

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE VOLUNTEER ARMY IN 1861 WITH SPECIAL REF- ERENCE TO MINNESOTA¹

It is the present which gives direction to the study of history. In the piping times of peace historians were concerned chiefly with those things which lay within the sphere of "economic interpretations." When war was to be averted or embraced, even the most orthodox buried themselves in the intricacies of diplomacy and waxed enthusiastic or pessimistic over the growth or decline of international law. Now that the war is at last a reality, we all feel justified in for once indulging our primal instincts and focusing our attention upon military events. It is this inevitable shifting of interest which makes history a subject eternally new. It must be constantly rewritten to fit the times in which we live. In a day when our government is bending every effort towards the raising of a mighty army, nothing could be more appropriate than the refreshing of our memories as to the methods used in assembling another army in 1861.

Lack of preparedness for war is a constant quantity in American history. If, as some say, this condition were a sufficient guarantee of peace, the United States would have had no wars, for we have never been prepared. In 1861 the United States was as unready for war as usual. We had a small regular army, sixteen thousand men at the most, which was engaged in keeping in check the Indians along the western frontier. All of it was needed there. Probably the "mobilization" of enough troops to form a regiment would have been a hazardous undertaking.² In addition to the regular army

¹ Read at the stated meeting of the executive council of the Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, October 15, 1917.

² Less than one thousand troops were garrisoned east of the Mississippi

was the militia, largely under state control, unequipped, disorganized, and for the most part utterly useless.

During the winter and spring of 1860-61 it became increasingly evident that the "impending conflict" was at hand. State after state seceded. The *Star of the West*, flying the flag of the United States, was fired on by southern batteries. Attempts at compromise, and at the "reconstruction of the Union," failed dismally. The president-elect, Abraham Lincoln, spoke kind but determined words. This situation did not prevent the federal government from maintaining a state of "masterly inactivity" with respect to military affairs. The people themselves thought less of such things, if possible, than the government. The newspapers preached the "right and duty of coercion," but the legislatures did little to make coercion possible. There was much boasting, but little action.³ Then on the twelfth of April came the bombardment of Sumter.

River. Many of the inhabitants of the great eastern cities had never set eyes upon a company of regular soldiers. Report of the secretary of war, 1860, in 36 Congress, 2 session, *Senate Executive Documents*, no. 1, pp. 213, 215 (serial 1079); Louis P. A. d'Orleans, Comte de Paris, *History of the Civil War in America*, 1:172 (Philadelphia, 1875).

³ For example, an act for the reconstruction of the state militia was proposed in Illinois and passed the House in February, 1861. It was allowed to die in the Senate where the chairman of the committee which had the bill in charge, R. J. Oglesby, a Republican, very sagely remarked that should "necessity arise the whole country, having the love of the Union at heart, would rise *en masse*, and, disregarding the hindrances of a militia law, volunteer their services to the proper authority of the State speedily and without delay." "Weak-kneed" Republicans who opposed action of the sort contemplated in the bill disliked to do anything which might further excite the South and the "Egyptian" members. The debates of this session of the Illinois legislature make interesting reading. One member from "Egypt" told the Republicans that "if they wanted a fight they could have it without going out of the State." Another declared his willingness to enforce the laws of the state, but he wanted to know when in the last ten years the militia had been called upon for that purpose. Should the people of the South attempt to invade the North his constituents would oppose them "like a wall of fire," but "if the North were marched upon the South, her forces would be met on the prairies and be made to march over the dead bodies of the men who people them." Illinois, *Senate Journal*, 1861, p. 391; *Chicago Tribune*, January 12, 1861.

War, so long a probability, became now an actuality, but to prosecute a war armies were necessary. How were these armies to be raised?

The constitution of the United States gives to Congress the right to "raise and support armies." Under such authority the regular army had been created and was still maintained. No other army of the United States existed. Congress, and Congress alone, could enlarge that army or legislate a new army into existence. But Congress was not in session; it could not be immediately assembled; and it was then as now incapable of expeditious action. Naturally the administration cast about for other means to accomplish its purpose, or at least to serve as a temporary expedient.

The expedient, for such it certainly was, the government found in an old militia law. The Constitution not only gives to Congress the right to raise armies, but it also declares that Congress shall have the power "to provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections, and repel Invasions." Acting upon this authority, Congress in 1795 passed a law giving authority to the president to call out the militia of the several states, or any portion thereof, whenever such an emergency as was contemplated by the Constitution should arise. Certain rather formidable restrictions were placed upon the president's action. First, no militiaman could be "compelled to serve more than three months, after his arrival at the place of rendezvous, in any one year," and second, the militia so called forth might not be continued in service longer than "thirty days after the commencement of the then next session of Congress."⁴

When the news from Sumter arrived, Lincoln did the only thing he could do. He ordered the governors of the states which had not seceded to furnish him with seventy-five

⁴ Article 1, section 8 of the Constitution of the United States. The statement of the law is positive rather than negative: "the use of militia so called forth may be continued, if necessary, until the expiration of thirty days after the commencement of the then next session of Congress." United States, *Statutes at Large*, 1: 424.

thousand state militia to serve for three months time. In the same proclamation he called Congress together, presumably with the idea of requesting the only body which had any real authority in the matter to make further provision for troops if necessary. Later on Lincoln was not at all squeamish about the niceties of constitutional interpretation, but in his first war paper he left little room for criticism on that score. He had back of him the Constitution, the law, and a decision of the Supreme Court upholding the validity of the law. Only an out and out secessionist like the governor of Missouri could say: "Your requisition, in my judgment, is illegal, unconstitutional, and revolutionary in its object, inhuman and diabolical, and cannot be complied with."⁵ Such fine fervor, with equal lack of patriotism and logic, has its counterpart in certain present day denunciations of the conscription law.

Uninformed critics have wasted much breath in censuring the administration for the lack of foresight shown in calling only seventy-five thousand men and specifying so short a time as three months. Lincoln probably did not greatly underestimate the task before him. The law of 1795 explains why the term of service was to be for no longer than three months, and, apart from other considerations, the absence of a really effective state militia shows why a call for more than seventy-five thousand such troops would have appeared preposterous.

⁵ In deciding the case of *Martin v. Mott*, February 2, 1827, Justice Story had declared in no uncertain terms that the constitutionality of the law of 1795 was not open to question, and that the "authority to decide whether the exigency has arisen, belongs exclusively to the President, and that his decision is conclusive upon all other persons." 12 Wheaton, 30. For the answers to the president's proclamation given by slave state governors see James Ford Rhodes, *History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850*, 3:393 (New York, 1895), and John G. Nicolay and John Hay, *Abraham Lincoln, a History*, 4:90 (New York, 1890). The president's proclamation calling Congress into session and requisitioning troops, together with other interesting documents relative thereto, may be found in the *American Annual Cyclopaedia and Register of Important Events*, 1861, pp. 715. A table showing the quotas assigned to each state is given in *The War of the Rebellion: a Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, serial 122, p. 69.

On paper, the militia system of the United States furnished the nation with a formidable army. The Constitution authorized Congress "to provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the Militia, and for governing such Part of them as may be employed in the Service of the United States, reserving to the States respectively, the Appointment of the Officers, and the Authority of training the Militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress." By an act passed in 1792 and subsequently amended, Congress sought to carry out the intent of the Constitution. All male citizens between the ages of eighteen and forty-five years were to be enrolled by the several states and held liable for service. An adjutant general in each state, in practice appointed by the governor, was to have supervision over military affairs within his territory. Nothing was done, however, to prevent the various state legislatures from elaborating upon the federal law as they saw fit. The result was that in nearly all the states there were constructed impressive paper organizations, always based upon the principle of universal enrollment, but differing widely as to details, and useful chiefly as a means of furnishing flattering statistics for a people not then noted for its modesty.⁶

Ignoring its statistical value, the militia system was suited at best only to the day "when every man's cabin was his fortress." For most of America that day had passed. Minnesota, owing to its proximity to the Indian frontier, should have had an effective militia if such a thing were possible anywhere. Yet the adjutant general in his report for 1861 deplored the "present weakness of the military force, as well as the absolute inefficiency of the Militia system of our State." According to a law of 1858 the state possessed six divisions,

⁶ Article 1, section 8 of the Constitution; *Statutes at Large*, 1: 271-274. The Minnesota militia law, which is fairly typical, may be found in Minnesota, *General Laws*, 1858, pp. 232-254. The paper strength of the total militia of the United States was rated by the secretary of war in 1861 as 3,167,936. "Returns of Militia," in 36 Congress, 2 session, *House Executive Documents*, no. 53, p. 5 (serial 1100).

twelve brigades, twenty-eight regiments—in all, 24,389 citizens enrolled for military duty. Actually, Minnesota could count on the services of one hundred and forty-seven officers, and about two hundred men. That even this small number could be made available was due to the custom, common to most of the states, of recognizing a few volunteer companies, who uniformed themselves and drilled at their own discretion, entirely without compensation.⁷ Arms, distributed by the federal government to the several states, were generally provided for well-organized companies, but all too frequently, as interest in the organization flagged, these arms were lost or were allowed to deteriorate through lack of care. On the sixteenth of April, 1861, when the first call for troops was made in Minnesota, the remnants of only eight volunteer militia companies could be detected by the state adjutant general, and these were most imperfectly equipped. Nor was Minnesota far below the average in military efficiency.⁸

⁷ During the years from 1856 to 1860 there had been a lively interest in militia companies. Possibly this had been awakened by the events of the Crimean War and the lack of preparedness which had characterized England's participation in it. Nearly every American city of any size had its militia company, gorgeously arrayed, and drilled to perform all sorts of spectacular feats. Chicago prided herself especially upon a company of "Zouaves" which had been organized in 1856 and under Captain E. Elmer Ellsworth had attained rare efficiency. The interest in military drill seems to have died down with the rise of the more lively sports, such as baseball, but as late as 1860 Ellsworth's Zouaves made a tour of the country, arousing great enthusiasm wherever they went. The company was disbanded in October, 1860, when its leader left Chicago. Ellsworth will be remembered as the first Union officer to be killed in the war. J. Seymour Currey, *Chicago: Its History and Its Builders*, 2: 32-35, 113 (Chicago, 1912). The "Wide Awakes" and the "Little Giants," respectively Republican and Democratic marching clubs, were another manifestation of this same enthusiasm. Both organizations existed in St. Paul and were of material assistance to the government when the war broke out. J. Fletcher Williams, *History of the City of Saint Paul and the County of Ramsey*, 396 (*M. H. C.* vol. 4); *Daily Pioneer and Democrat* (St. Paul) June 12, 1861; *Saint Paul Daily Press*, August 18, 1861.

