

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## The First Air Corps

In 1861, 42 years before the Wright brothers made their first airplane flight, President Lincoln named Thaddeus Lowe Chief Aeronaut of the Army of the Potomac. What was an **aeronaut**? At that time, it was a person who flew in a hot air balloon.

Lowe recruited and managed the North's first **hot air balloon corps**, which provided aerial surveillance during the first two years of the Civil War. He and his airship crew made over 3,000 flights into Confederate territory.

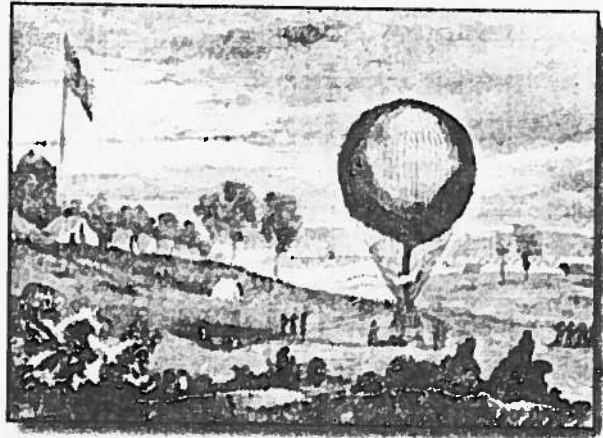
On August 3, 1861, the **U.S.S. Fanny** became the country's first aircraft carrier. Aeronaut John LaMountain used the ship as a base for a balloon survey of Southern activities along the Potomac River. From the air, he could get a better view of the scene below, including numbers and placement of troops.

Confederate General James Longstreet remarked, "The Federals had been using balloons in examining our positions, and we watched with envious eyes their beautiful observation as they floated high in the air, well out of range of our guns."

The first Confederate balloons were made of varnished cotton and inflated with air heated by burning pine knots and turpentine.

These were tethered to half-mile ropes connected to a windlass.

Cotton was not satisfactory material for hot air balloons, but the cost of silk, the best material, was too expensive. The Confederates overcame this problem by sewing together pieces of silk from dresses donated by Southern women to make a balloon.



At the Battle of Fair Oaks in May 1862, Lowe's observations from a hydrogen balloon provided vital information that narrowly averted a Union defeat, according to his unpublished memoirs.

Despite the advantage of air surveillance, many Union generals were not convinced of its value, and the air corps was expensive to maintain. When Lowe quit in 1863, the air corps itself was discontinued.

UNIT TWO: THE CIVIL WAR

### Critical Thinking

How do you think the use of hot air balloons gave the North an advantage? Give specific details or examples to support your answer.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## The War at Sea

Except for a few gunboats at the beginning of the Civil War, the South had no ships to protect its 3,500-mile coastline from Virginia to Texas.

Union ships patrolled the Atlantic coast and the Gulf of Mexico, blocking Confederate trade routes. This prevented the South from receiving supplies or sending cotton, tobacco, and other trade goods to be sold.

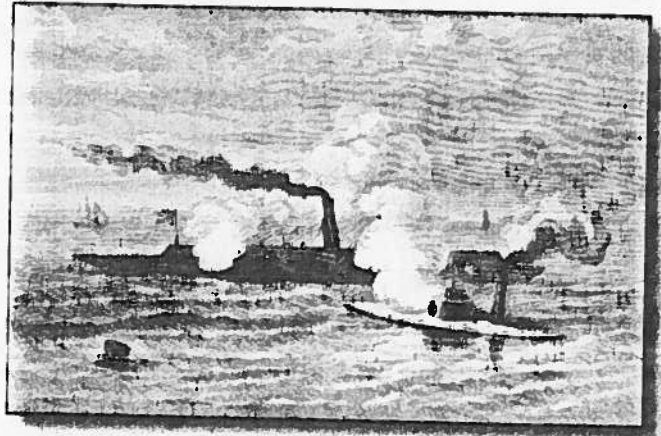
Stephen Mallory, Confederate Secretary of the Navy, decided the South needed an ironclad ship. They raised the **U.S.S. Merrimac**, which had been sunk at the beginning of the war to prevent it from falling into Confederate hands. They covered the ship with iron plating and renamed it the **C.S.S. Virginia**.

When the North learned about the **C.S.S. Virginia**, they decided to build their own ironclad ship, the **U.S.S. Monitor**. By then, though, the South had a three-month head start.

Both navies rushed to complete their ships. Many people expected the **ironclads** to sink as soon as they were launched. They didn't sink, but both had serious problems and there was no time to fix everything.

In its first battle at Hampton Roads on March 8, 1862, the **Virginia** destroyed two Union warships, caused one to become grounded, and drove off two others.

The **Monitor** arrived the following day, before the **Virginia** could destroy the ship that had run aground. Only 50 yards apart at times, the two ironclads blasted cannonballs at each other.



The *Virginia* (*Merrimac*) on the left is approached by the *Monitor* on the right.

