informed his wife in the spring of 1864, "you see soldiers holding prayer meetings." He found one whole regiment on their knees praying "for forgiveness for their sins, for strength and courage to resist the invader, and for success to the Confederate cause." From the trenches around Atlanta in the summer of 1864, a private in the 33rd Mississippi wrote home that three of his messmates including his best friend had been killed, "but when I took the last look at him I felt very happy to think that he had gone to a better world." Religion was the only thing that kept this soldier going; even in the trenches "we have prayer meetings every night when we don't have preaching."42

Many previously unregenerate Union soldiers also got religion during the final, grueling year of the war. A young corporal in the 103rd Ohio wrote home in May 1864 that for the first time "I feel confident that I have found grace in the sight of God who then should we be afraid to die." A hard-bitten hell-raiser before he joined the army, the color bearer in the high-casualty 86th New York came to the Lord after he was twice wounded. On the eve of the final assault at Petersburg on April 2, 1865, he wrote in his diary: "Jesus owns me, O, how sweet to feel that if we fall on the field of strife, we only fall to rise to higher and more perfect bliss than this world can give. My object is to live for Heaven."43

The conclusion drawn by a study of G.I.s in World War II holds true for Civil War soldiers as well: religious faith "did not impel the individual toward combat but did serve the important function of increasing his resources for enduring the conflict-ridden situation of combat stress."44 What then did impel Civil War soldiers to combat? Part of the answer lies in the same ideals of manhood and honor that had impelled many to enlist.

Chapter 6

A BAND OF BROTHERS

Civil War soldiers wrote much about courage, bravery, valor—the three words meant the same thing. The quality they described was the mark of honor. But soldiers wrote even more about cowardice—the mark of dishonor. Many soldiers lacked confidence in their courage. But most of them wanted to avoid the shame of being known as a coward—and that is what gave them courage. Civil War soldiers went forward with their comrades into a hail of bullets because they were more afraid of "showing the white feather" than they were of death. The soldier who visibly skulked out of combat could never hold up his head again as a man among men. S. L. A. Marshall wrote of soldiers in World War II: "Personal honor is the one thing valued more than life itself by the majority of men."

Civil War soldiers would have agreed. "Death before dishonor" is a phrase that occurs in their letters and diaries more times than one can count. And they really seem to have meant it.

A postwar novel by a Civil War veteran included an episode depicting a visit by wives and mothers to soldiers in camp. The women praised their many courage and contrasted it with the timorous nature of womanhood. The second lieutenant replied: "We are as much afraid as you are, only we are more afraid to show it." To show fear was to
court contempt. A captain in the 14th New Hampshire expressed pride at having so few skulkers in his company "and the others shame those few so much that they must of necessity come up to scratch or be in disgrace." After a soldier in the 16th Mississippi had fallen to the rear at Malvern Hill, "he is irretrievably disgraced," reported his sergeant. "Not one of the Regt. deign to notice him at all."2

Few soldiers with "any pride of manhood in them" could bear the shame of such contempt. "I cannot boast of much pluck," wrote a private in the 39th Ohio after his first battle, "but I have got my full share of pride and could die before I could disgrace the name I bear." He was confident that his wife also "would sooner hear of my death than my disgrace."3 It is by no means clear that wives and mothers shared this sentiment. But husbands and sons liked to think they did. A New York private wrote his wife in 1863: "I would not show myself [a coward] if I was ever so big a one, would you?" A sergeant in the 64th Ohio informed his mother that "it is better to die the death of a brave Soldier than to live a coward's life." The wife of a Texas infantry captain was probably not thrilled by a letter from her husband in 1863 declaring that if he ever showed "the white feather" in battle, "I hope that some friend will immediately shoot me so that the disgrace shall not attach either to my wife or children." He was later killed not by a friend but by the enemy, at the battle of Pleasant Hill.4

Before their first battle many soldiers were apprehensive that they would not pass this test of manhood. Those who did pass uttered a sigh of relief after it was over. "I am so afraid I shall prove a coward," an officer in the 8th Connecticut told his family. "I can hardly think of anything else." But after the battle of Newbern he wrote elatedly that he was "a little shaky at first but soon got used to the music. I know no one will say that I behaved cowardly in the least." While waiting to go into action for the first time, a private in the 36th Pennsylvania feared that he might "find myself acting the coward," but in fact "the opposite was the case; I was never more cool and self possessed than while in the hottest of the fight." Before attacking Confederate trenches at Fort Donelson, an Iowa corporal "did not know whether I had pluck enough to go through," but afterward, "I have no fear but I can do my duty. . . . I would rather be in a soldier's grave than to have acted as some of our boys did," especially the "fist-cuff rowdies" from the waterfront slums of Davenport, who were last seen "running away into the timber" while "all the Wolf Creek boys did their duty bravely."5