⁸ *Statutes at Large*, 2: 490; 10: 639; Adjutant General, *Reports*, 1862, p. 231. According to its governor, the state of Illinois, whose population was ten times as great as that of Minnesota, had less than eight hundred

In each of the loyal states the War Department orders to "detach" from the local militia its proportionate share of the seventy-five thousand troops called out was received as an amiable legal fiction, and recruiting was begun. To all intents and purposes, Lincoln had called for volunteers, but his action made the states individually responsible for the raising of the quotas assigned to them and relieved the federal government entirely of this burden. In every northern state this responsibility was assumed without the slightest hesitation. What happened in Minnesota may be taken as typical of what was going on elsewhere.

When the Civil War broke out, Minnesota was one of the youngest states of the Union. Admitted in 1858, the new commonwealth had by 1860 a population of about 172,000, which a year later, residents confidently agreed, had grown to at least 200,000. St. Paul, at the head of the navigation on the Mississippi River, was the largest town in the state. It boasted some 10,000 inhabitants, nearly half of whom were foreign born. It had two daily papers. Railroads there were none; connections with eastern lines were made by way of steam-boats to La Crosse and Prairie du Chien. Other evidences of frontier conditions are not hard to find. One summer day in 1861 the St. Paul Daily Press complained that "about a hundred men (?) and half-grown boys went out on Wabashaw Street Hill yesterday afternoon to witness a dog fight. The police did not learn of it in time to break it up." A correspondent wrote to the same paper a few days later that "our old acquaintances, the Winnebagoes, were thick in the streets of Mankato while we were there. Their reservation . . . is within a few miles of the town; and when they get hold of whiskey . . . they are very troublesome to the uniformed militia. Illinois, *Senate Journal*, 1861, p. 26. Massachusetts, with possibly five thousand effective militia, was better prepared to meet Lincoln's call than any other state. *Annual Cyclopaedia*, 1861, p. 451; Rhodes, *United States*, 3:362; James Schouler, *History of the United States*, 6:42 (New York, 1899).

inhabitants." Agriculture, lumbering, and fur-trading were the sources of practically all the wealth the state possessed.⁹

The governor of Minnesota, Alexander Ramsey, chanced to be in Washington when the news from Sumter arrived. He at once hastened to the war department and offered a thousand men from Minnesota for the defence of the government, the first tender of troops from any quarter after the fall of the Charleston fortress made war an accomplished fact. On the fifteenth of April the president's proclamation was published, assigning as Minnesota's quota in the new army a regiment of not less than 780 men. On the sixteenth, Ignatius Donnelly, as acting governor, issued the call. Troops were to be accepted only by companies, and the preference was given to the eight volunteer militia organizations supposedly in existence, provided they could recruit to minimum strength within ten days. With this exception, companies were to be received in the order offered, and to take rank accordingly.¹⁰

The scenes which so recently marked the entrance of the United States into the World War make it easy for us to picture what happened in April, 1861. The St. Paul flag supply was exhausted. Democratic newspapers headed their columns with Decatur's words: "Our Country, May it ever

⁹ *United States Census*, 1860, volume on population, 253, 259, 261. In his message to the legislature, January, 1862, Governor Ramsey claimed 200,000 inhabitants for the state. *Executive Documents*, 1861, p. 4. The population of Ramsey County is listed by the census of 1860 as 6,641 native born, and 5,509 foreign born. The proportion of people in the state speaking foreign languages is suggested by a resolution introduced in the state senate in January, 1861, which proposed the printing of copies of the governor's message, three thousand in English, one thousand in German, and five hundred in Norwegian. Some house members wished to add five hundred in Swedish and five hundred in French. *Senate Journal*, 1861, p. 42; *House Journal*, 1861, p. 45; *Pioneer and Democrat*, January 11, 15, 1862. A good description of Minnesota society during this period is to be found in Joseph G. Pyle, *Life of James J. Hill*, 1: 24-28 (New York, 1917). See also *St. Paul Press*, June 5, 8, 1861.

¹⁰ *Rebellion Records*, serial 122, p. 67; governor's message, in January, 1862, *Executive Documents*, 1861, p. 26; Adjutant General, *Reports*, 1862, p. 231; *St. Paul Press*, April 18, 1861.

be Right; but Right or Wrong, Our Country." Preachers took patriotic texts and expounded them to audiences for once attentive. Mass meetings were called in every village. All this happened with the greatest spontaneity. In one respect, at least, the demonstrations differed markedly from those of April, 1917; people had an immediate object, namely, the raising of an assigned quota of volunteers. Speakers pointed out this duty with emphasis. Sometimes a roll was opened after a meeting, and all who wished to form themselves into a company of volunteers inscribed on it their names. The officers of the old militia companies made strenuous efforts to recruit their commands to full strength before the ten days allowed for this purpose should expire. Captain Alexander Wilkin of the Pioneer Guards, St. Paul's crack militia company, advertised for "able bodied men between the ages of eighteen and forty-five . . . to enroll their names at J. C. Becht's Saloon, Third street, without delay." The state adjutant general received names in his office for a company of St. Paul volunteers and was later rewarded by the captaincy of the company. This activity was distributed evenly throughout the state. St. Anthony and Minneapolis threatened to raise two or three companies, and the St. Charles Hotel announced that owing to the fact that all the able bodied men among its employees "to the number of seven have enlisted for the wars, the hotel will probably be closed in a few days." April 22, six volunteers arrived in St. Paul from Pine Bend, "a village of only fifteen families," too small to recruit a company of its own. When the ten days had expired, it was found that three of the old militia companies were ready for service and that eleven new volunteer companies, representing nearly every part of the state, had been formed. If only a little more time could have been allowed, many others would have been ready.¹¹

¹¹ *Pioneer and Democrat*, April 17, 19, 28, 1861; *St. Paul Press*, April 18, 21, 23, 1861; *Northfield Telegraph*, May 1, 1861; Adjutant General, *Reports*, 1862, p. 82. General Grant gives an interesting description of these activities in his home town in Illinois. When the news from Sumter

The instructions from Washington were that the Minnesota regiment should be prepared to receive marching orders by the tenth of May. In the meantime, the troops were to rendezvous at St. Paul, where they should complete their organization. On the twenty-seventh of April, the adjutant general announced the ten lucky companies chosen to form the First Minnesota, and since no suitable quarters could be found in St. Paul, he ordered them to report as speedily as possible at Fort Snelling. This plan met with universal approval. The fort was described as "an old military post at the confluence of the Minnesota river with the Mississippi, six miles above St. Paul." In Indian times it had been one of the great strategic points of the northwest, but the advance of civilization had made its abandonment possible. In 1861 it was in the hands of civilians, but the officers' quarters, barracks, and other buildings were reported to be in a good state of repair, and ready for occupation once more by an armed body of men. It became the rendezvous and drill ground for all the troops which Minnesota subsequently furnished for the war.¹²

The regiment was assembled and organized with amazing rapidity. On the twenty-seventh, three companies came up was received at Galena, followed by the call for volunteers, posters were stuck up calling for a mass meeting at the court house in the evening. Grant presided. Patriotic speeches were made by Democrats and Republicans alike. After the speaking was over volunteers were called for to form a company. The company was raised and the officers elected on the spot. Grant declined the captaincy, but announced that he would aid the company in every way possible. Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, 1:230-231 (New York, 1885). This account differs in no essential respect from the story of the organization of the Red Wing company given in Joseph W. Hancock, *Goodhue County, Minnesota, Past and Present*, 141 (Red Wing, 1893). Both are typical of what happened in the smaller towns and villages of the North.

¹² Adjutant General, *Reports*, 1862, pp. 82, 231; *St. Paul Press*, April 30, 1861. See also General Richard W. Johnson, "Fort Snelling from its Foundation to the Present Time," in *Minnesota Historical Collections*, 8:427-448, and Marcus L. Hansen, *Old Fort Snelling (Iowa and War*, no. 1, July, 1917).

the river, one each from Faribault, Red Wing, and Hastings, and were quartered in the city over Sunday. By Monday, April 29, every company was on hand, the Stars and Stripes once again appeared on the flagstaff at Fort Snelling, and mustering-in by an officer of the United States Army was begun. During the latter ceremony a surgeon was present, but physical examinations were not rigorous. Only a few men were rejected. By April 30 the organization was complete. In the selection of officers the militia law of Minnesota was supposed to govern. This gave the governor the right to appoint all commissioned officers, but in practice companies elected their own officers, who were then commissioned by the governor. The captains appointed the "non-coms," and the governor appointed the field officers, consisting of a colonel, lieutenant colonel, and major. From the roll of lieutenants the colonel then appointed the adjutant. The selection of ex-Governor Willis A. Gorman, a veteran of the Mexican War, as colonel of the First Regiment was favorably received, and drill was immediately begun.¹³

Minnesota had been asked for a regiment of 780 men. Within two weeks' time she had ready nearly a thousand, and everyone knew that as many more could have been obtained for the asking. Nor had the loyal section of the country as a whole been less generous. In spite of the failure of several border states to coöperate, the call for 75,000 men produced a total of 98,235, and the loyal governors literally deluged Washington with telegrams asking permission to receive more troops. If Lincoln had had any doubt as to the willingness of the country to support him in the stand he had taken, these doubts were now allayed. Realizing the seriousness of the

¹³ April 30, Governor Ramsey sent word to Washington that one regiment of nine hundred men was ready for service. *Rebellion Records*, serial 122, p. 138; *St. Paul Press*, April 25, 30, 1861; Minnesota, *General Laws*, 1858, p. 233; *Minnesota in the Civil and Indian Wars, 1861-1865*, 1:3 (2d edition, St. Paul, 1891). For a more extended account see *History of the First Regiment Minnesota Volunteer Infantry, 1861-1864* (Stillwater, 1916).

