan. The only problem is that you also mistakenly reported to McClellan the existence of another 48 enemy regiments that were not there. In addition, you reported a much higher total number of Confederate soldiers, contributing to McClellan’s hesitancy to attack. When Lincoln fired McClellan in the fall of 1862, you left Army service.

After the war, you continued hunting train robbers including Jesse James. (You never got him.) Your agency also took jobs opposing the formation of labor unions and helping the Spanish government suppress a rebellion in its colony of Cuba. You died in Chicago on July 1, 1884, but the Pinkerton Detective Agency lives on to this day as a subsidiary of a larger security company.
You could have been the greatest general of the Union Army and the savior of the Union, but it never quite worked out because of your indecision and poor use of intelligence information. You were born in Philadelphia and attended West Point, graduating second in the class of 1846. Soon after graduation, you received orders to serve in the Mexican-American War where you showed bravery as an engineering officer. You also performed reconnaissance missions (exploring the territory to gather military information) for American commander General Winfield Scott.

After the war you stayed in the Army serving in a variety of positions and were even sent on a secret mission to the Dominican Republic. In 1855, because of your ability to speak French, you were sent as an official observer of the Crimean War in Russia. Based on these observations, you wrote the US Army’s manual for cavalry (use of soldiers on horseback).

In 1857 you left the Army to work for a railroad, but when the Civil War broke out in 1861, you were called back and soon put in overall command of Union forces. You set to work very effectively building up the Union armies. You also started planning a campaign in Virginia that you hoped would win the war for the Union. Your idea was to land the Union Army on the Virginia Peninsula and then march on Richmond, the Confederate capital. When you arrived on the Peninsula your intelligence officer, Allan Pinkerton, gave you vastly inflated estimates of the strength of the Confederate troops facing you. You began to fear that you were outnumbered (but, in fact you greatly outnumbered the Confederates, you just didn’t know it). You eventually got within four miles of Richmond before the Confederates started to push you back and, by summer the forces had dwindled and the Army withdrew from the Peninsula.

President Lincoln was disappointed in your performance and replaced you with General John Pope, who was even less successful. You then returned to command. Two days later, Confederate commander General Robert E. Lee led his Army into Maryland and you gave chase. On September 13th, one of your soldiers found a copy of Lee’s orders to his Army accidentally dropped on the ground by a Confederate courier. Feeling a little cocky, you told a friend, “Here is a paper with which if I cannot whip Bobbie Lee, I will be willing to go home.” However, when your scouts brought in information suggesting that Lee’s forces were deviating slightly from their plan, you refused to believe them. As a result, you were unable to position your own forces to win a decisive victory, though you fought the Confederates to a bloody draw in the Battle of Antietam. When you did not pursue the retreating Confederates, President Lincoln fired you.

You never again held a command. In 1863 you declared yourself a Democrat, and in 1864 you ran for President against Abraham Lincoln but lost. After the war, you travelled in Europe, worked for the New York City Department of Docks and for a railroad, served one term as Governor of New Jersey, and wrote your memoirs. You died on October 29, 1885.
You were an ex-slave who became a spy for the Union during the American Civil War. You were born in Maryland to slave parents and escaped to freedom in Pennsylvania around 1849. In the 1850’s you became one of the conductors of the Underground Railroad, risking your life to bring other slaves, including your parents, to freedom.

When the Civil War started, you volunteered to work for the Union. First you worked as an Army cook, then a nurse, and finally as a spy. In 1863 Union officers decided that you would be more effective as a covert operative. You were asked to assemble a group of former slaves who knew the region and could gather intelligence. You recruited African American river boat captains who helped you locate Confederate “torpedoes” (underwater vessels hidden in rivers that carried explosives). You then disguised yourself as a field worker or a poor farm wife and personally conducted short-term spying expeditions behind Confederate military lines in South Carolina.

In July 1863 you became Colonel James Montgomery’s second-in-command during a night raid up the Combahee River, near Beaufort, South Carolina. The Union gunboats, carrying around 300 black troops, slipped up the river, eluding torpedoes that your recruits had identified. Managing to get ashore undetected, the raiders destroyed a Confederate supply depot, burned homes and warehouses, and rounded up more than 750 plantation slaves.

A Confederate report on the raid stated that “the enemy seems to have been well posted as to the character and capacity of our troops...and to have been well guided by persons thoroughly acquainted with the river and country.” Although no one knew it except for you and your troops, this was high praise for your efforts.

Brigadier General Rufus Saxton reported the raid to Secretary of War Stanton and said “This is the only military command in American history wherein a woman, black or white, led the raid, and under whose inspiration it was originated and conducted.”

After the war, you tried unsuccessfully to collect $1,800 in back pay from the government. You finally got a pension in 1899 but only because you were a widow of a veteran. You settled in Auburn, New York, and opened schools for freed slaves in the South and sponsored a home for the poor. You died in 1913 and in acknowledgement for your work as a spy during the Civil War you were given a full military funeral.
You were educated at a Quaker school in Philadelphia where your family's abolitionist beliefs were reinforced. When your father died in 1843 your brother, John Newton Van Lew took over the family business and your family freed your nine slaves, even though your brother was opposed to the idea. One of those slaves included Mary Bowser, a woman who was purported to be a Union spy.

During the depression of 1837-1844 you used your entire cash inheritance of $10,000 (nearly $200,000 in current money) to purchase and free some of your family's former slaves' relatives.

When the Civil War started, you began working on behalf of the Union. You were allowed to bring food, clothing, writing paper, and other things to the Union soldiers held in Libby Prison in Richmond, Virginia. You would aid prisoners in escape attempts by passing them information about safe houses and would try to get Union sympathizers to work on the prison staff so they, too, could assist prisoners in escaping. Some prisoners gave you information on Confederate troop levels and movements which you were able to pass on to Union commanders.

You also operated a spy ring during the war that included clerks in the War and Navy Departments of the Confederacy. It has been suggested that you were able to have your former slave, Mary Bowser, spy in the White House of the Confederacy, although this was never confirmed. Your spy network was so well run that on several occasions you sent Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant fresh flowers from your garden with a copy of the Richmond newspaper. You developed your own cipher system and would often smuggle messages out of Richmond in various concealment devices including hollowed out eggs.

Your work was highly valued and George H. Sharpe, intelligence officer for the Army of the Potomac credited you with “the greater portion of our intelligence in 1864-65.” On Grant’s first visit to Richmond after the war, he had tea with you and then appointed you as postmaster of Richmond. He said, “You have sent me the most valuable information received from Richmond during the war.”

When Richmond fell to US forces in April 1865, you were the first person to raise the United States flag in the city. You spent most of your money on your espionage activities and tried, with no success, to get reimbursed by the federal government. You were regarded by most Southerners as a traitor.

You died on September 25, 1900, and were buried in the Shockoe Hill Cemetery. A plaque at your gravestone reads “She risked everything that is dear to man—friends, fortune, comfort, health, life itself, all for one absorbing desire of her heart—that slavery might be abolished and the Union preserved.”
You studied to become a lawyer but when the Civil War began you enlisted in the Stonewall Brigade, led by Colonel Thomas J. (“Stonewall”) Jackson. You were severely wounded in battle in the Shenandoah campaign of 1862 and then tried to return to battle, but were too weak to fight. Finally, you were discharged for medical reasons.

You then went to Canada where you met with Confederate agents and discussed plans for a covert operation to lead two small boats on the Chesapeake Bay to raid two Union supply ships. You and your agents cut a Union telegraph cable, blew up a lighthouse, and captured several ships. One of the ships was carrying supplies to a Union force at Port Royal, South Carolina. You put your best crew aboard and had the ship sail to Richmond. You later wrote “I do not know that we ever accomplished any great things, but we deviled the life out of the gun boats of the Chesapeake trying to catch us.”

In November 1863, you and your comrades were arrested for piracy and put in jail for several months. In May, 1864, you were sent to Richmond in a prisoner exchange. You slipped back into Canada again and worked on your plan to capture the USS Michigan and free Confederate prisoners of war.

You were again captured and were taken to a New York City police station. While there, you tried to bribe a police officer with $3,000 in gold to help you escape. You were unsuccessful in this attempt and transferred to Fort Lafayette, a prison on an island at the mouth of Upper New York Bay (today, that island supports the east tower of the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge.) On February 10, 1865, a court martial tried you on violating the law of war by capturing a civilian ship and acting as a spy. You insisted that you had honorably worked under the orders of President Jefferson Davis and authorized agents of the Confederate government. The court dismissed your defense and found you guilty, sentencing you to death. On February 21st you wrote a letter to the Confederate commissioner in charge of prisoner exchange. You insisted that you “acted under orders,” that you were not a spy, and therefore should be treated, instead, as a prisoner of war.

The commissioner received the letter on February 27th, three days after you were hanged. On the gallows you said “I protest against the execution of the sentence. It is absolute murder, brutal murder. I die in the defense and service of my country.”

NAME: John Yates Beall
DATE OF BIRTH: 1835
PLACE OF BIRTH: Jefferson County, Virginia
LOYALTY: Confederate
GENDER: Male
OCCUPATION: Lawyer, Soldier, Covert Operative
NAME: Thaddeus Sobieski Constantine Lowe
DATE OF BIRTH: August 20, 1832
PLACE OF BIRTH: New Hampshire
GENDER: Male
LOYALTY: Union
OCCUPATION: Aeronaut, Scientist

You were born in New Hampshire. As a boy you became interested in chemistry, which led you to a fascination with lighter-than-air gases and their application in ballooning. In 1857 you built your first balloon and then went into the balloon-making business with your father. You started building progressively larger balloons and by 1859 believed that you could build a balloon so large that it could fly across the Atlantic Ocean. In June of 1860, you undertook a first flight from Philadelphia to New Jersey which was successful, but your first attempt to cross the Atlantic failed when the wind tore a hole in the balloon. In your next test flight on April 19, 1861, you intended to fly from Cincinnati to Washington, DC but the winds instead took you to South Carolina where the Confederates arrested you as a spy. Your claim to being a scientist was ultimately believed and you were sent home.

Back in the North, you received an invitation to explain ballooning to President Lincoln in June 1861. Lincoln was impressed and became even more so when you started raising tethered balloons over Washington. On one ascent you took a telegraph and cabled to the ground a description of what you could see from your lofty vantage point. On July 25th, the President named you the Army’s Chief Aeronaut.

At this point in the war, the Confederates were near Washington and you began to use your tethered balloons to observe their positions. On September 24th, you used the balloon for the first time to direct Union artillery fire on Confederate positions in Falls Church, Virginia. You used a white flag to signal to the Union gunners to indicate if their shots were on target, short, long, or to the left or right.

In 1862, General George B. McClellan led the Union Army to the Virginia Peninsula to march on the Confederate capital of Richmond. The Confederates bottled up the Union Army on the Peninsula, largely because McClellan and his intelligence chief, Allan Pinkerton, believed that the Union forces were outnumbered. The result was that the Union advance was very slow. This provided a perfect opportunity for your tethered balloons to ascend and observe Confederate positions for McClellan. After McClellan withdrew from the Peninsula, your balloons became less useful because subsequent battles were much more fluid and rapid-moving, making it impractical to use a balloon tethered to one spot on the ground. You resigned your position in May 1863 after your commanding officer cut your pay.

After the war, you worked as an industrial chemist, inventor, and businessman. One of your most innovative ventures was to use refrigerated ships to send fresh fruit from New York to Galveston, Texas, and bring fresh beef back. In 1887, you moved to Los Angeles where you became rich by opening up several ice factories and a railroad. Unfortunately, the railroad eventually ran into business difficulties and took most of your money. You died in January 1913 at your daughter’s home in Pasadena, California.
NAME: Robert E. Lee  
DATE OF BIRTH: January 19, 1807  
PLACE OF BIRTH: Virginia  
LOYALTY: Confederacy  
PROFESSION: Soldier

You were born in Virginia, the son of a famous Revolutionary War military commander and Governor of Virginia, Henry “Light Horse Harry” Lee III, though you had a distant relationship with your father. You entered West Point in 1825 and graduated four years later, second in your class, having never been given any demerits. You served with distinction in the Mexican-American War (1846-1848) as an aid to American commander General Winfield Scott. It was in this war that you first met Ulysses S. Grant against whom you would later face off in the Civil War. In 1852, as a colonel you became the Superintendent of West Point, overseeing the education of young cadets. You served there for three years.

In 1859, you helped fight against John Brown’s abolitionist raiders who had seized control of the federal arsenal at Harper’s Ferry, hoping to spark a slave rebellion. In February 1861, you were serving in Texas when that state seceded from the Union. Your commanding officer surrendered your unit and became a Confederate general, but you left and made your way back to Washington, DC, where you were soon offered a senior command as a general in the Union Army. However, when your beloved home state of Virginia joined the Confederacy, you decided that your loyalty to your state outweighed your loyalty to your country. Soon you became the commanding general of the Confederacy’s Army of Northern Virginia. You held this position until the end of the war.

You are generally recognized as someone talented in designing military strategy and tactics as well as a great leader. However, with regard to intelligence, you were less advanced in your practices than most of the Union generals you faced, though most of them (aside from Ulysses S. Grant) were not as good commanders as you. Unlike most of your Union opponents, you had no designated intelligence officer on your staff and you served as your own intelligence analyst. Nevertheless, you did make substantial use of scouts and spies to bring you information. You also were a voracious reader of Union newspapers, believing correctly that they often contained military secrets.

Your most important source of intelligence was the fast-moving and far-ranging cavalry (soldiers on horseback). Your cavalry commander was General J.E.B. Stuart, until his death in 1864. After his death, you said of your friend that “he never brought me a piece of false information.” However, during the Gettysburg Campaign of 1863, Stuart led his forces far afield and out of touch with you, leaving you nearly blind as your forces blundered into the Battle of Gettysburg, which you lost.

After the Civil War ended in April, 1865, you became the president of Washington College (now William and Lee University) in Lexington, Virginia, a job you held until your death. In 1868, you were forgiven for taking up arms against the Union in a mass pardon signed by President Andrew Johnson. You died on October 12, 1870.
NAME: George H. Sharpe  
DATE OF BIRTH: February 26, 1828  
PLACE OF BIRTH: Kingston, New York  
LOYALTY: Union  
GENDER: Male  
OCCUPATION: Lawyer, Diplomat

You came from a privileged family in Kingston, New York. A bright young man, you graduated from Rutgers at the age of 19 and went on to Yale Law School. After graduation you travelled in Europe for five years, working for two of those years at the US Legation (today, known as the US Embassy) in Vienna. You returned to the United States in 1854 and practiced law until the Civil War started, when you joined the Union Army.

In 1862, you organized a regiment that helped defend Washington, DC. Early the next year, you went to work for General Joseph Hooker, then commander of the Union Army of the Potomac. There you headed a new organization called the “Bureau of Military Information.” Assisting you in this job was John Babcock. You may have been the first practitioner of what we today call “all source intelligence.” Your bureau produced reports for the commanding general based on information collected from some 70 agents, prisoners of war, refugees, Southern newspapers, documents found on dead Confederate soldiers, and other sources.

This information was very useful in helping your superiors make military decisions. For instance, at the end of the second day of the Battle of Gettysburg, you were able to tell Union General George Meade (who had replaced Hooker) that your information showed that the Confederates were as exhausted as the Union. This encouraged Meade not to withdraw his battered Union forces from the battlefield (which would have left the battle a draw) and instead to fight again for a third day. This decision enabled the Union to win the most important victory of the entire Civil War.

You performed similar services for General Ulysses S. Grant, who succeeded Meade, and in February 1864 your success was rewarded with a promotion to Brigadier General. Your last wartime task came at the Confederate surrender at Appomattox in April 1865, where you oversaw the granting of parole certificates to Confederate soldiers. It soon became clear that you, as an intelligence officer, knew the organization of the Confederate Army better than its own members did!

In 1867, after the war, Secretary of State William H. Seward asked you to go to Europe to investigate Americans who might have been involved in the assassination of President Lincoln. You brought back John Surratt, whose mother, Mary Surratt, had been hanged as one of the Lincoln assassination conspirators. A jury acquitted John Surratt, however. President Grant appointed you US Marshal for the Southern District of New York State. In this capacity, your investigation of political corruption in New York City helped to smash the Tweed Ring (a political corruption ring) run by boss, William Tweed. Later you served in the New York State Assembly. You died in 1900.
NAME: Samuel Ruth
DATE OF BIRTH: Unknown
PLACE OF BIRTH: Unknown
LOYALTY: Union
GENDER: Male
OCCUPATION: Railroad Saboteur, Spy Master

You were a Northerner living in Richmond, Virginia, the capital of the Confederacy, coming to Virginia before the war to serve as Superintendent of the Richmond, Fredericksburg, & Potomac Railroad. This railroad would be very important to the Confederacy because it was the only railroad that ran north from Richmond.

In an effort to assist the Union, as early as 1862 you began sabotaging the smooth operations of the railroad by delaying bridge repairs, needlessly reducing the number of railroad employees, and other such measures. You arranged to schedule trains carrying Confederate troops and supplies so inefficiently that General Lee complained to Confederate President Jefferson Davis that you were endangering the Confederate war effort. Lee thought you were incompetent, but you weren’t, just clever...and loyal to the Union.

Later, Elizabeth Van Lew, a resident of Richmond who was spying for the Union, recruited you as a spy and you, in turn, recruited two of your friends and subordinates from the railroad. You used your spy ring to courier (carry) information from Elizabeth Van Lew and her ring of spies and you also put together your own spy ring.

The members of your ring were able to provide information about the Confederate forces that travelled north on your railroad. You were also able to report on damage sustained by your rail cars, Confederate forces in southwest Virginia and the number of troops sent south by rail to counter the Union amphibious invasion of Wilmington, North Carolina, in the last months of the war. You sent the information you gathered to General George Sharpe, General Grant’s intelligence officer.

Eventually, suspicion grew about your real loyalties, and Confederate authorities arrested you on January 23, 1865. However, the citizens of Richmond objected so much to the arrest of such an “outstanding citizen” that you were released from jail after only nine days, and you went back to work.

After the war ended in April 1865, you begged Union authorities to say nothing about your services to the Union for fear that one of your Richmond neighbors would take revenge on you. Eventually the word did get out and you were repeatedly threatened, but never actually harmed. When General Grant became President of the United States after the war, he gave you a job in the Internal Revenue Service.
You are an immigrant from Britain like Allan Pinkerton, the spymaster for whom you worked during the Civil War.

Born on March 12, 1822, you came with your family to the United States as a boy. You grew up in Princeton, New Jersey and then became a policeman in New York City in 1853. Allan Pinkerton soon noticed you and recruited you into his detective firm.

In early 1861, Maryland was showing a great deal of sympathy for the South, so Pinkerton sent you and Hattie Lawton (a member of Allan Pinkerton's Female Detective Unit) on a mission to Baltimore, Maryland. Though you already had a real wife, you and Hattie posed as a pro-Southern couple and became members of a pro-secessionist group. The two of you reported to Pinkerton on secessionist activity in the area and your reports also gave warning of a plot to assassinate President-elect Abraham Lincoln. This information helped Pinkerton foil the plot and keep Lincoln safe when he came to Washington for his inauguration.

