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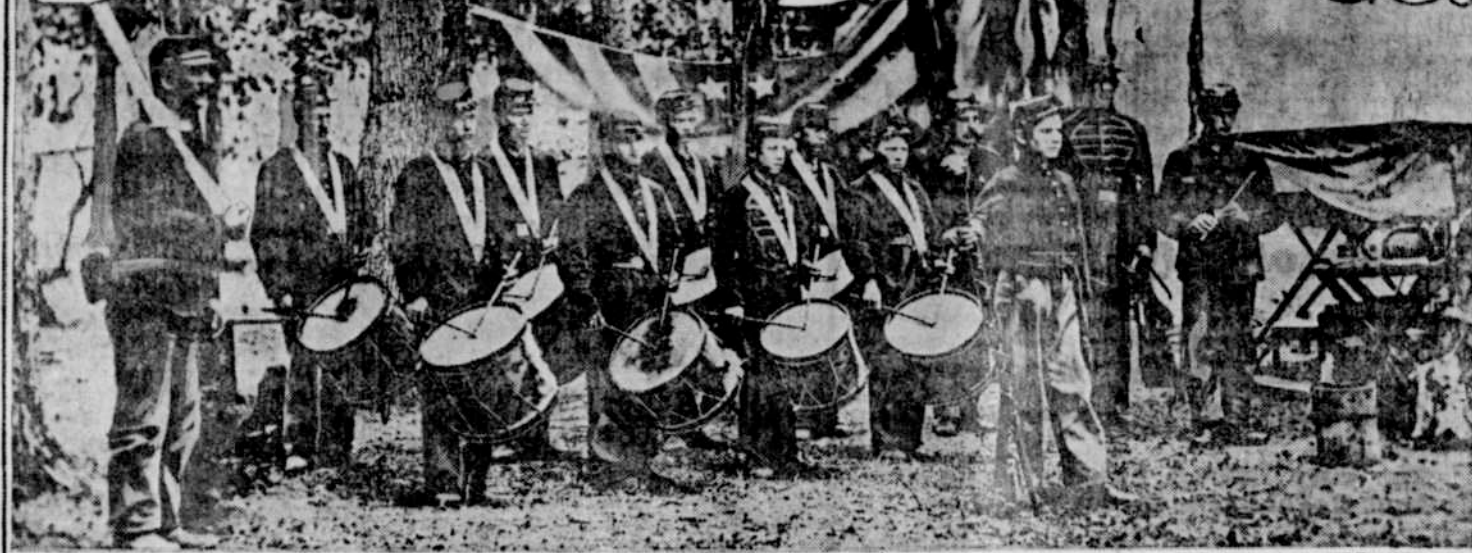


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Youthful Musicians

Heroic Lads of the
Civil War

By Captain GEORGE L. KILMER,
Late U. S. V.

When battle round each warlike band
And carnage loud her trumpet blew
Young Edwin left his native land
A drummer boy for Waterloo.

NOTWITHSTANDING the crude-
ness of the writer's art, the
verses from which the above
lines were taken immediately
became a festsday classic. They were
given to the public while Waterloo was
fresh in mind as the greatest battle
of modern times. All the civilized
world was then interested in Waterloo.
Just as the tactics and military prac-
tice of the French and English were
copied by the regular soldiers of the
United States, so the ideas and tradi-
tions clustering around some famous
name, as of a Napoleon or Wellington,
or a battle like Austerlitz or Waterloo,
warmed the imagination of the Ameri-
can masses.

A dreaming boy of 1861 dreamed of
Waterloo. If his age permitted he be-
came a soldier to imitate the Old
Guard of Napoleon or the Royal Scots
of Wellington. His tender years could
not hold him back from the recruiting
camps, for, if not old enough to take
up arms as a soldier, he could be a
drummer perhaps. There had been
drummer boys at Waterloo; why
should not the drummers in the Ameri-
can camps also be boys?

If the recruiting sergeant did not
think so and refused to enroll the lad

clans enlisted for each company of in-
fantry. Usually one was a fifer and
one a drummer.

If a boy could show himself very
skillful at the rub-a-dub-dub or tootle-
te-toot he would be taken, even if he
lacked a couple of years, a couple of
inches and a score of pounds to bring
him up to the regulation size, age and
weight. This accounts for Willie
Johnson, aged thirteen, who was
awarded a medal of honor for some
gallant act performed the second year
of the war while he was a drummer to
the Third Vermont; for the boy Munson
of the Twenty-third Massachu-
setts, who was mortally wounded at
the battle of Rappahannock while only thir-
teen; of Gardner, the drummer of the
Eighty Michigan, brought home to his
anxious, waiting mother, dead from a
wound received in battle when he was
but little over thirteen.

Blue or gray, it made no difference.
There were A. K. Clark, a drummer of
the Fifth Georgia regiment, who went
through the campaign weighing but
ninety-five pounds, and little Giffen of
Tennessee, the hero of a classic war
lyric, who was nursed back to life from
an awful wound only to go forth
again to battle and never be heard
from more.