Both crews fought desperately to keep their ships afloat. When cannonballs failed to sink the **Monitor**, the **Virginia** tried to ram the ship, but missed by a few feet. After a four-hour battle, the **Monitor** headed for water too shallow for the **Virginia** to follow.

The **Virginia** returned to port for repairs, where they discovered the ship had been hit by cannonballs at least 150 times during its two-day battle. The **Monitor** had been hit 23 times.

After being repaired, the **Virginia** returned to Hampton Roads on April 11, where the **Monitor** and a pack of Union warships waited. Outnumbered and surrounded, the crew set fire to the **Virginia**. It burned until it finally exploded. The **Monitor** later sank in a December storm.

The South built 22 ironclad ships, but the North built more than 60. With their superior numbers, the Union tightened the blockade, captured most of the major ports in the South, and controlled the rivers.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## The War at Sea (cont.)

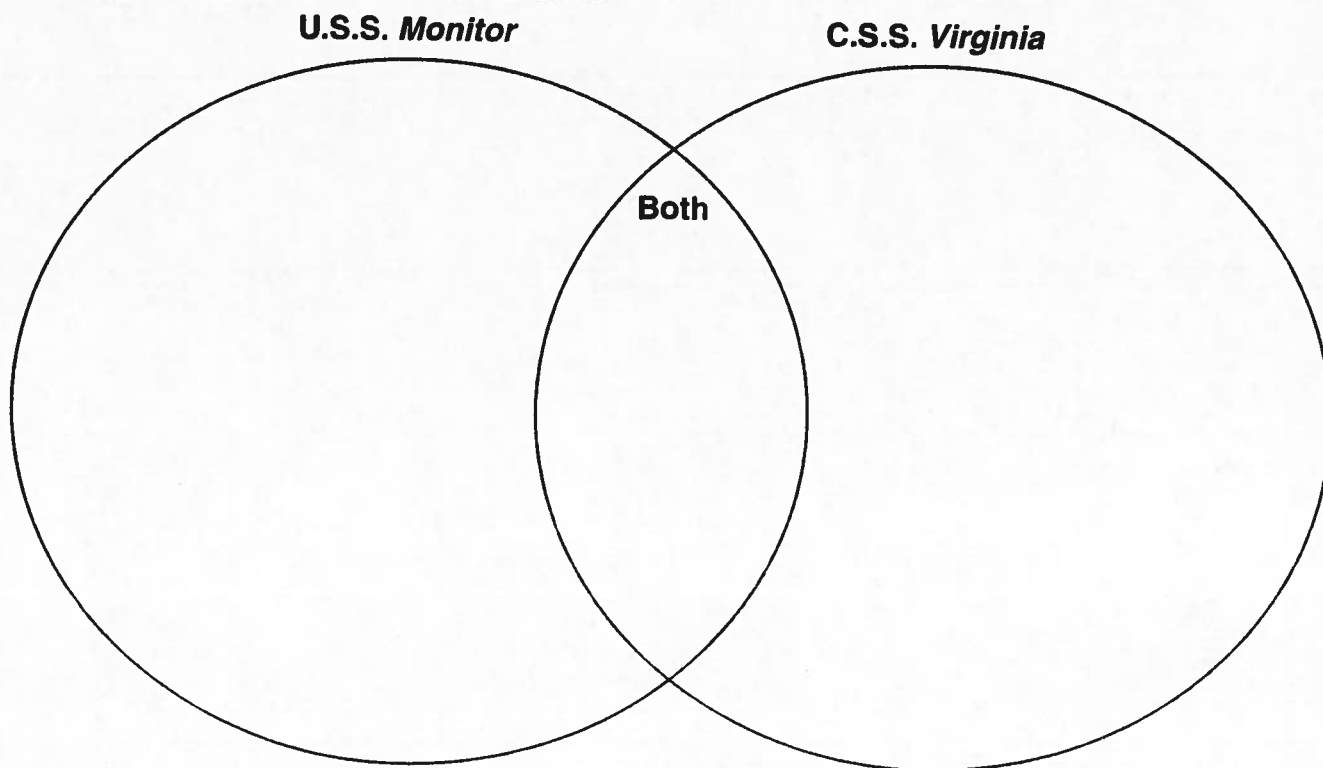
### True or False

**Directions:** Write "T" if the statement is true or "F" if it is false.

1. T F Stephen Mallory, Confederate Secretary of the Navy, decided the South needed an ironclad ship.
2. T F The South decided to build the ironclad ship, the U.S.S. *Monitor*.
3. T F The U.S.S. *Merrimac* was covered with iron plating and renamed the C.S.S. *Virginia*.
4. T F The North built 22 ironclad ships, but the South built more than 60.
5. T F With their superior ironclad ship numbers, the Confederates captured most of the major ports in the North and controlled the rivers.
6. T F At Hampton Roads on April 11, the *Virginia* was destroyed by its own crew.
7. T F The *Monitor* sank in a December storm.
8. T F Many people expected the ironclads to sink as soon as they were launched.