approaching struggle, the administration therefore decided to make more adequate preparations. Before the end of April word had been given out that no more three months troops would be accepted, and on the third of May the president issued a proclamation calling for 42,034 volunteers for three years or during the war, 22,714 additional men for the regular army, and 18,000 seamen to be used in making the blockade of the southern coast effective. All this the president did without the slightest authority of law. He was evidently convinced that his action was demanded by the exigency of the situation, and that the hearty response of the people to his initial call warranted him in disregarding the lack of legal or constitutional authority. Congress alone had the right to raise armies, and the extra-constitutionality of his action Lincoln in effect admitted when he promised that the "call for volunteers hereby made, and the direction for the increase of the regular army and for the enlistment of seamen, hereby given, together with the plan of organization adopted for the volunteers and for the regular forces hereby authorized, will be submitted to Congress as soon as assembled." He knew that this work ought not to be longer delayed if the Union were to be preserved.¹⁴

The plan for the new volunteer army was set forth in General Orders number 15 of the war department,¹⁵ and

¹⁴ Nicolay and Hay, *Abraham Lincoln*, 4:86, 255; 7:8 note; Rhodes, *United States*, 3:438. Lincoln's proclamation of May 3, authorizing the army and navy increases, may be found in Abraham Lincoln, *Complete Works*, 6:263-265 (Nicolay and Hay edition, New York, 1894). "These measures," said Lincoln, "whether strictly legal or not, were ventured upon, under what appeared to be a popular demand, and a public necessity; trusting then, as now, that Congress would readily ratify them." Message of July, 1861, in 37 Congress, 1 session, *Senate Executive Documents*, no. 1, p. 9 (serial 1112). Congress later confirmed Lincoln in what he had done, but with manifest reluctance. *Statutes at Large*, 12:326; *Congressional Globe*, 37 Congress, 1 session, p. 392.

¹⁵ Printed in full in *Rebellion Records*, serial 122, pp. 151-154, and in the *Pioneer and Democrat*, May 18, 1861. In the call for state militia the president had been under the necessity of accepting state appointments for general as well as regimental officers. These could be assigned only

endured, with slight variations, throughout the war. Pressure of business in the office of the secretary of war had thrown to the treasury department the task of drawing up the system of organization, and the imprint upon it of Secretary Chase, a former Democrat of states' rights proclivities, can be plainly discerned. Under his direction an informal committee of three army officers worked out the details. The most important result of their deliberations was the decision to take every advantage of state coöperation. A plan for a distinctly national army, using the congressional districts as the unit for recruitment, was rejected. Instead, the governors were given authority to commission officers up to and including the grade of colonel, regiments were to be raised by, and to bear the name of, their respective states, and only the appointment of the general officers and the disposal of the troops, once they were mustered into service, were left to the president. As one writer puts it: "The Government sought to save the Union by fighting as a Confederacy."¹⁶

to the more populous states, and obviously under such a system many difficulties were sure to arise. The necessity of federal appointment of the higher officers was not open to question. In the new army each division, under the command of a major general, was to consist of about fourteen thousand men organized into three or more brigades. Four regiments ordinarily made a brigade, and ten companies a regiment. The companies had, besides nineteen officers, a minimum of sixty-four and a maximum of eighty-two privates. Brigades and divisions were not necessarily composed of men from the same state and in practice were formed of almost as diverse elements as the "rainbow" divisions of the national guard with which we are now familiar.

¹⁶ Emory Upton, *The Military Policy of the United States*, 233-235, 275 (Washington, 1912). General Upton goes on to show that the methods of North and South in conducting the war were diametrically opposed. The North made use of state initiative, the South sought to overthrow the national government by fighting as a nation. "The Government recognized the States, appealed to them for troops, adhered to voluntary enlistments, gave the governors power to appoint all commissioned officers and encouraged them to organize new regiments. The Confederates abandoned State sovereignty, appealed directly to the people, took away from them [the governors] the power to appoint commissioned officers, vested their appointment in the Confederate President, refused to organize war regiments, abandoned voluntary enlistments, and adopting the republican

There was as little delay as possible about putting the new system into operation. Some of the three months troops were already in active service and were allowed to finish out the term for which they had enlisted. But, whenever possible, the state militia in the national service was reorganized in conformity with General Orders number 15. In Minnesota this could be accomplished without difficulty. The secretary of war sent word that all men who were willing should be reënlisted for three years, and that all others should be mustered out. In conformity with these orders, about three hundred and fifty men who refused to enlist for the lengthened term were promptly discharged, and recruits were sought to fill the ranks. Within three weeks after the president's second call, the regiment was again at maximum strength.¹⁷

In no part of the country did the lengthened term of service noticeably reduce the enlistment fever. Possibly in defiance of the Constitution, certainly without authority of law, and frequently over the orders of the war department, dozens of regiments literally forced their way into the federal service. Before Congress could assemble on the fourth of July to ratify what had been done, the army of the United States had swollen to a total of 310,000 men. The defeat at Bull Run on the twenty-first of July added further impetus to the work. Next day Congress authorized an army of 500,000 men to be

principle that every citizen owes his country military service, called into the army every white man between the ages of 18 and 35."

¹⁷ Adjutant General, *Reports*, 1862, p. 83; *Rebellion Records*, serial 122, p. 161; *St. Paul Press*, May 11, 14, 1861; *Press and Democrat*, May 12, 15, 1861. The three months' troops of some of the states could not be induced to reënlist. On May 28, 1861, the six regiments which Illinois had put into the field were given an opportunity by presidential proclamation to enter the three years' service. No regiment was to be received in which more than one-fifth of the men declined to volunteer. In case of regiments received, the men who had not volunteered were to be mustered out at once. Regiments which declined to offer themselves for the longer term were to remain in service until the three months for which they had enlisted should expire. Not one of the Illinois regiments reënlisted under the terms offered. *Weekly Illinois State Journal* (Springfield), June 5, 1861.

organized in accordance with the principles laid down by the war department, and Lincoln, thus legally fortified, called for 300,000 more volunteers. By the end of the year the federal army numbered 687,000 men.¹⁸

In the raising of this great army Minnesota played an entirely creditable part. Before the end of the year, the aggregate of troops furnished by the state, as given by the adjutant general, was 4,400, a number greater than the entire population of Minnesota in 1850, and more than equal to the quota assigned. It must not be forgotten that all this took place with the minimum of assistance from the central government. For months the only direct representative of the United States in Minnesota associated with the raising of the army was the mustering officer, a captain of the regular army, who formally accepted the troops when the state had them ready. No responsibility which the state could assume was taken by the general government. This division of labor was fortunate. Without the energetic and effective intervention of the states, it is difficult to see how the war could have been won.¹⁹

Many governors, finding themselves overwhelmed with difficulties, called their legislatures into special session and unloaded upon them a part of the work. Such, for example, was the course which Governor Yates of Illinois adopted with excellent results. The Illinois legislature left nothing undone

¹⁸ Reports of the secretary of war, July and December, 1861, in 37 Congress, 1 session, *Senate Executive Documents*, no. 1, p. 21 (serial 1112), and 37 Congress, 2 session, *Senate Executive Documents*, no. 1, p. 3 (serial 1118); Rhodes, *United States*, 3: 360; Ida M. Tarbell, *Abraham Lincoln*, 2: 42 (New York, 1900).

¹⁹ Governor's message, January, 1862, in *Executive Documents*, 1861, p. 27; Adjutant General, *Reports*, 1862, p. 86. See also correspondence of Minnesota state officials and the war department in *Rebellion Records*, serial 122, pp. 467-469, 528, 533, 569, 587, 592, 593, 604, 727. Not every state raised the required number of troops so promptly as Minnesota. The *St. Paul Press* pointed out, November 27, 1861, that Ohio with a quota of 61,000 men had raised not more than 45,000, and that New Jersey with a quota of 17,420 men had only 9,000 under arms. Few states could equal the record of Illinois, which by the end of November had raised 46,000 men, when her quota was only 44,400.

to place the state on a warlike footing. Ten regiments, one from each congressional district, and one additional, were authorized, to be held in reserve pending a presidential call. As soon as raised, these troops were sent to camps fitted out at state expense and were paid the same wages as soldiers accepted by the federal government. To cover the cost of this proposition an appropriation of a million dollars was made; half a million more was to be used for the purchase of arms and to build a powder magazine, and another two millions was set aside for general purposes of state defence and national aid.²⁰

That the coöperation of the Minnesota legislature was not immediately sought by the governor was due mainly to the poverty of the new state. While in Washington, Governor Ramsey explained to the secretary of war that Minnesota finances were in a somewhat critical condition and asked that the general government furnish the necessary clothing, arms, and equipment. This proposition was readily agreed to. Inasmuch as it was proposed in any event to reimburse the states out of the federal treasury for their war expenditures, the assistance which the Minnesota legislature might have given would have been only in the nature of a temporary loan. Moreover, the older states had full treasuries and abundant credit and could afford to advance the funds necessary to put their troops in the field. "But it would have been folly," the Governor explained, "for a State like ours, with a barren treasury, to have emulated the example of New York or Pennsylvania. If the Legislature had been convoked in extra session for this purpose, the required sum could only have been raised by the issue of bonds or treasury warrants, at a great sacrifice; and, without resulting in any substantial benefit to the Government, would have entailed a large addition to our own embarrassment."²¹

²⁰ Illinois, *Session Laws*, special session, 1861, pp. 10-30; *Pioneer and Democrat*, May 7, 1861.

²¹ Governor's message, January, 1862, in *Executive Documents*, 1861, p. 26; also printed in the *Pioneer and Democrat*, January 10, 1862. The

While Minnesota thus sought to rely more upon national assistance than some of the other states, it does not follow that the expected aid was immediately forthcoming. The adjutant general and other interested officials were often at their wit's ends to know what course to pursue. Individual initiative, coupled with a spirit of patriotic coöperation, made possible what often appeared to be hopeless tasks.

