



Commemorating the 250th Birthday of the United States The Final Frontier: The U.S. Army After the Civil War

By late 1864, the American Civil War shifted in favor of the Union thanks to several advantages. With the exception of the Gettysburg Campaign, every significant military action had taken place on Southern soil, preserving Northern resources. At the same time, the larger populations of Northern states meant the Union had a larger reserve of manpower, which overwhelmed Confederate forces in the latter stages of the conflict. Combined with the Union's superior position in transportation, production, and economic power, the fall of the Confederacy became inevitable. At the conclusion of the war, the United States faced jarring final casualty figures from the four years of conflict.

Approximately 2.2 million men served in the Union army, more than 15% of whom died from battle or disease, while 12.5% were wounded. On the Confederate side, close to 1.1 million men served, 23% of whom died and 17.6% were wounded. The Union Army would survive the war, but without the influx of volunteers and conscripts. The Volunteer Army was disbanded in 1865, leaving a Regular Army numbering 77,000 in 1866 and 52,000 in 1869.

After the Civil War, U.S. Army Regulars were primarily posted to the American West, to protect settlers and subdue Native Americans in a series of conflicts known as the Indian Wars. Violent tension erupted with the arrival of the first European explorers and expanded with the rise of the American Colonies. However, the most intense era of Native conflict came during the era of Westward Expansion (1801-1861), when colonists pushed across the Appalachian Mountains to the Mississippi River and beyond. At first, conflict with Native Americans centered on the desire of settlers to expand, resulting in tribes east of the Mississippi River being relocated

to reservations in Oklahoma, either voluntarily or via forced marches along the Trail of Tears. In Texas, settlers fought for another four decades to remove the perceived Native American threat, most prominently during the Comanche Wars (1836-1877).

Elsewhere in the West, the number of new settlers rose dramatically due to the discovery of gold and silver. The increase in population due to the California Gold Rush (1848-1855) in the Sierra Nevada Mountains led to California becoming a state in 1850. Similarly, the Pike's Peak Gold Rush of 1859 led to creation of Colorado Territory in 1861. The Homestead Act of 1862 created further conflict by allowing settlers to claim "public" land in the West by squatting, resulting in 10% of all American lands west of the Mississippi River being claimed by settlers virtually overnight. This included a large part of eastern Oklahoma, which had previously been set aside for Native reservations. The Montana Gold Rush of 1862-63 led to opening the Bozeman Trail as a significant settlement route. This, in turn, led to Red Cloud's War (1866-68). The trend would further accelerate with the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869.

CASUALTIES



In the midst of these changes came the U.S. Civil War (1861-65), which became intertwined with Native conflicts in the West. Following the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter, many Native tribes sought to take advantage of the unrest to gain more independence for themselves. At first, many opted to remain neutral, seeing the conflict as a white man's war. Soon, it became clear that Natives residing in strategic locations, particularly recently settled areas on the western side of the Mississippi River, would not be allowed to stay out of the Civil War. They must pick a side or else face the hostility of Union and Confederacy alike.

Some would declare themselves loyal to the Union, hoping the Federal government would, in turn, grant them further rights and concessions. Drawn predominantly from the Five Civilized Tribes (Creek, Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Seminole), these volunteers fought in three regiments known as the Indian Home Guard. The most noteworthy Native unit in the Union Army was Company K, drawn from scattered Michigan tribes, including the Ottawa, Delaware, Huron Oneida, Potawatomi, and Ojibwa. This group of sharpshooters participated in the Battle of the Wilderness and at Spotsylvania. Though 3,500 Native Americans served in the Union Army, 8,000 served the Confederacy. Like the Indian Home Guard, most were drawn from the Five Civilized Tribes, with additional volunteers from the Comanche, Osage, Quapaw, Shawnee, and Seneca-Cayuga. These tribes allowed themselves to be annexed by the Confederacy in exchange for some rights.

