



CIVIL WAR AMERICA
Cary W. Gallagher, editor

WHY CONFEDER★TES
FOUGHT Family and
Nation in Civil
War Virginia

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The University of
North Carolina Press
Chapel Hill

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Designed by Kimberly Bryant

Set in Scala by Keystone Typesetting, Inc.

Manufactured in the United States of America

This book was published with the assistance of the Fred W. Morrison Fund for Southern Studies of the University of North Carolina Press.

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Sheehan-Dean, Aaron Charles.

Why confederates fought : family and nation in Civil War Virginia / Aaron Sheehan-Dean.

p. cm. — (Civil War America)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-8078-3158-8 (cloth : alk. paper)

1. Virginia—History—Civil War, 1861–1865—Social aspects. 2. Soldiers—Virginia—Social conditions—19th century. 3. Soldiers—Virginia—Family relationships—History—19th century. 4. Family—Virginia—History—19th century. 5. Nationalism—Virginia—History—19th century. 6. Social classes—Virginia—History—19th century. 7. War and society—Virginia—History—19th century. 8. Virginia—Social conditions—19th century. 9. Nationalism—Confederate States of America—History. 10. United States—History—Civil War, 1861–1865—Social aspects. I. Title.

E581.S54 2007

975.5'03—dc22

2007019498

Portions of this work appeared earlier, in somewhat different form, as "Everyman's War: Confederate Enlistment in Civil War Virginia," *Civil War History* 50 (March 2004); "It Is Old Virginia and We Must Have It: Overcoming Regionalism in Civil War Virginia," in *Crucible of the Civil War: Virginia from Secession to Commemoration*, ed. Edward L. Ayers, Gary W. Gallagher, and Andrew Torget (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006); "Justice Has Something to Do with It: Class Relations and the Confederate Army," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 113 (December 2005); and "Success Is So Blended with Defeat: Virginia Soldiers in the Shenandoah Valley," *The Shenandoah Valley Campaign of 1864*, ed. Gary W. Gallagher (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), and are reprinted here with permission.

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For My Mother & the Memory of My Father

2 ★ A NATION OF THEIR OWN
JULY 1861—MARCH 1862

*Now is the time for every true & patriotic spirit to rally 'round the
Bonnie Blue Flag & fight & never cease to fight while there is an enemy
South of Mason's & Dixon's line.*

—James R. McCutchan, 14th Virginia Cavalry, March 19, 1862

Virginians had barely grasped the idea of secession and the prospect of building a new nation when they flung themselves into war. Tens of thousands of Virginia men volunteered in April, May, and June, and these new soldiers were joined by thousands more from other Confederate states sent to Virginia where everyone assumed the war, if it came, would be fought. It came soon, as Confederate soldiers battled Union troops in western and central Virginia from late May until late September. The fighting established the physical boundaries of Confederate Virginia, with much of the trans-Allegheny region controlled by Federal soldiers and their local Unionist allies, while central Virginia remained firmly within the orbit of the Richmond government. During late 1861 and early 1862, another fight occurred that helped establish the ideological boundaries of the Confederacy. The debate over conscription forced Confederates to spell out the terms of loyalty to the new nation and to clarify the penalties for those who did not follow them. Soldiers and their families played crucial roles in these exercises, resisting the Union advance in the West, driving Federals from the plains of Manassas, and accommodating themselves to the new rules of military service.

The experiences of 1861 and early 1862 forced Confederates to confront the prospect of a longer and more unpredictable war. Military defeats in South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia contradicted the narrative of inevitable victory. In northwestern Virginia, Confederates faced able U.S. troops and hostile Unionist civilians and suffered under ineffective leadership, illness, and dissension in their own ranks. The Confederacy's heavy-handed efforts to solve the manpower problems alienated many loyal citizens. Virginians debated the nature of military service and conscription more carefully than they had when they entered the war during the wave of martial celebrations that filled the state in April and May 1861. As a result, they

entered a more articulate protest against what they felt were the unjust aspects of the draft. The combined effect of these problems created a crisis that severely tested the commitment of Virginians to form a new nation.

Nonetheless, Virginia men did accept the burden of reenlistment and continued service, as the war dragged on into a second year. In doing so, they drew upon several elements, some of which emerged out of their experience from the previous year, while others developed from the unpredictable pattern of the war itself. The resounding military success at Bull Run reversed the trend of defeats and confirmed Confederates' sense of their military superiority. Even as the Richmond government alienated prospective, and current, soldiers with its draft policy, the responsive rules and procedures within the army itself mollified tensions within the service. A strong emotional connection with their families at home and a growing belief in the new nation anchored the emerging sense of Confederate purpose:

The volunteers who enlisted in the spring of 1861 were eager to represent themselves, their families, and their communities in the face of the apparent threat from the North, but few were anxious to fight a real war. Their threats against Yankees and predictions of imminent victory were mostly the arrogance of youth. Outside of the Kansas Territory, very few Americans had practiced any organized sectional violence against one another. Many soldiers did not expect an actual war and most desired an honorable peace more than a military defeat of the North. One soldier enjoyed the privilege of shaking his new president's hand when Jefferson Davis visited his camp in late May. The serious demeanor of his commander in chief appropriately impressed the man, but zeal for the Confederacy did little to stimulate zeal for battle. He noted to his family "I hope that Peace will be made in a few weeks and we may all get home." Despite the rabid pronouncements filling southern papers, not all soldiers burned to actually fight the Yankees. A week later, in another letter home, he optimistically announced, "there is I think a good chance for Peace in a few weeks."¹