In August 1861 you moved to Washington, DC, but kept contact with the Baltimoreans and were able to establish yourself as a pro-Confederate courier (carrier of information) between Baltimore and the Confederate capital in Richmond, Virginia. Your trips to Richmond allowed you to observe the Confederate Army’s defenses on the Virginia Peninsula, to gather information on the defenses of Richmond itself, and to collect other information that added to Union knowledge of the strength and organization of the Confederate Army. You even carried letters from a Confederate general to his son, a captain in the Union Army in Washington, urging the son to join the Confederates. You reported this information to Pinkerton who told General McClellan. He had the young captain transferred far away to California. Later, the Confederates gave you a pass to travel west to Tennessee to carry messages which allowed you to count Confederate regiments in that part of the country.

In 1862, while in Richmond, you became ill and you and Hattie Lawton fell out of communication with Pinkerton. He sent two agents, Pryce Lewis and John Scully, to find you. Unfortunately, on their arrival in Richmond, they were recognized as Union agents, arrested, and sentenced to death. In order to save their own lives, they gave you away. The Confederates arrested you and Lawton. She received a sentence of one year in prison, and you were sentenced to death. Despite desperate Union attempts to win your release, you mounted the gallows on April 29, 1862. However, on the first attempt to hang you, the knot slipped and you fell to the ground. As you were being carried back up the gallows, you said “I suffer a double death!” The second attempt to hang you was successful.

NAME: Timothy Webster
DATE OF BIRTH: March 12, 1822
PLACE OF BIRTH: Britain
LOYALTY: Union
GENDER: Male
OCCUPATION: Policeman and Detective

You are an immigrant from Britain like Allan Pinkerton, the spymaster for whom you worked during the Civil War.

Born on March 12, 1822, you came with your family to the United States as a boy. You grew up in Princeton, New Jersey and then became a policeman in New York City in 1853. Allan Pinkerton soon noticed you and recruited you into his detective firm.

In early 1861, Maryland was showing a great deal of sympathy for the South, so Pinkerton sent you and Hattie Lawton (a member of Allan Pinkerton's Female Detective Unit) on a mission to Baltimore, Maryland. Though you already had a real wife, you and Hattie posed as a pro-Southern couple and became members of a pro-secessionist group. The two of you reported to Pinkerton on secessionist activity in the area and your reports also gave warning of a plot to assassinate President-elect Abraham Lincoln. This information helped Pinkerton foil the plot and keep Lincoln safe when he came to Washington for his inauguration.

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NAME: Thomas N. Conrad  
DATE OF BIRTH: August 1, 1837  
PLACE OF BIRTH: Fairfax Court House, Virginia  
LOYALTY: Confederate  
GENDER: Male  
OCCUPATION: Educator

You were born in Fairfax Court House in Virginia and entered Dickinson College in 1853. Graduating four years later, you took a job as the headmaster of the Georgetown Institute, a boys' school in Washington, DC. You had your students use window shades in the schoolhouse to send secret signal messages to the Confederate side of the Potomac River. On graduation day in June 1861, you directed the band to play "Dixie" as the students marched in, and the graduation speakers all gave pro-Confederate speeches. You were arrested that very day and sent to the South.

You entered service in J.E.B. Stuart's cavalry as a chaplain. In this position you continued spying, using your status as a minister to enter Union camps to deliver comfort to the soldiers there, in the process gaining military information of potential use to the Confederates. After a time you were called to Richmond and given a mission to go back to Washington, DC to find certain British and French diplomats and to escort them to Richmond to talk with the Confederate government. You successfully carried out this mission.

Emboldened by this experience, you decided to move back to Washington, DC. In order to avoid being recognized, you changed your hairstyle and the way you groomed your beard. And to further protect yourself, you managed to place a spy named Edward Norton inside Lafayette Baker’s counterespionage organization that was operating in Washington, hoping that Norton would be able to tip you off if you were in danger of arrest.

Shortly after your return to Washington, you proposed to your Confederate higher ups that you be allowed to assassinate the Union commander, General Winfield Scott. (Ironically, President Lincoln would soon fire Scott because he was too old to carry out his duties). Your superiors forbid this. By this time, however, you had recruited some pro-Confederate clerks in the War Department who gave you access to sensitive documents. In this way you were able to send information about the strength, organization, and plans of General McClellan’s Army just before he embarked on the Peninsula Campaign in March 1862. Later you reported to the Confederates that Union General Ambrose Burnside was going to attack Fredericksburg, Virginia, a full day before it happened.

In mid-1863, Edward Norton warned that you were about to be arrested so you left the city again. However, it was not long before you came back to Washington, this time with a plan to kidnap Abraham Lincoln. Your superiors turned down this plan, too. Soon, you decided that you were tired of the stress of being a spy and you moved back to Richmond. Toward the end of the war, you returned to Washington one last time. Again, you changed the style of your hair and beard but unfortunately you unwittingly made yourself look like John Wilkes Booth! Because of this resemblance, after the Lincoln assassination, you were briefly arrested, but soon set free.

After the war, you got married and served as the president of two different colleges. You also wrote your memoir, Rebel Scout. You died in 1905.
You were a telegraph operator for the Pennsylvania Central railroad when the Civil War started. You then went to work as the manager of the War Department’s telegraph office, a job you held until March 1862.

It was in the fall of 1862 that your espionage career started. You provided valuable service to the Union in September when Robert E. Lee drove his Army north into Maryland. There were reports that the Confederates would invade Pennsylvania at that time. The governor of Pennsylvania was worried about this possibility and organized a small intelligence unit led by William J. Palmer, a twenty five year old cavalry officer, to investigate. In civilian life Palmer had worked for the Pennsylvania Central Railroad where you had both met. He asked you to help him track the Confederates and you agreed. You and Palmer went to Hagerstown, Maryland to scout the enemy. The two of you provided detailed information on Confederate movements and were able to accurately assess that Lee would not invade Pennsylvania, though you did not rule out the possibility that he would mount a temporary cavalry raid into that state. You and Palmer sent your reports to your superiors using a “lineman’s pocket test kit,” a small telegraph key that you carried with you and could be used to tap telegraph lines. Unfortunately, your superiors reduced the length of your reports so much that by the time they were received by General McClellan, the Union commander they were of little use in helping him make decisions.

In 1863 when Robert E. Lee really did lead the Confederate Army into Pennsylvania in the campaign that culminated in the Battle of Gettysburg, you organized a group of spies from among your friends at the Pennsylvania Central Railroad to watch his advance. You were quite different from the popular image of a spy hiding in the shadows: you often followed Lee’s Army in, of all things, a locomotive! On one occasion, you were following some Confederate cavalry on a hand operated car on the railroad tracks, when the enemy spotted you and started shooting. You barely escaped alive. Whenever you had information to pass on, you would stop and use your pocket telegraph instrument, tap into the telegraph lines, then send your report to Union authorities at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

You survived the war and lived for many years, dying in 1919.
NAME: Nancy Hart  
DATE OF BIRTH: Approximately 1846  
PLACE OF BIRTH: West Virginia  
GENDER: Female  
LOYALTY: Confederate  
OCCUPATION: Guerilla, Spy

You were born in the hills of what is now West Virginia, one of thirteen children. You were fifteen years old when the Civil War started. Two of your brothers joined the Union Army, but you were initially uninterested in politics and the war. However, you were interested in other traditional male pursuits such as shooting, tracking, and fishing. These skills would soon serve you well.

In 1861 and 1862, a group of pro-Confederate guerrillas (an independent/unofficial group conducting warfare) called the Moccasin Rangers roamed much of Virginia terrorizing pro-Union families. The group was led by a twenty-three year old man named Perry Conley, who called himself a “Captain.” You ran away from your home at the age of fifteen to join Conley’s group. Because of your knowledge of the countryside, you were a valuable addition to the group and often served as their guide as they spread terror with their campaign of murder, arson, and rape.

In the fall of 1861 you were briefly captured by Union forces but soon released because they did not believe that a young woman could be involved in any wrongdoing. You returned to Conley’s camp bearing information about the Union camp where you had been questioned.

Though you seem to have run away for the adventure, you become more and more pro-Confederate through exposure to the Moccasin Rangers. Your anti-Union sentiment turned to hatred when Union soldiers killed your brother-in-law. You were further enraged when Union forces killed Conley in the summer of 1862. Now, sixteen years old, you married a fellow Moccasin Ranger and then moved to a cabin in the mountains while your new husband went off to join the Confederate Army. In July, however, you were discovered, arrested, and taken to prison by Union troops. Before long, however, you were able to grab a rifle, shoot your guard and escape from prison, fleeing on horseback.

You spent much of the rest of the war spying on Union outposts in the area of Summersville, Virginia. Sometimes you would watch them from the hillsides above. At other times you would enter the Union camps selling eggs or vegetables. Whatever you were able to learn about Union forces you reported back to General Stonewall Jackson’s Confederate forces. Sometimes you also led Confederate raiding parties to Union positions.

After the war you and your husband settled in Greenbrier County, where you lived for many years. You died in 1902.
NAME: Thomas Henry Hines  
DATE OF BIRTH: October 8, 1838  
PLACE OF BIRTH: Kentucky  
GENDER: Male  
LOYALTY: Confederate  
OCCUPATION: Teacher, Lawyer, Judge

You were born in Kentucky, the son of a judge. Though you had little formal schooling, at the age of 21 you became a teacher at a school for orphans.

After the Civil War started, you joined the Confederate Army in 1861. Initially you served in a unit called Buckner’s Guides, which operated as guides and raiders for the Confederates. Later you became an officer in the 9th Kentucky Cavalry. From then on you spent much of your time on secret missions undercover as a civilian, not the soldier you really were. In June 1863, you led a group of twenty-five Confederate soldiers into Indiana in Union uniforms pretending to be chasing Union deserters. The real mission was to see if “Copperheads” (anti-war Democrats in the Union) would support a Confederate invasion planned for the next month. You found that they would not, and your trip back to Confederate lines almost ended in disaster when your team was found out and attacked. You escaped only by swimming across the Ohio River under gunfire. Not long afterwards, you, your commanding officer, and several of his staff were captured by the Union and imprisoned in the Ohio State Penitentiary. However, you and your comrades dug a tunnel and escaped on November 20, 1863.

In early 1864 you were called to Richmond and briefed on a plan to free Confederate prisoners of war in the northwestern Union states. Confederate agents were to operate out of Toronto, Canada. All of this would enable a Confederate invasion of the northwestern Union states. You were made the military commander of this effort.

From your post in Toronto you worked with Copperhead groups in Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Kentucky to carry out this plan. The Copperheads always appeared to you as to help and your optimistic nature always made it appear to your superiors that you were on the verge of success. Among other efforts, you helped organize a number of unsuccessful covert operations such as: an uprising in Chicago in 1864 timed to coincide with the Democratic National Convention being held there; uprisings in Chicago, New York, Boston, Cincinnati and elsewhere meant to take place on election day, 1864; mass arson in New York City in late November 1864; an attack on a Union gunship on Lake Michigan; and, the kidnapping of Vice President-Elect Andrew Johnson as he travelled to the inauguration in Washington in 1865. None of these operations succeeded, in part because the Copperheads were seldom willing to back up their words with action and in part, because of the efforts of Union secret services to thwart you. The Confederacy wasted more than $1 million on these failed operations.

After the war, you stayed in Toronto for about a year; only returning after President Andrew Johnson issued a general amnesty for former Confederates. You then moved to Kentucky where you became a lawyer and then a respected judge. You died in 1898.

NAME: Thomas Henry Hines  
DATE OF BIRTH: October 8, 1838  
PLACE OF BIRTH: Kentucky  
GENDER: Male  
LOYALTY: Confederate  
OCCUPATION: Teacher, Lawyer, Judge
You were born in Greene County, Tennessee. In 1854, you married Sylvanius H. Thompson and you had two daughters.

When the Civil War started, your husband, Sylvanius became a private in the Union’s 1st Tennessee Cavalry Regiment, working mainly as a recruiter for the Union Army in Tennessee. You helped him with his work, which was dangerous because the population was mostly sympathetic to the Confederacy. Nevertheless, the two of you managed to clandestinely recruit some 500 soldiers for the Union. In early 1864, a Confederate soldier under the command of Confederate cavalry Brigadier General John Hunt Morgan killed your husband near Greeneville. Saddened but undaunted, you carried on your recruiting work and sometimes also carried secret messages for Union officers.

On September 23, 1864 you got your opportunity for revenge when General Morgan and his men spent the night in Greeneville. When you found out who the mysterious visitor was in a mansion in town, you realized that you had information of great value, but the nearest Union forces who could act on this information were fifteen miles away, and Greeneville was surrounded by Confederate guards. You told one of the guards that you had to leave the town to milk your cows, and you promised him some milk if he would let you out and then allow you back in. He foolishly agreed. You then went to a friend’s house, borrowed a horse and rode into the night, arriving at a Union camp around midnight. The Union commander did not believe your mere “woman’s tale” but changed his mind when two of his soldiers vouched for you. Soon you were riding back to town with 100 Union cavalry troopers. Back in Greeneville, you personally pointed out Morgan’s hiding place and watched as a Union soldier shot him to death. A few days later, a few of Morgan’s men sneaked back into town and took you prisoner. Fortunately, Union soldiers rescued you before you could be hanged.

After this, you served the Union as an army nurse in Knoxville, Tennessee, which was under Union control, and then in Cleveland, Ohio. After the war, you struggled to make a living and to claim a pension for your war work. You had many temporary jobs in the Federal Government, and eventually a special act of Congress granted you a pension of $12 a month. In 1866, you married Orville J. Bacon of Broome County, New York, and had two more children with him. You and he were eventually divorced, and in the 1880s you married James Cotton, who then died. You died on April 21, 1909 after being crushed between two trolley cars in Washington, DC. You were buried alongside the soldiers in Arlington National Cemetery.

---

NAME: Sarah Lane Thompson  
DATE OF BIRTH: February 11, 1838  
PLACE OF BIRTH: Greene County, Tennessee  
GENDER: Female  
LOYALTY: Union  
OCCUPATION: Army Recruiter, Nurse
You claimed to be the ancestor of an illustrious Revolutionary War hero, but that claim appears to have been false. Instead, you were born the son of a poor farmer in Stafford, New York. Your family later moved to Michigan, and when you grew up you moved to New York City and then followed the gold rush to California. In San Francisco, you became a bar bouncer (door security guard) and vigilante (a member of a volunteer law enforcement group) to help keep the city safe.

When the Civil War started, you came to Washington where you volunteered to be a spy for Union General Winfield Scott. He sent you on a mission to Manassas and Richmond. Unfortunately, your post-war memoirs clearly embellish this episode so much that it is hard to determine what really happened on this mission.

When you returned north, you became the head of a counterespionage (spy catching) organization. Eventually you gained the rank of Brigadier General for this work. Your organization was initially attached to the US Department of State, but it was soon transferred to the War Department where it became known as the National Detective Bureau under Secretary Edwin M. Stanton. At this time, Confederate spies could operate freely in Washington, DC, and your unit of some thirty men kept busy searching them out. In conducting this work, you also cooperated with the New York City police and occasionally the Union armies in the field. You and Allan Pinkerton were both operating “detective” services in and around Washington, but you seldom if ever cooperated with each other. The two services were occasionally known to monitor or even arrest the operatives of the other. You also sometimes sent agents as far away as Canada to investigate suspected spies.

Over time you gained a negative reputation for your Bureau’s ruthless and unethical ways. Aside from hunting spies, you pursued corrupt contractors, counterfeiters, and other “vicious citizens.” Most of the time when you caught a spy, you released the person if s/he was willing to swear allegiance to the Union. You ran into even greater trouble when you began to suspect Secretary Stanton of corruption and took it upon yourself to intercept his telegrams. For this, you were sent away to New York. Not long afterwards, however, the war ended and President Lincoln was assassinated. You were quickly called back to Washington to investigate. Soon your agents in Maryland had made four arrests and had the names of two more conspirators, including the actual assassin, John Wilkes Booth. After Booth was killed in a shootout, you received a significant portion of the reward being offered for bringing the assassin to justice.

In 1866, you were fired from your government position after President Andrew Johnson accused you of spying on him, a charge which you later admitted. When you testified before the House of Representatives during President Andrew Johnson’s impeachment hearings, the House found you so disreputable that the official record reads “it is doubtful if [you have] in any one thing told the truth, even by accident.”

You published your memoirs in 1867. However, they are filled with unverifiable claims, exaggerations, and outright lies. You died on July 3, 1868, of meningitis, though some people have since claimed that you were poisoned.

NAME: Lafayette Curry Baker
DATE OF BIRTH: October 13, 1826
PLACE OF BIRTH: Stafford, New York
GENDER: Male
LOYALTY: Union
OCCUPATION: Detective

MISSION 01  CIVIL WAR SPIES: KEEPING YOUR COVER

NAME: Lafayette Curry Baker
DATE OF BIRTH: October 13, 1826
PLACE OF BIRTH: Stafford, New York
GENDER: Male
LOYALTY: Union
OCCUPATION: Detective

You claimed to be the ancestor of an illustrious Revolutionary War hero, but that claim appears to have been false. Instead, you were born the son of a poor farmer in Stafford, New York. Your family later moved to Michigan, and when you grew up you moved to New York City and then followed the gold rush to California. In San Francisco, you became a bar bouncer (door security guard) and vigilante (a member of a volunteer law enforcement group) to help keep the city safe.

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You published your memoirs in 1867. However, they are filled with unverifiable claims, exaggerations, and outright lies. You died on July 3, 1868, of meningitis, though some people have since claimed that you were poisoned.
NAME: William Saunders aka Frank Lacy Buxton
DATE OF BIRTH: Unknown
PLACE OF BIRTH: Britain
GENDER: Male
LOYALTY: Union and Confederate
OCCUPATION: Journalist, Spy

Your real name was William Saunders, and you were born in Britain, but immigrated to the United States. You were married and had two children with your wife, but it was also hinted that you may have had other children out of wedlock. You stole money and goods from merchants in New York and Philadelphia, and then in order to get yourself out of potential trouble, you joined the Republican Party in Philadelphia. You were able to befriend important Republican politicians who protected you from the getting arrested or having legal actions taken against you for what you had done.

Later you went to work for the New York Tribune newspaper, and you reported from the South during the “secession winter” of 1860-1861. In September 1861, you also started working as a spy for the Union. In fact, you are the only spy known to have reported directly to General George B. McClellan instead of through Allan Pinkerton. Your work as a journalist and your contacts in the South made you a valuable asset and you passed along military information about Confederate operations in Virginia. Little of this information was useful, as you had a tendency to wildly exaggerate the size of the Confederate forces you were reporting on.

Your career as a spy came to an end in the spring of 1862. On March 27th of that year you reported information from inside the Confederate lines about the aftermath of the Battle of Winchester, where the Union had beaten Confederate General Stonewall Jackson. However, you came under suspicion and a few weeks later Union forces arrested you on charges of also spying for the Confederates.

