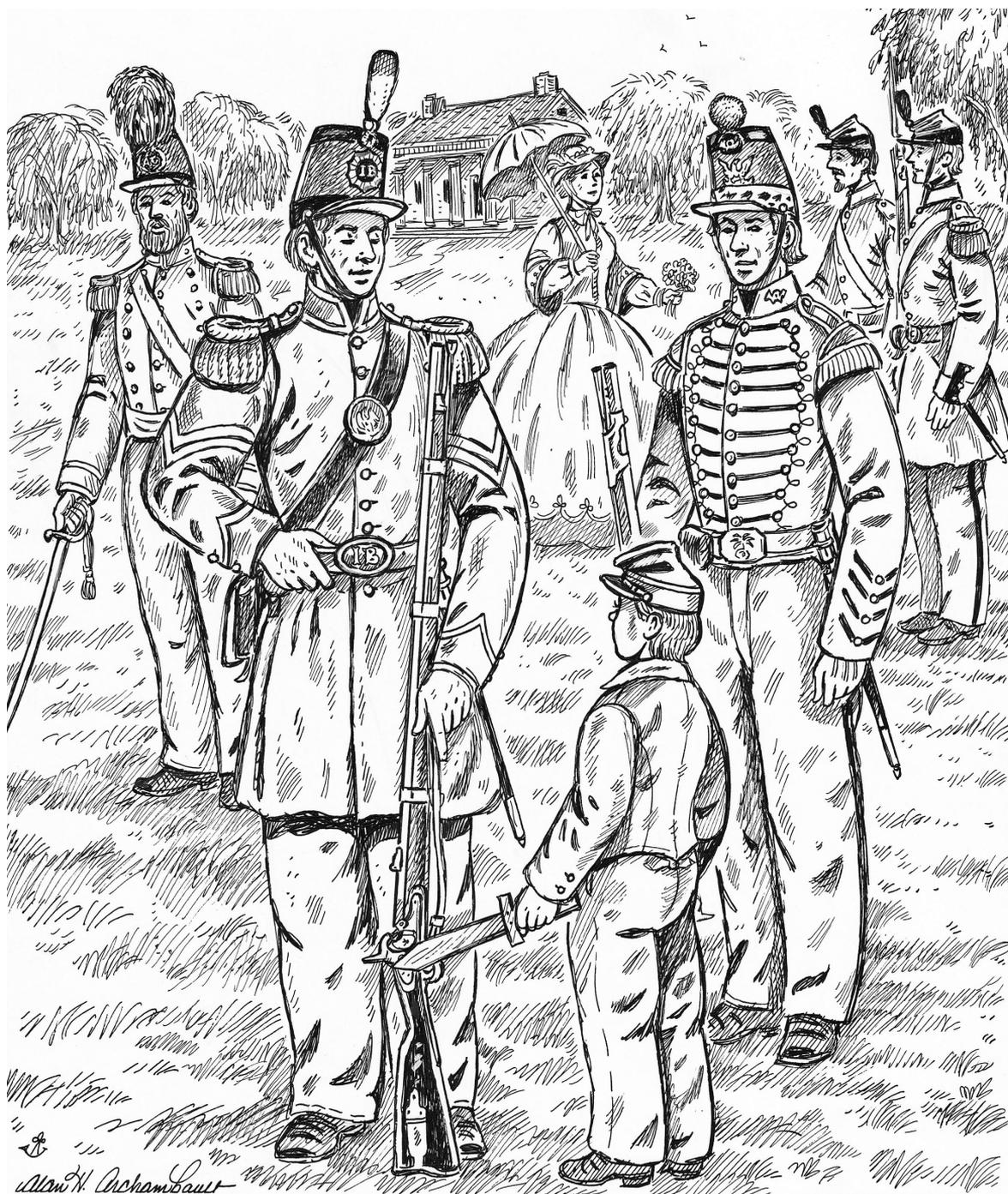


Southern Heritage. The people of the Southern states have a tradition of honoring their patriot heritage. In the years following the American Revolution, the proud Southern veterans of that conflict instilled a sense of patriotism and freedom in their families as well as throughout their communities. No freedom was held dearer than self-government and the rights of the individual. By the 1860s many people in the South believed that the federal government in Washington was increasingly controlled by the Northern states and that the interests of the Southern states were no longer being represented. Just as the American colonies had rebelled against the oppressive British government in 1776, the Southern patriots of the 1860s believed they were justified in seceding from the union of states that did not meet with their approval. Many Southerners saw this course of action as part of their revolutionary heritage.