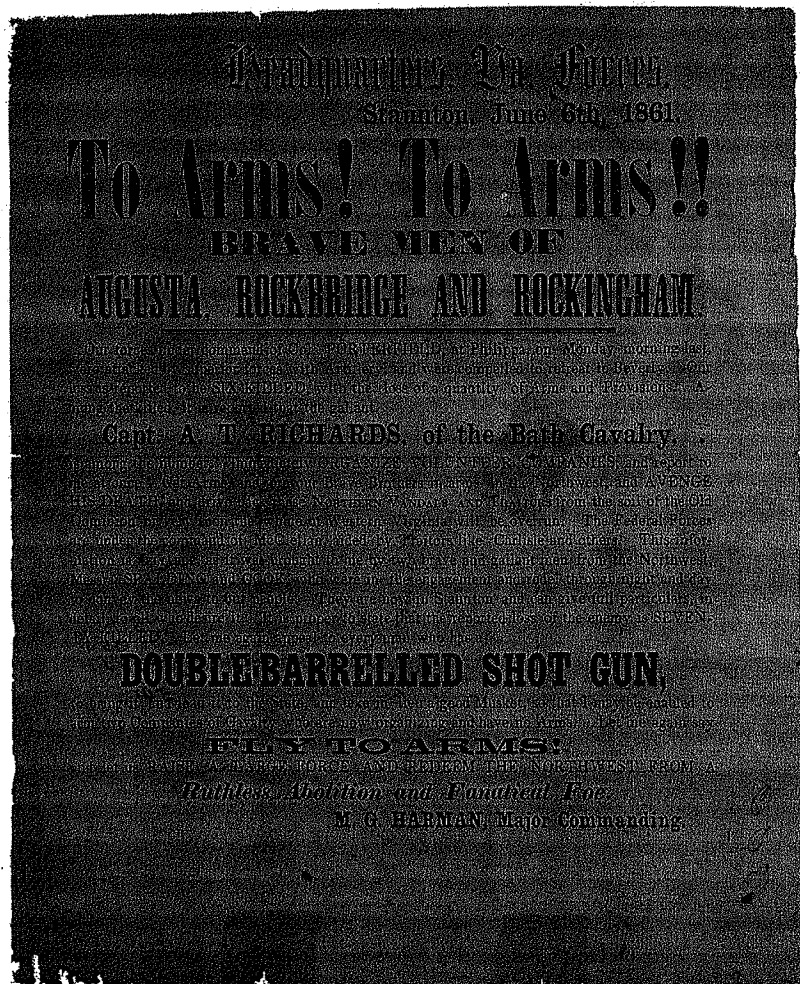
Soldiers had initially imagined that a full war could be averted, but with troops massing in northern Virginia those same soldiers also needed to confirm for themselves that they would emerge victorious from any conflict. In a tangle of sentiments and wishes, one wrote home: "I think that Peace will be made in a few weeks after the fourth of July at the least and I hope to be at home safe by the first of August at least and if I do we can tell you all a story worth hearing." He then changed course, noting, "I do not doubt but we will have a fight first but I do not doubt for a moment but that we will

whip them so badly that they will never forget it."² The alternating hesitancy and bluster expressed by this young man typify the nervous condition of most Virginia Confederates at this time. They could not foresee the outcome, and most earnestly desired some event that would settle the uncertainty.

That event appeared soon, as General George B. McClellan began organizing an invasion into northwest Virginia that he hoped would "secure [the region] . . . to the Union."³ Like many conservative northerners, McClellan assumed a great latent Unionist majority in the South. With the proper support, he believed, these Americans would reassert their control of the region and return to the Union. Although the hopes of McClellan, Lincoln, and Secretary of State William H. Seward for a general Unionist uprising in the South failed, western Virginia did hold a sizable body of Unionists. It offered a prime place to begin a military campaign with clear political goals.

Confederate leaders in the area along the Potomac and Ohio Rivers watched this buildup nervously and petitioned Richmond for help. In response, Governor Letcher authorized the organization of men from the upper northwest counties in order to defend the region and the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad in particular. On May 23 the state's voters ratified the ordinance of secession. On May 26 McClellan entered western Virginia and his troops quickly drove a small Confederate force out of Grafton, where the Baltimore & Ohio and the Northwest Virginia Railroad intersected. Both armies targeted railroads, turnpikes, and rivers in order to take control of the sparsely settled region. Shortly after their entry into the state, Union troops tried to catch 800 Confederate recruits at Philippi, a small town along the Tygart River. Poor communication among the Federals, complicated by the foul weather that impeded military efforts on both sides all year, gave Confederates a chance to retreat still further into central western Virginia. Though the Confederates escaped mostly without harm, their hasty retreat was dubbed the "races at Philippi" in papers around the country, an ignominious start for the military forces of the Old Dominion.⁴

Confederates sent to western Virginia had to abandon most of what they expected about warfare, principally in the active role played by Unionist civilians in the region. One soldier described the depth of knowledge locals had of Confederate movements. Following the ambush of a Confederate scouting party, he wrote that "those prisoners that was brought informed us they were apprised of the attack as much as we were." "So much for union men we cannot have a fare chance here," he continued, "and western Virginia are to be more dreaded than any other portion of the state on account of the union men. They have already done us great injury."⁵ Soldiers encountered civilians



"To Arms! To Arms!" Confederates reacted to McClellan's invasion of northwestern Virginia with outrage and called upon locals to defend the "Old Dominion." The material shortages Confederates faced were already visible, as demonstrated by the recruiter's call for men to trade in their own weapons for military arms. This item is reproduced by permission of The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

in this region with extreme trepidation, never knowing who would betray them, especially in those counties that formed the boundary between Union and Confederate territory in western Virginia. In Greenbrier County, according to one soldier, "Two of our picket guards were shot last week by a Union man and a very little boy. They rushed upon them and they ran upstairs and

the pickets followed after them. They shot and killed one, wounded the other. The little boy shot one of the pickets. The pickets took them on to Staunton and placed them in prison." Despite the violence of this exchange, conditions would worsen considerably in 1862, when Union and Confederate civilians and soldiers commonly engaged in bushwhacking. In later cases, Unionists who surprised and shot Confederate pickets and were captured would be tried and executed as guerrillas.⁶

This was not the war that Virginia men had volunteered to fight. John Winfield, a junior officer with the 7th Virginia Cavalry wrote home to his wife from Winchester, at the lower end of the Shenandoah Valley, and a safe spot for Confederate forces to rest between attacks on Union forces in the northwestern part of the state. "You observe from the caption of this letter that I am again back in this miserable hole Winchester," wrote Winfield. "We were called here suddenly on yesterday from Sheppardstown—to prepare for another wild goose chase in the mountains of Hampshire—called away from the face of a foe—to seek one in the jungles and hills of a poverty stricken region."⁷ Winfield's anger for both the enemy and the citizens of the region he was supposed to be defending typify the frustration among Confederates after several months of defeats in the mountainous and heavily Unionist Northwest. Many easterners who came west identified the enemy responsible for Confederate failures in the region—their fellow Virginians—and targeted them for destruction. "I believe we are surrounded by Unionists in this section," noted one man. "Though they are afraid to express their real sentiments—We have made but four arrests as yet, they have not had a trial—I hope to have the pleasure of shooting a few of them yet. . . . They are acting as guides to McClellans army—& are responsible for our defeat."⁸

The conditions of service in western Virginia did little to inspire Confederates. The spread of diseases among men lacking the necessary immunities nearly wiped out whole regiments.⁹ One soldier wrote to his sister with the news that several of his friends had died of typhoid fever: "I have always said that I feared disease in the army more than anything else; we have now in the mountains between Lewisburgh & this place not less than two thousand sick." More than most soldiers, this man recognized that he might very well share their fate. He remarked that his friends were "gone, yes gone where a great many of us will soon go."¹⁰ Another soldier reported the numbers of sick and healthy men in his regiment stationed in Highland County in late 1861: "Times are very dull here in camp. The health is bad. We have 774 men in our regiment and there are only about 300 fit for duty."¹¹ The 46th Infantry, an all-eastern outfit stationed in the Alleghenies, fared little better. In late

summer, its commander reported losing 25 men per day to measles, reducing the regiment to a mere 371 soldiers.¹² Death by disease seemed a poor reward for Confederates who fought hard battles against Union troops and Unionist civilians. Over the course of the war, 9 percent of Virginia soldiers died from illnesses, nearly twice as many as those killed in action.¹³

