



## Moved to Tears

I just want to say how touching the Winter 2017 cover image was—a veritable issue's worth all by itself. I have seen a lot of period couple shots and truth be told have given them short shrift in general but this one with the intimacy that it so warmly exhibits—just makes me tear up and the same can be said of many of the other related images—



curiously postured and some with their backs to the photographer—never seen the like.

As a historian I love context

so when I see the same story presented in multiple images my visual imagination just knows no bounds so your two virtual albums (2nd R.I. and 7th N.Y.) were simply astonishing to me.

I particularly love the identified photos of course—we all do and it is a great mitzvah that you are doing, both in publishing these but also of course partnering with others to make these connections.

Jim Jacobsen  
Des Moines, Iowa

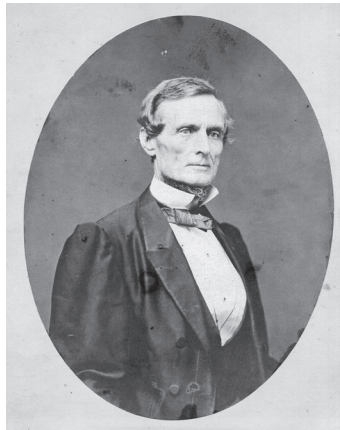
## A Keeper

Keep up the good work. If I had to give up the dozen or so Civil War magazines I subscribe to, I would keep yours. Your approach is fresh and exciting. I have never seen such beautiful copies of images in a magazine before.

Yvonne P. Divak  
Johnstown, N.Y.

## Davis de Rigueur

Enjoyed the Jefferson Davis article in the Winter 2017 issue. This is the first time I have ever seen the full photograph on page 12 published. A note on Davis' clothing as described in the article, the "jacker" is actually a black broadcloth formal



frock coat—de rigueur for an American President at this time. Davis is actually wearing a dark, not "light" vest, probably black silk brocade as befits formal afternoon dress for an elected official. Davis has a cord, probably for attachment to some kind of eyepiece (tucked no doubt in a vest pocket) that is lying on his white pleated shirt, which gives the appearance of a "light" vest. Superb image!

Kirk D. Lyons  
Black Mountain, N.C.

## Massachusetts Soldier Identified

Thanks to a reader known only as "Octogenarian" who identified the 6th Massachusetts Infantry soldier with crutches pictured in the Winter 2017 *Uniforms & History* as Pvt. Charles L. Chandler of Com-



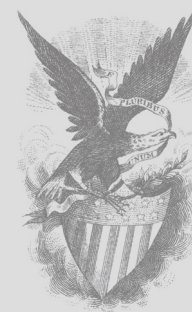
pany D. Chandler left his job as a "Pop Corn Man" in a traveling circus and enlisted on April 22, 1861. He was wounded a week later while passing through Baltimore with his regiment. In the scuffle with pro-secession rioters, he injured his leg. He was discharged a few weeks later and went on to serve in the Bay State's 26th and 33rd infantries. Chandler returned to the circus. In 1883, while on the job in Dover, Del., he suffered a crushed leg and bruised arm in another riot that went down in history as the Great Dover Circus Shoot-Up. According to a report in the *New York Times*, Chandler stated that, "the mob in Dover surpassed in ferocity the one his regiment encountered in Baltimore." Chandler survived his injuries and lived until 1915.

## On Crossed Arms

Robert Rybolt of Hanover, Kan., observed the three VMI cadets with arms crossed ("Rats,



Crossed Arms and a Mourning Ribbon," Winter 2017) and was reminded of his days as a cadet at Kemper Military School in Boonville, Mo. Founded in 1844 by Frederick T. Kemper, the brother of Confederate Gen. James L. Kemper, the school adopted a military training program in 1885 when it hired a VMI graduate as an instructor. Rybolt notes, "My first year was my 'rat year,' which required walking a rat line, bracing the walls, ad infinitum. In the mess hall, when addressed by a senior cadet we ceased eating and crossed arms as a form of attention. I suspect the three front cadets are seated at attention."



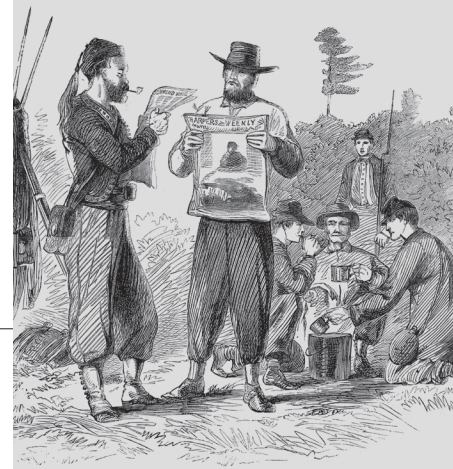
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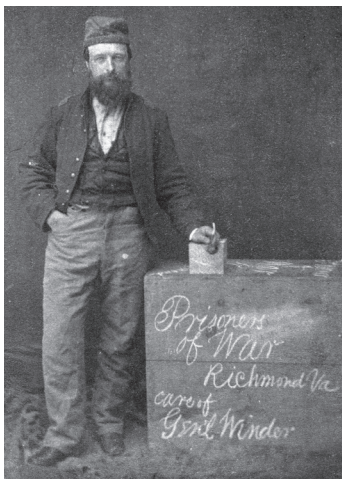
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He adds, “Sadly, Kemper closed its doors forever in 2002.”