The mere raising of men was no easy matter. June 12, 1861, the federal government announced that a second regiment would be accepted. Five companies were mustered in within a week, but the rest were obtained only slowly. Along the frontier were three forts, Ridgley, Ripley, and Abercrombie, where small garrisons were always kept to insure the safety of the outlying settlements in case of Indian uprisings. In the first days of the war the regular troops which had been stationed at these posts were recalled, and Minnesota volunteers were ordered to take their places, a most unwelcome task. It became the custom to make each new regiment serve an apprenticeship of this sort. Before the battle of Bull Run the North looked forward to speedy victory, and it therefore seemed at this time that enlistment for residents of Minnesota meant only garrison duty. If the regiment were ordered to the seat of war, one paper declared, it would be filled within twenty-four hours, but men were loath to spend their summer at the forts. The fact that the harvest season was at hand also slowed down enlistments, while the complaints of poor equipment and mistreatment on the part of members of the First Minnesota, who were getting their first taste of real soldiering, may have been a further deterrent. The battle of Bull Run brought an urgent request for the filling of the regiment, but not until the harvest and heavy working season was over did the recruiting become brisk enough to bring the

course of the governor in avoiding an extra session is defended in the *St. Paul Press*, June 28, 1861. It is vigorously assailed in the *Pioneer and Democrat*, June 18, 22, 1861.

Second Regiment to maximum strength. In October it was ordered to the front.²²

The calls now came thick and fast. Two more regiments were apportioned to Minnesota by a dispatch of the secretary of war to the governor, dated September 17. A fifth regiment was authorized December 5, and at various times one company of sharpshooters, one battery of artillery, and three companies of light cavalry were accepted.²³

Two steps were necessary whenever it was decided to enlarge the number of volunteers. In the first place, the president was required to issue a proclamation stating the number of troops desired and the states from which they were to be furnished. In any such requisition he was expected to take into consideration the number of men previously furnished by each state, as well as "the exigencies of the service at the time," and to equalize so far as practicable the quotas assigned. The second step in the process was for the governor to publish the president's call, asking for volunteers from the state at large. No effort was made, as a rule, to equalize the quotas among the various counties or sections within the state, but those first offering themselves were first accepted, and so on,

²² Adjutant General, *Reports*, 1862, pp. 84, 238; *Minnesota State News* (Minneapolis), July 13, 1861; *St. Paul Press*, July 16, August 8, 1861. When several companies of the First Minnesota were ordered to the frontier resolutions were addressed to the governor stating that the regiment was tendered for immediate service "to vindicate the laws, retake the forts and property of . . . the Government . . . and to permanently establish the Union of the States." Home Guards, it was contended, should have been organized to protect the frontier. Nevertheless, orders had to be obeyed, and several companies headed toward the forts. They were almost immediately recalled, however, and it is to be doubted if any regiment from the state saw more strenuous service than did the First Minnesota. *Pioneer and Democrat*, May 9, 1861. The efforts of the governor to secure the acceptance of the First Minnesota for service at the front appear in *Rebellion Records*, serial 122, pp. 229, 268, 270, 272.

²³ Adjutant General, *Reports*, 1862, pp. 84, 248; *St. Paul Press*, September 19, 1861. A full statement of troops furnished down to that date is given in a dispatch to the secretary of war dated January 17, 1862, in *Rebellion Records*, serial 122, p. 802.

until the required number was obtained. It can readily be seen that the success of this system depended wholly upon the popular response. The president might have called upon the governors in vain for troops had not the people of each state rallied to the support of their respective executives.²⁴

In Minnesota, as elsewhere, whenever a call for troops was received, a proclamation was issued by the governor through the office of the adjutant general, setting forth exactly what was expected of the state. Although this proclamation was important news, to insure its prompt and full publication, Minnesota newspapers were generally authorized to give it two insertions at state expense. Following the call, it was expected that public meetings would be held in each locality to stimulate enlistments and, if possible, to start a muster roll. Although there was occasional talk of the need of more systematic effort to encourage enlistment, patriotic individuals sufficient to see that this work was done were rarely lacking. Neither in state nor nation did America possess a bureaucracy upon which such extraordinary labor could be thrust, hence, volunteers for recruiting service were as essential as volunteers to fill the ranks themselves. This was especially true in view of the fact that no one looked for the men to offer their services directly to the state. They were first expected to organize themselves into companies, and only with this larger unit did the state have time to deal. Obviously such a policy would never have worked without adequate voluntary leadership.²⁵

It was essential, then, that prominent individuals in each locality should shoulder the task of raising companies, or parts

²⁴ *Statutes at Large*, 12:268. The adjutant general of Iowa saw no reason why the counties should not be compelled to fill their quotas and went so far as to propose a state draft to fill the national quotas. The boards of supervisors of the various counties according to this plan were to report the names and residences of all able-bodied men liable to military duty, and from these lists deficiencies were to be made up. Iowa, Adjutant General, *Reports*, 1861, p. 8; *St. Paul Press*, September 28, 1861.

²⁵ *St. Paul Press*, September 19, 25, 1861; Comte de Paris, *Civil War*, 1:173.

of companies. Generally such an individual could feel certain that he would be rewarded by a commission, and thus ambition was added to the incentive of patriotism. There was considerable complaint about the "tricks, palaver and 'soft soap' of the political candidate." One outraged recruit declared that "the misrepresentations, lies and impositions that were practiced by some of those who were working for recruits, in order that they might become officers in some of the companies, would cause Ananias, the patron saint of liars, to blush for shame. 'Enlist in my company and I will make you orderly sergeant or sergeant or corporal, musician or company clerk!'" The worst of it was that the offices were limited in number, while the promises frequently were not. Officers sometimes entered upon their duties with small reputation for truth and veracity. "But they seemed to care nothing for that. They had got in; donned their shoulder straps, 'old cheese knives,' and were ready to be respected and obeyed accordingly."²⁶ This, however, is only one side of the story. The prospective officers assumed grave responsibilities. Frequently they had to bear the cost of elaborate advertising, of transportation, and even of subsistence, pending the acceptance of their men. They must abandon their business and devote themselves unreservedly to the task of recruiting. If their companies were not immediately accepted, they must nevertheless maintain the organization and do what they could to perfect the drill. But for the efforts of the individuals who became company officers, Minnesota, at least, could never have filled her quotas.²⁷

²⁶ Alonzo L. Brown, *History of the Fourth Regiment of Minnesota Infantry Volunteers during the Great Rebellion, 1861-1865*, 21 (St. Paul, 1892).

²⁷ Adjutant General, *Reports*, 1862, p. 233; *St. Paul Press*, September 22, 1861. In the more populous states men of sufficient means and influence undertook the raising of whole regiments and even brigades. The governors would frequently promise to any so disposed the command of the troops they raised. Sometimes, also, in the early months of the war, such regiments were accepted directly by the federal government, but this led to such confusion in the assignment of quotas and commissions

The opportunity to enlist along with his acquaintances in a company raised almost entirely in his own town and officered by his friends appealed strongly to the average recruit. How great a difference this made in the number of volunteers, may be estimated by a comparison with the number of recruits obtained for the regular army. Only about forty thousand men were to be raised for the regular service in the whole country, but by the end of 1861 that number had not been reached by fully one-half. During the same time more than six hundred thousand men entered the volunteer army. Recruiting officers for the regular army were maintained both in St. Paul and in Minneapolis, but almost the only mention they received concerned their lack of success. While other considerations undoubtedly contributed to the unpopularity of the regular army, the chief reason for its failure to fill its ranks was that it offered no opportunity for men who knew each other to enlist together.²⁸

Among the colleges of the North the appeal of enlistment by groups had the same effect in 1861 as it has had to-day. The organization of numerous hospital and ambulance units from the ranks of college students, which we have witnessed during the last few months, has met with such extraordinary success, not because college men are predisposed towards any such service, but because there is no other way in which they can keep their group identity. Had the orders come for enlistment by companies in infantry, or artillery, or cavalry, or marine corps, or naval reserves, the response would have been the same. In 1861, Hamline University, then located at Red Wing, Minnesota, was the most pretentious institution of

that the practice was speedily discontinued. Colonel D. A. Robertson, in command of the Twenty-third Regiment of Minnesota Militia, made strenuous efforts to raise a complete regiment in Minnesota. *St. Paul Press*, May 5, 10, 18, June 12, 1861; *Pioneer and Democrat*, June 14, 1861; *Rebellion Records*, serial 122, p. 200.

²⁸ Report of the secretary of war, December, 1861, in 37 Congress, 2 session, *Senate Executive Documents*, no. 1, pp. 4, 10 (serial 1118); *St. Paul Press*, November 26, December 10, 1861. See also Upton, *Military Policy*, 235-238, and Comte de Paris, *Civil War*, 1:288.

higher learning in the state. It furnished one-fifth of Goodhue County's first company. In 1862; Professor H. B. Wilson, together with a full company of Hamline students, enlisted in the Sixth Minnesota. Three successive senior classes were broken up by enlistments, and during the war the institution sent a total of 119 of its students to the front—practically every available man.²⁹ The record of this Minnesota college is typical of the colleges throughout the North.

Citizens of foreign birth, especially the Germans and Irish, ordinarily formed themselves into separate companies. The resolutions of some of the German mass meetings make even more interesting reading to-day than they did in 1861. One enthusiastic St. Paul gathering on the evening of April 22 declared that :

Whereas, an aristocratic party has by revolutionary means, usurped the government of some of the slaveholding states, and taken forcible possession of the United States property, and threatens not only to put an end to the rights of freemen, which are guaranteed to all citizens by the Constitution, but also to open a new home to the dying out despotisms of Europe on the free soil of North America, it is,

Resolved, That the Germanborn citizens of St. Paul, will, till our last breath, remain true to our oaths, and will support the Constitution of the United States.

