

Challenge Yourself, Round 12
The Congressional Medal of Honor

During this down time occasioned by the fight against the spread of the Coronavirus, we want to keep our members in touch with the Civil War with a bi-weekly round of questions and ponderables. Some will be easy, some will not. This is not a formal quiz, but a way to keep your ACW expertise sharp. No response is needed; however, if you do want to comment, send them via email to Emil at emilposey@ardmore.net, and he will post with the next "Challenge Yourself," which will also contain the "school solution" to this set of questions.

1. The Medal of Honor was first established by:
 - a. George Washington as the Badge of Military Merit on 7 August 1782.
 - b. Congress as a Certificate of Merit on 3 March 1847.
 - c. The Congressional Committee on Naval Affairs on 9 December 1861.
 - d. President Abraham Lincoln on 21 December 1861.
2. Upon whom was the award of the Medal originally intended?
 - a. Officers
 - b. Enlisted Men
 - c. Department of War Certified Civilians
 - d. Exceptional Congressmen
3. During the Civil War, most awards were made for what action?
 - a. Heroism under fire
 - b. Saving the flag from capture
 - c. Capturing an enemy General
 - d. Capturing an enemy flag
4. How many Medals were awarded to members of the 27th Maine Volunteer Infantry Regiment?
 - a. 0
 - b. 6
 - c. 28
 - d. 864

Extra Credit #1: What were they awarded for?

Extra Credit #2: What happened to them?

5. How many Medals were awarded the Navy and Marine Corps during the Battle of Mobile Bay, 5 August 1864?

- a. 87 Sailors and 8 Marines
- b. 4 Sailors and 3 Marines
- c. 16 Sailors and 0 Marines
- d. 29 Sailors and 14 Marines

6. How many Medals of Honor were awarded during the Civil War?

- a. 2495
- b. 4302
- c. 1522
- d. 957

Extra Credit: Of these, how many were awarded to members of the Navy and Marine Corps?

7. Who were awarded the first Medals during the War?

- a. The Secret Service who helped President Lincoln get safely to Washington
- b. Andrews Raiders for capturing a railroad train at Big Shanty, Ga
- c. Colonel Elmer Elsworth who was killed while removing a Confederate flag from the roof of the Marshall House inn in Alexandria, Virginia
- d. Robert E. Lee who was offered the award for assuming command of the Union forces prior to the war's beginning.

8. Who was the only woman awarded the Medal during the War?

- a. Mary Edwards Walker
- b. Harriet Tubman, Union Spymaster
- c. Pauline Cushman, Union Spy
- d. Mary Elizabeth Bowser (a.k.a. Mary Jane Richards), Union Spy

9. What US Ship had the most Medal of Honor winners in her service during the war?

- a. USS Tecumseh with 99
- b. USS Hartford with 5
- c. USS Lackawanna with 2
- d. USS Richmond with 33

10. How many sailors off the USS Metacomet were awarded the Medal of Honor for rowing a skiff into the middle of the battle to rescue survivors of the USS Tecumseh?

- a. 1
- b. 4
- c. 6
- d. 9

Extra Credit #1: Why didn't the officer in command of the skiff receive an award?

Extra Credit #2: What did Confederate General Paige, Commander of Fort Morgan, order when he saw the skiff arrive on the scene?

11. How long did the Battle of Mobile Bay, during which fully 28.96% of the total number of Medals of Honor awarded during the American Civil War were given, last?

- a. 3 hours
- b. 7 hours
- c. 4 days
- d. 6 weeks

BONUS FUN FACT: All 60 members of President Lincoln's funeral detail were also awarded the Medal of Honor. These too would later be revoked as not rising to the level required for award.

BONUS FUN FACT #2: Not to be outdone by the Navy, the Army would also be given the right to award the Medal on 12 July 1862.