In Civil War argot, one of the favorite devices of men who wanted to skulk out of combat was to "play off"—to feign sickness—when their real ailment was "cannon fever." Letters from fighting soldiers are full of contempt for men in their companies who were "taken very suddenly ill" when action portended. A captain in the 63rd Ohio wrote in his diary after a fight that "the usual number of cowards got sick and asked to be excused."6 A private in a Kentucky Confederate regiment damned the "infurnel cowards" in his company who "reported Sick when the fight was expected." But he was proud that all of his messmates "walk out like men" to meet the enemy. A soldier in the 38th Tennessee told his wife after Shiloh that "some of our Company disgraced themselves by falling back, pretending to be very lame. I would have gone in if I had to have gone in on one leg."7

To avoid the taint of cowardice, many genuinely sick soldiers did go into battle on one leg, so to speak. A corporal in the 24th Michigan wrote in his diary during the battle of Fredericksburg: "Feel quite sick. If it were not for being called a Sneak and a coward I would not be in the ranks today." A sergeant in the 155th Pennsylvania disobeyed the surgeon's order sending him to the hospital during the Bristoe campaign because "there are so many get off by pretending to be sick that a man is always looked upon with suspicion if he goes to a hospital, especially if there is a fight expected soon." A lieutenant in the renowned 15th Alabama was "quite sick" at the battle of Gaines Mill, he admitted to his wife afterward, "but I was determined not to have it said that our Comp. was in a fight and I not with them."8

Soldiers who went into action despite a real illness sometimes paid a steep price. A private in the 62nd Pennsylvania remained with his regiment despite the surgeon's orders to the contrary, for "if I had of Staid behind I would have been called a coward." He later regretted this decision, for he became seriously ill and did not recover for weeks just because "my foolish Pride kept me in the ranks." A corporal in the 1st Minnesota fought at First Bull Run despite sickness and afterward lost sixty pounds and almost died during three months in an army hospital. The 2nd Massachusetts was one of the war's elite regiments, with many of its officers from Boston's Brahmin class. One of them, Robert Gould Shaw, reported that four of his fellow officers refused to stay out of the battle of Cedar Mountain even though they were "quite ill." "It was splendid," Shaw wrote his mother, "to see those sick fellows walk straight up into the shower of bullets, as if it were so much rain." For that splendor three of the four paid with their lives.9
Most of the men in a volunteer company had enlisted from the same community or county. Many of them had known each other from childhood. They retained close ties to that community through letters home, articles in local newspapers, and occasional visits by family members to the regiment's camp. Because of this close relationship between community and company, the pressure of the peer group against cowardice was reinforced by the community. The absence of censorship meant that reports of cowardice would quickly find their way back to the community. The soldier who proved a sneak in battle could not hold up his head again in his company or at home.

Fighting soldiers did not hesitate to name skulkers in their letters home. "I am sorry to say that Norman Hart is a D—n coward," wrote a private in the 10th Wisconsin after Stones River. "He run away from the company just as we were going under fire the first day. . . . I tell you I do hate a coward. I am a big enough coward to go but never will desert in a trying time like Hart so help me God." A private in the 20th Indiana wrote home after a skirmish at Mine Run that "we did have A lot of skedaddlers." He named nine of them, adding that "they should be published to the world." Likewise a private in the 18th Mississippi wrote an amusing letter describing the antics of men in his company who found excuses to disappear as the drums beat the long roll for action. One of these men was harried out of the regiment by the ridicule of his fellows. He could never go home again because "the boys have written so much about him." 10

Officers did not escape this kind of censure; indeed, they were held to a higher standard. "Capt. Lucy of our company has resigned and gone home," wrote a lieutenant in the 17th Connecticut after Chancellorsville. "The company called him a coward and we told him that we hoped the folks at home would treat him as such." A captain in the 47th Ohio reported to his wife a rumor that another captain from their community "ran away and left his men" during a skirmish. "I hope not for the honor of our town." When the same officer "proved himself a coward" in another battle, it polluted forever his family alter—what a stigma for men to transmit to their posterity—your father a coward! 11