Measures taken at this meeting resulted in the speedy organ-

²⁹ William C. Rice, "Hamline Always Loyal," in *Hamline University, Alumni Quarterly*, vol. 14:7 (October, 1917). Divinity students did not then plead exemption, for many of the Hamline men were candidates for the Methodist ministry. "The Red Wing company," says the *Pioneer and Democrat* of May 23, 1861, "are models in some respects. About half of them are tetotalers, and the same proportion members of churches. They hold a prayer meeting in their quarters every evening." After the battle of Bull Run in which the First Minnesota stood and fought, while many other regiments ran away, and during which four Hamline students, among others, were killed or captured, the *St. Paul Press* gave space to the following: "The boys from Hamline University will be remembered for their soldierly bearing, their prayer meetings at Fort Snelling, their bravery on the field of battle, and their terrible loss in the first conflict." *St. Paul Press*, August 7, 1861. See also the issue of December 19, 1861.

ization of a German military company. Nor is this the only instance of the kind on record. Similar companies were formed throughout the state. The military training which most of the Germans had received before coming to America made their services particularly desirable. A company of veteran Germans constituted the first cavalry offered by Minnesota for the war.³⁰

Although the organization of an Irish company was projected in St. Paul within a few days after the fall of Sumter, it must be admitted that, as a whole, the Irish volunteered less readily than the Germans. Towards the end of the year steps were taken to remedy this situation. In December, 1861, in response to the desires of Irish citizens, the Fifth Minnesota regiment was authorized. Volunteers for this regiment were not confined to any one nationality, but it was understood that the Irish had the right of way. "Irish fellow countrymen to arms!" ran one advertisement, "Now is the time to stand by the Stars and Stripes, and help to preserve the Union! Every loyal State has sent forth an Irish regiment: shall Minnesota be an only exception?" By the spring of 1862, the regiment, unmistakably Irish in flavor, was ready for service.³¹

³⁰ *Pioneer and Democrat*, April 24, 1861; Adjutant General, *Reports*, 1862, p. 240; *Rebellion Records*, serial 122, pp. 394, 457, 461; *St. Paul Press*, September 29, 1861; *Minnesota in the Civil and Indian Wars*, 1: 572-584.

³¹ Adjutant General, *Reports*, 1862, p. 248; *Pioneer and Democrat*, April 26, 27, 1861; *St. Paul Press*, December 6, 24, 1861. One of the reasons advanced for the organization of an all-Irish regiment was the reasonable expectation that a chaplain of the Roman Catholic faith would be appointed. The law of Congress of July 22, 1861, provided that "there shall be allowed to each regiment one chaplain, who shall be appointed by the regimental commander on the vote of the field officers and company commanders on duty with the regiment at the time the appointment shall be made." *Statutes at Large*, 12: 270. It was always customary in Minnesota to take into consideration the wishes of the majority of the men in the appointment of this officer. John Ireland, now Archbishop Ireland, served as chaplain of the Fifth Minnesota from June, 1862, to April, 1863.

The assertion occasionally made nowadays that the United States relied mainly upon foreign born citizens and foreigners for its armies in the Civil War is entirely without foundation in fact. The Comte de Paris,

The methods used in raising troops in 1861 were not without serious defects. Among these was the inability, soon manifest, to fill depleted ranks. It was relatively easy to raise a new company. It was all but impossible to secure recruits for old ones of diminished strength. Offices, which were generally the price paid for the work of recruiting new troops, were not at the disposal of the unfortunate soldier who was detailed to raise his regiment to full strength. Moreover, the enthusiasm of enlistment *en masse* was lost, and volunteers could not even be certain as to the company to which they would be assigned. The unfortunate part of this situation lay in the fact that the assistance of experienced troops could rarely be utilized in the training of raw recruits. New regiments had to be formed, officered, and drilled, when the old regiments had more than enough officers for their own requirements and could easily have absorbed a large number of untrained men. It was a process wasteful alike of time and of men, but it was the only way to obtain troops until the application of the draft made the consultation of individual preferences less essential. Towards the end of the war, the formation of new regiments was frowned upon, and General Grant took the liberty of consolidating the fragments of decimated regiments whenever he chose.³²

a competent and unprejudiced foreign observer, gives elaborate statistics to show the falsity of such a line of reasoning. "The foreign element," he declares, "was not proportionately represented in the composition of the national army. The soldiers born on American soil were more numerous than if the army had been recruited by a draft bearing equally upon all the Citizens of the Union." Comte de Paris, *Civil War*, 1:180.

³² The unsuccessful efforts to keep the First Minnesota at full strength after the battle of Bull Run may be traced through the daily papers. *St. Paul Press*, August 14, September 7, December 1, 1861. It was probably due to the extraordinary record of the First Regiment, and it was entirely exceptional, that as many as one hundred and fifty recruits could be sent forward to it by August 30. *Rebellion Records*, serial 122, p. 467. In Illinois, only three hundred and fifty-one men were obtained for similar service during a like period. Illinois, Adjutant General, *Reports*, 1:16 (revised edition). To December, 1862, when the war was nearly half over, the total number of recruits to old regiments had reached only

Another difficulty arose from the attempts frequently made to recruit troops to be credited to one state from the residents of another. This resulted in no end of charges and counter charges, all tending to show that this state or that had been defrauded of the credit due it for raising volunteers and was being compelled to furnish more troops than its fair share. Wisconsin persistently charged Minnesota recruiting officers with entering her territory, and Minnesota as persistently retorted that Wisconsin had been "poaching" on her. One whole company of artillery from Minnesota, it was claimed, had enlisted in a Wisconsin regiment, while Houston County, one of the oldest in the state, had furnished so many troops to Wisconsin that during the whole first year of the war it was unable to raise so much as a company for Minnesota. Many of the states forbade this recruiting of troops within their borders to be credited elsewhere, but to the end of year Minnesota had taken no such action.³³

The officers which the system produced were not always well fitted for their duties, potentially or otherwise, but under the circumstances a different method of selecting them would hardly have been feasible. No one thought of such a thing as a reserve officer's training camp, and there were only a few who worried because the officers were burdened with about the same amount of ignorance of military affairs as were the men given them to command. The regulations provided that the governors of the states furnishing volunteers should commission the requisite field, staff, and company officers. In the selection of the company officers, however, the governor rarely had anything to say. The man who had been chiefly interested in the raising of a company was rewarded with its command as a matter of course. Usually he was elected to that office by his men long before his commission could be granted. The

49,990. Report of the secretary of war, December, 1862, in 37 Congress, 3 session, *House Executive Documents*, no. 1, p. 10 (serial 1159). See also Comte de Paris, *Civil War*, 1:274.

³³ Adjutant General, *Reports*, 1862, p. 86; *St. Paul Press*, 23, 25, 1861; *La Crescent Plain Dealer* (Houston County), August 6, 1861.

first and second lieutenants were similarly chosen, although there was often some rivalry for these posts. In Minnesota, during the early months of the war, the practice was adopted of commissioning the officers thus chosen only as the company was filled. A company part full was given a second lieutenant. When more recruits were obtained, a first lieutenant was commissioned, and finally, when minimum strength had been reached, the captain was formally inducted into office. Probably it was hoped that this withholding of commissions would stimulate prospective officers to greater recruiting activity. Non-commissioned officers were appointed by the captains of each company, and were often promised far in advance. One captain in the Fourth Regiment, however, waited until his men had become acquainted, and then with true American democracy allowed them to elect the "non-coms" by ballot.³⁴

Ordinarily, regimental officers were not appointed until each of the companies had recruited to minimum strength. The governor had considerable freedom in the selection of the colonel, lieutenant colonel, and majors for a regiment, and it was fortunate that he did. Since the captains and lesser officers frequently possessed no military experience whatever, it was necessary to have at least one man to a regiment who knew something about his business. At first every effort was made to secure officers of the regular army for the higher commands, but the decision of the war department to continue the organization of that branch of the service made this course all but impossible. Although military critics are disposed to think that it would have been wise to have broken up the regular army, distributing its experienced men among the states to assist in the training of volunteers, the release of army officers for this duty was generally preëemptorily refused. In making their appointments, governors were compelled to fall back upon veterans of the Mexican War, ex-army officers, foreign born citizens who had had military training, and even

³⁴ Adjutant General, *Reports*, 1862, p. 245; *St. Paul Press*, October 24, November 6, 1861; Brown, *History of the Fourth Regiment*, 40.

militia officers. As the war progressed, minor officers who had seen service at the front could be recalled to take higher positions in new regiments.

Military experience was by no means the only factor to be considered in the making of appointments. The activity of individuals in raising men was frequently rewarded. If a captain had shown himself particularly competent in recruiting his company to full strength, he might wisely be considered in line for promotion, for upon the regimental officers devolved part of the duty of raising a regiment to the maximum after their commissions had been assigned. Political considerations, likewise, could not be ignored. The appointments must be balanced fairly evenly between Republicans and Democrats. They must give representation to every section of the state. They must not ignore popular leaders. In short, they must be made with a view to securing the widest possible support of the war.³⁵

Because among army officers thus chosen a few must be found who could never approximate success, Congress wisely provided that a military commission, appointed by the general commanding a separate department or a detached army, might examine into the qualifications of subordinate commissioned officers, and if incompetency were proved, might vacate their commissions. This rule was not rigorously applied, but it proved of considerable service when used as a threat. A man who knew his shortcomings either took steps to remedy them or resigned. Summary removal, when actually resorted to, might or might not improve the situation. New selections could be made only by state authority, and as often as otherwise they were no better than the original.³⁶

³⁵ Adjutant General, *Reports*, 1862, p. 251; *St. Paul Press*, November 14, 1861. In the larger states, where individuals often undertook the raising of whole regiments, the governor was under the same obligation to appoint the man who raised the regiment to be its colonel as he was to commission the man who had raised a company to be its captain. Comte de Paris, *Civil War*, 1:186.

³⁶ *Statutes at Large*, 12:270, 318; *General Orders affecting the Vol-*

The method which obtained in making promotions was equally unsatisfactory.³⁷ The federal government should have been authorized to apply a uniform rule, but this the states were unwilling to permit. Each state made promotions as it chose. Instructions issued by the adjutant general in November, 1861, explained the principles which governed in the advancement of Minnesota officers. Promotions to field offices were made regimentally; to line offices, by companies. Each regiment and each company was for this purpose considered a separate military organization, and no promotions were made from one regiment to another, or from one company to another. This practice varied widely from the seniority rule in force in the regular army, but state officials contended, not without plausibility, that there was a vast difference between the regular and the volunteer service. In the regular service men from all sections of the country were thrown together to form a company, and, enlisting as privates, they had little hope of promotion. Volunteers, on the other hand, came by companies from the same county or town, and the officers were often no better trained than the men. Since the regular army was officered chiefly from West Point, promotions in that branch of the service strictly by seniority could work no hardship. In the volunteer forces, however, it would mean the transfer of many officers from the company or regiment which they had assisted in raising, and which had elected them to their posts. It would mean, too, that privates, in many cases as well qualified for commanding positions as the officers themselves, would have no chance for speedy

unteer Force, 1861, p. 16; *Revised Regulations for the Army of the United States*, 1861, p. 521; Comte de Paris, *Civil War*, 1: 188, 269. In authorizing the raising of new units, the war department repeatedly reserved to itself the right to revoke the commissions of all officers found incompetent, but this seems likewise to have been more in the nature of a threat than a practice. *Rebellion Records*, serial 122, pp. 587, 607.

