

**A Patriot Heritage.** Although the Patriots of the American Revolution had passed on into history prior to the crisis of 1861, their legacy of sacrifice and valor was an inspiration for the Northern soldier. As children, many of the men who later served in the Union Army listened to the stirring stories told by the local veterans of the Revolution and the War of 1812. In the days before sports celebrities and movie stars, veterans and frontier heroes were the idols of the nation's citizens. Letters, speeches and editorials of the period indicate that many Union soldiers were very mindful of the responsibility to preserve the union of states created by the blood and bravery of their Revolutionary ancestors on the battlefields of Lexington, Saratoga and Yorktown.



*Alan H. Archambault*

**The Militia.** Since colonial days, the male citizens of the various states were expected to be enrolled in the militia, subject to be called on to defend their communities. Although in times of peace the militia laws were seldom enforced, many Northern communities boasted volunteer military companies. These units were usually chartered to defend the local area from enemies both "foreign and domestic." Most of these units wore colorful uniforms and had long, celebrated histories. Some units chose uniforms reflecting their Revolutionary War heritage, while others copied popular European military fashions. The units were both social and military in nature and their members were often the most respected members of the community. When the Union was threatened in 1861, the various militia companies were summoned from the Northern states and served as the nucleus around which the state volunteer regiments were formed. A few of the many militia units of the North are illustrated here. They are, from left to right: Private of the Putnam Phalanx of Connecticut; Company Officer, 71st Regiment (the American Guard); New York State Militia; Private, Cincinnati Rover Guards, Ohio Militia; Sergeant, Albany Burgesses Corps, New York State Militia.



**The Regular Infantry on the Eve of War.** Beginning during the War of Independence against Britain, the American infantry had been the muscle of the United States Army. The foot soldier had won our independence, defended our nation's honor in the War of 1812, protected the frontier, and fought Mexico in a war for "Manifest Destiny." In 1860, as the nation faced an internal conflict, the Regular Army numbered only 1,108 officers and 15,259 men. Taking into account those soldiers who were sick, absent from duty, or confined, the Army consisted of about 14,000 effective soldiers. The units were dispersed all over the continent, with most serving on the western frontier. While serving at remote garrisons, many of the soldiers took an interest in the events that would split the nation. When the storm broke in April 1861, the ten existing infantry regiments of the United States Army would become the nucleus for the Union infantry. This illustration depicts a first sergeant, a private and a musician of Company B, 4th U.S. Infantry Regiment in full dress uniforms. The 4th Infantry served on the Pacific Coast from 1853 until recalled east in 1861. The regiment went on to serve with the Union Army of the Potomac and fought, with honor, in twelve major campaigns.



*Leon H. Archembault*

**The Call to Arms.** On April 12, 1861, Confederate forces fired on the Federal garrison at Fort Sumter, South Carolina. This act of war sent the North into a flurry of "war fever." On April 15, President Abraham Lincoln called for volunteers to crush the rebellion against the Federal Union. Soon, patriotic rallies were held throughout the North and young men were eager to punish the "traitors" for their insult to the flag of the United States. The ranks of the volunteer companies were soon filled with eager recruits, ready to prove their loyalty and courage. Indeed, one of the biggest fears of the eager volunteers was that the war would be over before they could prove themselves in battle against the Rebels.



*Wm. H. Abrahamson*