## An Officer’s Identity, and a New Backstory

Thanks to subscriber and contributor Buck Zaidel, the soldier posed with a box labeled “Prisoners of War Richmond Va, care of Genl. Winder” (The Last Shot,



Winter 2017) has been identified as Marvin A. Parks. Zaidel, co-author of *Heroes for All Time: Connecticut Civil War Soldiers Tell Their Stories*, discovered the same portrait and other materials related to Parks in the MOLLUS Collection at the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center in Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

Prior to the identification, it was believed that the soldier was a prisoner of war from Ypsilanti, Mich., who was possibly captured at the Battle of Gettysburg and held at one of the Richmond area prisons under the direction of Brig. Gen. John H. Winder. The theory was based on the pencil inscription “Ypsi July 1863.”

But thanks to Zaidel’s efforts, a very different scenario emerges. An examination of Parks’ military records reveals that he was in fact a prisoner of war in Richmond, but fell into enemy hands during the First Battle of Bull Run. At the time he served as a second lieutenant in the 1st Michigan Infantry, a regi-

ment organized in April 1861 for a three-month enlistment. Parks was exchanged and released in January 1862, and mustered out at that time because his term of service had expired. He returned to the army in the summer of 1862, and served briefly as first lieutenant and quartermaster in the 26th Michigan Infantry. He then joined the U.S. Commissary Department as a captain. It was in this role that he is pictured here as the sender of a box of supplies to Richmond—not as a recipient as previously theorized.

The war did not end well for Parks. In early 1865, he was charged with fraud, embezzlement and misappropriation of government funds. Found guilty by court-martial, he was sentenced to prison and ordered to pay a hefty fine. He was held at Fortress Monroe and paid a part of the monies owed before military authorities released him in the summer of 1865, after making a determination that he had suffered enough.

Parks disappears from federal records about this time. He may be the same Marvin A. Parks who died in 1870 and was buried in Genesee County, N.Y., his birth state.

## Note on the Early Uses of the Flaming Bomb Insignia

Several readers observed that the flaming shell insignia on the cap worn by Thomas Lord, Jr., in the Winter 2017 issue (“The Regiment That Saved the Capital,” page 32) is the emblem of the U.S. Army Ordnance Department, not the Corps



of Engineers as noted in the caption. Author and *MI* Senior Editor Mike McAfee notes, “The flaming bomb insignia was used as a military insignia by

most European nations, first as a symbol for grenadiers and gradually for other military types. The 7th New York State Militia used a shako plate based on Russian insignia featuring three conjoined flaming bombs in the 1830s and 40s. It was used as part of the sockets for plumes and pompons in the U.S. Army from the 1830s through the Civil War. Its specific use starting in 1851 for the Ordnance Department was just one of many uses of the flaming bomb in the 18th and 19th centuries.”

## Capt. Simpkins, 54th Massachusetts

In “Following the Colors on James Island,” (Autumn 2016), author Scott Valentine told the story of Capt. Cabot Jackson Russell



Russell

of the 54th Massachusetts Infantry. The vivid details of his tragic death during the Battle of Fort Wagner included a poignant scene involving a fellow captain, William H.

Simpkins, who also was killed as he attempted to assist the mortally wounded Russell. The story was illustrated with a portrait of Russell.



Simpkins

Thanks to contributor Paul Russinoff, we can now see the face of Capt. Simpkins. The *carte de visite* portrait was taken in the studio of James Wallace Black of Boston, Mass.

## Dual Designation

The caption that accompanied the *carte de visite* of Capt. Abram Sharpe Smith in the Winter 2017 issue (“Great Greatcoats!,” page 56) identified him as a member of the



80th New York Infantry. This prompted a strong response from Seward Osborne, a longtime subscriber and contributor who owns the original *carte de visite*. Osborne, author of *The Three-Month*

*Service of the 20th New York State Militia, April 28–August 2, 1861* (Longstreet House, Hightstown, NJ, 1988), has dedicated nearly 50 years to researching the regiment. He has made a compelling case that it should be identified as the 20th New York State Militia (80th New York Volunteers).

A tangled web of misunderstandings, failed communications, broken promises and political intrigue on the state level during the early part of the war resulted in the dual designation. Uneven references to the regiment after the war have only added to the confusion. Osborne insists that images of soldiers who served in the regiment should be labeled as the 20th (80th). And so *MI* shall honor his request.

Osborne, by the way, has authored several other publications, including *Holding the Left at Gettysburg: The 20th N.Y.S.M. on July 1, 1863* (Longstreet House, 1990). An updated and expanded version of this title is expected to be available later this year.