



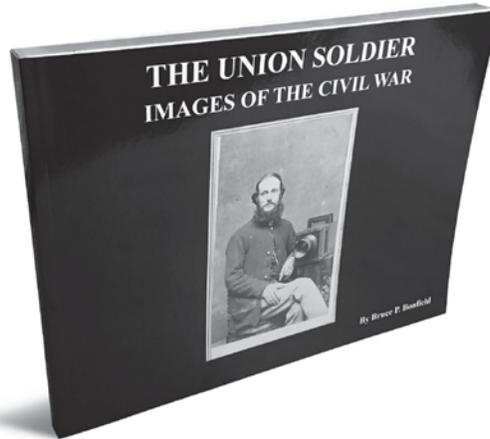
Images Shine in a Book of Collection Favorites

BY RONALD S. CODDINGTON

Like the tiny spark that ignites a raging fire, the inspiration that propels an author on a book-publishing journey can come from unexpected sources.

For photo collector Bruce Bonfield, it was winning an eBay auction of an album filled with images of soldiers from the 21st Iowa Infantry. One of the photographs tucked into the album was his great-great grandfather, 2nd Lt. Gilbert Cooley. The portrait, along with letters and other documents from his ancestor, laid the foundation of his self-published 2010 book, *Make the Rebels Bawl: Lt. Gilbert Cooley: 21st Iowa Volunteer Infantry*.

The self-publishing experience motivated Bonfield to tackle a second book, *The Union Soldier: Images of the Civil War*. A survey of favorite images from his personal collection assembled over three decades, the volume features 170 albumens, ambrotypes, *cartes de visite* and tintypes. The cover photo, a rare *carte de visite* of a Union soldier posed with a camera, sets the tone for the quality of content



The Union Soldier: Images of the Civil War

By Bruce P. Bonfield
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Blackstone Publishing
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of the photographs inside. A representative sampling of images from the book can be found beginning on page 60.

Union Soldier is divided into 11 chapters, with three sections dedicated to New York soldiers, an early focus of his collection. Other chapters devoted to various image groupings include New England and Western infantry, cavalry, engineers, sailors and miscellaneous. A lone Confederate soldier appears in the frontispiece.

Throughout this effort, however, the photographs remain the stars of this show. The captions and design are economical, typically no more than one line with very basic information. The introduction includes a capsule history of early photography and a quick reference guide to uniforms, ranks,

weapons, regimental organization and more.

Bonfield clearly has a keen eye for quality images. His *Union Soldier* offers something for everyone—the casual observer of portraiture, the advanced image collector, and anyone curious to see the results of one man's lifetime pursuit of Civil War photography.

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