Aided by the Unionist majority in northwestern Virginia, the Federal advance under McClellan continued south and east. By July, Union troops under the command of General William S. Rosecrans pushed the Confederates out of Rich Mountain, capturing hundreds, including the commanding officer. Another Confederate commander, General Robert S. Garnett, was killed on July 13. His forces retreated thirty-five miles south to Monterey, along the Staunton and Parkersburg Railroad that led into the Shenandoah Valley. The combined effect of the loss at Rich Mountain and the barely successful retreat devastated the men involved. Many soldiers reacted by dismissing the region and its inhabitants. In a fit of anger, one volunteer wrote home from Pocahontas County in late July: "This is the meanest place that ever had a name and I wouldnt live here for anything in reason, and if it wasn't that the Yankees might get to Richmond through this way they are welcome to the whole country about here, as far as I am concerned." Another eastern soldier in the West calmly advocated giving up the whole region. "Although Western Virginia abounds in that grandest natural scenery," he remarked, "I am perfectly disgusted with the country and think we would be benefitted and not injured by a division of the state."¹⁴ In the face of the embarrassingly poor leadership displayed by Confederate generals Henry A. Wise and John B. Floyd, Robert E. Lee arrived in late September and took command of the unified forces. Rosecrans, however, held firm control of the region and refused to engage with the Confederates. Lee returned to Richmond on October 30 without success, and his men returned to their mountain barracks.¹⁵

The challenges of battle against Union troops in the mountains of the West were matched by the political discomfort occasioned by the recognition that some Virginians really did prefer to stay in the Union. Confederate Virginians made a determined effort to hold the Old Dominion together, but the opposition of Unionist residents in the upper counties of the trans-Allegheny region compelled most soldiers to accept the division of the state. Ideology and the musket together marked the boundary between Confederate Virginia and the Union.

Confederate armies had substantially more success in central Virginia.

Like the fighting in the West, the late July battle at Bull Run helped determine the borders of the new nation. Responding to the pressure from northern civilians, anxious for a decisive end to the "rebellion," President Lincoln ordered General Irvin McDowell and his inexperienced army to take the offensive. The Federal army marched toward Manassas Junction, where the Orange & Alexandria Railroad met the Manassas Gap Railroad. Facing him was General P. G. T. Beauregard and 30,000 eager Confederate soldiers.

The commanding generals of each side struggled to direct armies bigger than any seen in North America since the American Revolution. Their men were untrained, and poor staffing complicated the execution of orders throughout the day. The morning's fighting brought what seemed to McDowell to be a Union victory, as his troops pushed Confederate soldiers back onto a rise known as Henry Hill. A delay in the Union offensive at midday gave the Confederates a chance to assemble a defensive line, cemented by the soon-to-be minted "Stonewall" Jackson. By late afternoon, the Confederates had repulsed the Union attack, and the disorganization of retreat multiplied itself as Union troops feared being caught by Confederate cavalry. As Confederate artillery batteries lobbed shells into the assembled spectators from Washington, D.C., the retreat turned into a rout. Northern soldiers abandoned guns, tents, haversacks, and all impediments that prevented flight back to the security of Washington's defenses.¹⁶ An ignominious and chaotic retreat by Union troops at the end of the day spurred joy and celebration in the Confederacy.

Confederate confidence soared as news of the victory flashed along southern telegraph lines. Four days after the battle, Maurice Evans wrote home from Manassas. His unit had seen no action, and perhaps as a result he had a lopsided picture of the battle's outcome. As Evans told his mother, the Confederates had lost 400 men killed and 800 wounded, but the Federals had 6,000 killed and 1,500 prisoners: "They have lost all and we have won the most brilliant victory ever achieved by arms in America." This overrepresented Union deaths by a factor of thirteen but perfectly represented the sentiment prevailing among the victorious Confederates.¹⁷ John Winfield concurred with his comrade. As he wrote his wife, "We have slaughtered them—it will take them two months to reorganize and supply the place up their lost ordinance and stores. *The war is ended* except for the enemy to skirmish a little while until they can decently get out of the difficulty they are in."¹⁸ The outcome confirmed long-standing assumptions of southern mar-

tial superiority, and many Confederates assumed this one battle would compel the North to negotiate the South's peaceful exit from the Union. Southerners saw in the victory proof of the Confederacy's validity as a natural entity and a testament of God's favor. The victory offered retrospective confirmation of the wisdom of secession and fueled a stronger commitment to the Confederacy among both soldiers and civilians.

Even as citizens around the state and throughout the Confederacy celebrated the victory at Bull Run, soldiers on the battlefield recoiled from the horror of what they had seen and done. Philip Powers walked across the Manassas battlefield two evenings after the fight. "Nothing—nothing could lessen the horrors of the field by moonlight," he wrote, "Enough, I cannot I will not describe it—May God, in His infinite mercy avert a second such calamity."¹⁹ Despite the thrill of victory, most of the soldiers present did not gloat over the Union dead. Only two months before, these dead men had been their business partners, brother Christians, and fellow Americans. The fire-eaters who preached destruction of the North were few and far between in antebellum Virginia. The majority of southerners harbored increasingly deep suspicions of northern intent toward slavery but favored a peaceful parting of the ways. After tallying the dead at Manassas, William L. Hill issued a prayer for peace: "May God slake any unnecessary shedding of blood and restore to us a speedy peace."²⁰ The scale and scope of violence at Bull Run surprised even the victors, who had not yet imagined the gravity and sorrow of real war. One man struggled to describe the scene to his wife, "O my God you never dreamed or read of such sights and such times Great God . . . I saw thousands of dead Yankees on the field killed and wounded in every shape every way there was . . ."²¹

The heavenly invocations offered by Powers and Hill after Manassas reveal one way that Confederates could reconcile the actions they were compelled to take. Most Confederates, even if they were not devout Christians, believed their cause was sanctioned by God. Although warfare and killing may have been repugnant, faith that they were following God's plan assuaged fear and guilt. One man, writing to his father after the death of several men in his company during a skirmish remarked that they must have been taken by God. "I have an abiding confidence that He will compel the right to right," he wrote, "and that ere long, all of the soldiers will be restored to their homes and friends, to spend the rest of their lives in prosperity and happiness. Our cause will triumph, so I must beg you to be hopeful and cheerful, and in due time the Great Ruler will bring all things right."²² This faith,

which increased in strength among Confederates through the conflict, did not reflect fatalism about man's incapacity before God's power. Rather, it confirmed the intentions and actions of Confederates as they sought to build a better world.