³⁷ The original plan for the filling of vacancies allowed the men to select the new officers, but Congress was soon convinced that this was impracticable and authorized the governors to make such appointments. *Statutes at Large*, 12: 270, 318.

promotion. Moreover, to the civilian there appeared to be "little justice in the rule, that, when a company by extraordinary exposure and valor on the field of battle should lose one, two or three of its officers, would supply their places from another company less exposed."³⁸

General officers for the volunteer army were appointed by the president, by and with the advice and consent of the senate. Lincoln showed a strong disposition to choose men from the regular army for these responsible positions, and Congress made full provision for this contingency. Officers temporarily taken from the regular army to serve in higher positions as commanders of volunteers were permitted to retain their original rank in the regular army.³⁹ This had some curious results. When Major General Hancock was in command of the Second Corps of the Army of the Potomac, in the regular army he was only a quartermaster with the rank of captain. At the time of the battle of Gettysburg, Meade as a regular was still a captain of engineers. Sheridan remained a captain of infantry in the regular army until close to the end of the war. By no means all of the higher officers were chosen from men of military education. Many appointments were made obviously for political or personal reasons. Some of these appointments discovered men of real military talent, but others terminated far less happily. On the whole, one may say that the effective military leadership in the Civil War was furnished by men who had had some previous training in the regular army.⁴⁰

³⁸ Adjutant General, *Reports*, 1862, p. 252.

³⁹ *Statutes at Large*, 12: 269, 281; *Revised Army Regulations*, 1861, p. 520.

⁴⁰ Bad appointments to high positions were hard to remedy, and from the first considerable criticism followed the elevation of each politician to high place in the army. "The military policy which subjects volunteers, surgeons, black-smiths and even mules and cavalry horses to rigid examination, should, in our judgment, put general commanding officers through the same course of sprouts. A brigadier general, however, needs no examination. If a coward, his commission makes him brave—if a dolt, it makes him brilliant, if ignorant it makes him learned, if deficient in all

As has been aptly said, an ordinary assemblage of men resembles "a statue of clay, unable to move without breaking."⁴¹ Drill is required if any such mob is to be transformed into an army. This process would have been simplified greatly had there been an adequate number of trained instructors, but such, unfortunately, was not the case. Officers and men learned together. Usually, as already intimated, there was at least one officer to each regiment who knew something of military tactics, and, regardless of his rank, he assumed the actual direction of affairs. Also, among the recruits there were numbers of men who had had some military experience. Some of them had served formerly in European armies. Others had belonged to one of the fancy militia companies so popular in the Fifties. Still others had gained knowledge, not to be despised in such an emergency, as members of the "Wide-Awakes" and "Little Giants."

Training was usually begun by a company the day it was organized. In Minnesota, newly formed companies were generally ordered to report at once at Fort Snelling, or to one of the frontier posts. Here they had to remain until maximum, or at least minimum, strength had been reached, and during this time there was nothing to do but drill. Minnesota troops were relatively well prepared when their time came to go to the front. The long distance to the scene of activities, coupled with the necessity of garrisoning the frontier forts, delayed some regiments weeks, and even months, in their departure. Thus, an opportunity for military training was given, which, if unappreciated, was none the less useful. Reports of the rigors of military drill by the men afflicted are hardly to be taken at face value. Still, the training must have been fairly strenuous. The First Regiment began on a schedule something military knowledge, he at once becomes the repository of all the learning of Scott, and all the aptness to command, which made Bonaparte famous. . . . It is the commission that works this transformation—this miracle." *Illinois State Journal*, July 3, 1861.

⁴¹ Comte de Paris, *Civil War*, 1:272.

like this: "Morning gun was fired at 5½ o'clock. Drill for an hour. Breakfast. Recreation for half an hour. Drill for five hours. Dinner. Recreation. Drill again until five o'clock, when the boys were again 'let out to play.' Such was the day's routine." In the evening the colonel assembled the officers for further instruction.⁴²

The major portion of the training of the troops took place beyond the borders of the state. After the lesson of Bull Run, the necessity of further instruction was fully realized. In the East, and to a less degree in the West as well, the armies in the field became vast training camps. "In the conflicts of 1861," says Major General Wood, "both officers and men were untrained for the duties demanded of them. . . . By 1862 effective regiments, brigades, and divisions had come into being, but the conduct and leading of higher units as a rule was still imperfect. It was not until 1863 that the armies confronted each other as complete and effective military teams."⁴³

The equipment of the national army taxed the resources of both state and nation to the limit. It was here that the lack of preparedness was most embarrassing. The scarcity of arms was startling. Volunteers came in swarms, camps could be improvised, and uniforms might be dispensed with, but no fighting could be done without weapons. The arsenals of the United States were neither numerous nor well-stocked, and many of them fell to the South.⁴⁴ The best infantry arm available was manufactured by the government at the Springfield arsenal, but prior to the war not more than eight hundred of these rifles had been produced in any one month; and the arms which the United States had furnished to the state militia

⁴² *St. Paul Press*, May 2, 5, 1861.

⁴³ Major General Leonard Wood, *Facts of Interest Concerning the Military Resources and Policy of the United States*, 9 (pamphlet—Washington, 1914).

⁴⁴ The relative strength of the North and South in the *matériel* of war is discussed in Rhodes, *United States*, 3:239-241, 397-410; Comte de Paris, *Civil War*, 1:292-316.

all too frequently were lost or useless. In this respect, however, Minnesota seems to have been rather better off than most of the states. Arms of various sorts to the extent of over seventeen hundred stand had been received from the federal government since 1852; but many of them were out of repair, many were of obsolete design, and many others, scattered among the defunct militia companies of the state, could be collected only with difficulty. Nevertheless, the state was able to arm its first regiment in full and to have guns of an inferior quality left over for the companies forming. Afterwards the federal government made an effort to furnish the arms for each Minnesota regiment well before the time set for its departure from the state.⁴⁵

The immediate need for arms led the federal government, not only to make reckless purchases at home, but also to send a special agent to Europe with two million dollars for use in buying all the weapons he could find. The war department also authorized the several states, as well as generals in

⁴⁵ Report of the secretary of war, December, 1861, in 37 Congress, 2 session, *Senate Executive Documents*, no. 1, p. 7 (serial 1118); Adjutant General, *Reports*, 1861, p. 8; 1862, p. 235; *St. Paul Daily Press*, May 9, December 10, 1861. Referring to the condition of the Illinois militia, Governor Yates had this to say: "Under the present system all the arms issued to this state by the general government, representing a value of over \$300,000, have been lost beyond recovery, and we have not today in the state, two hundred serviceable muskets." Illinois, *Senate Journal*, 1861, p. 26. A local paper described the state of military preparedness in Chicago as follows: "The eight military companies who claim to have existence in Chicago . . . probably could not turn out more than a hundred men fully equipped . . . and for these there are less than half that number of efficient muskets. . . . Four brass six-pounders, and a mountain howitzer completes the present war-like equipment of a city of 100,000 inhabitants." *Chicago Tribune*, January 24, 1861. The rapidity with which the Minnesota troops were supplied with arms is shown by the fact that as early as the fifth of June, 1861, 880 stand of the "terrible Minie musket, that carries a heavy ball a full mile" had been received. *Pioneer and Democrat*, May 22, 1861; *St. Paul Press*, June 6, 1861. But the Third Minnesota, on the eve of its departure for Louisville, Kentucky, was still without arms or accoutrements. *Rebellion Records*, serial 122, p. 624.

command of divisions, to purchase arms for which the central government would pay. This policy was exceedingly short-sighted, for it led to ruinous competition among the agents of the states, the United States, and others authorized to buy. Prices advanced out of all reason. Arms of every description were purchased. American agents greedily bought up the old-fashioned and worn-out weapons of European states at a figure which allowed the latter to restock with the most modern inventions. Out of this chaos the government gradually evolved order. In 1861, the volunteer, if he had a weapon, was fortunate if it proved to be as dangerous to the enemy as to himself. In 1862, the Springfield factory was delivering nearly twenty thousand stand of arms a month, and privately produced muskets, somewhat standardized by the "survival of the fittest," supplied additional needs. By 1863, purchases of arms from Europe had ceased altogether.⁴⁶

It was no light task to supply with clothing this great army of mushroom growth. Fortunately, the recent invention of the sewing machine had laid the foundation for the modern ready-made clothing industry, and the factories took over much of the work which a little earlier could have been done only by hand. At the outset, individuals and localities frequently assumed the responsibility of meeting the needs of troops from their vicinity. Thus, the ladies of Winona sent

⁴⁶ Report of the secretary of war, December, 1861, in 37 Congress, 2 session, *Senate Executive Documents*, no. 1, p. 7 (serial 1118); Emerson D. Fite, *Social and Industrial Conditions in the North during the Civil War*, 97 (New York, 1910); Comte de Paris, *Civil War*, 1:298. Numerous documents relative to the activities of the government in the purchase of arms are printed in 37 Congress, 2 session, *House Executive Documents*, no. 67 (serial, 1131). Major Peter V. Hagner, an ordnance officer purchasing arms for the federal government in New York City, testified as follows before the Committee on the Conduct of the War: "The agents of General Frémont, of the governors of States, of cities, of Union Defense Committees, of colonels of regiments, and of generals of our army, are all here. I may be in treaty for arms, and the first thing I hear the arms are sold to some agent. Some men who hold arms, I sometimes think, are rather disposed not to have a *bona fide* sale. I think they have been gambling in arms just as they do in stocks." 37 Congress, 2 session,

to every man of their company at Fort Snelling "a beautiful gray fatigue uniform," and the ladies of Stillwater presented each member of the Stillwater company with a pair of "comfortable blankets." But the chief burden fell upon the state. When the First Regiment was called out, the adjutant general, in spite of the lack of money and authority, let contracts for blankets, socks, flannel shirts, trousers, and hats to a local clothing company. These articles were delivered as soon as possible, and although inferior in quality, they were accepted because no others could be procured without great delay. Also, several companies were equipped out of regular army supplies found at Fort Ridgley.⁴⁷

One result of this method of equipment was the assembling for the defence of the national capital of an army clad in the most variegated uniforms imaginable. Governor Ramsey,

House Reports, no. 2, p. 35 (serial 1142). In the month of June, 1861, Arthur M. Eastman of Manchester, New Hampshire, purchased of the ordnance bureau 5,400 Hall's carbines at \$3.50 each, and after a slight alteration of the arms, at a cost of from seventy-five cents to \$1.25 on each arm, sold 5,000 of them, for \$12.50 each, to Simon Stevens, who immediately sold the whole lot to General Frémont for \$22.00 each. 37 Congress, 2 session, *House Reports*, no. 2, p. 40 (serial 1142).

