

## Civil War Soldier Story (Extra Credit)

After looking at the list of Civil War (terminology, common slang, vocabulary), choose one of the battles from the list below to research and write a letter from a soldier who participated in the battle to a family member or friend detailing what took place.

The Battles: Choose one of the following battles to research. Find out about the circumstances leading up to the battle, what are the significant and/or important details of the battle, casualties for both sides, and aftermath.

Letters must be at least one page (**typed**) and include 10 terms (**underlined**) and 5 facts from the battle (**underlined**). 10 assessment points.

<i><b>Battle</b></i>	<i><b>Date</b></i>	<i><b>Location</b></i>	<i><b>Victor</b></i>
<b>First Battle of Bull Run (or the First Battle of Manassas)</b>	July 21, 1861	Manassas, Virginia	Confederate army
<b>Fort Henry</b>	February 6, 1862	western Tennessee	Union army
<b>Fort Donelson</b>	February 16, 1862	western Tennessee	Union army
<b>Shiloh (also called the Battle of Pittsburg Landing)</b>	April 6-7, 1862	near Pittsburg Landing, Tennessee	Union army
<b>Seven Days' Battle</b>	June 25-July 1, 1862	Virginia	Confederate army
<b>Second Battle of Bull Run (or the Second Battle of Manassas)</b>	August 27-30, 1862	Manassas, Virginia	Confederate army
<b>Antietam</b>	September 17, 1862	Antietam Creek, Maryland	Union army
<b>Fredericksburg</b>	December 13, 1862	Fredericksburg, Virginia	Confederate army
<b>Chancellorsville</b>	May 1-4, 1863	Chancellorsville, Virginia	Confederate army
<b>Siege of Vicksburg</b>	May 19-July 4, 1863	Vicksburg, Mississippi	Union army
<b>Gettysburg</b>	July 1-3, 1863	near Gettysburg, Pennsylvania	Union army
<b>Chickamauga</b>	September 19-20, 1863	Chickamauga, Georgia	Confederate army
<b>Chattanooga</b>	November 23-25, 1863	Chattanooga, Tennessee	Union army
<b>Battle of the Wilderness</b>	May 5-9, 1864	northern Virginia	Not decisive
<b>Spotsylvania</b>	May 1864	Spotsylvania Court House, Virginia	Not decisive
<b>Cold Harbor</b>	June 3, 1864	Virginia	Not decisive
<b>Siege of Petersburg</b>	June 20, 1864-April 2, 1865	Petersburg, Virginia	Union army
<b>Mobile Bay</b>	August 5, 1864	Alabama	Union army
<b>Atlanta</b>	September 2, 1864	Georgia	Union army
<b>Nashville</b>	December 15-16, 1864	Tennessee	Union army

The military of today has a distinctive and sometimes confusing catalog of terms, unique and all its own. Many of the terms used by modern soldiers are based on the first letters of a military label and often they use informal terms for pieces of equipment, fellow soldiers, or the places where they are based. It was no different during the Civil War. The Civil War soldier had a wide variety of names for the things they used in their daily routines and also invented many *slang* terms or nicknames for their equipment, experiences, and other soldiers. Many of these expressions were based on military terms, lighthearted humor, or biblical references and can still be found in our everyday language.

## **Terminology, common slang, vocabulary during the Civil War**

accoutrements -- A soldier's fighting equipments, made of leather

a beat -- A lazy soldier who dodges work

Arkansas toothpick -- large knife

Army of Northern Virginia -- the Confederate army at Gettysburg, led by Robert E. Lee

Army of the Potomac -- the Union army at Gettysburg, led by George G. Meade

artillery -- cannon and other large weapons

battle (engagement) -- a large-scale fight between two armies

bayonet -- knife-like weapon attached to the front end of a musket or rifle

been through the mill -- endured a lot

bedroll -- rolled blankets containing personal belongings, carried by soldiers

bread basket -- stomach

bluff -- someone who cheats

bombardment -- mass firing of large amounts of artillery

bombproof -- an underground shelter or used also to describe officers who never went to the front

bones -- dice for games

blowhard -- someone who brags

buck and gag -- a form of punishment

bully -- hurrah! or yeah!

bummer -- soldier that would take needed items from farmers and townspeople

campaign -- a series of army movements with a specific goal or destination

canteen -- tin or wood container on a strap, used to carry liquid

cap -- a small device used to cause gun powder to explode in a musket barrel

cap box -- small leather box attached to the belt to hold caps used to fire muskets

carriage -- the wooden mount for artillery, also used to describe a lady's shape

cartridge -- paper tube that held a bullet and gun powder

cartridge box -- leather box used to hold cartridges

casualty -- a soldier who has been killed or wounded, is missing, or was captured by the enemy

cavalry -- group of men fighting, scouting, or screening army movements from horseback