The next battle of 1861 was an internal war, a dispute among Confederates over the terms of military service and the definition of loyalty to the nation. Beginning in late 1861 and extending into early 1862, Confederate officials considered plans to avert the departure of the twelve-month enlistees in April and May 1862, just as the new military season would begin. The looming shortage of manpower hit Virginia especially hard. For the Confederacy as a whole, twelve-month men constituted 71 percent of the men in the field.²³ In Virginia, effectively all men were twelve-monthers.²⁴ Union successes in the western theater in early 1862 added to the pressure on the Confederate government to field larger and more effective armies. During the winter, debates over enlistment and conscription spilled out of the capitol and into parlors and camps across the state. The *Daily Richmond Examiner* reflected the logic of the times. After an accounting of the numbers of men available and the threat posed by the ever-growing Union forces, the paper issued a succinct judgment: "It is obvious from these facts that the safety of the South lies in the prompt and energetic adoption of such measures as will utilize the strong force of men that she has in reserve."²⁵ In mid-April 1862, the Conscription Act passed, making all white men between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five eligible for the draft.²⁶ The legislation included provisions that offered furloughs and pay bonuses to men who voluntarily reenlisted. Barring that, the act automatically reenlisted all one-year volunteers as three-year enlistees.

The war's longevity and the fact that most early volunteers did serve until death or the war's end make it easy to assume that men enlisted with the foresight to imagine an extended conflict and the dedication to serve unconditionally, but the fervor of enlistment in April and May 1861 masked the fact that most men signed up for short terms of service. Volunteers perceived enlistment as a contract that obligated them to the Confederate military for a specified period of time. Further, they carefully monitored the execution of that agreement. Once in the army, volunteers became valuable soldiers to keep. The War Department, congress, and the president himself all sought remedies to the manpower crisis that would be acceptable to the men who had shown such early enthusiasm for the Confederate cause. Officers in the

field reflected this concern for the rights and dignity of volunteers. They exercised considerable flexibility as they sought to refill the ranks before the implementation of an official draft act. In the face of high rates of absence in late 1861, commanders detailed junior officers to go home and retrieve absent men. Samuel Moore, a lieutenant serving in Stonewall Jackson's corps, led one such expedition in mid-October. Moore and eight enlisted men received instructions to "bring back or cause to return to duty all persons belonging to the Army of the Potomac whom you may find absent without leave or who may without lawful excuse have overstayed their 'leaves.'" The awkward euphemism "men who may without lawful excuse have overstayed their 'leaves,'" used instead of "deserter," revealed the necessity of dealing gingerly with men not at their posts of duty.²⁷

Like most of the legislation passed by the Confederate Congress to meet the contingencies of war, the draft accomplished its stated purpose.²⁸ It enlarged the army but in the process generated foreseen and unforeseen conflicts among soldiers and within communities. Some objected on the simple grounds of class, knowing that wealthy or well-connected men could escape the draft. Others objected to the provision giving the opportunity for eligible men to hire substitutes to serve in their place. Littleton Robertson, with the 18th Virginia Infantry, wrote his wife that he was "not going to stay in the war any longer until I am forced to do it as there is so many men at home enjoying all the pleasures of life and we are debarred from all."²⁹ Others objected to the idea of coercion by the state. Still others saw in the draft and the requirement that they stay in service a mark of deep shame. They believed that military service was, and should remain, a voluntary act.

Robertson's sense of an unequally shared burden was acknowledged by other men in the service. As Edward Camden noted, "If the legislature adopts a tyrannical law, which they are trying to do they will disorganize the army and then we will be subject to yankee hirelings of the north for the volunteers came once to the defence of our honor and rights." He continued, "And now it seems that the object of the legislature is to make regulars of them by drafting them for two years more without even allowing them to go home." Like others, Camden believed that the volunteers had done their duty, fulfilled the terms of their contract, and should be relieved by fresh men. "There are a plenty of men in the state of Va who was able to bear arms, as the volunteers," Camden wrote, "and it is nothing but right and proper for them to relieve us after twelve months hard service." Camden then went on to raise the political objections common among libertarians in Richmond.

And when the volunteers came to the field there object was to put down a tyrannical laws which was then being hovered around our heads and in a war we have defeated that law with our faces turned northwards—and have broken and shaken it in its very walls and foundations. And now to think that the Legislature is coming in our rear and trying to put another obnoxious law on us. for us to live under for two years to come is too hard for us to submit to.³⁰

The prospect of a draft also increased the caution among volunteers who often discouraged their relatives from joining the service. Although the physical danger and discomfort of camp life drove a great part of this advice, the number and specificity of letters encouraging siblings to avoid service picked up markedly after conscription passed. Few men saw a contradiction between serving faithfully themselves and giving advice to relatives about how to remain civilians. Robert Hooke corresponded with his brother at home in Rockingham County during his early months in the cavalry and was puzzled as to how his brother had avoided being called into service. Nonetheless, he advised, "if it is required I want you to do like a man but put it off as long as you can keep out of it honorably, for you will see the worst times that ever you experienced."³¹

Despite the objections raised to the idea and execution of the draft, most volunteers remained in the service because they had not yet achieved the goals for which they initially enlisted.³² William Randolph Smith of the 17th Virginia Infantry confessed to his wife that some men grumbled about the draft but he approved of it as a measure for establishing a clear test of loyalty and manhood. "There is some dissatisfaction among the troops arising from the act of Congress keeping all in for ninety days," he noted, "and all between the ages of 18 and 55 for two years or the war. I am glad of it for the act cannot possibly take any effect upon the true Southerner, while those who have not enough respect or manhood about them to reenlist should be made to do their duty." In Smith's company, as in others, most men eventually reenlisted voluntarily. "There was not many, I am happy to say, in our company that had to be forced in, a majority of the company having previously reenlisted and received their Bounty," he reported. "Some twenty got their furlough of 30 days. I was among this number."³³ All soldiers craved time with their families, but most accepted the requirement that they remain in service in order to defend those very families. As Joseph Manson explained to his wife, "I came in it [the war] in a humble capacity and if I keep well intend to stay in it

until it ends or some unforeseen cause takes me out. I am willing to sacrifice everything for my children's independence & sacred rights & they are dearer to me than life itself."³⁴

The threat of force that William Smith mentioned revealed how the process of enforcing service, begun by the state as a military necessity, redefined how soldiers understood and exercised their loyalty to the state. Just as those men who would be drafted and those who had already volunteered were classified as loyal, those who left the service or avoided the draft could be classified as disloyal. The language of desertion began to emerge more clearly in the period during and after passage of the Conscription Act. No longer would men missing from their posts for weeks at a time be listed as "absent" or as "probably being at home." The decision to remove oneself from military service for more than a few days now created the risk that a man would be classified as a "deserter." The *Lexington Gazette* addressed the problem forthrightly. "Those who are absent from the army 'without leave,' had better be getting back to their posts," the editors advised. "If they persist in remaining at home, until compelled to go back under the escort of a provost guard, they lay themselves liable to be treated as deserters; and the rules of military discipline inflict the penalty of being shot upon all who deliberately desert the army in time of war." Like most soldiers, however, the newspaper recognized an important distinction between types of absence and prescribed different treatments. "If on the other hand," they advised, "those who are absent on their own responsibility, return voluntarily, they will be liable to be treated only as delinquents, and be subjected to less severe penalty than that inflicted upon the real deserter."³⁵

In the winter of 1861-62, some "real deserters" who opposed the war and supported reunion did absent themselves. But the vast majority who left the camps of northern Virginia that long fall and winter did so because they defined military service and duty differently than did the military planners in Richmond. Most who left during this period displayed no desire to rejoin the Union. Indeed, most returned to their camps and continued fighting in the spring.³⁶ But in making military service obligatory and in constructing a bureaucracy to enforce the new rules, the Confederacy created a clear standard of loyalty.