The life and drum corps of an in-
fantry regiment formed a unit in it-
self. The members were detached
from the companies in which they had
enlisted and attached to regimental
headquarters, the same as the color
guard. Under a chief they occupied
separate quarters and were subject to
the directions of the colonel's staff of
officers. In battle the fifers and drum-
mers, especially during the early days
of the war, assisted the surgeons in
the care of the wounded. Often they
were with strangers, administering to
the fallen, and errands of mercy called
them to distant parts of the field.

In 1863 the Federal ambulance corps
was organized, and the work of giving
first aid and removing the wounded
was done thereafter by ambulance at-
tendants. This arrangement relieved
the musicians of the duty of removing
wounded in stretchers and left them
free to roam the field in search of
suffering victims.

Unlike the regimental band, the reg-
imental life and drum corps, which
includes the regimental bugler, has a
practical duty to perform in the rou-
tine of camp and march. The band
is a luxury and an ornament. Con-
gress discovered that early in 1862
and legions of hundreds of bands out
of existence.

The 700 then in service employed
17,000 men and had already cost \$5,
000,000 in addition to the pay of the
men, their food and the expense of
transporting them. It was plain at
that date that the war was to be a
long and costly one.

The musicians were regularly enlist-
ed soldiers, who could not be forced
to take up arms and fight unless they
chose. The only way to abolish the
bands was to muster them out of
service. But music was not totally
banished from the army camps. Bri-
gade bands were formed, and some
regiments or their officers or patrons
at home paid the expenses and retain-
ed the music.

The bugle and the life and drum are
essential in an army to sound the va-
rious calls, which swiftly, as well as
musically, signal the orders of the
commander to the troops. These in-
clude the familiar ones of getting
"em up in the mornin'" and "go to
sleep, go to sleep, go to sleep," reveille
and taps. In camp certain calls are
sounded periodically day in and day
out, but on a campaign many of them
are signals to sudden change of ac-
tion.

With the army strung out for miles,
the bugle or drum at headquarters
starts the signal rolling. The nearest
drums or bugles repeat it, the notes
often rattling in emergencies the
first signal may be overtaken before it
reaches the end of the line by another
sent out to supersede it. The "long
roll" beaten on the drum or the bugle
calls "To arms!" and "To horse!" an-
nounce the sudden appearance of the
enemy.

The armies of fifty years ago had no
telephone or megaphone and only an
imperfectly developed telegraph and
flag signal system. Practically then
the bugle or drum, even in the hands
of a schoolboy, was an official mouth-
piece which might order men "into
the jaws of death," also recall them
in nick of time "back from the mouth
of hell."



LEADING THE CHARGE

of ten or twelve, the boy could still
follow the army to the front as a vol-
unteer and trust to luck. The sergeant
might relent when the boy showed the
stuff that was in him by facing the bat-
tle as bravely as his seniors.

"This is the way it happened that in
the romance and poetry of the war may
be found the sobriquets 'The drummer
boy of Shiloh' and 'The drummer boy
of Chickamauga.' They were the same
boy, little Johnny Clem, who couldn't
be a soldier because he was only eleven
years of age. But he could drum, and
the kind hearted soldiers humored his
ambition and took him to the front,
where he 'made good,' first at Shiloh
and then at Chickamauga.

When the war broke out in 1861 the
rule concerning musicians in the Uni-
ted States army was about the same as
in the British army, after which it was
modeled.

After the Crimean war England
adopted the rule of enlisting the mu-
sicians as soldiers and then forming
them into musical corps or bands. This
became the practice of the regu-
lar army of the United States, and the
volunteer army, of course, followed
the same custom. The regulations
were that there might be two musi-

ALL lad, you have your uniform.
When I put on the blue
My heart was young, my hopes
were high.

I was a boy like you.
I thought that it was great to don
The bright and brave array,
But Uncle Sam's regalia then
Meant something more than play.

It meant long years from Bull Run's field,
Where raw troops felt the breath
Of leaden storms, whose lightnings flashed
And thunders spoke of death,
To Appomattox, where beneath
Her famous apple tree
The sun went down upon the hopes
Of those who fought with Lee.

It meant long marches and a bed
Upon the frozen ground,
The open sky our only tent,
The elements around.
It meant scant clothing, summer fare
And insect tormenting dena.
It meant disease and fever camps
And southern prison pens.

It meant the fiercest fighting
This old world has ever seen
From Fair Oaks to the Wilderness
And all the way between.
And this with brothers of the blood,
From common lineage sprung,
With the same sacred memories,
Their speech a common tongue.

All that is over now, my lad.
The passions have subsided.
We have one flag, one hope, one land,
And all our ways are peace.
Gone are the hatreds of the past,
The anguish and the tears.
The battle scars are buried 'neath
The snows of fifty years.

May you, my grandson, never know
Such fratricidal scenes.
But keep alive their memory,
To teach what freedom means.
Through them this land, as Lincoln said,
Saw liberty's new birth.
Through them she now has come to be
The leader of the earth.

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compared with that of a man is as 67
to 100.

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"An Ibsen expert?"
"Yes; he makes some mighty queer
plays."—Cincinnati Enquirer.

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