Chief cook and bottle washer -- the boss, person capable of doing many things

comrade -- a close companion or co-worker

Confederacy -- the eleven states that seceded from the United States to form their own country

democracy -- 1. a form of government where the people rule themselves through elected representatives. 2. equality of rights, opportunity, and treatment

dogrobbler -- the soldier of a group who cooks for everyone else.

dog tent -- a small, two-man tent

drill -- training by repetition; teaching something by having participants do it over and over again

enlist -- to sign-up or enroll in the army

first rate -- feeling well and very happy

fit as a fiddle -- in good shape, healthy

fit to be tied -- angry

flank -- the end of a line of soldiers

forage or foraging -- roving the countryside in search of food, sometimes taking from farmers

formation -- the basic physical arrangement of soldiers in a unit, made up of ranks and files; a rank is the single line of men from right to left, and a file is the line of men from front to back

Fresh Fish -- new recruits

Gettysburg Address -- speech delivered by President Abraham Lincoln at the dedication of the Soldiers' National Cemetery in Gettysburg on November 19, 1863. Lincoln stressed the necessity of continuing the fight for a government of the people.

goobers -- peanuts

grab a root -- have dinner, potato

greenbacks -- Union paper currency

greenhorn, bugger, skunk -- officers

graybacks -- Southern soldiers, lice

gum blanket -- rubber-coated cloth sheet used as a rain cover

hard case -- tough

hard knocks -- beaten up

hardtack -- flour, salt and water biscuit that was very hard and dry

haversack -- small canvas bag used by soldiers to carry food and other belongings

headquarters -- the building or location for the head of an army to direct movements and operations during a battle and campaign

homespun -- a clothing item made of homemade or home spun cloth

hornets -- bullets

horse sense -- smart or to use good sense (common sense)

housewife -- a sewing kit

hunkey dorey -- O.K. or good

infantry -- group of men who travel and fight on foot

jailbird -- criminal

Johnny -- Union soldier's term for a Confederate soldier

jonah -- a soldier who always brought misfortune and bad luck with him

journal -- a daily written record of one's experiences, sometimes called a diary

kepi -- cap or hat; part of the uniform of a Civil War soldier

knapsack -- canvas container strapped to a soldier's back, carrying personal belongings

liberty -- a right or a freedom; the idea that every individual has a fair and equal chance for success and happiness

line of battle -- territory marked by formations of soldiers, either in defense of a position, or in preparation to attack a position

"The luck of Cain" -- one who has bad luck or is prone to illness

muster -- to assemble and be counted for military service

paper collar man -- someone who has money or is financially well off

pepperbox -- multi barreled pistol

picket -- a guard or guard duty

played out -- worn out

possum -- a buddy or friend

rebel -- common term for a Confederate soldier

reinforcements -- additional troops held back from battle until they are needed to support and strengthen the units already in the battle

retreat -- to withdraw troops under attack; to move away from the enemy and the battle grounds

ridge -- a long, narrow and raised strip of land

rifled-musket -- muzzle loading gun, fired with cartridge and cap

sacred soil -- Virginia mud

sacrifice -- to give up one thing for the sake of another

sawbones -- a surgeon

scarce as hen's teeth -- rare or scarce

screamers, quick-step -- diarrhea

seeing the elephant -- a man's first experience in combat

shebang -- a temporary shelter of poles & branches

Sheet iron crackers -- hardtack

shine, bark juice, tar water, nokum, stiff, joy juice -- alcohol (liquor)

shirker -- a soldier who would not do his duty on the battlefield

skedaddle -- run, scatter, retreat

smart like a fox -- slick and cunning

snug as a bug -- comfortable, cozy

Sunday soldiers, kid glove boys, parlor soldiers -- insulting words for soldiers

tight, wallpapered -- intoxicated

toeing the mark -- obeying orders

top rail -- the best place to be or Number One!

tough as a knot -- in good health

traps -- accoutrements

uppity -- conceited

vittles -- food or rations

Yank or Yankee -- Confederate soldier's term for a Union soldier

Zu - Zu -- Zuoave soldier

When soldiers gathered around the campfires to cook, "grab a root" was a social term meaning to help oneself to some vegetables. A soldier often referred to his camp as his "digs" and his fellow soldiers as "the boys".