Civilian institutions also adopted the new definition, revealing that the government had the power to change the way civilians understood loyalty as well. The *Gazette*, after defining the problem in a way that assumed loyalty from most soldiers, carried ads listing deserters by name in an attempt to shame Lexington soldiers back into the ranks.³⁷ The *Daily Richmond Exam-*

iner went further still. An editorial on desertion condemned those men who abandoned the army without recognizing the varieties of absence that then existed within the service. "The man who deserts his colours and turns his back upon the sworn obligations of his country's service is beyond the reach of ordinary shame," the *Examiner* asserted; "he must be treated, without sentimental ado, as a criminal, not as a subject for moral suasion; he must be made an example to the army, and his crime must be expiated by the just vengeance of the laws."³⁸ Churches cooperated with this change, adding a spiritual dimension to the problem of desertion. More than one parish decided to excommunicate a member who left the army. For pious Christians, this may have been the most serious punishment of all. One case came before the members of Elon Baptist Church in Hanover County in early 1862 and the parishioners concluded: "The man who is not willing to work for the freedom which God has given us, is a traitor to his country, a hypocrite in the church and unfit to die."³⁹

Soldiers understood their enlistment as a contract between the state and themselves, one that created mutual rights and responsibilities. Because of this belief, few soldiers saw a contradiction in seeking a substitute after the expiration of their initial twelve-month enlistment. After being detailed to Richmond in early 1862 to catch and return some "runaways" from their units, William Kidd confessed to his wife, "I would give a thousand dollars if I had it if I could get clear and could get home to stay there, a person that never has been in the service can stay at home & do some big talking but if they had to take the fare that I have they would soon get tired of war."⁴⁰

Others who sought a substitute did so less from a sense of justice and more from simple war weariness. George Harlow made this plain in his letters home. "I hope we will not have to fight any more soon for I am getting verry tired of it and intend to get out of it if I can," he wrote. Like many volunteers, Harlow found the marching and camp life unbearable. Accordingly, he sought an honorable way out of his service agreement: "I made arrangements to get a substitute and before he got here there was an act passed not to take any substitutes under 45 years old and the one I got was just 16 he was from Louisa by the name of harper I was to give him \$600 and a suit of clothes but I had to send him back tell Henry to look around and see if he cannot find a man in passing about that I can get that is over 45 years old." Harlow's willingness to modify his plans to meet the letter of the law reflected both his concern to achieve a lawful release for himself and an acceptance of the legitimacy of the new terms of military service.⁴¹

The process of conscription and reorganization was hesitant, uncertain,

and incomplete in many respects, but it resulted in the renewal of Virginia's military fortunes, albeit with an army composed of much more skeptical soldiers than the eager volunteers of 1861. The deliberations of James Old of Rockbridge County reveal this process in close detail. Old sensed that the war would be much worse than politicians and the press announced. Posted near Manassas in late June 1861, he wrote to his mother, "I hope and prey that I may be spared to meet you all a gain but I will have to go through a hard time if ever I do get back I have already seen hard times but nothing to what I expect to see." By January 1862 he was nearing his breaking point as rumors of forced reenlistment swirled around the camps. "Dearest Mother," he wrote from Centerville, "I thought a while back the chance was to be good to get a furlow but they have put a stop to all furlows except those that are sick and those that will reenlist in the army for the war I think I will try and tuff my time out. and perhaps mayby I can come then." Then he relayed the threat that hung over enlisted men that winter. "Captain saunders says he dont think there will be any chance for ous to leave the field that wee will be drafted as soon as our time is out." Old's response represented everything that Confederate leaders feared as they debated the conscription legislation: "They may do as they may but i am a counting when my time is out if I live I have not forgot how to walk yet I will desert if they do that way." Worse still, Old prophesied that a forced draft would alienate most soldiers, "and most of the army say they will fight against the south."⁴²

Despite his dire predictions, Old underwent a change of heart early in the new year. He wrote home to the brother he had earlier counseled to stay out of the war. "I received your letter dated the 22," Old began, "and was very glad to here from you but was sorry to here that you exspected to be drafted soon and I exspect you will have to come a bout the 10th of march that is what the papers says." Old's new perspective on military service now emerged. He wrote, "I am very sorry to here that you and Mr Sale will have to leave your Families but This war is going to be a desperat one and A short one I think and wee will Need all the men that wee can get." Old gave no direct explanation for his change of heart, though he did remark that "they are whipping ous at all points and if wee dont do all that we can do they will whip ous and if they do what will be come of ous and our families they will all be Taken from ous." Instead of the aggrieved and disaffected soldier he had been in late 1861, by early 1862 James Old recommitted himself to the preservation of the Confederacy. "So wee aught to do all that wee can and fight them untill the last drop of blood has gone," he wrote, "I Think the test will be desided this somer John I think you had better Join some company and not be drafted . . . I exspect to

Reaenlist before long." Old did reenlist and was even appointed color corporal for his unit before dying of disease in July 1862. His brother John enlisted in the same regiment in March 1862 and served for the duration of the war.⁴³

Like all his fellow soldiers, James Old's struggle with the question of reenlistment occurred within a new atmosphere of military camp life that followed the fighting in mid-1861. Confederates' experiences in those camps shaped their response to the new definition of loyalty created through fighting the Yankees and debating the draft. After the battle at Manassas and the campaign in western Virginia, Confederate troops returned to camps where they could train and rest for the spring campaigns. In western Virginia, they settled in Winchester and many of the smaller towns of the Shenandoah Valley and along the eastern edge of the Allegheny Mountains. In central Virginia, thousands settled around Orange Courthouse and at outposts along the Rapidan River. From these camps, officers and enlisted men met the challenge of maintaining discipline and resolving the class and regional tensions that emerged among volunteers by creating a surprisingly flexible and responsive system. Soldiers buttressed their commitment to the army by establishing a dense web of connections with families, through personal visits, regular correspondence, and fond recollection. Finally, soldiers drew upon the political nature of secession and the public nature of enlistment to formulate a new sense of national spirit that bolstered their resolve to accept the burdens of the draft, persevere despite the defeats in western Virginia, and prepare for future battles.