You were confined to the Old Capitol Prison in Washington, DC (which stood where the US Supreme Court building is now). Because you were still a British citizen, the British Minister (today called the Ambassador) showed an interest in your case. You were released after promising that you would remain north of New York City.

The records are not clear but it appears that you may have broken your word and later returned to the South, where you falsely claimed to represent a newspaper in London, and where you passed bad checks.

You were subsequently lost to history.

---
NAME: Albert Myer
DATE OF BIRTH: September 20, 1828
PLACE OF BIRTH: Newburgh, New York
GENDER: Male
LOYALTY: Union
OCCUPATION: Telegraph Inventor, Surgeon, Army Officer

You were born in Newburgh, New York, but raised primarily by your aunt in Buffalo. A bright boy, you entered college at age 13 and graduated at age 19. You then went to medical school and became a doctor in 1851 while working part time as a telegraph operator. Your medical school thesis was entitled “A New Sign Language for Deaf Mutes.” For a time, you had a private medical practice in Florida, but then in 1854 you applied for, and received a commission in the US Army as a surgeon.

Pursuing your personal passion, you soon started developing a system of communication using a signal flag or torch. This was an important development because armies at that time lacked a reliable system of short-range communication. In 1859, an Army board recommended that the Army test your system and it was soon adopted. In 1860, you were made the chief of a new Army Signal Corps and sent to New Mexico to continuing testing it in military operations against the Navajo Indians.

During the Civil War you served under various Union generals, including George B. McClellan in the Peninsula Campaign and at the Battle of Antietam, and you also served in Washington, DC. In April 1863, you learned that a captured Confederate soldier said that the Confederates had figured out your signaling system. In fact, it became clear that the Confederates were routinely intercepting Union flag signals. You reacted by instituting a cipher system under which letters were substituted for each other and those substitutions changed every day, but repeated weekly. Though you knew this was quite a simple system, it appears the Confederates did not figure it out.

Now that you knew the Confederates were reading Union flag communications, you realized that you could send deceptive messages. In April 1863, you arranged for Union signalers to send an unencrypted message intended to mislead the Confederates about Union plans. The Confederates took the bait and forwarded the intercepted message to General Robert E. Lee. Circumstantial evidence indicates that it fooled him (though the historical record is not clear on this point).

As a result of a dispute over control of the War Department’s telegraph system, the Secretary of War relieved you from your position as Chief Signal Officer in November 1863. However, after the war you were returned to the position of Chief Signal Officer, and you became a Brigadier General. You developed a new signal technique called “heliography” that involved signaling with sunlight, and when the Signal Corps was given the duty of predicting the weather for the Federal Government, you established a far-flung network of weather stations.

You died in Buffalo, New York in 1880.

----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
MISSION BRIEFING

There was no formal intelligence community or intelligence agencies during the Civil War. This does not mean, however, that intelligence was not collected, analyzed and acted upon. Information came from various sources within the military and from civilians on both sides of the war. As a result, various individuals created and ran spy rings which fed information to decision-makers throughout the war.

To illustrate the connections and the methods by which intelligence was collected and disseminated, students will step into the shoes of a spymaster or spy during the Civil War. Integrating an overlay of modern technology, they will fill out a “Silhouettebook” (AKA Facebook) newsfeed that will enable them to think creatively about the type and content of communications that their chosen or assigned spy or spymaster would post. What are the daily posts and when would they have been posted? Who would be in their network of “friends?” What events would they be attending and inviting others to attend? What messages might they send to their network?

Using the modern-day Facebook example as an overlay on the personalities and historic events of the Civil War gives a new twist to eliciting student’s working knowledge of the spies and the spy networks of the time period.
OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson students will be able to:

1. Describe the actions of their assigned or chosen spy or spymaster during the Civil War.
2. Articulate the connections their spy had with other spies, informants, military personnel, and civilians.
3. Create a basic chronology of the Civil War from their spy’s viewpoint.
4. Adopt a writing style in keeping with the supposed personality of their spy or spymaster.

MATERIALS

Spy Dossiers (pages 11–37)
Sample Silhouettebook Newsfeed (page 41)
Silhouettebook Worksheet (page 42)

PROCEDURE

1. Assign or have each student choose a spy from the provided dossiers (pages 11 to 37).
2. Distribute the Silhouettebook Worksheet to each student.
3. Have students conduct external research on historical context of their assigned spy to flesh out the information given in the dossier.
4. Each student should complete their “newsfeed” in a way that is in keeping with their spy. For example, Union Spy, Elizabeth Van Lew would be “friends” with General Ulysses Grant. Her status updates and comments might be about the Confederate plans and capabilities. Have the students fill out a couple of lines each day.
KEY TERMS

**Courier:** Someone who secretly transports information or goods from one place or person to another.

**“Friend”:** The term used when individuals are connected on Facebook. Can be used as a verb, “Can you “friend” me?”

**Informants:** Someone who provides information secretly.

**Newsfeed:** The daily postings on a Facebook page

**Silhouette:** The dark shape and outline of someone or something visible against a lighter background, especially in dim light. A silhouette would be a common way of capturing someone’s image when photography was not as commonly available as in the Civil War era.

**Spy:** A person who seeks to obtain secret information about the activities, plans, or methods, of an organization or person.

**Spymaster:** A person who directs or manages the work of a spy or many spies.

**Spy Ring:** A group of spies that work together secretly.

MISSION DEBRIEFING

Students can report out on their Silhouettebook page and as they do, the connections between certain individuals will be revealed.

MISSION EXTENSION

Students can pair up or group together in their networks and develop their Silhouettebook conversation/newsfeed together.
PROFILE:
BRAXTON BRAGG

LOCATION:
WASH, DC, USA

NEWS FEED
DATE: 01-13-1861

Abraham Lincoln added President of the United States to his work.

South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas have all left the group The United States of America.

South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas have all joined the group The Confederate States of America.

Pierre Beauregard attended the event Attack on Fort Sumter.

Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee and North Carolina have all left the group The United States of America.

Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee and North Carolina have all joined the group The Confederate States of America.

Robert E Lee to Abraham Lincoln:
Curses to you Mr. Lincoln. I am leaving to take tea with President Davis.

Robert E Lee is no longer friends with Abraham Lincoln.

Robert E Lee and Jefferson Davis are now friends.

Robert E Lee and Stonewall Jackson are now friends.

Robert E Lee to Stonewall Jackson:
Let us succeed in Victory!

MORE HISTORIC NEWSFEED EXAMPLES

Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice Newsfeed: http://www.much-ado.net/austenbook/

### SILHOUETTE BOOK WORKSHEET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROFILE</th>
<th>NEWS FEED</th>
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<td>DATE</td>
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<th>LOCATION</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>FRIENDS</th>
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### ALTERNATE:

Do this electronically by going to My Fake Wall: http://www.myfakewall.com
CIVIL WAR
SPY TRADECRAFT
The telegraph was an important method for communicating information during the Civil War. A telegraph works by sending a series of electric pulses through a long wire, to another telegraph device which then interprets the pulses into a series of clicking sounds. Depending on how long the lengths of the clicks are, there is an “alphabet” called Morse code that the person on the other side of the telegraph can use to understand the message. The telegraph system was the first step in the development of the telephone.

The Union saw value in using the telegraph for communicating military strategy. Telegraph units in the field were linked to hilltop signalers who sent messages by using flags in daylight and torches at night. The Union Army telegraphic messages were handled by the civilian-staffed US Military Telegraph (USMT). The telegraph enabled soldiers and generals in the field to communicate with the War Department in Washington. Each day more than 4,500 telegrams were sent. Even underwater telegraph cables were used to send messages across the Chesapeake Bay. The Confederacy also saw the value of using the telegraph to communicate military strategy and send messages between Richmond and military command posts.

Telegraph wires could be tapped by stripping away the rubber insulation and attaching the wires to a pocket test (a portable device used to test the telegraph line to see if it was functioning properly). The pocket test reveals the electricity passing along the wire and therefore the person using the pocket test could actually intercept a telegraph message and read it as it is reaching its destination. The message would still be received, but the person using the pocket test could read the message before it reached its destination.
MISSION BRIEFING (CONT'D)

Both sides would often encrypt messages or parts of messages prior to sending them to ensure that if the line was intercepted/tapped by someone with a pocket test that the enemy would not be able to decrypt the message.

In this activity, students will use a primary document, an 1863 telegram with a portion that is encrypted. They will determine the importance and historical context of the telegram and attempt to use a **Vigenere** (visj-en-air, the sj sound is like the s in Asia or measure) cipher to decrypt the message.
OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson students will be able to:

1. Describe how the telegraph and pocket test were used as spy tools during the Civil War.
2. Examine a primary document and develop an understanding of its larger historic context.
3. Describe how a Vigenere cipher works and use it to decrypt and encrypt messages.

PROCEDURE

1. Distribute the Background Briefing (page 47) and Simulation Packet #1 (page 49) to each student.
2. Have them read through the Briefing and the Packet and fill out their first worksheet.
3. Each student should either hand in their decrypted telegram message worksheet or hand it in for assistance.
4. For those students needing assistance AND for those who decrypted successfully, distribute Simulation Packet #2 (page 54) (which will provide the correct decryption and then take the questioning one step further).
5. Students should then turn in their Telegram Decryption Worksheet (page 61).
6. Conduct a debriefing dialogue that assesses the courses of action recommended in the student’s reply telegram.

MATERIALS

Background Briefing (page 47)
Simulation Packet #1 (page 49)
Decryption Manual (FYI: This was created in partnership with the Cryptologic Unit of the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s Labs at Quantico) (page 55-58)
Simulation Packet #2 (page 59)
**KEY TERMS**

**Caesar Cipher:** a type of substitution cipher in which each letter in the plaintext message is replaced by another letter that is a fixed number of positions down the alphabet.

**Plaintext:** The text before it is transformed into cipher or the text that is readable after a message is decrypted.

**Pocket Test:** a portable device that allowed telegraph linemen to test the telegraph wire to ensure that it was working properly. This device could also be used to intercept messages as they were being sent over the wires.

**Telegraph:** a method of transmitting messages over great distances electronically over a series of wires.

**Telegram:** Message sent by telegraph.

**Vigenere Cipher:** a method of encrypting alphabetic text by using a series of different Caesar ciphers based on the letters of a keyword. It is a simple form of polyalphabetic (multiple alphabets) substitution.
BACKGROUND BRIEFING

THE CIVIL WAR’S WESTERN THEATER IN JUNE 1863:

The telegraph message you are about to receive was sent in June 1863, at which time Union General Ulysses S. Grant was heading a campaign to capture the city of Vicksburg, Mississippi. If Grant succeeded, Union officials hoped they could gain complete control of the Mississippi River, dividing the Confederacy in two. Grant laid siege to the city and pulled troops from Kentucky to reinforce the men he had there. This left Kentucky mostly empty of Union troops, enabling the Confederacy to make an attempt to gain control of territory. Throughout the rest of the year, the Confederacy launched campaigns across Tennessee to defend their position in Kentucky.

KEY PLAYERS IN THE TELEGRAM

JAMES A. SEDDON

James A. Seddon, the recipient of this telegram, was appointed the fourth Secretary of War to the Confederacy, from November 1862 to February 1865. He was the longest holder of that position. Prior to Virginia’s secession from the Union, Seddon was a congressman from the 6th District of that state.

BRAXTON BRAGG

Like many Confederate officers, prior to the outbreak of the Civil War, Braxton Bragg was an officer in the US Army. He was first assigned to training officers in the Gulf Coast. He was later given command of the Army of Mississippi, which he controlled during the summer of 1863. Through the majority of the year he was a part of the campaigns through Tennessee including Tullahoma and Chattanooga.

JOSEPH E. JOHNSTON

The sender of this telegram is Confederate General Joseph Johnston, and much like Braxton, he resigned his US Army commission to join the Confederacy. He was put in command of the Department of the West and was the fourth ranking general in the Confederate Army. Tensions with Jefferson Davis, the President of the Confederacy, and a lack of aggressiveness often caused problems in his strength as a general. He was frequently criticized for his failures to bring the Army to victory, including in the Vicksburg Campaign.
SIMULATION PACKET #1: TELEGRAM INTERCEPTED

WHO ARE YOU?

It is June 16th, 1863, and you are a Union telegraph officer operating at a telegraph station in the field in Tennessee. You have used your handy telegraph pocket test to intercept a Confederate telegram. The telegram you’ve intercepted contains a mysterious text that seems to be encrypted.

YOUR MISSION:

Read the telegram and record its contents.

Determine the importance of this telegram.

Decrypt the encrypted portion.

YOUR TOOLS:

The June 1863 telegram (both sides)

Telegram Worksheet

Decryption Manual
JUNE 1863 TELEGRAM

Jackson 16th Jun 1863

To J. Sedley,

Genl. Praygs informs me that a Telegram from Louisville of the 10th says that part of the 9th 28th Corps have been sent to reinforce Grant, will must this enable us to unn. for this Genl. Praygs x should be K X X X X.

J. Johnston

53/514
SIDE 2, JUNE 1863 TELEGRAM
TELEGRAM WORKSHEET

To the best of your ability transcribe the telegram:

Side One:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Side Two

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Who wrote the telegram/who is the sender? ____________________________________

When and where was it written? ________________________________________________

Who was this document written for? ____________________________________________

What is the relationship between the author and the intended recipient? ___________

What are the main points the author is trying to make? ____________________________

Is there any knowledge the author assumes the recipient has? _______________________

Record the enciphered portion of the telegraph here:

Can you decipher it? If not—consult your Decryption Manual. (page 55)

________________________________________________________________________
DECRYPTION MANUAL

CRACKING THE TELEGRAM CIPHER

The encrypted portion of the telegram was created using a Vigenere (pronounced visj-en-air, the sj sound is like the s in Asia or measure) cipher. This is a system where multiple alphabets are used. Or you could say that a message is enciphered using numerous Caesar shift alphabets.

In order for the recipient or the intended person to read this enciphered message, both the sender and recipient would use an agreed upon key word or phrase. In this telegram the key phrase is: Manchester Bluff. This was a common key phrase used during the Civil War. Other phrases used were “Complete Victory” and, as the war came to a close, “Come Retribution.”

The trick in deciphering this particular telegram is that there is a spelling error in the key phrase. This could be due to an error in the transmission of the telegram or to an error that the sender made originally (no spellcheck was available back then!)

Manchester Bluff was misspelled as Manehastar Bluff

Now let’s get cracking! Use the following worksheets to go through the process of cracking the cipher in the telegram.

---------------------------------------------

KEYWORD: MANEHESTAR BLUFF

(MANCHESTER BLUFF SPELLED INCORRECTLY)

Each letter in your key word gets assigned what is known as a period (i.e. The letter “M” would be period 1, letter “A” would be period 2, etc (see below):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Phrase:</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>L</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Period:</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So there are a total of 15 periods in the keyword.

[NEXT PAGE]
DECRYPTION MANUAL (CONT'D)

Using the Vigenere Cipher (diagram #1) follow the steps that are outlined below to decipher your Civil War message.

Your enciphered message in the telegram appears as follows:

**UNIEK- CXNKVNd Jjrrk ISLX- KFYHJEER**

Here’s how to crack this code—we will start you out with the first two letters then you do the rest:

1. Looking at your Vigenere example diagram #1, go down the cipher text alphabet on the left-hand side of the table, stopping at the first letter in your key word, which is the letter M or (period 1).

2. Once you find the M, continue across until you get to the first letter in your enciphered message (the letter U which is 8 letters over to the right). Hint: A ruler helps you keep your place.

3. Now go in a straight line up to the plaintext alphabet at the top and this will give you the first letter of your plaintext message, which is the letter I (see below):

   **U N I E K**

   I

4. Now find the 2nd letter in your key word (period 2) in the cipher text alphabet, which is the letter A.

5. Follow across until you get to the second letter of your enciphered message (which is the letter N–13 letters over to the right).

6. Now go up one to the plaintext alphabet at the top and you will get the second letter of your plaintext message, which is the letter N (see below):

   **U N I E K**

   I N

Use the worksheet on the next page to continue to decipher your message into plaintext by following this method.

[NEXT PAGE]
MISSION 03

TELEGRAPH TEASER

DIAGRAM #1
## CODE CRACKER WORKSHEET:

| A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z |
| A | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z |
| B | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z | A |
| D | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z | A | B | C |
| E | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z | A | B | C | D |
| F | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z | A | B | C | D | E |
| G | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z | A | B | C | D | E | F |
| H | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z | A | B | C | D | E | F | G |
| I | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H |
| J | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I |
| K | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J |
| L | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K |
| M | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L |
| N | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M |
| O | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N |
| P | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O |
| Q | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P |
| R | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q |
| T | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S |
| U | U | V | W | X | Y | Z | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T |

**MISSION 03**

**TELEGRAPH TEASER**

**UNIEK- CXNKNVED JJTRRK ISLX- KFYHJEER**

If you've cracked the code and have the plaintext message, submit it to the War Department (AKA your teacher). If you cannot decipher the encrypted part of the message, send it to the Telegraph Office of the War Department (AKA your teacher) to be translated. They will send you a deciphered version of the text when they have completed it.
SIMULATION (PART 2)

You have received the deciphered portion of the original message. Look at translation in reference to the original message, and the questions you had about the document.

TRANSLATION OF CYPHER

Will not this enable us to x invade Kentucky, for this Genl Bragg X should extend over East Tennessee.

X words underscored in Cypher

1. What is General Johnston suggesting to the Confederate Secretary of War?
2. What do Union troops need to do in response?
SIMULATION PACKET #2: TELEGRAM INTERCEPTED

THE NEXT STEP
Here is your transcribed and deciphered telegram from the Telegraph Office of the War Department:

Telegram Transcription

Side One

[j illegible] Telegraph
Jackson 16th June 1863

Mr JA Seddon
Genl Braggs informs me that a Telegram from Louisville of the 10th Says that Part of the 9th 2[j illegible] 0 Corps have been Sent to reinforce Grant. will not this enable us to UNIEK—CXNKVNED, for this Genl Bragg X should JJTRR—Over ISLX—KFYHJEER.
JE Johnston
Genl
53/514

Side Two

1703
Genl Johnston
Jackson, Miss.
June 16, 1863

43
8
344
171
514
TELEGRAM DECRYPTION

UNIEK- CXNKVNEC  JJTRRK  ISLX-  KFYHJEER
INVADE KENTUCKY EXTEND EAST TENNESSEE

Can you answer these questions?

1. What is General Johnston suggesting to the Confederate Secretary of War?

2. What do you think Union troops need to do in response?
TELEGRAM DECRYPTION WORKSHEET

1. Craft a message to be sent to Secretary of War, Edwin M. Stanton about this telegram. Include important details such as what the Confederates are planning to do, how that plan might affect Union goals, and your recommendation for action.

2. Send it to Secretary of War, Edwin M. Stanton. Make sure that you encipher the key intelligence in your telegram so if it is intercepted it cannot be deciphered.