As most Regular Army units were withdrawn from western forts to fight the Confederacy during the Civil War, Union forces fighting Native American tribes in the West during this period largely consisted of volunteer militias raised by western governmental authorities, including the states of California and Oregon, as well as the territories in the Great Plains. During this period, the U.S. Army fought Native tribes in what were essentially continuations of conflicts that both predated the war and continued beyond it. These included the aforementioned Comanche Wars, the Apache Wars (1849-1924), Nava-jo Wars (1849-1866), and Sioux Wars (1854-1891).



Cavalry soldier, Indian Home Guard

This Month in Military History

Jan. 3, 1777: In his final engagement before entering Winter Quarters for the season, Gen. George Washington leads the Revolutionary Army to victory over British forces under Lt. Col. Charles Mawhood at the Battle of Princeton (New Jersey).

Jan. 6, 1809: A combined British, Portuguese, and Colonial Brazilian fleet lunches an attack on Cayenne, capital of French Guiana, as part of the Caribbean front in the Napoleonic Wars. The defenders surrender one week later, giving Portugal control of the area until 1817.

Jan. 9, 1431: Bishops begin the trial of French general and future saint Joan of Arc in the English-occupied Rouen. She is convicted of heresy for blasphemy (wearing men's clothing) and following demonic visions (by fighting the English on behalf of France). She is executed in May.

Jan. 12, 1944: British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and French General Charles de Gaulle meet for a two-day war conference in Marrakesh, Morocco.

Jan. 15, 1865: At the Second Battle of Fort Fisher, the American Navy bombards a North Carolina stronghold, allowing Union forces to capture the last Confederate seaport.

Jan. 18, 1817: General José de San Martín leads a combined force of Argentine soldiers and Chilean exiles over the Andes to attack Spanish forces in Chile. The crossing takes 21 days and results in Chile becoming independent from Spain.

Jan. 21, 1793: Four months after being removed from the French throne, and one week after his conviction for high treason, former King Louis XVI is execute by guillotine, a critical event in the French Revolution.

Jan. 24, 1968: Australia and New Zealand launch Operation Coburg, a unified attack on North Vietnam and the Viet Cong in an effort to prevent an assault on allied forces in what becomes the Tet Offensive a week later.

Jan. 27, 1649: An English High Court of Justice renders its verdict against King Charles I, declaring him "tyrant, traitor, murderer, and public enemy to the good people of the nation, to be put to death by the severing of his head from his body." The execution takes place three days later.

Jan. 30, 1902: Britain and Japan sign a treaty committing to the establishment of an independent China and Korea. Three years later, Japan wins the Russo-Japanese War and turns Korea into a puppet state, formally colonizing the country in 1910 and dominating Korea until 1945.

JMC Archives Spotlight:

The JMC Archives maintains several collections documenting the history of ammunition installations which have long been closed, including ammunition plants (St. Louis, Kansas, Volunteer, Joliet, Longhorn, Lone Star, Louisiana, Mississippi, Sunflower), army depots (Sierra, Savanna), and more specified installations (Weldon Springs Chemical Plant, Aberdeen Proving Ground).

Among the most curious items is a collection of artifacts and signage from Twins Cities Army Ammunition Plant, which was in standby from 1976 to 2002 before it officially closed in 2005. These items were salvaged by the employee, who turned out the lights on the last day. Many signs, like the one pictured here, were hand painted and aimed at specific audiences and issues. As they say, there wouldn't be a rule unless someone tried it.



This Month in Military History

Feb. 1, 1713: After allowing Charles XII of Sweden to spend more than four years in exile in Turkey, the government tires of his presence, prompting Ottoman forces to attack the Swedish camp near Bender and capture the Swedish king.

Feb. 4, 1194: England pays a ransom of 100,000 pounds of silver to Holy Roman Emperor Henry VI for the return of King Richard I "Lionheart." It ends more than a year of imprisonment after his capture following the Third Crusade.

Feb. 7, 1783: Upon the conclusion of the American War of Independence, France and Spain end their siege of the British colony of Gibraltar. They had maintained the blockade for three years and seven months.

Feb. 10, 1676: In the conflict known as King Philip's War (or Metacom's War), 400 Native American warriors from the Wampanoag, Nipmuc, and Narragansett tribes raid Lancaster, Massachusetts, killing 14 settlers and capturing 23 others. One captive, Mary Rowlandson, wrote a memoir describing her experiences before being ransomed.