⁴⁷ *St. Paul Press*, April 30, May 2, 4, August 8, 1861. See also Fite, *Social and Industrial Conditions*, 88-90. There was continual misunderstanding as to what assistance might be expected from the federal government. In a communication dated September 14, 1861, Governor Ramsey complained bitterly of "the refusal or neglect of the authorities at Washington . . . to pay for either equipping or furnishing the First or Second Regiments of Minnesota Volunteers, though such payment was directly promised by the War Department." *Rebellion Records*, serial 122, p. 513. A different reaction comes from a member of the battalion of cavalry which was enlisted in Minnesota in September, 1861: "Being mustered into service, we were furnished with Uniforms, knapsacks, canteens, haversacks and blankets, which last were of the poorest quality and smallest size. These blankets were said to have been a gift from the State of Minnesota and were doubtless the best to be had at that time in the local market and of course were thankfully received by the men, but when later on these same blankets were found charged against the individual soldiers at the full price of the best the men did not feel so grateful." Eugene Marshall's narrative of his experiences in the Civil War, in the manuscript collections of the Minnesota Historical Society.

after one of his trips east, reported the street scenes of Washington: "Now it is a regiment of Zouaves, in Algerine costume; then the dapper gray style of the New York Seventh; next, perhaps, the Knickerbockers from New York, with breeches looking for all the world like the nether integuments described by Washington Irving; or some other unique style of dress and equipment." After the battle of Bull Run there was a strong demand for a national uniform. The Red Zouave uniforms attracted too much attention from the enemy. Others were so much like uniforms worn by the Confederates that friend could hardly be distinguished from foe. Often, too, the uniforms furnished by the states were of the trashiest materials. "A gentle wind," declared "Doesticks," an Ellsworth Zouave, "would blow a man's coat into rags in half a day; while if he ventured outdoors in a stiff breeze, his red breeches would tear into long red flags."⁴⁸

The difficulties which the First Minnesota experienced in securing proper equipment are a fair sample of the trials which all the early volunteers were compelled to endure. The state authorities did what they could to provide a temporary outfit, but assumed that once the troops were called into federal service the national government would do the rest. This assumption was in complete accord with the law, and with private advices received by the governor from the war department. Hence, the departure of the troops for the front in summer weather without coats and overcoats occasioned little concern.

As time went on, an increasing volume of complaint came home in the shape of letters from the soldiers, correspondence sent to the home papers, and even petitions to congressmen.

⁴⁸ *St. Paul Press*, August 2, September 13, 1861. Doubtless many of the uniforms were made of "shoddy," a substitute for cloth, "which consisted of rags of all colors and descriptions, cut into pulp and pressed back into cloth by a process similar to that used in making felt; such cloth had no resistance, it easily fell back again into rags and pulp, and the sunshine or rain was wont to bring out its true nature very quickly." Fite, *Social and Industrial Conditions*, 85.

The men declared that they were destitute. They abused their officers for failing to secure the needed supplies. They abused the state authorities for general negligence. Some of them were ready to desert. An attempt was made to remove at least one man from the ranks by means of a writ of *habeas corpus* on the alleged ground that he had not been sworn in for three years, but only for three months. Real privations must have been felt, but the opportunity for exaggeration was too good to be ignored. The state adjutant general was convinced that nobody really suffered, and a committee of Minneapolis citizens appointed to inquire into the situation criticized the authorities only mildly, if at all. The regimental quartermaster went so far as to say that the men were sometimes guilty of maliciously damaging their clothing in order to escape drill and dress parade, and to hasten government action by their sad appearance. Colonel Gorman was not greatly disturbed. "A few men," he admitted, "wore out their pants and tore them so as to render them unfit for duty. . . . This has occurred in all regiments and in all armies." But everyone who stayed at home conceded that "in these war-like times our soldiers, with all the inconveniences incident to their situation, have a right to growl a little."⁴⁹

That the men should have received new equipment long before it came was admitted on all sides. Still, no one was particularly to blame. Before the regiment left for the front, the state adjutant general had contracted with a New York firm for the delivery of coats and overcoats to the troops, presumably at state expense. Governor Ramsey arranged, however, that the United States should inspect these articles, and if they were found satisfactory, should pay for them. When the First Minnesota was ordered to the front, it was agreed that the goods should be sent to Harrisburg, Pennsyl-

⁴⁹ Adjutant General, *Reports*, 1862, p. 83; *Minnesota Conserver* (Hastings), July 25, 1861; *Minnesota State News* (Minneapolis), July 27, August 3, 1861; *St. Paul Press*, August 6, 8, 17, 31, September 1, 11, 1861; *Lake County Weekly Journal*, August 31, 1861; *History of the First Regiment*, p. 56.

vania, where the soldiers on their way east would find them. Unfortunately, the garments failed to pass inspection, and hence were not available at Harrisburg. The contractors were then ordered to make their shipments to Washington, and did so. But the military storekeeper who received the consignment had no knowledge that it was designed for any special body of troops and issued it to the first regiment asking for supplies. Remonstrances brought a fresh set of supplies, but no instructions to the military storekeeper, who made the mistake a second time. Finally, when the goods were addressed "For the First Minnesota," the regiment obtained them. Even after this there was much discontent, for many necessities were still lacking, but before winter set in the government was able to furnish reasonably good clothing for all. Subsequent installments of Minnesota troops were usually equipped directly by the federal government without the intervention of the state.⁵⁰

Dissatisfaction among the soldiers about the food they had to eat was no less inevitable than dissatisfaction about the clothes they had to wear. Most of the trouble about rations, however, came before the troops had left the state, for the United States subsistence department speedily developed a creditable efficiency. The simplest way for the state to provide for the feeding of the troops at Fort Snelling was to contract for the same with some local firm, and this was done. Whether because the contractors had difficulty in securing the necessary provisions, or because they desired to get rich quick, the rations for a few days were neither adequate nor appetizing. One company went to bed supperless rather than touch the food served it. Those who had visitors at meal time apologized, saying that the coffee would have been better "if beans hadn't been so plenty," that there would have been milk

⁵⁰ Adjutant General, *Reports*, 1862, p. 87; *St. Paul Press*, May 30, August 8, 1861. The condition of the regiment attracted much newspaper notice, but all the important documents are to be found in the issue of the *Press* for August 8. For general conditions see Comte de Paris, *Civil War*, 1:292.

in it "but the cow didn't come home," and that the "sugar would have been whiter, if it hadn't got mixed with 'our rich black soil.'" Protests to headquarters, coupled with a near "bread-riot," brought some reforms, but no abandonment of the system. As late as March, 1862, contractors, who boarded the soldiers at so much per day, still furnished the rations at Fort Snelling, and the soldiers divided their time "about evenly . . . between drill and cursing the cooks."⁵¹

Still another cause of discontent was the failure of the men to receive their pay at the time expected. The assistant paymasters who were charged with this duty were very frequently drawn from the regular army, and were accustomed to strict attention to form. Moreover, their operations were supervised directly by a separate branch of the service—the pay department—where there was little opportunity for the cutting of red tape so common elsewhere. The Minnesota troops expected to receive their pay on the first of July, but to their chagrin they found that the paymaster passed them by. The reason, once explained, was clear enough. Certain required formalities had been omitted. Officers were required to make a complete and perfect muster roll of their companies, showing when and where each man had enlisted. From this list only could the pay roll be made out. Blanks had been sent to the officers, but not all of them had made out the muster rolls, with the result that the men were delayed about three weeks in receiving their pay. Back in Minnesota a similar situation developed. The men who had enlisted for three months but had declined to serve for three years, were told that their pay would be given them October 15. When that date came, the proper official was on hand with the money, but he could find no data available for use in carrying out his instructions. Considerable time elapsed before proper identifications of the men and proof of their enlistment could be obtained.⁵²

⁵¹ *Pioneer and Democrat*, May 1, 1861; *St. Paul Press*, May 2, August 8, 1861; Brown, *History of the Fourth Regiment*, 23.

⁵² *St. Paul Press*, August 8, October 10, 1861.