What is your key phrase? ______________________________________________________

Your Response Telegram:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
MISSION BRIEFING

Union and Confederate generals and civilians alike used codes and ciphers to transmit secret messages. Both sides also tried to break each other’s code and cipher systems with varying degrees of success. In this lesson you will find examples of three different Civil War-era enciphering methods. Now it’s your student’s turn to be the code master as they try their hand at breaking the encrypted messages.

OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

1. List three enciphering methods used during the Civil War:
   - Greenhow’s Cipher
   - The Cipher Wheel / Caesar Cipher
   - The Cipher Reel / Vigenere Cipher

2. Describe how each method works.

3. Demonstrate ability to write enciphered messages and decipher them using the three methods.

PROCEDURE

1. Distribute the Code Cracker Challenge Worksheets (1, 2, and 3) to each student.

2. Check, or have students check, their answers on the answer sheet.
MISSION 04

CIVIL WAR CODE CRACKER

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MATERIALS

Code Cracker Challenge Worksheets 1, 2 and 3 (pages 63-70)
Answer Sheet (page 71)

TO CONSTRUCT THE UNION CIPHER WHEEL

Cardstock paper (to duplicate the cipher wheel)
Metal paper fastener (brad) to clip the cipher wheel disks to each other
Scissors

TO CONSTRUCT THE CONFEDERATE CIPHER REEL (optional)

Pringles can, or tube of a similar circumference and length
Vigenere Cipher Square Template with slide rule and 2 indicators (page 70)
Tape
Scissors

---------------------------------------------
CODE CRACKER CHALLENGE #1: GREENHOW’S CIPHER

THE REBEL QUEEN

A Confederate spymaster, Rose Greenhow developed her own system of enciphering secret messages sent along her “Secret Line,” which used couriers to carry the military secrets. In this way, messages were passed all the way from Washington and Baltimore to the Confederacy.

Take a close look at the enciphered letter from Rose Greenhow on the next page. Using the Key (on page 65), try to decipher this word in the letter:

Can you decipher any other words in the letter?
A letter written by Rose Greenhow using her code system.
Use Greenhow’s key to try to decode as much of the letter as possible.
CODE CRACKER CHALLENGE #2: THE UNION / FEDERAL CIPHER DISK

Union Chief Signal Officer General Albert J. Myer (A.J.M.) used a cipher disk method to send secret signals. The “adjustment letter,” or key, would be determined prior to sending the message and would change frequently, so it was less likely that signals would be intercepted and decrypted.

Albert J. Meyer Cipher Disk Reproduction: International Spy Museum
**HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN FEDERAL CIPHER DISK:**

Step 1: Cut out the small disk and the larger disk.

Step 2: Place the smaller disk on top of the larger disk.

Step 3: Use a metal brad to fasten the smaller disk to the larger disk.

**YOUR FEDERAL CIPHER DISK CHALLENGE:**

Set the letter “R” on the inner disk to the 8 numerical setting on the outer disk.

Decipher this message:

1188 1881 81 111 811 181 8181

Plaintext: ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
CODE CRACKER CHALLENGE #3: THE CONFEDERATE CIPHER REEL

Telegraphs could be tapped and secret messages intercepted, so it became imperative to encrypt messages before sending them. A common solution was to use the Vigenere (vis-j-en-air, the sj sound is like the s in Asia or measure) system of substituting multiple letters for other letters. A message was sent in plain text with a key word or phrase which would allow the deciphering of a subsequent enciphered message using the reel.

Try your hand at deciphering this message (this is a simplified version without a code phrase) simply set your markers on the 9th letter across and the corresponding letter at the 21st position is your plaintext: so Q=C

QIGHSF CB HVS ACJS

To decipher the message you can either make your own Cipher Reel (page 70) or you can use the Vigenere table in its flat form (not on a reel) (page 71)
MAKE YOUR OWN CONFEDERATE CIPHER REEL:

Materials:

Pringles can, or tube of a similar circumference and length
Vigenere Cipher Square Template with slide rule and two indicators (page 71)
Tape
Scissors

Procedure:

1. Wrap the cipher square around the Pringles can so that all the letters show. Trim as necessary and tape the cipher to itself so that the paper spins freely around the tube. Tape the seams as smoothly as possible so that the reel spins well under the slide rule.

2. Cut out the slide rule and the two indicators along the black lines. Tape the slide rule across the length of the can so it does not catch the cipher. Attach the two indicators to the slide rule by slipping the tabs under the slide rule.

3. Your reel is ready! To use, set the right hand indicator to the appropriate letter of the key. Spin the cipher around the can until the left hand indicator points to the corresponding letter of the message. At this point the right hand indicator will be pointing to the enciphered letter.
CIVIL WAR CODE CRACKER ANSWER SHEET

Code Cracker Challenge #1
Greenhow’s Cipher: MCLELAND*
(*Greenhow’s spelling)

Challenge #2
Union Cipher Disk: PICKETS

Challenge #3
Confederate Cipher Reel: CUSTER ON THE MOVE
MISSION

THE GEOINT OF GETTYSBURG

MISSION BRIEFING

Today, the United States employs a wide variety of high-tech intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) resources to support military operations. The National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA), National Reconnaissance Office (NRO), Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), and National Security Agency (NSA) dynamically map and analyze geospatial imagery and related data, extracting quantifiable information about the location of adversaries and their assets. Today, this geospatial intelligence (aka GEOINT) is an integral component of every successful military operation.

During the Civil War, on the other hand, reliable geospatial intelligence was much harder to acquire. There were mixed results with a number of newly developed technologies and methods. The roots of modern satellite reconnaissance are traced back to overhead reconnaissance performed by the Union Army Balloon Corps, established in 1861 and disbanded in 1863. There were also experiments with aerial photography, but further work was needed to make the process practicable. Reliable geospatial intelligence was nevertheless required, and generals learned what they could about the movements of their adversaries from cavalry units, independent scouts, and observation points on high ground.

High ground offers advantages in battle as well, and Civil War generals sought out defensible terrain as they prepared to engage an adversary. Working knowledge of local topography commonly influenced the outcome of many Civil War engagements. This was exemplified at Gettysburg where the Union army successfully held the high ground to the south-east of the town of Gettysburg, a famously fishhook-shaped line of defense stretching from Culp’s Hill down along Cemetery Ridge all the way to Little Round Top. This location also served to conceal the arrival of additional troops marching up the Baltimore Turnpike from the southeast, beyond the view of Confederate observers.

[NEXT PAGE]
MISSION BRIEFING (CONT'D)

The Battle of Gettysburg – fought July 1-3, 1863 in southern Pennsylvania – is widely considered pivotal to the outcome of the Civil War. A decisive victory by the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia would have rendered Washington, DC vulnerable to attack and could have pressured the United States government to accept a peace accord affirming the Confederacy as a separate, sovereign nation. But the Union Army of the Potomac prevailed, and the Confederates were forced to retreat back to Virginia. Many historians view this battle as the ‘High Water Mark’ of Confederate military operations during the Civil War, a notion commemorated at the location where Pickett’s Charge briefly penetrated Union defensive lines along Cemetery Ridge.

The ultimate defeat of the Confederate army at Gettysburg can be attributed in large part to limitations in ‘situational awareness’. Situational awareness is essentially the ability to perceive elements present within a given space and timeframe and is vital to battlefield coordination and decision-making. Confederate army attacks on the flanks of Union army battle lines on day 2 of this battle were unsuccessful because of poor timing and coordination due to uncertainty regarding size and location of Union forces along their left flank. In modern engagements such lapses in situational awareness are averted by reliable geospatial intelligence.

Modern geospatial intelligence contributes to situational awareness by exploiting imagery and geographic data derived from a variety of sources such as satellites and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) and providing actionable intelligence to commanders in the battlefield. If Confederate commander General Robert E. Lee had access to such technology he would have been able to monitor the movement of Union troops and adjust his battle plans accordingly.

A balloon at General McDowell's headquarters as illustrated in Harper's Weekly.
OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson students will be able to:

1. Employ geospatial intelligence (GEOINT) to assess strategic positioning of various military elements in the Battle of Gettysburg.

2. Use an interactive web mapping system to identify and graphically annotate significant locations on the Gettysburg battlefield.

3. Explain the significance of topography on troop movements and battlefield positions at Gettysburg.

PROCEDURE

This activity engages students with the Battle of Gettysburg using simple web mapping tools, providing an introduction to modern geospatial concepts and the ability to augment topographic and imagery base maps with annotated graphic features (see Technical Directions section (pages 77-78) for guidance on using the web-based ArcGIS.com software).

Required technology:
(a) computer, (b) web browser, (c) ArcGIS.com mapping system

Reference materials:
Battle of Gettysburg maps (1st-3rd July 1863) included with lesson

Preparation:
Introduce students to contextual elements of the Battle of Gettysburg, including the strategic purpose for the Confederate Army to advance into Pennsylvania and reasons why the battle occurred in this particular location. You can obtain this from three suggested sources: The Killer Angels by Michael Shaara (historical fiction); Gettysburg by Stephen Sears; and Stars in Their Courses: The Gettysburg Campaign June-July 1863 by Shelby Foote.
KEY TERMS

**Base Map:** A collection of geographic features and/or imagery which provides reference and context to the subject of the map.

**Elevation:** A numerical measure of the height of a location above or below a fixed baseline, e.g. mean sea level.

**Geospatial Intelligence (GEOINT):** A discipline responsible for collecting, analyzing, and disseminating information about human activity and physical features of the earth’s surface by exploiting imagery of a physical place in real time.

**Geospatial Information:** Information pertaining to features which can be linked to location on the earth’s surface.

**Intelligence:** The process of collecting and analyzing information of importance to national security and policy.

**Reconnaissance:** The action of scouting or surveying the capabilities and intent of the enemy, e.g. a reconnaissance of enemy airfields prior to an invasion.

**Situational Awareness:** Awareness of the information, events, and activity taking place within a defined spatial extent and timeframe and its impact on goals and objectives.

**Surveillance:** A clandestine manner of monitoring activity and behavior of individuals, organizations, or political groups.

**Terrain:** A description of the physical character of the landscape in context of horizontal and vertical dimensions.

**Topography:** The study of the earth’s features and elements of the earth’s surface which includes physical characteristics such as terrain, as well as man-made features such as buildings and roads.
THE GEOINT CHALLENGE

The Confederate Army of Northern Virginia is attacking from west of Gettysburg. You are a GEOINT Analyst for the Union Army of the Potomac and you’ve been tasked with finding optimal locations for defensive engagement, while additional Union forces continue to arrive from the southeast. Using the topographic base map (or other base maps you find on ArcGIS.com), you will mark features that are strategically important for successful battle outcomes. When you are done you can compare your decisions with actual Civil War deployments illustrated on the battlefield maps accompanying this lesson.

YOUR MISSION:

Open the ArcGIS.com software and zoom in to the Gettysburg, Pennsylvania location. Use the “Add Features” function to create graphic features (points, lines, areas) to annotate your map with the following items, including text descriptions and web links to photographic images and other information.

HIGH GROUND: Gettysburg was a victory for Union forces because they were able to control the ridges and hills to the east and south of the town. Study the topographic map and identify areas of high ground. The Union Army will place troops in defensive positions along this ground.

DEFENSIVE LINES: The Union Army of the Potomac has seven infantry corps, a cavalry corps, and an artillery unit, totaling more than 90,000 troops. The Confederates have roughly 70,000 troops in three infantry corps and one cavalry corp. Place defensive battle lines connected along strategic high ground locations.

ARTILLERY PLACEMENT FOR THREE UNION ARTILLERY DIVISIONS: Artillery provided heavy firepower during the Civil War and was effective in weakening enemy positions at a distance. Choose locations which give the artillery placements a good view of the approaching enemy and reduce the risk of hitting your own troops.

LINES OF ATTACK/WITHDRAWAL: Confederate forces were on the attack for much of the Battle of Gettysburg. Create directional arrows indicating movement of forces in battle.

CAMP LOCATIONS: The Union and Confederate armies are large forces requiring much space for both troops and supplies. Look for locations protected from the battle (behind ridges and hills) and close to water.

COMMAND HEADQUARTERS: Union commanders require a headquarters for meeting and planning, in a location safe from enemy artillery and battle charges.

FIELD HOSPITALS: Mark two locations for field hospitals on the map close to the high ground where the Union Army will be fighting. Remember you want to keep the hospitals out of sight from enemy artillery.
TECHNICAL DIRECTIONS

For this activity we will use the ArcGIS web mapping platform. ArcGIS.com is a powerful mapping tool that enables the creation of customized maps featuring a wide variety of data. The following steps will help you get started with this GEOINT of Gettysburg lesson.

1. Open a web browser and navigate to www.arcgis.com. Click on the ‘Make a Map’ option.

2. You will be presented with a map display. Read the directions on how to make a map, found to the left of the map.

3. Center the map on Gettysburg, PA by searching for it using the ‘Find Address or Place’ search box.

4. You can pan around the map by clicking the mouse of on the map panel and dragging in a direction. You can zoom in and out with the mouse wheel or by manipulating the zoom bar to the top left of the map panel.

5. You can mark and draw features by adding an editable layer to the map. Do this by clicking on the ‘Add’ button on the toolbar and choose ‘Create Editable Layer’. You are then presented with a dialog which asks you to name the layer and choose a symbol template (the default ‘Map Notes’ template is adequate for simple points, lines and polygons but feel free to experiment).

6. The process of creating features on the map by hand is a simple one. Simply choose a symbol under the points, lines or area (polygon) in the left panel and click on the map surface to begin drawing.

7. For example, if you want to annotate a region of high ground (such as at Little Round Top), click on the ‘Area’ symbol in the left panel and then click on a location along the boundary of the feature you wish to symbolize to drop the first point. Continue by clicking along the edge of the feature until it is covered by the translucent fill and double click to complete the polygon. You may wish to give the
feature a name and adjust its color in the pop-up dialog. Color may be adjusted by clicking on ‘Change Symbol’ and changing the fill and outline options.

8. Points are placed simply by selecting a symbol under the point section and then clicking on a location in the map panel to place the point. To draw a line, select a symbol under the line section and then click twice on the map surface—once at the start location and the second at the end location of the line. You can exit the editing interface by clicking on the cross to the top right of the symbol panel.

9. The default base map in the map panel can be changed by clicking on the ‘Basemap’ button on the toolbar and selecting from a range of options (such as imagery and streets). Experiment with base maps and see if it helps you locate noteworthy features.

10. You can search and add additional geographic information by clicking ‘Add’ and choosing ‘Add Layers’. Experiment by searching for something of contemporary interest such as population density.

11. When you have completed your map you can print it by clicking on the ‘Print’ button and selecting a suitable output option

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**EXTENSION**

Group students into Confederate and Union Army teams and experiment with troop maneuvers, defensive line placements, and combat strategies—using knowledge about 19th century Civil War engagements to inform strategic decisions. How might Confederate victory been a plausible outcome?
MISSION BRIEFING

Although there was no formal intelligence collection apparatus in place during the Civil War, intelligence was collected, analyzed, and disseminated. The sources of intelligence were wide and varied and some were quite unusual. One type of intelligence, in particular, was so prolific that it warranted a special category. “The Black Dispatches” contained collected intelligence from slaves and runaway slaves passed to Union officers. Tens of thousands of African-Americans risked their lives to secretly gather intelligence sometimes right in plain sight and sometimes from behind enemy lines.

OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson students will be able to:

1. Define the role of the Black Dispatches during the Civil War.

2. Describe four things that Harriet Tubman did that could be considered spying during the Civil War.

3. List three characteristics of slaves and free blacks that positioned them to be valuable spies.

4. List three spy skills that are necessary for all spies.
PROCEDURE

1. Instruct students to read the book, Harriet Tubman, Secret Agent by Thomas B. Allen (National Geographic, 2006).

2. After reading the book, distribute the Debriefing Worksheet (page 81) to students and have them fill it out.

3. Conduct a discussion/debate about the contents of the Debriefing Worksheet.

4. Optional Extension Idea: you can assign students to read The Real Spy’s Guide to Becoming a Spy, a book published by the International Spy Museum, to compare and contrast the skills of the “modern spy” versus the skills employed by Harriet Tubman and her sources, the Black Dispatches during the Civil War.

MATERIALS

A copy of the book, Harriet Tubman, Secret Agent by Thomas B. Allen for each student

The Debriefing Worksheet (page 81)

KEY TERMS

The Black Dispatches: Intelligence collected by slaves and runaway slaves and passed to Union officers during the Civil War

Courier: A person who carries intelligence or secret messages from one location or person to another.

Tradecraft: The skills and tools that spies need to do their job.
HARRIET TUBMAN, SECRET AGENT DEBRIEFING WORKSHEET

List the reasons why you believe that Harriet Tubman could be considered a spy:

________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________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MISSION BRIEFING

Although somewhat limited, there are some accounts and documentation relating to the use of spy gadgets by both the Confederacy and the Union during the Civil War. Spy gadgets are designed to solve a problem. Understanding the problem, or challenge, is key to understanding spy tradecraft. Wartime, in general, is a time when technological advances are accelerated in attempt to give the military an “upper hand” in battlefield strategy and tactics.

OBJECTIVES:

After completing this lesson students will be able to:

1. List at least two spy gadgets used during the Civil War, the problem each gadget solved, and how each might have impacted the outcome of a particular battle or the War itself.

2. List and describe at least three 20th/21st Century equivalent spy gadgets or technologies that address the same or similar intelligence problems faced during the Civil War.
PROCEDURE:

1. Provide each student with the Background Briefing sheet (page 85-89) to give them content about spy technology developed and used during the Civil War.

2. Copy and cut out the Civil War and Modern Gadget Flash Card Deck (pages 91-100) to provide each student with their own complete deck.

3. You can either provide each student with a set of spy scenario challenges (pages 101-104) or you can post them around the classroom and have students affix their choice of the appropriate gadget/technology to the scenarios.

4. Have the students choose which gadgets are suitable for solving each spy scenario challenge. And place their flashcard on that scenario or make the match on their own set of challenges.

5. Once the gadgets are matched with their challenge, students can generate a list of the pros and cons of each gadget (modern and Civil War technologies).

6. Thought provoking questions to stimulate dialogue include:
   - How has spy technology changed for the better?
   - Do similar challenges still exist?
   - What kind of future spy gadgets will be needed in order to solve emerging challenges?
   - What are some of the new challenges that we face in the world of espionage/spying?

MATERIALS:

Civil War Gadget Flashcards:
- wiretapper
- hot air and hydrogen balloons
- signal flags
- cipher reel
- cipher wheel
- field glasses
MATERIALS (CONT'D)

20th-21st Century Gadget Flashcards:

- night vision goggles
- Enigma Machine
- overhead camera/bird cam
- lipstick pistol
- wristwatch camera
- buttonhole camera
- covert remote listening device (bug)
- spy satellite

Spy Scenario Challenges:

- covert communication
- overhead surveillance
- tactical planning

KEY TERMS:

**Tradecraft:** the skills and tools that spies need to do their job.

**Bug:** a covert remote listening device.

**Reconnaissance:** an inspection or exploration of an area, especially one made to gather military information.

**Surveillance:** a clandestine manner of monitoring activity and behavior of individuals, organizations, or political groups.
BACKGROUND BRIEFING: CIVIL WAR GADGETS

The Telegraph

The telegraph was an important method for communicating information during the Civil War. A telegraph works by sending a series of electric pulses through a long wire, to another telegraph device which then interprets the pulses into a series of clicking sounds. Depending on how long the lengths of the clicks are, there is an “alphabet” called Morse code that the person on the other side of the telegraph can use to understand the message. The telegraph system was the first step to the development of the telephone.