The development of a Confederate military that responded to soldiers' needs emerged, in many cases, before soldiers ever settled in their winter camps. Complaints over food, shelter, equipment, and leadership characterized the army from its earliest days, as did an almost continual contest for status and respect among soldiers and between enlisted men and officers. The Confederate victory at Manassas in July 1861 bolstered morale and helped subdue the frustration and tensions growing out of the volatile mix of eager, untrained volunteers and assertive and inexperienced officers that fermented in undersupplied training camps around the state that summer. As McClellan reorganized and reequipped Union troops in the fall of 1861, Confederate military leaders undertook the same effort. The drilling and discipline that company-level commanders imposed upon their men in the late summer and fall began to rankle many soldiers who were not, and had no ambition to be, professional warriors. Complaints about their treatment emerged quickly.

Samuel B. Blymon, just returned from picket duty on the evening of November 3, wrote to a friend from Centreville: "Soldiering is getting to be no fun now. I suppose the Confederate Authorities will never want any more volunteers after this war is over, from the manner in which they treat them now. And unless they change their treatment in a very great measure, it will be hard to force them back into service." Blymon's friend also served in the army, and Blymon stressed that his criticism of conditions and even leaders should not be interpreted as unpatriotic: "I love my country as dear as any man that breathes, and will take my rifle and march to meet its enemies as soon as any man. But when such upstarts get authority as we have amongst us, I feel no inclination to place my carcass at their disposal and shall be apt to look before I leap next time. As for Jeff Davis, & Stephens, Beauregard & Johnston, they are gentlemen but it is the petty officers who have the more immediate control over us that I complain of." Blymon's comments represent a fair estimate of the dissatisfaction that developed as the Confederate army began to organize its soldiers. His expression of support for the Confederacy was also typical.⁴⁴

Similar complaints could be heard in other parts of the army. One soldier noted in a letter home, "Gen Longstreet remarked the other day that the 1st Virginia Regiment had become almost demoralized So I heard it reported one company was put under arrest for refusing to serve under a Lieutenant who had struck one of the men over the head with his sword. The men were sent to Manassas (that was company F Washington men)." Whatever the offense given to the men of company F it must have been grave, as was their reaction. The same month that the story circulated, Company F was detached from its service with the 1st Infantry and assigned to the 1st Virginia Artillery. The old Company F lasted in that position scarcely two months before being mustered out by special order. Though it was unusual for a whole company to disintegrate in the space of sixty days, the episode revealed the volatile nature of the Virginians who became soldiers and the need for circumspection when dealing with them.⁴⁵

The problems that incompetent officers created held the potential to ruin what little discipline the effective officers had established in the fall and winter. The deterioration that could occur emerged clearly in the correspondence of James Langhorne with his family. In mid-June, Langhorne wrote to his mother with glowing remarks for his commanding officer: "Capt Trigg is one of the best and most impartial officers I ever saw but he is a rigid disciplinarian I being his Lieut. have to convey all his orders to the company and see that they are carried out, all the men in the company who have sense

and know what discipline is like me, and think I do nothing more than discharge my duty." Langhorne continued, "those who are inattentive & negligent of duty all always receive the reproof or correction they deserve often complain, although the men complain of being strict on drill they say I have a kind heart." Langhorne's company fought at Bull Run, which he pronounced a "glorious victory." By late fall, however, a personnel change in the regiment had destroyed the positive morale and discipline established during the preceding five months. "Mr. John Wade is an excellent man," he reported, "but he makes a much worse Capt. than I had any idea he would, the men do not fear to violate his orders, and the company has lost more than I had any idea it would in discipline & morral since Capt Trigg left it, but in fact, our whole Reg has lost in discipline since the battle of 21st July."⁴⁶

Military officials tried to solve the problems of leadership and discipline that emerged in 1861, but common soldiers often seized the initiative themselves. Most importantly, Confederate soldiers turned out unsatisfactory officers. Richard Waldrop wrote to his brother from Gaines Point in late May with news about his company commander, a respected Richmonder, who had written a book on military drill. Despite his captain's prominence, or perhaps because of it, Waldrop found him intolerable. In his letter, Waldrop promoted the man to Colonel, perhaps in an intentional jab at his pretensions. "Col. Cary has gone to R & it is said here that he has gone to try to have us kept here but he has made himself so obnoxious to us by his short & snappish way of speaking to us that I dont believe there are a dozen men in the co who will muster into service under him," Waldrop reported. In fact, Cary was transferred two weeks later to take command of the 30th Virginia Infantry. He lasted in that position until the regiment's reorganization in the spring of 1862, when elections were held. At that point he stepped down, noting an "unwillingness to hold position conferred by those subject to his control."⁴⁷ In other words, Cary refused to participate in the democratic structure established for selecting regimental-level officers in the Confederate army. The men of the 30th Virginia seem to have been untroubled. They elected a new colonel, just as Waldrop would have advised.⁴⁸ Virginia's soldiers obeyed the orders of officers they respected, men who gave them the respect that they earned and demanded as free white men in Virginia, and of those officers who displayed courage on the battlefield. They rarely abided aristocrats who presumed to lead by status alone.⁴⁹

The power to select company-level officers was one of the most important rights granted to enlisted men. This power gave soldiers the ability to oust those commanders who treated their men with inadequate levels of respect

or courtesy. William Boutwell Kidd, serving with the 30th Virginia Infantry observed in February 1862 that "Johnsons Co has refused to enlist under him positively." The blanket rejection of a company's commander was rare but almost always fatal. When Johnson's Company D reorganized in April, the men voted him out of office, and he spent the remainder of the war teaching at a military institute in Florida.⁵⁰ Men paid careful attention to the behavior of all their officers and replaced without much hesitation those who dissatisfied them. One soldier noted briefly: "Our company was organized the other day and we turned our first Lieutenant out and elected the second lieutenant who was Bagby for our first lieut."⁵¹ Although critics charged that electing officers elevated incompetent men to positions of leadership, the performance of Virginia troops through the war offers little evidence to support this charge. The high number of prewar elites who served in the military offered an important leadership advantage that also helped the Confederacy. Consequently, many officers already possessed skills at resolving class and ethnic tensions between other white men.⁵²

The responsiveness of the Confederate military depended partly on those more astute officers facilitating an atmosphere of equality within their camps.⁵³ Captain James Jones White of the 4th Virginia Infantry wrote to his wife Mary from camp near Centreville in mid-August 1861 about a man in his company: "Coupland Page can take as good care of himself as any fellow in the services. He wanted me to take his bed made of barrel staves laid across poles but I wouldn't deprive him of it. He is a very generous & independent fellow—takes care of himself & allows nobody to interfere with his rights, which is very well understood." White wrote his wife about an episode where Page had trouble cooking dinner in the rain. One of Page's messmates began teasing him, and Page said he would "thrash" him if the man did not quiet down. As the commanding officer, White should have stepped in to prevent a fight, but instead he told Page he would not interfere and the messmate quickly departed. White concluded, "War is a firm business to develop character. I am surprised to make the discoveries that I do every day." Indeed, it seems more likely that Page's character did not "develop" in response to the war, but rather that Captain White had a previously unavailable opportunity to interact with men of Page's lower social standing, who possessed every bit as much pride and personal integrity as White's prewar associates. These types of opportunities probably came to officers and gentlemen with some frequency through the war. Those leaders who acted on their new knowledge, as White did, gained the confidence of their troops.⁵⁴