Feb. 13, 1692: Thirty-eight members of Clan MacDonald of the Scottish Highlands are murdered by members of the rival Clan Campbell for delaying a promise to pledge allegiance to the new rulers of the British Isles, William III of Orange and his wife Mary II.

Feb. 16, 1838: On the Blaukraans River in the Natal Province of South Africa, Zulu warriors kill hundreds of Voortrekkers (Dutch settlers) in the Weenen Massacre, prompting the Dutch to establish the Natalia Republic, an early Boer state.

Feb. 19, 197: Emperor Septimus Severus defeats Clodius Albinus at the Battle of Lugdunum, becoming sole ruler of Rome following the Year of the Five Emperors.

Feb. 22, 1915: The German Empire initiates unrestricted submarine warfare, sinking the American merchant ship *Carib* with a mine and Norwegian ship *Regin* with torpedoes.

Feb. 25, 1948: Communists seize control of the Czechoslovakian government after President Edvard Beneš gives in to the Soviet Union in a failed attempt to avoid civil war and intervention by the U.S.S.R.

Feb. 28, 1896: After briefly maintaining a figurehead over the Kingdom of Madagascar, France seizes full control of the territory, removing Queen Ranavalona III from the throne and exiling her, first to the nearby island of Réunion, later to Algiers, Algeria, from which she regularly visited France.



Sioux War, 1876 — lithograph, 1899

After the Civil War, the U.S. government adopted a strict policy for Native tribes: either stay on reservations or assimilate. Unsurprisingly, many tribes resisted such restrictions and continued to fight both settlers and the Army. In Texas, the fight erupted anew in the Comanche Campaign (1867-1875), which ended with a final surrender by tribal leaders. The discovery of gold in the Black Hills created a new gold rush in the Dakotas. This led to a new era in the Sioux Wars, punctuated by Gen. George Custer's famous last stand at the Battle of Little Big Horn (1876).

War also erupted in the Pacific Northwest, corresponding with new gold discoveries in Oregon and Idaho. Prominent among these conflicts were the Snake War (1864-68), fought against the Northern Paiute, Shoshone, and Bannock tribes along the Snake River; and the Nez Perce War (1877), which featured 18 different military engagements between the U.S. Army and the forces of Chief Joseph. Some of the most intense fighting occurred in the Southwest, along the border with Mexico. Half of all Native battles took place in Arizona, Texas, and New Mexico. Arizona alone saw 310 such battles and 4,350 casualties, twice as much as Texas.

Due to the lack of sources, it is difficult to determine the impact of the American Indian Wars with accuracy. In 1894, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated 28,500 whites and 45,000 Native Americans had died in battle since 1789. Yet, U.S. Army estimates for 1850-1890 indicate 21,586 casualties, including 6,596 military civilians (31%) and 14,990 Native Americans (69%). Historians estimate there were, in 1800, approximately 600,000 Native Americans living in the territory that would become the contiguous United States. By 1890, this number had been reduced to 250,000. Since then, the Native American population of the United States has slowly risen.

Though most Native resistance was quelled by 1900, the American Indian Wars did not officially end until the final Apache defeat in 1924. In the meantime, the U.S. Army would be distracted by two major conflicts. The first of these, the Spanish-American War (1898), would see dramatic changes in the both organization of the Army and U.S. foreign policy.

JMC Historical Document Collection

The JMC Public and Congressional Affairs Office maintains the JMC Archives, which collects and maintains historically significant records, including: emails, manuscripts, letters, reports, studies, images, videos, films, photographs, oral history interviews, briefings, SOPs, policies, decision papers, memoranda, statistics, newspapers, newsletters, brochures, maps, blueprints, drawings, and artifacts. Such records are pertinent to the Army's knowledge of active and predecessor installations, the ammunition industrial base, and JMC missions. JMC regularly uses these materials to research command history, and to answer research queries. When JMC workers leave positions or make physical moves, it is vital that their records be assessed before disposal. If employees are uncertain about the historical value of materials, the best policy is to make the items available to Paul Ferguson (paul.t.ferguson14.civ@army.mil), Room 661.