The lineman’s pocket test was developed to be used when performing repairs. It consisted of the telegraph key and sounder; the same as those used in a regular office to send and receive messages, just contained in a small unit. If a break in the line occurred, the pocket test would be used to test whether or not a line was live or carrying messages, in order to determine the location of the break in the telegraph line.

When the Civil War broke out, spies were at a disadvantage because messages could not be intercepted in the usual method of stealing documents or seeing a visual signal method in progress. The lineman’s pocket test was repurposed to create a wiretap along the line. The wiretapper could not stop the message from reaching its intended recipient, but he could intercept and read the content and send messages if he wished. Both the Union and Confederacy used wiretapping as a means of gathering information about the enemy, though the Confederates often had an easier time of it because they were more often in territory that lent itself to telegraph wires (giving them a clear advantage in this regard). The longest wiretapping operation is said to have taken place behind Union lines near Richmond while it and Petersburg were under siege. C.A. Gaston, Robert E. Lee’s confidential operator spent six weeks monitoring the Union telegraph near City Point, resulting in some successful actions against the Union based on the information he collected.
BACKGROUND BRIEFING

Hot Air and Hydrogen Balloons

Hot air and hydrogen balloons were first put to military use during the Civil War in an attempt to gain aerial surveillance of battlefields. The concept of a lighter-than-air balloon had been designed prior to the war, but further developments were made during the war. Balloons could be filled with hot air which would cause the balloon to lift off, but unless the pilot carried a heat source with him, landing would be necessary as the air cooled. Another way to fill the balloons was to use the gas that powered a town’s gaslights. However, if the balloon needed to be launched outside of a city, then it had to be filled with other gases, which inspired the creation of hydrogen generators. Unlike hot air balloons of today, these balloons did not have any ability to steer through the sky and were attached by tethers to the ground, trains, or sometimes even to boats. When they were attached to locomotives or vessels, they could be moved around a battlefield.

The first balloonist to be employed in the Civil War was Thaddeus Lowe. In 1861, Lowe lofted a balloon above the War Department with a telegraph wire attached to his tether in order to persuade President Lincoln to use balloons in the war effort. A small corps of balloonists was added to the Union armies, and the Confederates fielded two balloons, one hot air balloon and a gas balloon which was tethered to a train and towed to an observation site. That balloon was ultimately captured by the Union. One intrepid Union balloonist attempted free (untethered) ascents over the Confederate lines at Centerville and Manassas, but was arrested in Alexandria, Virginia where he was suspected of being a Confederate spy. Ultimately, balloons were discarded as a useful method of reconnaissance as they were too visible from the ground and were unwieldy. The Balloon Corps was disbanded by 1863.
BACKGROUND BRIEFING

Signal Flags

Major Albert J. Myer created a signal system using a combination of left and right waves of a flag, which was based on his knowledge of sign language. Myer also developed specific flags for the system, but stated in his *Manual of Signals* that a signalist could use “a handkerchief or hat held in the hand above the head...or any white or light cloth tied to a gun.” After the war, a signalman described the system as a series of “wigs and wags of a flag,” which gave the system its vernacular name, Wig-Wag, which is still used today.

Myer unintentionally trained Confederate officers in Wig-Wag because they resigned from the Army to join the Confederacy at the beginning of the war. One such officer, Captain Alexander, assisted in the victory at Manassas in July 1861 when he signaled a crucial Union movement on the since named Signal Hill. Following that, Wig-Wag was similarly used by both the Union and the Confederacy, which meant that they could intercept signals from each other. During a Charleston campaign, the Confederates had 76 signalists, twelve of whom were assigned to intercept enemy traffic. As a result, messages were often sent in cipher, and signalists spent a lot of time trying to decrypt messages. Myer also developed a cipher device which involved two concentric disks with flag wags on the outer disk which would indicate a letter on the inner disk.
BACKGROUND BRIEFING

Enciphering Methods

Sending messages that opponents could not read or comprehend was a priority for both sides of the Civil War. Cipher methods existed prior to the Civil War, but some were developed during the war including the one that was used in conjunction with Albert Myer’s wig-wag flags. The Confederates developed a tool to speed the use of an older ciphering method created by a Frenchman named Vigenere. He arranged the alphabet in a square that shifts letters one space to the left in each subsequent row. In order to encrypt a message, the user would write a message with a key above it, repeated the length of the message. Each letter would be encrypted by first using the key to determine the column and the message to determine the row, the ciphered letter was the intersection of the two.

The Confederates transposed this block of letters onto a rotating cylinder which had two markers, one each for row and column. The reel which is pictured here was purported given as a war trophy to a Union officer after it was captured in Mobile, Alabama.

Confederate Cipher Reel Replica, designed to simplify the use of the Vigenere Cipher.
BACKGROUND BRIEFING (CONT'D)

Albert J. Meyer's Cipher Wheel

A cipher disk or wheel is an enciphering and deciphering tool developed in 1470 by the Italian architect and author Leon Battista Alberti. He constructed a device consisting of two concentric circular plates mounted one on top of the other. The larger plate is called the “stationary” and the smaller one the “moveable” since the smaller one could move on top of the “stationary”. The first incarnation of the disk had plates made of copper and featured the alphabet, in order, inscribed on the outer edge of each disk in cells split evenly along the circumference of the circle. This enabled the two alphabets to move relative to each other creating an easy to use key. Rather than using an impractical and complicated table indicating the encryption method, one could use the much simpler cipher disk. This made both encryption and decryption faster, simpler and less prone to error.

During the Civil War, military officers were incredibly naïve about how they used cipher disks. Instead of agreeing on a key beforehand, the keys seem to have been chosen by the sender and then transmitted to the receiver at the top of the encoded message. In essence, if you could intercept a message between two officers, you would definitely be able to read it. Also, the Confederates were savvy of the Northerners system of encryption and it is highly likely that they captured many of the disks that the Northerners were using at the time.

The Albert J. Meyer Cipher Wheel
BACKGROUND BRIEFING

Field Glasses

Spies, particularly scouts, needed to be able to see objects at a great distance, anything from enemy troops to signal brigades. Telescopes were gadgets used to enhance vision, but they only magnified the sight in one eye. It wasn’t until the 1800s that a new method of binary magnification was invented, when Ignazio Porro patented a pair of binoculars which included a prism. The prism bends the light in a z-shape, spreading the lenses farther apart and creating better depth perception. The Porro prism is still in use today.

In the 1850’s field glasses, or binoculars, had become all the rage. They used two telescopes side-by-side to give the viewer a farther, clearer image.
SPY GADGET FLASH CARDS

Print on cardstock and cut along the lines so the photo is on one side and the information about the gadget is on the reverse side.
SPY GADGET FLASH CARDS

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LINEMAN’S POCKET TEST WIRETAPPER

Spy Use:
This compact device was developed to test the electricity in a telegraph wire to ensure that it was working properly. It could, however, be used to intercept enemy messages which were sent via the telegraph. It could also be used to send disinformation (false information) over the telegraph wires to deceive the enemy.

HOT AIR/HYDROGEN BALLOONS

Spy Use:
Both the Union and Confederate sides could gain critical overhead surveillance information about troop locations without crossing enemy lines, or carrying the balloon into reach of weaponry. The balloon could not free float and had to be tethered. A telegraph machine could send messages down from the balloon to the ground.

SIGNAL OR “WIG-WAG” FLAGS

Spy Use: Spies and Signal Bureau officers could send messages long distances without traveling. When the flags were waved in prescribed motions, they would translate into messages. Because the same type of flags and signals were used by both the Union and the Confederates they could easily intercept the messages. Therefore enciphered signal flag messages were sometimes used.
SPY GADGET FLASH CARDS

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SPY GADGET FLASH CARDS

Print on cardstock and cut along the lines so the photo is on one side and the information about the gadget is on the reverse side.

CONFEDERATE CIPHER REEL

Spy Use: This tool simplified the use of the Vigenere Cipher by putting the 26 block square onto a rotating cylinder. A key was needed to use this cipher. The message would be written and the key would repeat along the length of message. To encrypt, the marker would slide along the first row to the letter from the key. Then, the second marker, placed on the first column, and the reel would spin until the second marker meets the letter from the original message. The first marker will be pointing at the encrypted letter.

FIELD GLASSES

Spy Use: This gadget can be considered as a pair of binoculars. Commonly used in the 1850’s when an Italian named Ignazio Porro came up with a design that is still in use today. It is called the Porro Prism. In warfare and in peacetime, they can be used to conduct surveillance and spy on the enemy or a target from a fair distance.

NIGHT VISION GOGGLES

Spy Use: This optical instrument allows images to be produced in levels of light approaching total darkness. They can be used for conducting surveillance in low levels of light or darkness. Night vision devices were first used in World War II, and came into wide use during the Vietnam War. The technology has evolved greatly since their introduction, leading to several “generations” of night vision equipment with performance increasing and price decreasing. Another term is “night optical device” or NOD.
SPY GADGET FLASH CARDS

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SPY GADGET FLASH CARDS

Print on cardstock and cut along the lines so the photo is on one side and the information about the gadget is on the reverse side.

CIPHER WHEEL

Spy Use: This cipher wheel could be used to encipher secret messages so if they were intercepted they could not be read. The wheel provided a numerical substitution for each letter in the alphabet. A key would be determined and communicated to the recipient so they could crack the ciphered message.

ENIGMA MACHINE

Spy Use: Originally designed to encode business communications, the Germans adapted the Enigma cipher machine for use in World War II. The machine linked a keyboard to a series of rotors using electric current. The rotors transposed each keystroke multiple times. The message was then sent in Morse code. Enigma generated millions of combinations. The rotor order, starting positions and plug board connections were reset daily. To decipher a message, Enigma’s daily settings key—sometimes encoded in the message itself—was needed. The Germans believed Enigma provided an unbreakable code.

OVERHEAD SURVEILLANCE CAMERA, AKA BIRD CAM (c. 1917 - 1918, Germany)

Spy Use: Used for aerial surveillance, pigeons with tiny cameras were commonly released over military sites in World War I. As the birds flew, the cameras continuously clicked away, snapping pictures which were developed and interpreted when the pigeons reached their destinations.
SPY GADGET FLASH CARDS

Print on cardstock and cut along the lines so the photo is on one side and the information about the gadget is on the reverse side.
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LIPSTICK PISTOL

Spy Use: A concealed weapon could be used to get out of a tight spot. Referred to as “The Kiss of Death,” the lipstick pistol was employed by KGB operatives during the Cold War. This 4.5 mm single shot weapon was disguised as a tube of lipstick, easily hidden in a purse. The existence of such a weapon was first detected at a border crossing into West Berlin.

STEINECK WRISTWATCH CAMERA

Spy Use: This cleverly disguised subminiature camera allowed an operative to take photographs while pretending to check his watch for the time of day. It used a circular piece of film with six exposures.

BUTTON HOLE CAMERA

Spy Use: The KGB used small, lightweight F21 cameras for various methods of clandestine/secret photography. Concealing the camera behind coat buttons proved very effective. The camera lens was hidden behind a false button on the front of the user’s coat. When the remote shutter release was triggered, connected to the lens by a thin cable from a coat pocket, the center of the false button opened briefly to take the photograph. This concealment proved so successful, it remains in use today.
SPY GADGET FLASH CARDS

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SPY GADGET FLASH CARDS

Print on cardstock and cut along the lines so the photo is on one side and the information about the gadget is on the reverse side.

COVERT REMOTE LISTENING DEVICES (AKA Bugs)

Spy Use: Spy agencies have developed many ingenious devices to eavesdrop on enemy conversations. Tiny microphone-transmitter combinations may be concealed almost anywhere—in a telephone, book, desk drawer, or belt buckle. A skilled agent selects the right device to suit a particular place or to pick up certain sounds. One way to obtain secret information is by listening for it. Specialized intelligence agents planted listening devices—bugs—anywhere secret conversations could take place. Some bugs are connected to a wire linked to a listening post. Others send a radio signal via transmitter to a receiving and recording device.

SHOE HEEL TRANSMITTER

Spy Use: Secretly obtaining an American diplomat’s shoes, the Romanians outfitted them with a hidden microphone and transmitter, thus enabling them to monitor the conversations of the unsuspecting target. This was primarily used during the Cold War.

SPY SATELLITE

Spy Use: 1959 marked the first spy satellite named Corona. Thousands of feet overhead, satellites provide surveillance photography. Trained intelligence analysts interpret these images, using color, shape, shadow, and surrounding features to discern tiny details. Satellites are used to locate enemy targets and resources without anyone ever knowing that they are under surveillance. Today’s satellites can obtain a clear image on a target as small as the home plate on a baseball field.
SPY CHALLENGE SCENARIOS

Cut on the dotted line and have students choose which gadgets are suitable for each Spy Challenge Scenario.

Collecting Intelligence
You’ve made it to the target destination. There are documents you need to collect but you can’t take them with you because you don’t want anyone to know you’ve been there. It’s just too much information to memorize. How will you get it all back to HQ?
SPY CHALLENGE SCENARIOS

Reveal Enemy Intentions
It is wartime. If only you knew your enemy’s plans and intentions for next attack. Where will they deploy their troops? When will they attack? What is the size of their Army and what is their weapons capability?

Tactical Planning in War
It is wartime. You are a commander of a large unit of soldiers. You need to plan your troop’s movements toward new terrain.
SPY CHALLENGE SCENARIOS

Intercept Communications
You think a spy you’ve recruited is actually a double agent. You want to covertly intercept their communications to find out if they are working with an enemy agency.

Send a Secret Message
It is wartime. You are the captain of a ship and you need to get a message to the captain of another ship to warn them that the enemy has advanced and to halt their passage.
SPY CHALLENGE SCENARIOS

Send a Secret Message
You’ve been sent overseas as an intelligence officer. You need to send a message to a spy that you’ve recruited. The danger of interception is high.

SPY CHALLENGE SCENARIOS

Locating a Threat
You need to find the location of a weapons factory. You know that the factory is underground but that the surface of the ground might contain clues to what’s beneath.
MISSION BRIEFING

It is widely known that music was present on the Civil War battlefields and that bands were used to uplift the morale of the troops before, during, and after battles. What is not often explored and known is the use of music tactically during the Civil War. Music served both to communicate covert messages and to deceive the enemy.

OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson students will be able to:

1. Cite three examples in which music and bands were used tactically during the Civil War.

2. Brainstorm two examples of how music in today’s world can be used for reconnaissance and deceptive purposes both in warfare and in everyday life.
PROCEDURE


2. After students have read the article, facilitate a discussion using the following talking points/questions:

   • How was music used tactically during the Civil War?
   
   • Describe some examples.
   
   • What were the “messages” that certain musical sounds could send both to the troops and to opposing forces as deception?
   
   • What is the role of silence or lack of sound in reconnaissance?
   
   • What other types of reconnaissance supported aural reconnaissance?
   
   • How does music send “messages” in today’s world?
   
   • Do you think that music could be used tactically in a military situation in today’s world?

KEY TERMS

**Aural Reconnaissance:** An inspection or exploration of an area, especially one made to gather military information in this case, by listening for auditory “cues” or “clues.”

**Deception:** Those measures designed to mislead the enemy by manipulation, distortion, or falsification of evidence to induce the enemy to react in a manner prejudicial to the enemy’s interests.

**Surveillance:** Close observation of a person or group, especially one under suspicion.
RESOURCES
Musical Reconnaissance and Deception in the American Civil War

James A. Davis

Abstract

Music was an omnipresent part of American Civil War battlefields, yet the role of music in tactical situations has received little scholarly attention. Firsthand accounts reveal that certain officers and enlisted men recognized and drew upon the communicative potential of military music. Alert scouts realized that field musicians and brass bands conveyed valuable information about the enemy position they were reconnoitering, while creative officers used both the connotative and denotative potential of music to enhance tactical deceptions. These occurrences affirm the intrinsic role that music played in the lives of nineteenth-century Americans while revealing an expanding awareness of battlefield psychology.

Music played a surprising role in the events surrounding General P. G. T. Beauregard’s investment of and withdrawal from Corinth, Mississippi, following the Battle of Shiloh in April and May of 1862. The Union commanders pursuing Beauregard relied heavily on aural reconnaissance and were particularly sensitive to the information military music could impart. Certainly the sound of their own musicians was considered revealing; during the protracted approach to Corinth, General D. C. Buell sent a frustrated message to Henry W. Halleck complaining of the music coming from the Union ranks: “A furious beating of bass drums is kept up in the right and left corps. It can be heard a distance of

James A. Davis is Professor of Musicology at the School of Music, State University of New York—College at Fredonia. Having just finished a companion article on music and gallantry in Civil War combat, he is now working on a book that examines the musical practices of soldiers and civilians during the winter encampment in central Virginia, 1863–64.
four or five miles; of course betrays our position and progress, and ought to be suppressed. Bass drums are not used with field music in my command at all.”

These same commanders assumed that music from the Confederate ranks conveyed similar information and used it in their deliberations. Such was the case in Thomas A. Scott’s field report to Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton back in Washington: “Captain [L. H.] Marshall reports rebels in great force at Corinth and several miles south of the town on line of Mobile and Ohio road. He heard three heavy trains arrive and, after they stopped, marching music from the depot in the direction of the front lines of the enemy. He has no doubt they are re-enforced from the south. A spy sent out yesterday returned this morning and reports the enemy very strong.” The Union scouts were using their ears as much as their eyes, not only counting trains by their sound, but also describing the sound as “heavy” (implying boxcars full of troops and supplies). Add in the sound of marching music, and the conclusion was substantial Confederate reinforcements.

This conclusion, though misleading given the small number of Confederate troops trickling in, worked to Beauregard’s advantage. The Confederate general wanted his opponents to believe that he was receiving considerable reinforcements and anxious for a fight, when in fact he had already determined to withdraw as discreetly as possible. To this end Beauregard allowed Confederate “deserters” to cross into the enemy camp to give inflated numbers while adding Quaker guns and straw dummies to his batteries to enhance their numbers. Beauregard’s ruses worked as well as he could have hoped. Halleck was convinced that he faced a substantial force that could attack him at any moment.

As he finalized the withdrawal with his subordinates, Beauregard ordered that a variety of final deceptions, including musical performances, be continued. On 27 May he wrote: “After the departure of the troops from the intrenched lines a sufficient number of drums from each brigade must be left to beat the reveille at the usual hour, after which they can rejoin their commands.” The next day he ordered that small fires be kept up, though warning that not too many fires should be lit as that might “reveal too clearly our position.” And finally, on 29 May, he wrote: “Camp fires must be kept up all night by the troops in position and then by the cavalry also. . . . Whenever the railroad engine whistles during the night near the intrenchments the troops in the vicinity will cheer repeatedly, as though re-enforcements had been received.” Once again the deception proved remarkably effective, as evident in the grumpy description by a correspondent for the Chicago

2. 14 May 1862, OR, Series 1, 10 (Part II), 189.
3. OR, Series 1, 10 (Part I), 768–70.
“Up to last night the enemy kept up a display of force along his whole line, thus completely deceiving our generals.”