Answers to Round 11 questions:

- 1. b
 - a. Grierson's Raid -- In support of General Grant's campaign to take Vicksburg, Grierson and his 1700 horse troopers, some in Confederate uniform serving as scouts for the main force, rode over 600 miles from southern Tennessee through the state of Mississippi and into Union-held Baton Rouge, Louisiana, over routes no Union soldier had traveled before. They tore up railroads and burned crossties, freed slaves, burned Confederate store houses, destroyed locomotives and commissary stores, ripped up bridges and trestles, burned buildings, and inflicted ten times the casualties they received, all while detachments of the troops made feints confusing the Confederates as to his actual whereabouts, intent, and direction. Total casualties for Grierson's brigade were three killed, seven wounded, and nine missing. Five sick and wounded men were left behind along the route, too ill to continue.
 - b. Morgan's Raid -- The raid covered more than 1000 miles, beginning in Tennessee and ending in northern Ohio. During this raid, Morgan and his men captured and paroled about 6000 union soldiers and militia, destroyed 30 four bridges, disrupted the railroads at more than 60 places, and diverted 10s of thousands of troops from other duties. He spread terror

throughout the region, and seized thousands of dollars worth of supplies, food, and other items from local stores, houses, and farms. Since the timing somewhat coincided with the Gettysburg campaign and raids towards Pittsburgh by John D. Imboden's cavalry, many assumed at the time that Morgan's raid was part of a coordinated effort to threaten Ohio River commerce and spread the war to the North. Actually, it was independent of Robert E Lee's campaign in Pennsylvania.

- c. Shelby's Raid -- The raid last over 40 days and covered more than 800 miles of territory In west central and northwest Arkansas and southwest and west central Missouri in the autumn of 1863. While spectacular, the raid had little lasting results on the course and conduct of the war in Missouri or in other theaters. It did earn Joseph O. "Jo" Shelby a general's star and cemented his reputation as one of the Civil War's most daring cavalry commanders.
 - d. Streight's Raid -- Union Colonel Abel Streight raids into northern Alabama and Georgia with 1,700 men April 19 – May 3, 1863, with the goal of cutting the Western and Atlantic Railroad between Chattanooga, Tennessee and Atlanta. His provisional brigade consisted of portions of the 1st West Tennessee and 1st Alabama (US) cavalry regiments and four infantry regiments, most of whom had to ride mules due to a shortage of horses. The raid ended when Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest captured Streight's entire command near Rome, Georgia.
2. b
- a. Private Henry L. Wyatt, 1st North Carolina Volunteer Infantry (kia, Battle of Big Bethel, June 10, 1861)
 - b. Private Daniel Hough, Battery D, 1st Artillery (US) -- One of the defenders of Ft. Sumter, who was killed as a result of the accidental discharge of a cannon during the firing of salutes to mark the surrender of the fort to the Confederates on Sunday, April 14, 1861
 - c. US Colonel Elmer E. Ellsworth, 11th New York Volunteer Infantry (kia, Alexandria, Virginia, May 24, 1861)
 - d. CS Captain John Quincy Marr, Warrenton Rifles Infantry Company, Virginia State Militia (kia, Fairfax Court House, Fairfax, Virginia, June 1, 1861)
3. d
- a. April 9, 1865 Battle of Appomattox Court House (Virginia)
 - b. May 12-13, 1865 Battle of Palmito Ranch (Texas)
 - c. May 1, 1865 Battle of Anderson (South Carolina)
 - d. June 28, 1865 when the Confederate cruiser Shenandoah burned 10 US whalers in the Bering Sea. Not until 35 days later did Shenandoah skipper, Lieutenant James Waddell, learned that the war had ended in early April.
4. b