Competent officers could, and did, help enlisted men suffer the strictures

and indignities of military discipline by bending rules and making exceptions. William Fleming Harrison, a captain with the 23rd Virginia Infantry, explained the realities of his situation frankly to his men: "I have told them that I had to obey orders & I was carrying out the order of my superior officers & I had to obey & they should obey." Writing to his wife, Harrison confided that his men gave him "fits" in their efforts to assert their independence. Even as he was being pressured by his superiors to arrest and jail several of his men for breaches of discipline, he persevered in his attempts to persuade his company that a modicum of discipline was necessary. As the 1862 campaign season opened, regimental officers increased the pressure on Harrison to reclaim missing men and organize his company. Rather than report absent members of his company, he wrote to his wife and asked her to "tell Jno Wilson to see Wm Powell Charles Johnson Mo. N. Johnson & Wm. Ellis & tell them if they don't return forthwith they will be arrested as deserters & brought back which will be very disagreeable." Powell, a twenty-three-year-old farmer, had overstayed his sick leave but reported back for duty in time to avoid censure. He received a promotion to corporal in 1864 and lived to surrender at Appomattox. Ellis, on the other hand, did not return and regimental rolls listed him as absent without leave. At some point in 1863, he rejoined the company and a court-martial convened and acquitted him. Ellis died in action at the Wilderness in 1864. At least William Powell, and perhaps others, benefited from Harrison's efforts to deal gently with his men. Considering that the offenses that Powell and the others committed would soon warrant the death penalty, Harrison's sensitivity must have earned him plaudits from his men. His approach perhaps made the policies that he had to reluctantly enforce a little easier to manage.⁵⁵

At the same time that soldiers worked out the strategies that would allow them to retain their dignity and autonomy while in military service, they also sought ways to satisfy their emotional needs. After the Confederate victory at Manassas, many soldiers who assumed they would return home were shocked to find rules and guards keeping them in camp. For most men, that fall was the longest period they had been apart from their families. The separation seemed unbearable. David Funsten, a private with the 11th Virginia Infantry, spent the winter in Centreville, near the Manassas battlefield. He wrote to his daughters regularly about daily life in the army but finally confessed to his wife, "For a long time, I kept you all out of my thoughts, as much as possible, but when I began to think of a furlough & you always the embodiment of every hope & desire connected with it I found myself often overwhelmed as day after day & week after week passed away without the

expected leave of absence." Funsten knew firsthand the danger of withdrawing into one's emotions. He told his wife, "There was a young man from one of the Southern states who applied a few days ago for a furlough & it was refused. He was afterwards on guard . . . seeking an opportunity he stepped into a tent & blew his brains out. The tragic is extensively carried on here." Even without the drama of suicide, most Confederate soldiers would have agreed that their separations from their families constituted one of the war's central hardships.⁵⁶

Without their families, soldiers struggled to recreate some sense of home in the camps where they spent most of their time. This involved men assuming the values and performing the work often associated with women in the antebellum South. In fact, soldiers were not adopting wholly foreign beliefs or activities. During peacetime, most white men were active members of their households who understood and internalized the values that made them work. "The central values of the home," one historian has argued, "were harmony, self-control, and moderation."⁵⁷ For families to function successfully people had to suppress their individual needs, and the same was true in camps. Men found familiar the tensions between domestic and public space that they had also known at home, only now they enforced the feminine rules as well. Battles demanded toughness, ambition, and aggression, but in camp harmony, self-control, and moderation prevailed. Stable, home-like camps offered the opportunity for soldiers to create or strengthen relationships among men that bolstered their psychological health.⁵⁸

An important element of soldiers' efforts to recreate the parlor in the camp lay in the domestic duties that they performed. Of necessity, most Confederate soldiers had to do their own washing, cooking, and sewing. More surprisingly, many seem to have enjoyed it. Typical of this group was William Peek, who wrote his mother that, "As we lost our cook Steve and I had to get supper ourselves. I made the bread & he did the meat & coffee. The bread was pronounced the very best in the whole camp, and as good as any body need have."⁵⁹ Food preparation in the camps seldom exceeded the basic; most soldiers cooked meat (when there was any) in a skillet or roasted over a fire, and vegetables surfaced infrequently. When ovens could be obtained from home or built in camps, baking seems to have attracted the most interest. Confederate soldiers foraged rapaciously, and during the war they denuded acres of Virginia's fruit trees and bushes. The apples, cherries, and berries picked on these trips went into pies. As early as late 1861, Confederate soldiers who had taken on these new duties began to surprise themselves with their domestic abilities, and the accompanying sense of satisfaction.

Fletcher Moore, with the 12th Virginia Cavalry, boasted to his sister in mid-November, "we begin to understand cooking very well." His enthusiasm for cooking, probably not a frequent occurrence in prewar days, was not uncommon among Virginia's Confederate soldiers. Many men developed an affinity for assorted domestic duties and they openly proclaimed their new skills and the enjoyment they took from them.⁶⁰

The ability to feed themselves was crucial, but the meaning of the new skills went well beyond mere relief at being self-sufficient. William Mordecai took such pride in his baking that he bragged to his mother and asserted his culinary superiority over his sister. "My Dear Mother," he wrote, "You seem to think we are all naked & starving. . . . Since we kicked a trifling cook we had in our mess, out, on account of his bad bread, we (six of us) take it by turns to cook, & have biscuits which, if I may use such a figure, would often put Sally to the blush."⁶¹ Sally's first reaction might have been laughter rather than embarrassment, but like many Confederates, Mordecai was in earnest about his new skills. Daniel Hileman wrote to his brother from Fairfax Station in north-central Virginia, "Oh Philip I wish you could come down here to eat beefstake That oven you sent me is the very thing to fry beefstake in I flatter myself that I can cook beefstake as good as any woman and I can bake first rate bread too I am well pleased with the cooking instincts." Hileman frankly recognized that he hoped to reach a level of achievement already attained by most women. Further, his pride rested in developing his "cooking instincts," a skill few men would have bragged about before the war. The process of mastering domestic skills helped soldiers stay connected to the domestic worlds that they left behind when they joined the armies. Without a doubt, many soldiers learned to cook and clean because (like soldiers the world over) they had to, but soldiers' receptivity and interest in these tasks offers a valuable clue to the importance of domesticity in their lives.⁶²

Efforts to recreate a sense of domestic intimacy partially helped offset the loneliness men felt at being separated from their families. A young captain admitted the difference between his real home and camp in a letter to his wife late in 1861. "We have been lying out for the past week on the ground without tents," he reported, "and as we started back to camp some one remarked that he was glad that we were going back home (meaning camp). I remarked that if I only was assured that I was on my way to my home, where my dear wife is, it would be the happiest moment of my life, except the meeting, but alas, it was not home that we were going to, but the tented field." To assuage the sense of loss at being separated, soldiers spent time establishing contacts with loved ones. Communication with families, rather

than male bonding with other soldiers, satisfied most men's emotional needs during the war. One Confederate described the situation to his sister.