Apparently Beauregard’s final departure came at the right time, as there were indications that the deception was wearing thin. According to one Ohio journalist:

During that night we could hear teams being driven off and boxes being nailed in the rebel camp. . . . Considerable cannonading was done by our forces and yet no response, and yesterday the same. Last night the same band sounded retreat, tattoo, and taps all along the rebel lines, moving from place to place, and this morning suspicion was ripened into certainty when we saw dense volumes of smoke arise in the direction of Corinth and heard the report of an exploding magazine. Corinth was evacuated and Beauregard had achieved another triumph. I do not know how the matter strikes abler military men, but I think we have been fooled.

In this case it was the musical deception in particular that began to collapse. Alert listeners realized that although music was being heard continuously and from different locations, there was only one band playing at a time. Some of the musicians responsible for fooling the Union forces paid a heavy price for their role in this deception: “It is here proper to state that in the last advance a regimental band of rebels, consisting of 16 men, who were discovered secreted in the brush by members of the Twenty-eighth Illinois, surrendered themselves as prisoners of war, and were sent to the rear in charge of cavalry, with orders to report to the provost-marshal.”

The recognition of music’s value in reconnaissance and the use of musicians in tactical deceptions are enticing yet understudied topics to musicologists and military historians alike. Just as the Civil War was a turning point in the evolution of warfare, so too were the 1860s a time of transformation and maturation in America’s musical life. The intersection of these culturally emblematic practices presents a singular opportunity for broadening our understanding of creative

4. 30 May 1862, OR, Series 1, 10 (Part I), 772. Grant acknowledged Beauregard’s successful use of sound in these deceptions and implied that the Union forces might have been more pragmatic in their interpretation; Ulysses S. Grant, Personal Memoirs, ed. C. Carr (New York: Modern Library, 1999), 254–55.

5. Correspondent to the Cincinnati Commercial, 30 May 1862, quoted in OR, Series 1, 10 (Part I), 772–73.

tactical thought from the time while strengthening our appreciation of the irreplaceable service that music provided to the soldiers. When viewed in tandem these practices form an interpretive passageway into the psychological and emotional world of the officers and enlisted men who struggled through this country’s traumatic coming of age.

Music occupied an essential place in daily life during the nineteenth century. At home and at the front Americans produced and consumed a staggering amount of music. Singing was a pastime favored by all social classes; Americans were able to draw upon a healthy assortment of songs, ranging from traditional tunes handed down from previous generations to the crafted compositions produced by a blossoming publishing industry. Organized ensembles, including community brass bands, nascent orchestras and opera companies, and dance ensembles of any variety of instruments, attracted larger audiences each year. Sacred music rode on the back of the revivalism that swept the country, with stirring camp tunes and reverential hymns being heard from coast to coast, north to south. The mustering of young men from all corners of the country brought this musical diversity together, blending patriotic tunes and folk songs with operatic arias and marches. Soldiers repeatedly spoke of their fondness for music and the integral role it played in sustaining them during their hardships. As Lieutenant Colonel Charles B. Haydon of Michigan proclaimed: “Music is almost as necessary for soldiers as rations.”

Yet the conventional and emotional significance of music was no guarantee that it would move beyond the campfires or parade grounds and be adopted into a tactical mindset. Certainly field music was a recognized component of nineteenth-century European and American warfare. For hundreds of years the sounds of drums, fifes, and bugles had been heard in camp, on parade, and


in the field. Musical signals were used to regulate daily activities in camp, to keep troops marching in step, and to transmit commands on the field. Military bands had likewise been a visible part of many European armies, though more often than not these ensembles served as decoration for parades and drills. The prohibitive cost of supporting a regimental band resulted in comparatively few such ensembles throughout the downsized United States Army during the first half of the nineteenth century. In fact, by 1860 the majority of military brass and wind ensembles in America were loosely affiliated with local militia units. The outbreak of the Civil War saw these community bands proudly marching off with their local units, yet few had considered what to do with the bands after the parade was over. The need for more men in the ranks, along with the excessive cost of supplying and maintaining a band in the field, led to the official reduction of brass bands and enlisted bandmen. Many regimental bands were discharged or merged to form brigade bands, and the musicians’ roles became more clearly defined.

The primary task of field musicians was to broadcast the hours and duties of each day and to communicate commands from officers to their troops. Northern and Southern soldiers followed a disciplined aural timetable when in camp. “Reveille” wakened them at sunrise, while “Tattoo” sent them to their tents at night. “Peas on a Trencher” and “Roast Beef” summoned the men to their meals, while “Fatigue” and “Drill” sent them to work. In a battle there were skirmish calls to govern actions and movements such as “Fix Bayonets,” “Rally,” and “Forward” or “Retreat.” Bugles and drums were the primary instruments for these commands, though fifes could perform the calls if necessary. The drum corps, made up from a regiment or brigade’s fifes and drums, performed traditional marches and folk tunes while marching and
for certain military rituals (most notably reveille).\footnote{\textit{Reveille} was not only a bugle call but also a series of compositions performed by the drum corps (see George B. Bruce and Daniel D. Emmett, \textit{The Drummers' and Fifers' Guide} (New York: Wm. A. Pond & Co., 1862).} Brass bands were the favored ceremonial ensemble when available, playing marches and quicksteps for guard mounting, dress parade, inspection, and reviews. During combat bandsmen were usually assigned to remove the wounded from the field and to assist the surgeons. Bands would play popular, less martial pieces when serenading officers or visiting dignitaries and when putting on impromptu concerts for the troops. All told there was a great deal of music surrounding a Civil War army. Enlisted musicians and their ensembles were integral to the operation of their units, playing particular pieces at certain times for specific duties every day.\footnote{The finest study of enlisted musicians during the Civil War is Kenneth E. Olsen, \textit{Music and Musket: Bands and Bandsmen of the American Civil War} (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981). A good sampling of the diverse experiences of Civil War bandsmen can be found in Brian F. Smith, \textit{Bandstands to Battlefields: Brass Bands in the 19th Century America} (Gansevoort, N.Y.: Corner House Historical Publications, 2004), chaps. 6–8. For an overview of one band’s service, see Richard C. Spicer, “An Inspiration to All: New Hampshire’s Third Regiment and Hilton Head Post Bands in Civil War South Carolina,” in \textit{Bugle Resounding: Music and Musicians of the Civil War Era}, ed. Bruce C. Kelley and Mark A. Snell (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2004), 71–105; see also Maureen Manjerovic and Michael J. Budds, “More Than a Drummer Boy’s War: A Historical View of Musicians in the American Civil War,” \textit{College Music Symposium} 42 (2002): 118–30.}

The sound of military music was so pervasive that astute scouts could not help but consider it as a factor in determining various characteristics of an opposing force. Yet the prevalence of music did not guarantee sensitivity to the subtle details that might be inferred from such aural signals. Nor did the significant number of bands spread throughout both armies ensure that these ensembles would be viewed as possible diversionary tools. How then might an officer be prompted to use his musicians to create a diversion or deception? Military history is replete with examples of non-musical stratagems, and any officer familiar with famous commanders or campaigns might have found inspiration there. For example, William Washington’s use of a Quaker Gun to force the surrender of British troops at Rugeley’s Mill in 1780 foreshadowed Confederate General Beauregard’s use of the same deception at Corinth. The young Napoleon was fond of deceptions, so the idolatry of the French general common among American officers may have led some to emulate, or at least consider, the use of imaginative ruses and stratagems.\footnote{Brent Nosworthy, \textit{With Musket, Cannon and Sword: Battle Tactics of Napoleon and his Enemies} (New York: Sarpedon, 1996), 438–45. See also Maurice G. D’Aoust, “Hoodwinked: Union Military Deception,” \textit{Civil War Times} 45 (May 2006): 35–39, as well as the following issue for the second part of this article.} Yet examples of musical deceptions are much harder to find. In at least two situations—Arcole and Caldiero—Napoleon used field musicians to play calls in an attempt to fool the enemy commander into believing either that reinforcements were arriving or that a flank had been turned.
Generally speaking, military music was ignored by writers of the time, and there was a lack of focused study regarding the use of battlefield deceptions. In fact, the creative use of music in the field might have remained unexamined were it not for the diverse collection of personalities who were drawn into the bedlam of Civil War command structures. In the course of the war both sides made use of a bewildering variety of officers, from young to old, conservative to adventuresome. Even those officers who had attended West Point displayed a wide disparity in their tactical orientation; Ulysses S. Grant, for example, claimed to have never read Jomini, while Braxton Bragg had graduated in 1836 and would have been influenced by Winfield Scott as much as anyone. The war provided opportunities for unorthodox approaches to those officers who lacked formal training or whose record at the academy might have been uninspiring. In particular, the Union and Confederate armies relied heavily on volunteer officers who felt much less constrained by tradition than their West Point colleagues and might have been inclined to see music and deceptions in a different light.


Taken as a whole, Civil War officers were as diverse as the soldiers they commanded, and the turnover that resulted from attrition and incompetence led to the rise and fall of countless leadership styles. There was no pattern to the use of tactical ruses, nor was there a common awareness as to the unique potential of music in combat and reconnaissance. It fell on creative, idiosyncratic, or even desperate commanders to recognize the latent value of music and to concoct ruses that drew upon field musicians, bandsmen, and their music. Those instances where music was used in such a way vary depending on the perceived role of music in the military as well as the recognition of the possible impact of music on the listeners. For example, officers who saw bands as nothing more than formal decoration might be inclined to use their musicians in ways that relied upon customary or assumed military functions, whereas those who recognized the unique capacity of music were more likely to use their bands in ways that linked emotional affect with a larger tactical objective. The same could be said of musical surveillance; an observer who was sensitive to the aesthetic side of military music could draw more complex conclusions than one who viewed it merely as part of the sensory background. Examining the official reports and informal writings of soldiers reveals that music played an intriguing and influential role in intelligence gathering. Likewise there were a number of fascinating incidences wherein music served as part of a tactical deception involving the size, location, and even intention of an army.

Reconnaissance and surveillance were of paramount importance to most leaders within the Union and Confederate armies. With the opposing armies so often in close proximity to each other, scouts were frequently able to rely on aural as well as visual sources when gathering information. Consider this description of the field before Fredericksburg, Virginia, on 23 December 1862:

The morning was foggy and for a long while the level ground between us was wrapped in obscurity. But we had abundant evidences that the enemy was busily at work. At one moment we would hear the rattling of the artillery wheels—then the commands given to the infantry who were marching to the top of the hill and then again a brass band would strike up and the music would be carried to us across the plain. Soon the fog began to rise and we

could see battery after battery go into position along the line and endless columns of infantry marching and continue marching.\textsuperscript{16}

The sounds of wheels, marching, verbal commands, and music combined to form an acoustic picture for the fogbound observers. Attentive soldiers and officers could use all kinds of noise to their advantage, especially in situations where visibility was inhibited. In August of 1861 scouts for the 3rd Ohio Infantry used the sound of chopping wood (as well as the call of Reveille) near Cheat Mountain, West Virginia, to determine the location of an enemy camp when they could not see it.\textsuperscript{17} Since non-musical sounds could be instrumental in reconnaissance, they could likewise be used to send misleading information, as was the case with Beauregard’s subterfuge at Corinth. A curious bit of theater, in addition to music and other sounds, was used along the lines at Cold Harbor, Virginia, according to a member of the 10th Vermont Infantry:

Word soon came up the line that we were to talk aloud, telling how the army is forming for grand charge just at daylight, and how lucky that we are on picket, etc. But we were to decide, in whispers, which man of each four should stay five minutes after the others fall back. Soon we heard the jingling of a sabre, as an officer came down the line followed by a string of men.

“How many for this post?” he called.

“Four and a Corporal,” was the answer.

“Not enough!” cried the officer, “I shall double it. Eight men and a Corporal this way! Now, men, keep perfectly quiet.” and they passed down the line, taking three of our four with them. Of course this was just bluff, for the benefit of the enemy.\textsuperscript{18}

Of course, the absence of sound could be just as revealing, as a Union soldier was to discover outside Savannah, Georgia, in December 1864: “The morning of the 21st when I awoke, it was strange because it was quiet and still so we wondered if the rebels had at last given up the city. As the day progressed, we received orders to move our headquarters and at the same time we received information that the rebels had left the city.”\textsuperscript{19}

Silence would be needed for surprise attacks, concealed movements, and stealthy withdrawals. While flanking John Pope’s army prior to the Second Battle of Bull Run, Stonewall Jackson scolded his troops for cheering him lest they give


\textsuperscript{17} John Beatty, \textit{The Citizen-Soldier: The Memoirs of a Civil War Volunteer} (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 47.

\textsuperscript{18} Oscar Waite, “Three Years with the Tenth Vermont,” p. 150, unpublished manuscript, Vermont Historical Society, Montpelier, Vermont.

away their presence. Other officers would send out orders in an effort to keep their troops quiet, and such commands might well include specific mention of the musicians, as in these orders from William T. Sherman’s aide-de-camp prior to the Battle of Resaca in May of 1864:

The general commanding is desirous that as much silence shall be preserved in the army as possible, and in order that this end may be attained he wishes the use of the bass drum entirely discontinued, also the practice or use of any band music or field music save the usual bugle calls. All cheering of bodies of men, except in battle, should also be dispensed with. You will please give the necessary orders in your command to continue in force until further orders.

Such concerns for quiet, especially among musicians, made sense even when no stratagem was intended. There was no need to offer the enemy details of the strength and distribution of the forces they faced, and a performance by field musicians or a brass band could convey a great deal of information.

Music could be particularly useful in reconnaissance if the information was considered in context and processed as something more than the unavoidable background of a military encampment. At a basic level hearing music could confirm that any worrisome sounds were not random, natural, or even civilian in origin. The music of a brass band at a certain location or at a certain time could verify that any accompanying sounds were produced by a military unit. This might explain Colonel James Sinclair’s particular reference to music during Ambrose Burnside’s assault on New Bern, North Carolina, in 1862: “At the time I arrived there was sufficient moonlight to enable me to see that the enemy in heavy force was not far distant. I could distinctly hear the music of his bands and even the singing of his men on the fleet.”


21. OR, Series 1, 38 (Part IV), 147. “No music was allowed or beating of drums permitted” the men of the 21st New York Infantry as they passed through Fredericksburg on their way to Richmond in April of 1862; “The object of all this caution was that our scouts reported a large force of rebels a short distance in advance of us & we were ordered to take a certain position if possible without their knowledge.” Letter to Sophie, 16 May 1862, Charles Murray Harrington and Sophia Gibbs Harrington Papers, Archives and Special Collections, State University of New York at Fredonia, Fredonia, New York.

22. In operations along the Chattahoochee River in Georgia the band of the 104th Ohio Infantry was ordered not to play when along the front lines, but when the regiment was pulled back to the rear, the band was able to play. See entries of 9–13 July 1864, William W. Richardson Diary, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio.

music confirmed for Sinclair that whatever people or boats he had spotted were in fact military and not civilian. The music also helped him to determine where the enemy was located and how best to respond. The Union troops were not landing where Sinclair had placed his men, so he pulled back to the Beaufort Road to form a line against Burnside’s advance on New Bern.

If one was particularly sensitive to acoustic subtleties, then military music could communicate not only the general direction but also the distance removed an enemy unit might be. Sinclair’s use of the term “distinctly” when hearing the music of Burnside’s troops supported his claim that they were “not far distant.” Union Colonel Othneil DeForest risked even more specificity when he informed his superiors of hearing “the beating of the enemy’s drums” outside Winchester, Virginia, in May of 1862: “I ascertained that they were not more than three-quarters of a mile from us.”

Knowledge of the surrounding terrain enhanced the information provided by music and allowed commanders to localize distant units. This was the case for Colonel William Boyles of the 52nd Alabama Cavalry from outside Atlanta, Georgia, in October of 1864: “A little skirmishing is going on at the forward immediately below. Drums and bands of music are distinctly heard, and from the direction and volume of the sound are supposed to be along the Sandtown and Marietta road.” Add in some knowledge of the opposing order of battle and music could even be linked to a specific unit, as when Thomas Galway identified the camp of Wade Hampton’s cavalry brigade from a band performing “Dixie,” “The Bonnie Blue Flag,” ‘My Maryland,’ and other Southern music” across the Rapidan.

As such accounts reveal, sensitivity to acoustic phenomena—and music in particular—could be a handy characteristic for a scout. Yet a more thorough understanding of the status of music and musicians at the time greatly increased the possible information inferred from such sounds. For example, the indicative potential of brass bands increased dramatically as the war progressed. While it seemed that every regiment could boast of a band at the beginning of the war, attrition (both physical and financial) led to a noticeable decrease in ensembles. As bands became scarcer they came to be associated with larger units, most commonly brigades, and they were also more frequently attached to brigade or division headquarters. An awareness of this tendency can be seen influencing the report of Captain J. D. Baker from Chattanooga, Tennessee, in October 1863: “I have visited the pickets this morning and find the enemy are at work busily with axes all along our front. They seem to be in heavy force in the valley, as brass bands and martial music are distinctly heard all along our front.”

24. OR, Series 1, 12 (Part I), 582.
25. OR, Series 1, 52 (Part II), 748.
27. OR, Series 1, 30 (Part IV), 309. In another instance an officer determined he had located a full brigade as he could hear the sound of a band; see Gordon C. Rhea, Cold Harbor: Grant and Lee, May 26–June 3, 1864 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2002), 51.
to see the number of bands covering a large area as signifying a large number of troops. Were he reporting from earlier in the war (or from the Eastern theater) he might have placed less emphasis on the number and significance of the bands.

