



Backbone and Lifeblood, or Reflections on Our 200th Issue

On a brutally cold winter's day this past December, I traipsed the battlefield of Ball's Bluff for the first time. As I trekked down the trail along the edge of the Virginia side of the Potomac River, my mind conjured up chaotic scenes of federals fleeing across the cold waters and Confederate soldiers firing at them from the high ground behind me. I slipped the bonds of time and immersed myself in the surroundings. The past became alive.

I owe this experience to a fellow collector with a passion for this little remembered, yet historically significant, engagement. I first met Ken Fleming a few years earlier at a Civil War show and learned about his interest for Ball's Bluff—and his well-researched collection of portraits of soldiers related to the battle. Ken's collection and knowledge formed the basis of a collaboration that culminates in the presentation in this issue. The project was more than a year in the making, and involved 10 collectors and institutions.

Ken is representative of the core of collectors that shape the backbone of this magazine. *MI* could not exist without the generosity and kindness of the collecting community. The portraits, personal stories and surveys of material culture shared by collectors have kept *MI* vibrant and relevant for 38 years, and counting. As we celebrate this issue, our 200th, it is fitting to pay tribute to the long list of those who have contributed since 1979, and to recognize the many thousands of images that have been documented. This is also a good time to introduce a new column, *Most Hallowed Ground*, which profiles individuals interred at Arlington National Cemetery.

Our advertisers are also a critical part of the magazine's backbone. These dealers, auction houses and other purveyors work hard to bring military photographs and other artifacts into the marketplace. In appreciation for their continued support, I am pleased to introduce the new *Ad Index* on the opposite page.

Last, but by no means least, are our readers. You are the lifeblood of this magazine. Whether you subscribe, purchase individual issues at the Gettysburg National Battlefield Park visitor center or elsewhere, I salute you for your ongoing support and continued interest, enthusiasm and passion for Civil War portrait photography.

We need your help to spread the good word about *Military Images*. Tell your friends and fellow collectors to subscribe or advertise. Donate a gift subscription to your local library or historical and genealogical society.

And if you are a collector focused on a specific aspect of the war, I want to hear from you. Now, onward to future issues!

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Preserve.

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