Their meals were heavy in fat and starches. Hardtack was often boiled in water to soften it and to release any bugs that might have infested it (they weren't called "worm castles" for nothing) and then fried. Corn meal was mixed with water and fried in bacon fat, forming a filling dish called "coosh."

Fresh vegetables, fruit, and eggs were only available if the soldiers were lucky enough to stumble on them. Scurvy was common in many camps. To overcome this, Union quartermasters produced hard cakes of dehydrated beans, turnips, onions, carrots and beets. Confederate quartermasters tried to make up for vitamin deficiencies by suggesting that the men eat wild onions. Almost everyone, North and South, suffered from some form of diarrhea or dysentery due to the poor diet.

Fresh food and snacks were available from sutlers, civilian merchants who set up tents and shops outside of camp. Sutlers had a captive market with a high demand, and their prices reflected this. With little else to spend their money on, sutlers often did a booming business. Along with food, they also sold luxury and entertainment items.

To supplement food shortages, soldiers resorted to foraging. Foraging is a fancy way of saying, "taking anything that wasn't nailed down." In friendly territory it was done sparingly and (usually) with the best of manners. Local civilians were often happy to share a meal with a soldier, if they themselves weren't wanting. Foraging was necessary, even encouraged, while on the march, particularly in enemy territory. Pigs, chickens, even cattle wouldn't long escape the clutches of a hungry army. Wild game was eagerly accepted when it could be found (thousands of men tramping through a forest tended to spook the animals).

Foraging was also an important strategic tool. Robert E. Lee moved his men into Pennsylvania in 1863 largely to ease the burden his army was placing on northern Virginia. It didn't hurt that it brought some of the realities of war home to Northern civilians. He was careful to tell his men to pay for whatever they took in (essentially useless) Confederate scrip. That didn't ease the pain caused by his army's virtual scouring of southern Pennsylvania. William Sherman made foraging a policy in his march through Georgia and the Carolinas. Since his strategy was to bring the war to the Confederate people, he didn't bother trying to pay for what his army took. Southerners retaliated by hanging or shooting any foragers they happened to capture in the act.

Camp Life

The new company or regiment marched through the streets of the town to the cheers of onlookers, down the road to a training camp where they learned how to live and fight as a unit. Training camps and receiving depots afforded the new recruit only cursory training. The bulk of a soldier's training came when his company arrived at the front. Soldiers spent 50 days in camp for every day they spent on the battlefield.

Drill filled much of the soldier's daily routine. To fight effectively, soldiers had to learn to move in formation as a company and as a company within a regiment. They needed to know what all the strange bugle calls meant, and what an officer wanted when he barked out orders like "right face," "shoulder arms," and "right about march." They had to learn to charge with a bayonet. And, of course, the soldier had to learn to fire his weapon.

Firearms training was rudimentary. Rifled muskets were capable of hitting targets at 1,000 yards if the shooter could accurately estimate the target's range. The French found that this target estimation was difficult, particularly when an enemy force was bearing down during a charge. They altered the back sight on their muskets down to 400 yards. The U.S. Army went so far as to do away with the back sight on some muskets. Instead, soldiers were trained to use their thumb as a crude sight, which limited the weapons' effective range.

Volunteer officers had to walk a fine line between learning on the job and not appearing incompetent before the men. Many camps held special night schools for officers. Others were left to their own devices, reading Hardee's *Rifle and Light Infantry Tactics* on their own time. (William J. Hardee was a lieutenant colonel in the U.S. army before the war. He resigned from the Union army and joined the Confederacy as a general.)

A typical day in camp for an enlisted man started with a bugle call at dawn summoning the men for a roll

call. They then had half an hour to wash, shave, or nap before another bugle call brought them out for breakfast. After breakfast another bugle call signaled sick call, where sick men (and those trying to get out of the camp's monotony by faking it) were inspected by the regimental surgeon and sent to a hospital tent, if warranted. For everyone else, there were fatigue duties. Firewood needed chopping, water needed collecting, and quarters and the company campground needed cleaning. At 8 a.m. each company sent a guard detail to the regimental headquarters, where they would serve for 24 hours. Everyone else went out for drill. Drill lasted until lunch, around noon, followed by a 30 to 60 minute break. After the break there was more drill, or perhaps target practice. At 4 p.m. the men were sent back to their quarters to clean and polish their uniforms and clean their quarters for evening retreat. Evening retreat included a personal inspection, tent inspection, another roll call, and evening parade. Supper was served after evening parade. Between supper and sun down the men had free time to themselves. Tattoo (taps) was sounded just after sundown and the men showed up for another roll call. They had more free time, in the dark, until 10:30 p.m. when taps was sounded and lights were turned out. The men went to sleep, to do it all again the next day.

The men lived in tents. In the winter the tents weren't very warm and comparatively little campaigning was done in the winter months, so soldiers erected semi-permanent log and dirt cabins, turning the camp into something resembling a shantytown. Tents and dirt cabins were pure luxury compared to sleeping on the march, where a soldier had little more than a blanket or two and an oiled drop cloth. Rain and insects made evenings miserable. While marching in the cold weather, they would sleep in lines "spooning" each other to share body heat, taking turns being the one on the end.

Soldiers had a number of amusements to stave off boredom. Games, particularly involving dice and cards (poker and faro) were popular. So too was music, with soldiers singing or playing instruments. Some units formed amateur theatrical companies and put on plays and musicals for locals. Fraternal orders sprung up in the camps, the Freemasons being by far the most common.

Religion played an important part in the lives of American soldiers. Every regiment had a chaplain. Revivals, temperance meetings and prayer groups were popular and encouraged. They were often attended by senior officers. When an army was camped for a lengthy period of time, soldiers erected chapels.

Sports livened up camp life. Team sports included