- a. Drummer Boy Albert Henry Woolson -- (February 11, 1850 – August 2, 1956), the last known surviving member of the Union Army who served in the American Civil War; he was also the last surviving Civil War veteran on either side whose status is undisputed. At least three men who followed him in death claimed to be Confederate veterans, but one has been debunked and the other two are unverified. The last surviving Union soldier to see combat was James Hard (1841–1953).
 - b. Private John J. Williams, 34th Indiana Infantry -- He was killed May 13, 1865, at the Battle of Palmito Ranch, the last land battle of the Civil War, and is generally recognized as the last soldier killed in the American Civil War.
 - c. Corporal John W. Skinner, US 1st Florida Cavalry -- On May 19, 1865 ... "Cpl. John W. Skinner of First Florida Cavalry was killed, and three Union soldiers were wounded and were the last casualties of the war, the ambush at Hobdy's Bridge, Alabama.
<https://www.exploresouthernhistory.com/hobdys2.html>
 - d. Sergeant David Southard, 1st New Jersey Volunteer Cavalry -- A Union Army soldier during the American Civil War who received America's highest military decoration the Medal of Honor for his actions at the Battle of Sailors Creek
5. More than 400 Confederate and 580 Union soldiers advanced to the rank of general during the course of the Civil War, and more than 1 in 10 would die. A total of 124 generals died--78 for the South and 46 for the North.
 6. Prior to the Civil War, the Army periodically divided the United States into various units called geographical *Departments*. Two or more departments were sometimes grouped as a *Military Division* (later was called a *theater of operations*), and Departments were frequently divided into lesser geographical areas called *Districts* and often into *Subdistricts*.

These geographical units became powerful political Institutions during the Civil War. A Department commander, assigned by the President or the Secretary of War, controlled the area within its headquarters, forts, camps, stations, offices, and depots, as well as usually commanding all military units within its boundary.

When a large field unit such as a field army was in active operation, disputes arose frequently between departmental commanders and army commanders, especially when armies moved across departmental boundaries or occupied portions of two or more departments. Large armies or several armies, later called *army groups*, often extended over the boundaries of departments in which they were engaged or supplied. Examples included the Army of the Potomac and the Army of the Tennessee.

Such disputes between armies and departments often were resolved by the assignment of the same man to command the field army as well as the Department. Other times the President ordered an army commander to operate independently of departmental command. in the latter case, the department acted essentially in a supporting role.

(Source: Civil War High Commands, John H. and David J. Eicher; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001; pg. 819.)

7. d
 - a. April 9, 1865 (Appomattox)
 - b. June 28, 1865 (Confederate cruiser Shenandoah burned 10 US whalers in the Bering Sea)
 - c. November 6, 1865 (CS Cruiser Shenandoah surrenders to the HMS Donegal in the River Mersey, near Liverpool, England)
 - d. August 20, 1866 (President Andrew Johnson issues Proclamation 157, Declaring that Peace, Order, Tranquility, and Civil Authority Now Exists in and Throughout the Whole of the United States of America)

Ponderable: What strategic value was Cairo, Illinois to the Union? To the Confederacy?

The southernmost Union city in the Civil War, Cairo, the county seat of Alexander county in 1860, is located in extreme southern Illinois. Many of its population of some 2,200 felt kinship with the South and had ties with the institution of slavery. It was the terminus of the Illinois Central Railroad and was a port at the confluence of the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers, a low-lying delta area that came to be known as "Little Egypt". Cairo was the lynchpin to strategies North and South. Its strategic location made it a control point for river traffic up and down the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. It became the base of Union operations on the Mississippi and was the jumping-off point of Grant's campaigns in the West and Paducah, KY, and Forts Henry and Donelson, TN, and subsequently the move into northern Mississippi that evolved into the Vicksburg campaign. As long as the Confederacy could occupy or otherwise interdict the city, they would have effectively protected much of western Tennessee and maintained control of the Mississippi River basin to its south. Of course, that was not to be.

For those wanting to delve deeper into these and other ACW topics, you might go to our website (www.tvcwrt.org) and roam through the various collections at our Education pull-down tab. Those collections are continually expanding.