It must have been a happy thought to you, if you knew, whilst you were writing the letter I received yesterday, how much real pleasure it would afford. I knew I was not forgotten. I knew that the affection you had always shown would increase rather than subside under existing circumstances. But letters are not intended merely to convey intelligence. They are more precious as a medium for carrying on a silent conversation between those who have thoughts and affections & sympathies & hopes alike. Such was your letter to me.⁶³

Concern for families in the wake of Union invasion of the state, and the ensuing physical hardships, drove men to focus their emotional attention on their loved ones at home. Soldiers begged for descriptions of family members and activities, working to keep themselves connected to the domestic worlds they left. One soldier's plea to his wife is typical in this regard. "I want you to write me a long letter," he stated, "giving me a particular account of your own condition and telling me all about *our little daughter*. It is time she had a name—what do you want to call her?" The desperation felt by Virginia soldiers to stay involved in their families' lives emerges almost palpably from some letters. "Do write me soon," John Harrison pleaded with his wife. "It is cruel and unkind when I am so hampered with my duties to keep me so anxious about you all, when one little line might either set my mind at rest or call me to you—I am almost constrained that you do not care about my troubles or do not like to have me share yours." Many men maintained contact with their children through their spouses. A farmer from the Shenandoah Valley told his wife, "I want you to kiss the children once a day for me until I get home. Then I will get to take the job off your hands." When soldiers could not take furloughs to visit home, or read letters sent by relatives, they wrote letters themselves, or simply recollected the love and affection they enjoyed at home. All of this emotional work helped stabilize soldiers amid the uncertainty and violence of the war and served as a crucial counterpart to the institution building soldiers performed at the same time.⁶⁴

The third element that emerged in late 1861 and early 1862 to help cement soldiers' dedication to Confederate victory was an emerging sense of Confederate nationalism. Most white Virginians transferred their national loyalties to the Confederacy with surprising ease. Letters at this time contain references to "our country," or "the country," or "the nation" in clear reference to the Confederacy, yet few correspondents betray any self-consciousness that

this represented a shift of national loyalties. Rather, most Virginians seem to have adopted the perspective advocated by Confederate leaders, that the Confederacy represented the true intent of the Founding Fathers and should rightly be considered "America." One young soldier, who had joined the army without his parent's consent, revealed this perspective when he wrote home to explain his decision. Appropriately, he enlisted in the town of Liberty, Virginia. "Perhaps I have acted wrongly in acting without consulting you," he began, "but I could not stay here and see our lands overrun by those vile vagabonds of Black Republicanism I go with a brave heart and look to the Father of Battles for protection hoping that I may be spared to return and enjoy the freedom which was obtained by the blood of our forefathers." In the public atmosphere of secession and enlistment, dedication to nation as an end in itself emerged as a viable motivating factor.⁶⁵

During 1861 and 1862, the new sense of national identity helped anchor soldiers' duty to remain in service despite hardships in camps or on campaigns, dissatisfaction with the draft, or simple loneliness. Benjamin F. Wade, with the 19th Virginia Infantry, explained the demands made on loyal men to his brother in early January 1862. "In these revolutionary times individual life is much less regarded than ordinarily," he instructed. "The issues are so momentous that the blood of the present generations must be the purchase money. And they involve a degree of self sacrifice that must often be stimulated to be preserved, rather than weakened by those to whom we temporarily entrust our lives and fortunes." Wade closed with a remarkably succinct expression of nationalism: "If we are to have a nation it matters little who he be."⁶⁶ Indeed, Virginia men took note of events around their new nation and redoubled their efforts in the face of defeats and setbacks in the western theater. A cadet at the Virginia Military Institute informed his sister that "since the great disaster to our arms at Roanoke Island and Fort Donalson the Cadets have all tendered their services to Gov. Letcher. I don't suppose he will accept us. We have not heard from him yet. I wish he would accept us. I think every one ought to be in the field."⁶⁷

The eager young men at the institute were not the only Virginians who recognized in the losses of their new countrymen to the west a spur to action. James McCutchan of Augusta County drew from the western defeats a stronger sense of purpose. "This is the darkest hour the Confederacy has ever seen," he told his sister in March 1862. "Now is the time for every true & patriotic spirit to rally 'round the Bonnie Blue Flag & fight & never cease to fight while there is an enemy South of Mason's & Dixon's line."⁶⁸ Richard Waldrop expressed a similar sentiment to his mother, noting, "I think this is

Part II ★ THE CRUCIBLE OF WAR

a bad time for men to be pushing forward their own interests when the country is in more imminent danger than it has been, at any time yet & has need for every arm that can be raised in her defence.”⁶⁹ The draft angered many soldiers, but the necessity of service overwhelmed individual concerns about the mechanism deployed to create the army. “I think it [automatic reenlistment] probably justifiable under the circumstances,” Armistead Burwell wrote his brother, “for, it must be apparent to the most casual observer, that at least a large proportion of the twelve month volunteers must be kept in the field next Summer if we would meet the well drilled hordes of the North with any certainty of success.” Burwell did not speak without consideration for what it meant for him. “As for myself,” he wrote, “I expect to enlist again, and would like to make some arrangement with you, that we may both get into the same company.”⁷⁰

The commitment that Armistead Burwell made to the idea of a Confederate nation in the winter of 1861–62 came somewhat more easily than it may have for soldiers from the Lower South. Virginians recognized that the defense of the Confederate nation overlapped significantly with the defense of their own state. This understanding allowed soldiers like John Barrett Pendleton of Richmond to explain his duty as “the defense of our country, our liberty and the protection of our parents, wives, and children, and all that is dear to a man.”⁷¹ For Pendleton, as for most Virginia Confederates, there was little friction between the demands of home and the demands of nation. Samuel Moore grasped this idea as well. He criticized his company captain when the officer left the unit to care for his family. If his family could not survive without the captain’s presence, Moore thought he should resign. “I rejoice that no such conflict exists in my case,” he announced. “That my duty to my County, my family, my neighbors, myself, all unite in requiring me to be just where I am, a soldier in our noble army, ready to go and die in the cause of liberty.”⁷²

The Virginians who fought the Civil War, like all Americans who came of age in the antebellum era, were reared in a period when emotional celebrations of nationalism were the norm.⁷³ It seemed natural to them to identify closely with the Confederacy, because most had formed meaningful bonds with the United States before the war. That faith in the Confederacy would serve them well over the coming years. Although Virginians would not always agree with the policies of the Richmond government, or even continue to offer the paeans to nationhood that they did early in the war, the bedrock sense of national identity established by mid-1862 facilitated a deep commitment to southern independence.