United States soldiers, then as now, were the best paid soldiers in the world. The volunteer received thirteen dollars a month, a sum which to the European eye appeared "enormous." In addition, each man was promised a bounty of one hundred dollars, and a land warrant for one hundred and sixty acres of land, to be given him at the end of the war or at the end of his three year term of enlistment. This really generous treatment may have induced a considerable number to volunteer who might otherwise have hesitated. As the war progressed, the bounties offered by the national government were augmented greatly by state, county, and even municipal action.⁵³

From the first days of the war, great concern was manifest for the care of the families of the enlisted men. An act of Congress of July 16 authorized "allotment tickets" by which a volunteer might sign over a certain portion of his salary to be delivered regularly to his relatives or dependents. When this scheme was presented to one Minnesota company, nearly one-third of the men made allotments of from three to ten dollars each. Local activities went much further. A mass meeting held in St. Anthony on the twenty-second of April appointed a committee to see that the families of volunteers

⁵³ *Statutes at Large*, 10:701; 12:270, 326, 509; *Pioneer and Democrat*, May 18, 1861; *St. Paul Press*, August 13, 1861; *Northfield Telegraph*, October 2, 1861. Newspaper reports on the subject of bounties were apt to be very misleading. Unconfirmed rumors of what Congress intended to do were sometimes given the appearance of enacted laws. This may have been due to a desire to stimulate enlistments by making the terms appear as advantageous as possible. Local means of encouraging volunteering seem to have been resorted to from the very beginning. An Illinois law of 1861 authorized the corporate authorities of cities, towns, and counties to levy a five mill tax, and to appropriate such sums as were deemed expedient, "for the purpose of aiding in the formation and equipment of volunteer companies." Illinois, *Session Laws*, special session, 1861, 24. When finally the draft was invoked, localities bent every effort towards preventing its application to them. Volunteers sometimes received so much as a thousand dollars for enlisting, and a class of "bounty-jumpers" was developed, who enlisted for the money there was in it, and then deserted only to enlist again. See Carl R. Fish, "Conscription in the Civil War," in the *American Historical Review*, 21:100-103 (October, 1915).

were provided "with a decent and comfortable support in sickness and in health." Five Minneapolis physicians offered free medical attendance to the families of enlisted men. The city council of St. Paul proposed to guarantee to the dependents of those who went to war a reasonable allowance of support out of the city treasury, and the board of county commissioners appropriated outright one thousand dollars for this purpose. Subsequently there was considerable objection to the supporting of families of soldiers "in idleness and luxury." "One bill," a local paper complained, "was sent in for house rent at the rate of ten dollars per month. We hear another instance where the wife of a volunteer presented at a store an order from the chairman of the Relief Committee, and demanded the finest and most costly articles of shoes for herself and children that could be found in the establishment." But the general feeling, here as elsewhere, was that the state or municipality was under obligations to see that the dependents of soldiers should not suffer.⁵⁴

In many other ways the desire of those who stayed at home to "do their bit" soon made itself manifest. In every town the women organized themselves spontaneously into volunteer aid societies. They gave benefit concerts without number and used the proceeds to purchase towels, handkerchiefs, extra underwear, and the like, for the soldiers. They met afternoons

⁵⁴ *Statutes at Large*, 12: 271, 331; *Executive Documents*, 1862, p. 29; *Annual Cyclopaedia*, 1861, p. 27; *St. Paul Press*, April 25, August 8, October 3, 31, 1861; *Pioneer and Democrat*, April 28, 30, 1861. The adjutant general of Minnesota suggested that since many soldiers had left their property interests in an unsettled and insecure condition, it would be well for the legislature to provide by law for staying all proceedings against such persons or their property during the time of enlistment. This was done elsewhere, but not at once in Minnesota. Adjutant General, *Reports*, 1862, p. 90. See also interesting lists of subscriptions made in Wisconsin for the care of families of volunteers, given in William D. Love, *Wisconsin in the War of the Rebellion*, 128-136 (Chicago, 1866). An informing monograph on this subject is "Social Relief in the Northwest during the Civil War," by Carl R. Fish, in the *American Historical Review*, 22: 309-324 (January, 1917).

to prepare sundry-bags containing scissors, needles, thread, and buttons, with which the soldier might keep his garments in a good state of repair. They made with their own hands the flags which were to be carried in battle and presented them formally on days characterized by much oratory and parade and, not infrequently, by banqueting as well. They got the idea that "Havelocks," an indescribable attachment to the ordinary headgear, were an "absolutely necessary head covering for a soldier in a warm climate," and made hundreds of them on the eve of the departure of the First Regiment for the front. "Every gallant soldier of Minnesota," ran one report, "when marching under the scorching sun of Virginia, will bless the ladies of the Society for their timely and self-sacrificing care." The soldiers were decent enough later to write back that the "Havelocks" were "very good things to protect us from the sun," but the sad fact of the matter was that they became considerable of a laughing stock. As winter approached knitting became popular. Mittens were greatly in demand, and long directions appeared in the papers explaining how the work should be done. Mittens with one finger and a thumb were in highest favor.⁵⁵

No sooner had the Ladies' Volunteer Aid Society of St. Paul disbanded, having completed its duties by the making of a thousand "Havelocks," more or less, than it discovered a new field of activities and came to life again. The chaplain of the First Minnesota wrote home that the men were suffering from the want of hospital supplies. Immediately a committee set forth to solicit contributions towards a "hospital fund," and the result of the first day's labor netted some seventy dollars. Public contributions taken up in the churches throughout the state added further to the fund. In St. Paul a festival was planned. De Haven's Circus gave the receipts from one

⁵⁵ *Pioneer and Democrat*, April 11, June 16, 1861; *St. Paul Press*, April 14, 25, June 23, November 19, December 24, 1861; *Minnesota Conserver*, (Hastings), August 1, 1861; *Minnesota State News* (Minneapolis), November 16, 1861.

night's performance, and a travelling opera company did the same. Within a few weeks a sum of money had been collected "amply sufficient to meet the wants of the Regiment for a year to come." "Don't kill us with kindness," wrote the chaplain into whose care the fund had been committed. "Tell liberal men and noble women, to send no more money nor clothing." It was characteristic of the unsystematic way in which things were done that the Second Minnesota, then assembling at Fort Snelling, had reason to believe at this very time that its wants were being neglected. Presently, however, the organization of the United States Sanitary Commission gave much needed direction to willing workers and served to eradicate many such difficulties.⁵⁶

Other manifestations of private initiative are not hard to find. The American Bible Society and the Young Men's Christian Association, assisted by private donations, undertook to supply each volunteer with a New Testament. H. H. Sibley sent a check for a hundred dollars to the First Minnesota to be used as the soldiers saw fit, and this started the organization of a regimental band.⁵⁷ But for the willing coöperation of individuals, the financing of the war would have proved an insurmountable obstacle, alike in state and nation. Governors borrowed huge sums on their own credit with the expectation that their legislatures would indemnify them, and loans were readily secured on these terms. The adjutant general of Minnesota, whose salary from the state

⁵⁶ *Minnesota State News*, July 27, 1861; *St. Paul Press*, July 16, 25, 28, 31, August 13, 15, September 1, November 28, December 14, 18, 1861; *Northfield Telegraph*, July 31, December 4, 1861. The work of the Sanitary Commission was early recognized by the government as appears in the report of the secretary of war, July, 1861, 37 Congress, 1 session, *Senate Executive Documents*, no. 1, p. 26 (serial 1112). A satisfactory summary of the organization and work of the Sanitary Commission is given by Rhodes, *United States*, 5:244-259. Contemporary literature on this subject is abundant.

⁵⁷ *St. Paul Press*, May 1, 2, 3, November 15, 17, 1861. In the early part of the war the band of each regiment was also expected to man ambulances, and pick up the wounded.

was one hundred dollars a year, reported that during the year 1861 between two and three thousand dollars had been paid out by him out of his own pocket for war purposes, or was owing to individuals from whom he had purchased.⁵⁸ The governor of Minnesota, to avoid an extra session of the legislature, asked the state treasurer to make further necessary payments from his private funds, which he "generously and patriotically consented to do" to the extent of another three thousand dollars.⁵⁹ The contributions of private citizens and corporations throughout the country during the first three weeks of the war were estimated by the *New York Herald* to have reached a grand total of \$28,739,000.⁶⁰

It is this exploitation of individual initiative which is the distinguishing feature of the method by which the army of 1861 was raised. The correctness of the volunteer system, which burdened every patriotic citizen with a sense of individual responsibility when victories were not won, was rarely questioned. Even when the draft was invoked in the later years of the war, it was only as a stimulus to enlistments, and the number of conscripts was ridiculously low. Individuals, not officially inspired, assumed the duty of gathering recruits, and of organizing them into minor divisions. Individuals, without the encouragement of a Liberty Loan campaign, dug down into their pockets for the money to provide temporary equipment. Individuals, who never dreamt of the systematic methods of the American Red Cross, contributed funds, gave bazaars, sewed, knit, and even cooked for their own boys and brothers at the front. The state did nothing which the individual could do; the nation did nothing which the state or the individual could do.

⁵⁸ Adjutant General, *Reports*, 1862, pp. 88, 229.

⁵⁹ Governor's message to the legislature of January, 1862, in Minnesota, *Executive Documents 1861*, p. 5.

⁶⁰ Quoted in the *Pioneer and Democrat*, May 7, 1861. The secretary of war, however, claimed in July, 1861, that the amount contributed did not exceed ten million dollars. 37 Congress, 1 session, *Senate Executive Documents*, no. 1, p. 23 (serial 1112).

How different it all is to-day. The system which a little more than fifty years ago saved the Union, and vindicated democracy as a safe government for America, if not for the world, is now obsolete. In this war it is the nation which takes the lead, while the individual does what he is told to do. The state authorities, bereft of initiative, have become merely convenient tools in the process of "decentralization." The best of patriots can conscientiously await the result of a federal lottery and an elaborate questionnaire which shall determine whether they go to war or not. Even the making of bandages and the knitting of socks is supervised by some remote authority higher up.

Why all this change? Why has the United States so willingly abandoned long cherished traditions? There is a saying, as true as most generalizations, that "history never repeats itself," and another, that "we learn from history that we cannot learn from history." The conditions under which the Civil War was fought resemble only remotely the present situation. The analogies so commonly drawn are almost invariably misleading. It was possible in 1861 to put green troops in the field with officers no better than the men, for the enemy was doing the same thing. Imagine such an army as McDowell had at Bull Run, or as Grant had at Donelson, in contact with a German division! It was necessary in 1861 to divide the labor of organization among the several states, for a national government so weak that it was compelled to go to war to justify its very existence could hardly be expected to have adequate machinery with which to work. Since the Civil War the same trend towards centralization which has characterized business has also characterized government. To-day it is the national government which has the machinery, and the states that lack it. The points of contrast might be amplified at will. Just as the modern curtain of fire which precedes an advance along the western front differs from the bombardment of the Union lines at Gettysburg before Pickett's charge, by just so much do the conditions under which we

are fighting to-day differ from those of 1861. A new system of raising and maintaining an army had to be invented to meet the new situation. The new machine is full of flaws, and does not yet work smoothly, but the country as a whole approves the invention. The flaws will be corrected. The system adopted can be worked—is already working—and the world will be made safe for democracy. But the methods of 1861 were of little use as a guide for action in 1917. Those “lessons of history” which produced on some minds the vision of “a million men in arms over-night” had to be ignored. Present conditions, not long past experiences, determined how the army of 1917 was to be raised.

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