Jeb Stuart took his aural reconnaissance one step further when the Army of the Potomac crossed the Potomac following the Battle of Antietam: “The playing of bands and other indications rendered it almost certain that there was a large force of infantry present.”28 The musically inclined Stuart rightly concluded that the bands he heard indicated infantry and not cavalry, a logical deduction as mounted bands had suffered more than infantry bands and were even more rare as the war progressed. Cavalry units did not use drums either, which led William Tatum of the Richmond Howitzers to conclude that he faced a mixed force at Morton’s Ford, Virginia, on 23 December 1863: “Their cavalry pickets are in sight on the other side of the river, their infantry are not far off though as we can hear their drums.”29

Just as the sound of numerous bands could be a sign of a large force, the sound of one band (or none) could indicate a small force. Union Colonel Daniel McCook assumed that hearing only one band performing “as usual” meant the force opposing him remained small: “I do not see any particular evidence of a large force opposite me. Yesterday and to-day their cavalry seem to show themselves more frequently and boldly. At retreat last night we heard their band as usual.”30 Confederate General Raleigh E. Colston reported that a clever staff member heard the change from numerous bands playing to only one, suggesting that the enemy had in fact reduced their force: “It is the universal opinion of the officers with me that the enemy have withdrawn the mass of his forces. This opinion is also that of the inhabitants left on Mulberry Island. Last night Major [Stephen D.] Ramseur heard the tattoo of several regiments. To night only the band of one regiment was heard. There seem to be but few men on the opposite side of Warwick River.”31

Such passages reveal how the sound of music, especially that of brass bands, could provide key information in reconnaissance and surveillance. This was particularly true if there was some measure of musical awareness on the part of the listener. Musical appreciation was not only ample justification as to why certain commanders (for example, Stuart and George Custer) would use music as part of a deceptive ploy, but it also bears on the musical intelligence gathered and the way such information was construed. When Colonel Jesse A. Gove of the 22nd Massachusetts reported observing an enemy infantry unit “apparently at evening parade, their band playing ‘Dixie,’” he concluded what their actions must be by considering the sound of the band, the time they were playing, and the piece of music they were performing.32 Colonel Robert Graham of the 21st South Carolina

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28. OR, Series 1, 19 (Part II), 142.
30. Report from North Chickamauga, 8 November 1863, OR, Series 1, 31 (Part III), 86.
31. Report from Jones’ Farm, Virginia, 10 April 1863, OR, Series 1, 25 (Part II), 859.
32. Camp before Yorktown, 12 April 1862, OR, Series 1, 11 (Part I), 297.
drew even more information from the sound of a band: “At about 11 o’clock last night the music of a brass band on Big Folly could plainly be heard, and continued for about one hour, as if welcoming the arrival or mourning the departure of some favorite command or commander. Major [William H.] Campbell, artillery, Section 2, reports that yesterday the enemy’s tents, on Black Island appeared to be again increased.”33 In this case Graham was shrewd enough to recognize that 11:00 p.m. was rather late for a band to be playing, except for a special event; assuming that the arrival of a high-ranking officer (in charge of reinforcements) would be one such event, he then brought in the major’s information to draw a reasonable conclusion. It is likely that the style of music being performed influenced Graham’s perception, as it would be marches or some other kind of celebratory music that would be appropriate for welcoming a dignitary.

A specific piece of music played a key role in the reconnoitering that followed the Battle of Shiloh in 1862. Beauregard and members of his command staff went to sleep the night of 6 April pleased with their victory and confident of more success the following day. Others, such as Nathan Bedford Forrest, knew that their achievement could be nullified if Buell and his Army of Ohio appeared to support Grant’s beleaguered Army of Tennessee. Forrest sent out scouts to Pittsburg Landing where they learned the unfortunate truth; portions of Buell’s army were arriving and the Union forces were reforming. The appearance of fresh troops was celebrated with cheering and a band playing. As one Confederate noted: “I would mention that on Sunday evening, just after the firing ceased, I heard cheering on the river below me, evidently proceeding from a large force, to which my men responded, thinking it to be from their friends, and when the cheering ceased a band played the air of ‘Hail Columbia’ from a boat which was ascending the river.”34 For the Confederate scouts the sound of this band was misinterpreted at first; only when a Union composition was identified did the information gain substance. Unfortunately Forrest was unable to get this intelligence back to Beauregard, so the following morning the Confederates faced a reinvigorated Union army and were forced to retreat following a Union counterattack.35

In another instance it was not merely the playing of a band that provided information, but also the knowledge of what units could claim a band that proved to be significant. Union General Thomas Ewing questioned a wounded Confederate soldier during the Confederate invasion of Missouri in the fall of 1864. The prisoner gave detailed information on what units he believed Ewing to be facing; in particular, he noted the appearance of General Sterling Price, commander of the Army of Missouri. Ewing relayed his findings to Major General William Rosecrans: “He only knows positively that [Joseph O.] Shelby

33. Report from James Island, South Carolina, 31 March–29 April, 1864, OR, Series 1, 35 (Part I), 175.
34. Report of Col. Preston Pond, Jr., OR, Series 1, 10 (Part I), 518.
is there, but thinks Price, [John S.] Marmaduke, [William L.] Cabell, and [James F.] Fagan are also there with 15,000 men. He had not seen Price but heard he got there Saturday night. He heard a brass band Saturday night which did not belong to Shelby’s command, and was said to belong to Price. Two paroled prisoners in from Greenville road repeat the assertions of the others you examined.”

This timely intelligence proved to be true and allowed Ewing to prepare for, and successfully delay, Price’s drive towards St. Louis.

For such an interpretation to be useful, or even correct, there would need to be a recognition and understanding of the current status of bands and their customary role throughout the war. The information provided to General Ewing by this Confederate soldier was credible given that bands were scarce by this point in the war, and what bands there were would be attached to headquarters and familiar to most enlisted men. Simply knowing that certain types of music performed in the evening probably meant a serenade at headquarters could also be useful to artillery units and snipers. Artemis Skinner, a member of the 3rd Brigade Band of the 3rd Division, VI Corps, drew fire down on his general during the Overland Campaign. On 10 June 1864 the band members attempted to play for their commander but stopped as they “got fired at two or three times.” The next evening they tried again: “Went to play for the General tonight and got shelled again and had to stop.” Not pleased to be a target for Confederate artillery, Skinner added: “Hope the General is satisfied now.”


Awareness of the significant role of music in daily life was indispensable when scouting an enemy position. The musicians’ conventional duties resulted in certain tunes (or types of pieces) being played at particular times for specific reasons. For this reason the manipulation of music was essential to tactical deceptions. The universal and repetitious sound of bugle and drum calls made any alteration to their routine suspect, so field musicians were necessary collaborators in hiding any change to a unit’s size or location. Major General Godfrey Weitzel’s special orders of 27 March 1865 from outside Richmond, Virginia, provide a classic example of how field music was used in conjunction with other elements to cover the withdrawal and redeployment of troops:

The commanding officer of the First Division will see that camp-fires are kept burning as usual in all the camps, that as little change as possible is made at conspicuous points, and as far as possible cover the line of vacant tents nearest to the enemy with shelter-tents, and preferably occupy the two lines of tents near the line, instead of encamping in column. Until further orders the drum corps of each regiment will beat tattoo and reveille twice, and at different points. Reveille will, until further orders, be beaten at daybreak. Parades and drills in view of the enemy will be continued as usual. The whole command will be stripped for a movement and a fight; everything surplus sent across the James River.\(^{38}\)

Here a limited number of musicians were meant to represent a larger force by playing in different locations, while performing the appropriate calls at the proper time hopefully suggested that there was no change in the army’s routine. Routine was the critical element in this false projection. For musician Andrew Sperry and men of the 33rd Iowa retreating from Camden, Arkansas, the timing of their movement was directly linked to the predictability of the evening’s calls: “It was evidently supposed that the rebels were so near, they would speedily hear of our movements; and the intention was to give them no warning of our retreat. So we had tattoo on the drums that night, with all the noise they could make; and an hour after that, when the bass drum should sound the ‘taps’ at 9 o’clock, the regiment was to silently fall into line, and move off without further orders.”\(^{39}\)

Successful deceptions not only attempt to influence the beliefs of the deceived, but ideally alter the course of action taken by the target of the deception.\(^{40}\) Such success can depend on the likelihood of the misinformation being presented, or,

38. OR, Series I, vol. 46 (Part III), 213.
as in many cases during the Civil War, how much the deceived wishes to believe the information. For example, many officers on both sides of the conflict felt that they were continually outnumbered in the field and used these beliefs to call off attacks, withdraw from the field, or ultimately do nothing. It is much easier to provide indications that their fears are correct when opponents already have such firmly established beliefs.\(^{41}\) Within these parameters the use of music (as well as other activities) to present the image of a much larger force could be particularly effective, as was the case in Confederate operations around Centreville, Virginia, during the winter of 1861. As Captain William W. Blackford described it:

\[\text{General [D. H.] Hill is making various strategic moves tonight to deceive the enemy as to our numbers. He has been doing this sort of thing for several nights. Fires are kept burning in secluded woods, and bands play as if in a regiment. Old tents are pitched with no one to occupy, and everything is arranged that a casual observer, or an observer from the balloon the yankees daily send up, would estimate our force at double at what it is.}^{42}\]

At the start of the siege of Petersburg, Virginia (June 1864), the band of the 26th North Carolina was ordered to move south of the main force and play, ideally making the Confederate line appear to extend further, and in larger force, than it actually did. Ironically, the band of the 126th New York was placed at a certain point along the Union lines around Petersburg for the same reason. Band member John Ryno was told that “they wanted to make a show of us. Our lines are very weak and every tent helps to make a show.”\(^{43}\)

The use of bands to produce the image of a larger force may have been instigated by the theatrical General John Magruder at the Battle of Yorktown

\(^{41}\)“One overwhelming conclusion stands out with respect to deception: it is far easier to lead a target astray by reinforcing the target’s existing beliefs, thus causing the target to ignore the contrary evidence of one’s true intent, than it is to persuade a target to change his or her mind.” Richards J. Heuer, Jr., “Cognitive Factors in Deception and Counterdeception,” in Strategic Military Deception, ed. Donald C. Daniel and Katherine L. Herbig (New York: Pergamon Press, 1982), 42. Of course the outstanding example of this is George McClellan, who based many of his decisions on spurious information gathered by Allen Pinkerton and others that merely confirmed what he had already concluded.

\(^{42}\) Entry of 15 December 1861, Susan Leigh Blackford and Charles Minor Blackford, Letters from Lee’s Army; Or, Memoirs of Life in and Out of the Army in Virginia During the War Between the States (New York: Scribner, 1947), 66.

Music and Deception in the Civil War

26th North Carolina Regiment band [Courtesy of Moravian Archives, Winston-Salem, North Carolina]

during the opening stages of George B. McClellan’s Peninsula Campaign. Greatly outnumbered, he ordered troops to march back and forth in sight of the enemy and had bands play continuously, even late into the night. The well-known result was all that Magruder could have wished for; McClellan convinced himself that he faced a large opponent, ordered his army to entrench, and gave up any chance of overwhelming the meager Confederate lines. It is curious to note that McClellan was in some measure conscious of the tactical role of music during this very campaign; on his approach to Yorktown he ordered his bands and field musicians to not play, hoping to conceal his approach as well as the size of his force.44

44. According to Bugler Gus Meyers: “During our stay at Camp Winfield Scott, for about a month, we had not drum or bugle calls nor were any bands allowed to play, and after sunset all fires were extinguished. This precaution was taken to prevent the enemy from ascertaining the exact location of our camps, many of them being within easy distance of their long-range guns.” Augustus Meyers, Ten Years in the Ranks, U. S. Army (New York: Stirling Press, 1914), 207. The lack of music was strongly felt by the troops: “During the evening the regimental bands played at all the headquarters of generals, lasting until midnight. This is the first music we have been treated with since leaving Williamsburg, and was fully appreciated by all. All the time we lay in front of Richmond, music by the bands was prohibited by General McClellan, so that the enemy would not know our position in the woods and swamps of the Chickahominy. There was no ‘reveille’ or ‘tattoo’ by the drum corps even. No bugles were heard, except during the hours of battle, which then transmitted orders.” Robert Knox Sneden, Eye of the Storm: A Civil War Odyssey, ed. Charles F. Bryan, Jr., and Nelson D. Lankford (New York: Free Press, 2000), 103. See also Benny Ferguson, “The Bands of the Confederacy” (Ph.D. diss., North Texas State University, 1987), 151–53.
Magruder’s success in this instance was due to more than presenting the image of a larger force; many who heard the bands believed that additional Confederate troops were arriving in large numbers. The use of music to indicate the appearance of imaginary reinforcements is closely linked to projecting an inflated view of numbers as it operates within the same schema within the target’s mind. While many commanding officers felt that they were outnumbered in combat situations, they feared even more that the arrival of additional enemy troops would certainly turn the tide against them. Using bands as part of a ploy to augment this fear could be extremely effective. The sound of a band would reinforce the objective’s expectations not simply by projecting a definite image, but by providing a subtle but suggestive piece of information requiring interpretation.45 In this sense the sound of a band is the finishing touch in the deception (in the target’s mind), the vague shading around the deception “in order to enhance its veracity.”46

The linking of music with the arrival of reinforcements was based on practical experience. A common use of bands and drum corps was to lead troops on short marches. Many commanders would order their ensembles to play as a means of broadcasting their arrival to their allies as well as their enemies: “From my position on the field I could see numerous re-enforcements marching down the hill from the city, and could hear the whistle of the cars as they came in and the playing of bands of music. This led me to the belief that large bodies of re-enforcements were arriving and being thrown into my front.”47 The sound of a train or the cheering of troops in conjunction with the playing by a band amplified the impact of the music: “Last night (29th–30th) trains seemed to be running to and from the city as often as about once in every forty-five minutes. At about one a.m. a band was heard playing on James Island, and also considerable cheering. These indications, of course, lead me to suppose that troops are arriving on or returning to my front.”48 For Union General William W. Averell this combination of sounds was synonymous with the arrival of reinforcements: “While these movements were progressing, the arrival of re-enforcements to the enemy was announced by the music of a band, the display of battle-flags, and loud cheers of the rebels on the top of the mountain.”49

Such conditions were in place during the operations around Yorktown. McClellan approached the Confederate position already believing his opposition to be much greater than it was. And while the music of field musicians and bands

45. “It’s important to remember that the most effective deceptions involve the enemy fooling himself. He has to learn what you want him to learn, and it has to conform to his expectations or his hopes or fears as to what is actually going on.” Dunnigan and Nofi, Victory and Deceit, 24. Heuer also notes that expectations condition perceptions and a successful deception should take advantage of such cognitive biases; Heuer, “Cognitive Factors in Deception and Counter-deception,” 33–34.
49. Report from Petersburg, W.V., 14 November 1863, OR, Series 1, 29 (Part I), 506.
no doubt amplified this belief, the fears of McClellan and certain subordinates converted these sounds into a signal that additional enemy troops were aggravating an already difficult situation. Robert Sneden’s diary entry of 15 April 1862 reveals that such thoughts were trickling through camp: “Constant drumming in [the] evening is heard at Yorktown. This is construed by the knowing ones to mean that the enemy are receiving reinforcements from [Benjamin] Huger at Norfolk.” As such concerns spread through the ranks, this music gained even more significance; two days later it seems Sneden himself had come to adopt the opinion of “the knowing ones” he had quoted before: “By the constant beating of drums in Yorktown at different hours of [the] day and evening we surmise that the enemy are receiving reinforcements.”50 It is worth noting that Sneden’s beliefs were true to some degree, as Magruder was receiving reinforcements. Yet the small number of additional troops was insignificant compared to the number of Union troops facing them. Here the sound of music, coupled with the emotional mindset of the deception’s target, suggested the arrival of numerically significant reinforcements, which was by no means the case.

Not only could music broadcast the arrival of mythical troops, but it could also project the image of stationary troops and mask the sound of an army’s withdrawal. The use of music to disguise the noise of movement was one of the more elemental uses of bands and field musicians in a tactical situation. Grant and George Meade used this device repeatedly in the Overland Campaign, beginning at the Battle of Spotsylvania. Following numerous repulses at the Mule Shoe on 10–12 May, Grant began to look for a more advantageous angle from which to attack. As Oscar Waite of the 10th Vermont described it:

That night, as usual there, at seven o’clock the big guns commenced booming, the fifes were all squealing, the bands were making what noise they conveniently could with the snare drums; and it seems that Grant, under cover of the racket, was moving off all of our trains, together with everything on wheels that would make a noise on the road. Having heard the same kind of a pow-wow every night for a week, the rebels—although on the sharp lookout—didn’t suspect anything until toward morning.51

On the evening of 26 May bands of the II and VI Corps were brought up to the earthworks around the North Anna River and told to play, thereby covering the withdrawal of frontline troops and their subsequent shift to Cold Harbor.52 Then on 12 June bands were once again brought forward to play, this time for the

51. Oscar Waite, “Three Years with the Tenth Vermont,” p. 175, unpublished manuscript, Vermont Historical Society, Montpelier, Vermont.
52. The band of the Old Vermont Brigade was one of these ensembles; see entry of 26 May 1864, Civil War Diary and Journal of Charles B. Putnam, Vermont State Archives and Records.
attempted flanking of Robert E. Lee’s army towards Petersburg. As one officer described it: “The night was clear and calm. To drown the noise of the tramp of men, and as means to counteract any suspicion of the movement, the band played while the brigade was executing the movement, and followed out in rear of it.”  

Another soldier described the maneuver as follows: “So as to cover the noise which we necessarily made the bands were directed to strike up a lively air. This did not excite the suspicion of the enemy as the bands always perform at dark.”

These examples reveal another interesting aspect of musical deceptions. Obviously the performance by a band could cover the various sounds produced by a large body of troops in motion. Yet underlying these descriptions was an assumption that the music did not merely conceal other sounds but also projected a sense of normality. In these cases it was the prior experience of band concerts as part of a typical bivouac that allowed for the deception to succeed; soldiers on both sides of the line were acclimated to the nightly music and lured into believing that there was nothing special happening so long as the bands were playing. In the previous deceptions discussed the sound of a band was intended to draw attention to itself, to convey a specific image such as the arrival of reinforcements or the presence of a large force. Here the band’s music should form part of the background, at least in terms of the acoustic environment. The fact that the bands were playing specific pieces meant to entertain or even soothe the soldiers allowed the aesthetic nature of music to contribute to the deception as well. Perhaps it was this attempted projection of ordinariness to a wary audience that explains why the use of bands to cover movement—or to project the air of normality—began to raise suspicion with some frequency. On outpost duty around Chattanooga, N. H. Walworth saw through one such attempt: “The pickets report that they have just heard a noise similar to the movements of a battery moving slowly toward our right on the side of the mountain quite low down. The enemy kept a band playing at the same time.”

Administrative, Montpelier, Vermont. According to one observer: “Such bands as there were had been vigorously playing patriotic music, always soliciting responses from the rebs with Dixie, My Maryland, or other favorites of theirs.” Quoted in Rhea, Cold Harbor, 35. See also Ezra D. Simons, A Regimental History: The One Hundred and Twenty-Fifth New York State Volunteers (New York: Ezra D. Simons, 1888), 125; Joseph W. Muffly, The Story of Our Regiment: A History of the 148th Pennsylvania Volunteers (Des Moines, Ia.: Kenyon Printing & Mfg. Co., 1904), 270–71.


54. Abiel T. LaForge, 106th New York, diary entry for 14 June 1864, Civil War Miscellaneous Collection, United States Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.

55. Daniel and Herbig (“Propositions on Military Deception”) discuss how variants of deception include those that intentionally mislead (making the objective believe a certain thing) and those that increase ambiguity. Using band music to project a sense of routine behavior could be successful in both ways; if it fails to convince the objective that “nothing” is happening, it might still generate enough ambiguity to keep the enemy from making any decision.

56. Report of 9 October 1863, OR, Series 1, 30 (Part IV), 215.
themselves to be suspicious: “very quiet this evening; bands playing and big guns booming; wonder if it isn’t a bluff.”