### Graphic Organizer

**Directions:** Compare the U.S.S. *Monitor* and the C.S.S. *Virginia*. Complete the Venn diagram below.



UNIT TWO: THE CIVIL WAR

## Black Soldiers Help Win the War

Black soldiers had fought in the Revolutionary War and in the War of 1812, but when they first volunteered to fight in the Civil War, they were refused. Although abolitionists urged President Lincoln to accept blacks as soldiers, the majority of politicians opposed the idea. They believed blacks could not learn the duties and become good soldiers

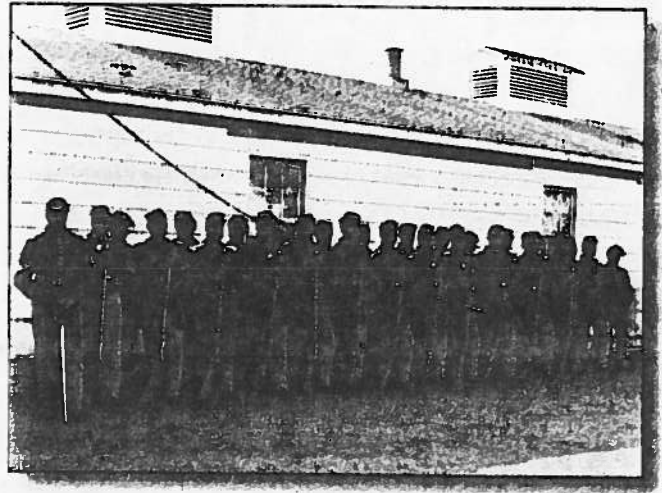
Frederick Douglass, an escaped slave, questioned this decision. "Why does the government reject the Negro? Is he not a man? Can he not wield a sword, fire a gun, march and countermarch, and obey orders like any other?"

Finally, after two years of war, Congress passed the **Militia Act of 1862**, allowing Lincoln to employ blacks "for any military or naval service for which they may be found competent."

The first black Union regiment, the **54th Massachusetts Volunteers**, received only \$10 a month as salary, \$3 less than white soldiers. Blacks were not permitted to hold a rank higher than captain.

Union regiments of black soldiers in the South consisted mostly of former slaves, men who knew the territory and had strong motives to fight against their former masters for the freedom of their fellow slaves.

At first, blacks were assigned only to menial tasks like cleaning latrines and building roads. Before the war ended, more than 186,000 blacks had fought in the Union Army and participated in over 400 battles.



Company E, 4th United States Colored Infantry. This detachment was assigned to guard the nation's capital during the Civil War.

Although some white soldiers welcomed the addition of black troops, many objected strongly. Some officers refused to lead black troops; some white soldiers refused to fight alongside them.

In spite of their bravery and outstanding record, **discrimination** against black soldiers continued for nearly another 100 years. It wasn't until 1948 that the army ended **segregation**, and black and white soldiers worked side by side.

Faced with a critical shortage of manpower, Jefferson Davis signed the **Negro Soldier Law** on March 13, 1865. Units of black soldiers were organized in Richmond. Southern crowds threw mud and stones at the soldiers as they trained. However, the war ended soon after, and the Confederate black soldiers never fought in the Civil War.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Black Soldiers Help Win the War (cont.)

**Directions:** Complete the following exercises.

### Matching

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| _____ 1. Militia Act of 1862           | a. separation   |
| _____ 2. 54th Massachusetts Volunteers | b. signed by Jefferson Davis  |
| _____ 3. discrimination                | c. first black Union regiment   |
| _____ 4. segregation                   | d. prejudice  |
| _____ 5. Negro Soldier Law             | e. allowed Lincoln to employ blacks "for any military or naval service" |

### Fill in the Blanks

- Black soldiers had fought in the \_\_\_\_\_ and in the War of 1812.
- Blacks were not permitted to hold a rank higher than \_\_\_\_\_.
- Union regiments of black soldiers in the South consisted mostly of former slaves, men who knew the \_\_\_\_\_ and had strong \_\_\_\_\_ to fight against their former masters for the freedom of their fellow slaves.
- Before the war ended, more than \_\_\_\_\_ blacks had fought in the Union Army and participated in over \_\_\_\_\_ battles.
- However, the war ended soon after, and the \_\_\_\_\_ black soldiers never fought in the Civil War.

### True or False

**Directions:** Write "T" if the statement is true or "F" if it is false.

- T F Abolitionists opposed the idea of blacks as soldiers.
- T F Black soldiers did not fight in the Revolutionary War.
- T F Politicians urged President Lincoln to accept blacks as soldiers.
- T F Frederick Douglass was an escaped slave.
- T F The 54th Massachusetts Volunteers received only \$10 a month in salary.
- T F Discrimination against black soldiers continued for nearly another 100 years after the Civil War.
- T F It wasn't until 1998 that the army ended segregation, and black and white soldiers worked side by side.
- T F Faced with a critical shortage of manpower, Jefferson Davis signed the Negro Soldier Law on March 13, 1865.
- T F Confederate black soldiers never fought in the Civil War.
- T F Union regiments of black soldiers in South Carolina consisted mostly of former slaves.