The Militia. The United States was a country founded in conflict and it is therefore understandable that the militia of the various states played a major role in the military, social, and political life of the nation. In the Southern states a number of elite militia units were established during the early 1800s. These units usually adopted distinctive uniforms and served as important sources of pride for the communities in which they were formed. When the South found itself in a position of raising an army, these militia units were often the nucleus of the new regiments. In addition, many of the experienced militia officers were tapped for important positions in the service of the Confederacy. The officer on the right of the illustration is with the Auburn Guards, while to the left is a corporal of the Selma Independent Blues. Both units were from Alabama and wore dark blue uniforms. The next soldier is from the Washington Light Infantry of South Carolina. His uniform is also dark blue with gold trim. The two soldiers in the background wear the gray uniforms of the Guildford Grays of North Carolina. Although most units favored blue uniforms, gray was a traditional color worn by militia units and cadets.



The Call to Arms. On April 12, 1861, the conflict began when Confederate forces fired on Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina. Immediately, the president of the United States, Abraham Lincoln, called for volunteers to suppress the rebellion. With this threat of invasion, the call went out throughout the South for volunteers to defend the new Confederacy. The martial spirit was alive in every city, town, and village, and the excitement and enthusiasm was great. Tens of thousands of volunteers enlisted and the forces of the Confederacy were soon formed to defend the newly created nation. This sketch depicts a recruiting detachment marching through a Virginia hamlet with eager volunteers and excited children following them.



Alan H. Arsham Gault

From City and Farm. The volunteers who sprang to enlist in April 1861 typified the diverse and individualistic nature of the Confederate States of America. In the military camps throughout the South many interesting contrasts could be observed. The finely uniformed soldier depicted here is a member of the Richmond Grays of Virginia. He is a highly educated, city-bred young man, who is well adapted to discipline and military life. He is fully equipped with a musket and accoutrements and ready to defend his nation. In spite of their enthusiasm, the country boys who flocked to the camps were often much less prepared for the discipline demanded by the army. A number of the rural volunteers arrived at the camps with their hunting rifles and homespun clothing. It is reported that some young volunteers were so uninformed that they initially believed that they were going to fight the British, America's traditional enemy. With proper training and discipline most of the new volunteers, from city, village, or farm, made steady and reliable soldiers.



Presenting the Colors. As the newly formed infantry units of the Confederacy prepared to leave for the front, many of them received flags either made or purchased by the patriotic ladies of their communities. Since the majority of these units had very strong local connections, elaborate and emotional ceremonies were often held in which the flags were presented to the soldiers. This illustration depicts such an event. A young lady, of obvious social standing in the community, presents a first national Confederate flag to the new unit, as the soldiers and citizens look on with pride. These colors, which were so symbolically bestowed, would be proudly displayed on many battlefields of the war and many young soldiers would fight with all their hearts to defend them.



Training the Volunteers. In the early days of the war, training camps were established throughout the Southern states. In these “camps of instruction,” thousands of young recruits were taught the skills they needed to become effective soldiers. Although many of the Southern volunteers were healthy, strong, and used to hard work, they were often unaccustomed to discipline and the principles of teamwork. However, under the care and instruction of noncommissioned officers, these recruits soon learned to attend to the details and requirements of military life. As in all effective armies, the soldiers quickly found that cleaning weapons, polishing equipment, and following orders to the letter are every bit as important as courage and patriotism.