A more complex deception involved using music to give the impression of a false movement, or to draw attention to a movement that formed the basis of a diversion. In this case the hope was to draw attention to the band (or other musicians) and encourage the target to form conclusions based on the most likely explanation of the sound. This type of deception relied not only on the plausible functions of military musicians, but also on the expected reason for hearing music given the immediate military situation. For example, a report by Beauregard from outside Petersburg shows that he viewed the sound of music in certain situations as denoting the transfer of troops: “General Hoke reports that the railroad to City Point has been used a great deal to-day by the enemy, and that they are still doing so; also that bands have been heard in that direction indicating the movement of troops.” In the right context the sound of music, be it from enlisted musicians performing or simply the singing of excited troops, could be used to indicate troop movement as part of a larger tactical ploy. An excellent example of this occurred in June 1862 during the Seven Days Battles. McClellan hoped that Union operations in the Shenandoah Valley would force Lee to spread his army thin and make an approach to the Confederate capital easier. Even though facing a larger force, Lee did in fact order troops up to the Shenandoah Valley, apparently to support Jackson. This move, and the nature of the order, surprised many in the Confederate ranks, including John Stevens of John B. Hood’s brigade:

The strange thing to this writer was that we were not only to be sent off, but that everybody should be talking about it. “Surely,” thought I, “the enemy ought not to know of our movements; that we are sending troops away from Richmond. The yankees will surely know it before sun-down.” Which of course they did, and that was just what Gen. Lee wanted them to know. It was a part of the ruse. We got up, folded our blankets and marched off right in the light of the day. And I guess McClellan knew as much about it as we did. We boarded the trains and they went whizzing away toward the valley with flags flying and soldiers shouting and singing of “The Girl I Left Behind Me.” Stevens and his comrades indeed joined up with Jackson in Staunton, only to immediately turn back and move into McClellan’s rear at Beaver Dam Creek: “Here we are now, within twenty-five miles of McClellan’s rear, hence, our movements must be kept as quiet as possible. The success of the movement now depends on keeping our movements from the Federals, hence every precaution is used.”

58. What Heuer might refer to as “availability bias”; “Events that are likely to occur generally are easier to imagine than unlikely events.” Heuer, “Cognitive Factors,” 45.
59. Report from Dunn’s Hill, 18 August 1864, OR, Series 1, 42 (Part II), 1187.
Lee’s decision to broadcast his troop movements played right into McClellan’s belief in his own interpretation of the situation. The singing and shouting drew attention to what McClellan hoped would happen; that the movement was made with a different goal in mind did not enter into Union suppositions. The subsequent quiet, secretive movement made this a textbook example of how music and sound in general can influence tactical ruses.  

The success of Lee’s stratagem depended to a large degree on predicting how his opponent would interpret and respond to the feint. In this instance the construction of the deception transcended the tangible action-reaction sphere and ventured into the realm of the psychological. Such illusory gestures are less concerned with projecting an image of what your forces are doing and more concerned with what they intend to do. Deciphering the enemy’s intentions motivates most tactical and strategic thought and hence becomes critical in reconnaissance; likewise a successful deception can either hide or even mislead the enemy as to what your intentions are. Music could be particularly effective in tactical obfuscations of this kind. Not only does a musical performance occupy a place above the other mundane sounds that surround an army, but music carries aesthetic weight that can operate on a deeper psychological or emotional level. In this sense it is the music more than the musicians that affects those in hearing distance. As was the case when music was used to hide the sound of troop movement, specific pieces could create a sense of calm or normality. In a tactical sense such music promoted the impression that nothing was happening nor about to happen. This helps to explain why the phrase “all quiet” was so often used in reports even when bands could be heard playing, as in Confederate General C. W. Field’s report from Petersburg: “I cannot learn that anything important has taken place in my front. I have just been looking at the enemy’s lines. They are full of men with numerous flags flying. Skirmish firing has almost ceased, and both sides are visible to each other. In fine, the enemy are still in force in my front, but quiet. Bands playing, &c.”  

The aesthetic nature of music could encourage a secure, even complacent feeling, perhaps reinforcing the notion that troops are settling in and have no plans for immediate action. This was Union General John Peck’s perception from within his besieged garrison at Suffolk, Virginia: “It only goes to show that they have no idea of leaving. The impression is that new troops are arriving. One brigade is certainly here from North Carolina. Several bands of music were playing last evening on the high ground.”  

Yet aesthetic function can eventually conflict with other auditory or visual signals and produce confusion. More specifically, the listener’s emotional state can alter how musical information is processed. This was apparent in a series of reports submitted by Union commanders in Chattanooga following the Battle of

61. A similar deception can be found at the Second Battle of Big Bottom; see Bryce A. Suderow, “Nothing but a Miracle Could Save Us,” *North & South* 4, no. 2 (January 2001): 15.
Chickamauga. On 4 October 1863 Major General Alexander M. McCook of the XX Corps saw little indication of any significant activity on his front:

All quiet on my front this morning. Last night numerous fires were seen on the left on Missionary Ridge, but all had disappeared by daylight. On the extreme right of my line chopping of trees and digging was heard by the advance pickets, and the noise of wagons or artillery moving on Lookout Mountain. The enemy’s band was playing in front at daylight.64

The next day McCook received a report from Lieutenant Colonel Horace Fisher, whose description seemed to support McCook’s interpretation of events in the Confederate camps, thought it is worth noting that the number of musicians heard had increased:

All quiet on front. At 3.30 to 4.30 a.m. heard two mule teams ascending the mountain past the battery. Judging from the rattling of kettles and tin pots, thinks that they were ration wagons. Three different drums heard within half a mile beating reveille at 5.30 a.m., one on right of Chattanooga Valley road, near rebel picket-line. General [William P.] Carlin, commanding Second Brigade, division officer of the day, First Division front, reports through Lieutenant [Joseph W.] Vance, brigade inspector; Two brass bands and about three field bands playing at dark yesterday evening; otherwise all quiet.65

Seven days later these sounds took on a new dimension. Colonel Daniel McCook (son of the above general) heard similar noises but believed that they represented something more ominous: “That noise of the calkers still continues. Also we hear what seems to be a saw-mill running. The cars have made more fuss to-day than any day yet. There has been more movement of wagons. We have heard three different bands and more drums than usual. There certainly is some unusual commotion among them.”66 From complacency to commotion, the sounds and music from the Confederate camp are read quite differently. Initially there was a subconscious assumption that the enemy was holding firm with no immediate plans. By the third report there was not only more effort to interpret what was occurring but also a belief that something significant was going to happen. Even though there was no apparent attempt at deception here, the interpretive nature of these musical performances helped generate ambiguity for those endeavoring to decipher the enemy’s intentions.

Whether taken as an emotional event that reflected troop morale or as a suggestion of troop size and location, musical information added to the morass of information being sifted. Regardless of any translatable message it might convey, the mere fact that music could convey different types of information increased the

64. OR, Series 1, 30 (Part IV), 81.
65. OR, Series 1, 30 (Part IV), 106.
66. 12 October 1863, OR, Series 1, 30 (Part IV), 320.
ambiguity surrounding the perceived state of affairs. This seemed to be particularly true for Horace Fisher, who once again drew attention to music in another report to McCook:

General Carlin was of the opinion that the enemy were preparing to attack, or else these fires were a feint, under cover of which the enemy was retreating. Between 2 and 3 o’clock this morning bugles were heard, which seemed to be calls to fall in and stand at attention, &c. No one is able to say which way the enemy were moving, though everyone thinks that they were moving. . . . A considerable number of men were heard hallooing, but whether in organized force is doubtful, because the noises of bull drums, brass bands, and voices of men walking to and fro seemed too evident an attempt to swell the number of troops.67

At first Fisher seemed to feel that the music indicated either an attack or withdrawal was imminent. He then reversed his opinion, wondering if the music was not an attempt at a musical ruse designed to increase the ostensible size of the enemy. Neither was the case, as it turned out, yet the confused and potentially conflicting readings of musical information were understandable given the vulnerable condition of these men. The Union army had suffered a demoralizing loss at Chickamauga. Frustration, anger, and the fear of a renewed Confederate offensive agitated Northern commanders and made them especially susceptible to emotional reactions.

In another situation music was joined with other visual and auditory feints to create confusion as to what and where any action might take place. In the aftermath of the Red River Campaign of 1864 the defeated Union troops under Nathaniel P. Banks had retreated to Alexandria, Louisiana, with Richard Taylor’s Confederates on their heels. Taylor had lost men to reassignment and hence had to come up with ways to convince his opponent that he remained a threat. Towards this end he manufactured a larger force through trickery that included his field musicians, leading the Union commanders to believe that potential attacks could occur at various points:

Thus we have a continuous line of pickets inclosing Banks’ army and [David D.] Porter’s fleet, and they are as closely besieged as was ever Vicksburg. Every day the enemy is attacked and driven on some road and kept continually harassed by feints, driving in pickets, &c. Thus he is expecting an assault every moment, and is uncertain of the direction whence it may come. To keep this up, with my little force of scarce 6,000 men, I am compelled to “eke out the lion’s skin with the fox’s hide.” On several occasions we have forced the enemy from strong positions by sending drummers to beat calls, lighting camp-fires, blowing bugles, and rolling empty wagons over fence rails.68

67. 7 October 1863, OR, Series 1, 30 (Part IV), 155.
68. Report from Lecompte, Louisiana, 10 May 1864, in OR, Series 1, 34 (Part I), 590.
Taylor’s efforts amplified the Union leaders’ fears about safely moving (and removing) the vessels that Admiral Porter was trying to push up the river. In addition, his stratagem stole the initiative from his counterparts and forced them to react defensively. According to a report of 30 April 1864 Banks believed that he faced the entire Confederate army west of the Mississippi, a force “sufficient to destroy this army, and to capture the fleet of gun-boats and transports.” He recalled troops from local garrisons and requested an additional “5,000 or 10,000 men if possible” to meet this supposed threat.69

Field music was a logical choice for those attempting to project a false agenda, as it did not rely on aesthetic reception to be communicative. Through standard usage field music denoted specific daily activities as well as special actions. It would be almost impossible not to hear field musicians broadcasting specific calls as anything other than genuine commands. This explicit communicative capability would help to explain why deceptions such as those Taylor employed could be so effective. Band music is less denotative than the music produced by the field musicians, but its connotative potential is richer than that of the bugles and drums. The flamboyant George Custer was well aware of such potential; he was particularly fond of music and knew the impact it had on his own troops as well as on the enemy. It is not surprising that he included a band performance when he attempted to mislead his opponent as to where an attack would occur during the Mine Run Campaign of November 1863: “I have been entirely successful in deceiving the enemy to-day in my intention to effect a crossing. I have compelled him to maintain a strong line of battle, extending without break from Morton’s to above Raccoon. . . . To strengthen this impression I have caused fires to be built along the edge of the woods and my band to play at different points since dark, to give the impression that a strong force of infantry is here.”70 The implication in Custer’s description is that his band communicated not only a spurious location for an attack, but also the intention that an attack was imminent. These musical feints were not in vain, as a member of the Army of Northern Virginia stationed at Morton’s Ford told his mother:

When we first went on picket at the river we could hear the Yankees’ drums by the hundred. They stopped all at once and we did not hear more than two or three for a whole week. Yesterday morning they opened with their drums again and from the number it would seem that they have a large army across the river. I think they tried to make us believe they had left, but they can’t fool General Lee.

69. OR, Series 1, 34 (Part I), 192. As Brig. Gen. Michael K. Lawler, 13th Army Corps, stated in his report of 2 May 1864: “Although the enemy did not resist stubbornly to-day, he showed an extensive line of pickets, mostly cavalry. Some of my officers who were with the skirmishers saw infantry also. . . . From the extent of the enemy’s pickets I am satisfied he has a force of respectable dimensions not far out. An engagement would attend our determined advance.” OR, Series 1, 34 (Part I), 275. See also Gary D. Joiner, Through the Howling Wilderness: The 1864 Red River Campaign and Union Failure in the West (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2006).
70. OR, Series 1, 29 (Part I), 811.
We have had orders for a week or more to keep two days’ rations cooked and be ready to move at a moment’s notice. I don’t think that we shall remain much longer at this camp.71 This soldier accepted the sound of Federal musicians as indicative of a large force across the river, and the fact that he and his regiment were ordered to stand ready showed that Custer’s noisy display and other such efforts had convinced the Rebel high command that an attack was imminent.

Unlike previous examples where music’s calming nature was used to depict complacency, in Custer’s deception the music conveyed an upbeat or aggressive attitude. This shows how the sound of music in surveillance could be used to determine the morale and spirit of the troops under observation as well as their size or location. This information could then factor into an interpretation as to the enemy’s intentions. Not only did Colonel Peter T. Swaine of the 99th Ohio determine the size of the force opposing him through music, he read their spirit as well: “Last night about tattoo two bands were playing and there was a great deal of cheering in the enemy’s lines, convincing me that the force was not so insignificant as I at first supposed. The pickets report that speeches were made that caused the cheering.”72 In the fighting around Rapidan Station in September 1863 Union officers used the playing of Confederate bands to determine that their artillery bombardment was having little effect.73 In situations such as these the significance attached to such sounds included both denotative and connotative elements; the emotional state of the participants is read through the music being performed, along with more material characteristics such as size or location.

On the other hand, music could be used to broadcast a false or inflated sense of high spirits as well. At least this is what Robert Moore of the 17th Mississippi Infantry concluded when he reported that the “enemy are playing on the brass bands & trying to present a lively aspect” while waiting to see what would happen following the Battle at Chancellorsville.74 It may be that the Union bands were trying to appear confident so as to dissuade the Confederates from following up on their victory, though it is equally likely that the bands were simply trying to raise the morale of the disgruntled Yankees. The bands of the 1st Division of the Army of the Potomac’s Cavalry Corps created and projected a sense of self-assurance while guarding the roads around Hanover Court House, Virginia, prior to the Battle of Cold Harbor: “All quiet until night when a shot was fired on our picket which caused the 1st squadron in reserve to move up to the picket line. Nothing

up—returned at 9 P.M. Built fires and band played stirring airs for effect."75 Such displays of musical bravado could fall short if the observer was suspicious, as when General Lafayette McLaws described to his wife the army facing him at Williamsburg, Virginia: "The enemy are still in our front & equally as noisy and demonstrative as before. To night at 9 1/2 I could hear one of their bands playing ‘Hail Columbia’ very loudly, although the night is very dark and rainy. But they are continually playing some bragadocias prank, and this may be one of them."76 Despite the intentions of the performers, music that communicated genuine or artificial confidence across the lines required aesthetic evaluation.

Certainly any attempt to interpret strategic objectives or the morale of troops based on the artistic side of music alone would be unrealistic at best. The full impact of the aesthetic component of music in a tactical situation or during reconnaissance was impossible to quantify. Yet the addition of music’s emotional aspect returned the human element to tactical calculations and observations. And this aesthetic impact was bilateral; not only did the music of a band or drum corps influence or reveal the emotional status of the units to which the ensemble was attached, but it also affected the feelings of the observers.

Regardless of whether a musical performance was intentionally manipulative or simply a customary form of entertainment, the emotional impact on soldiers from both sides of the line cannot be ignored. Music was an impalpable yet inescapable part of the soldiers’ milieu during the American Civil War, a contributory force in the formative circumstances that governed life at the front. Acknowledging the role music played in the lives of soldiers—from the regulation of daily activities by bugle and drum calls to the morale boost provided by a band concert—could greatly enhance reconnaissance and provide useful information not available through other means. Yet just as the sound of music could be revealing to a scout, it could also be intentionally misleading to a commanding officer. The use of field musicians and brass bands as part of tactical deceptions confirms that many Civil War officers possessed an admirable sensitivity to the psychology of war and were capable of truly creative initiatives. Musical deceptions are also one more indication of the significant role that music played in the lives of the combatants. Participants perceived the sound of music in a tactical situation as a particularly connotative action; there are meanings and associations connected to music that operate much deeper than superficial entertainment. Understanding such perceptions, and the actions they engendered, helps restore the human factor to the study of Civil War combat.

75. Diary entry of 27 May 1864, William Carey Morey Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, University of Rochester Library, Rochester, New York.
ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY AND RESOURCES

* = especially appropriate for students.


  • An excellent short overview of the role played by intelligence in the Civil War.


  • An excellent book that is especially appropriate for children but also pulls together material seldom covered in works for adults.


  • This volume contains spy stories that will be compelling for younger readers, but it relies heavily on memoirs that are exaggerated or unverifiable.


  • An enduring popular history. Like many of its genre, it depends very heavily on memoirs of participants, some of which are untrustworthy.


  • The extent of Rose Greenhow’s real accomplishments as a spy has often been challenged. This biography, which the CIA’s in-house journal, Studies in Intelligence, reviewed positively, persuasively, argues her case.

- This book attempts to sift fact from fiction in the story of Pauline Cushman, a spy for the Union. One scholarly reviewer recommends the book but also says that “William J. Christen’s work is a good, but rocky read, given the back and forth of fact-checking, conflicting evidence, and some extraneous material.”


- For many years Grant was thought to have ignored intelligence and fought on intuition. Feis’ book shows otherwise. One reviewer writes “Feis’s book offers the first full-dress study of military intelligence and Grant’s command. It also provides an essential primer on the ways intelligence was gathered and assessed during the war.”


- The leading scholarly work on the role of intelligence during the Civil War. A monumental book which is stronger on the Union side than the Confederate. Fishel drew heavily on a very large trove of Union intelligence documents that he found in the National Archives. This allows him to test the claims of many exaggerated memoirs against the official record.


- This is a book aimed at children but is also important as the first biography of Thaddeus Lowe, the Union’s “Chief Aeronaut,” who pioneered the use of balloons for overhead reconnaissance, the first step toward today’s spy satellites and drones.


- This book is useful as a compendium of intelligence personalities involved on both sides of the Civil War.


- Useful primary source document for those interested in the role of the telegraph and information (both intelligence and otherwise) in the Civil War.

- A good collection of first-person accounts of derring-do during the Civil War. One reviewer has noted that the real value of this book lies in Stern’s commentary on each case.


- Van Lew was probably the Union Army’s most important spymaster. She reported from Richmond, Virginia, the Confederate capital. A very well-regarded and readable book that gives an excellent sense of the time and place.


- Publisher’s Weekly calls this a “breezy overview of 36 women who spied for the Confederacy and the Union.”

Also recommended:


- Feis is interviewed by Mark Stout, Museum Historian. The interview covers intelligence collecting techniques during the Civil War and how Union Commanders used intelligence to their advantage.
For The GeoInt of Gettysburg Lesson


National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA): www.NGA.mil

- The National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency is primary source of geospatial intelligence for the US intelligence community.

United States Geospatial-Intelligence Foundation (USGIF): www.USGIF.org

- USGIF is a not-for-profit educational foundation which supports the advancement of GEOINT tradecraft across government, industry and academia.

Geospatial Analysis: http://www.spatialanalysisonline.com/

- An excellent free resource for student who are interested in further studying concepts of geospatial science and analysis