That was why so many soldiers echoed the words of a private in the 20th Georgia: "I had rather dye on the battle field than to disgrace my self & the hole family." Or like a lieutenant in the 26th Tennessee they proudly wrote home after a battle that "I did not disgrace our name. . . . The Boys all know it & can tell of it." Two brothers in the 10th Connecticut who fought at Newbern informed their father after the battle that "shame need not settle on your face in behalf of your two sons." 12

In some cases, soldiers who had been assigned to safe duty behind the lines pulled strings to return to their regiments at the front because folks back home might think they were playing off. As a private in the 21st Mississippi explained it, "I prefer the ranks" because his detachment as brigade clerk "is what is technically known as a 'Bomb proof' & that is something that I never want." Similarly a private in the 36th Massachusetts who had been detailed for two months as a teamster was "glad of the chance to come back to the company" because "I should not like to go home with the name of a coward." 13

Some studies of combat motivation have found that the felt need of a soldier to prove himself in the eyes of his comrades is strongest in his first battle or two. After that the veteran believes he has done enough to demonstrate his courage, and subsequently his fear of death or a crippling wound sometimes overmasters his fear of showing fear. One study finds the same to be true for the Civil War, in which the seemingly endless carnage by 1863 supposedly eroded the Victorian notions of manhood, courage, and honor that soldiers had carried into the army. 14

Soldiers' letters offer some evidence for this interpretation. Reluctance to fight often characterized "short-timers" during their final weeks of enlistment—especially those Union soldiers whose three-year terms expired in 1864 and who had not reenlisted. "The 2nd RI has got but 4 days more and if they get into a fight I don't think they will last a minute," wrote a lieutenant in the 10th Massachusetts, another regiment in the same brigade, in June 1864. "It makes all the difference in the world with the men's courage. They do dread awfully to get hit just as thier time is out." A private in the 3rd New York Cavalry with a good combat record confessed when he had only three weeks left of his enlistment that "I am what the Boys call 'playing off' " by pretending not to have recovered from an illness. "I have been sent for half a dozen times but So far have got out of going. . . . I am in hopes that it may last until my time is out." 15 This psychology did not exist in the Confederate army because there was no such thing as a Confederate short-timer. The Richmond Congress required men whose enlistments expired to reenlist or be drafted.

A majority of Union soldiers served through the end of the war unless killed or badly wounded, however, because half of the three-
year volunteers of 1861 reenlisted and the terms of the 1862 three-year volunteers did not expire before Appomattox. Among these men, and among most Confederate soldiers, little change in the values of honor and courage they brought into the war is reflected in their letters and diaries. "I do most earnestly hope that I may be enabled to meet my duties like a man when the breath of battles blows around me," wrote a corporal in the 64th Ohio in language that sounds like 1861 but was actually written in 1864 as he returned from his reenlistment furlough. Although he had fought in such bloody battles as Shiloh, Perryville, Stones River, Chickamauga, and Missionary Ridge, he expressed the same sentiments that had animated him three years earlier: "I do hope I may be brave and true for of all names most terrible and to be dreaded is coward." Another reenlisted veteran of many battles, a private in the 2nd Vermont of the Vermont brigade, which suffered more combat deaths than any other brigade in the Union army, wrote after his regiment lost 80 men killed and 254 wounded in the Wilderness that "I am sure if I had acted just as I felt I should have gone in the opposite direction [i.e. to the rear] but I wouldn't act the coward. . . . I clench my musket and pushed ahead determined to die if I must, in my place and like a man."  

These were far from isolated examples. If anything, the motivating power of soldiers' ideals of manhood and honor seemed to increase rather than decrease during the last terrible year of the war. A veteran in the 122nd Ohio wrote in 1864 that "I would rather go into fifty battles and run the risk of getting killed than as to be . . . a coward in time of battle." The lieutenant colonel commanding the 70th Indiana in Sherman's Atlanta campaign broke down from stress in June 1864 after a month of almost continuous fighting. Although he was still sick and exhausted, he returned to his regiment after a week in the hospital because "those who keep up are full of ugly feelings toward those who fall [behind], intimating in every way possible that it is cowardice that is the cause. . . . By being with the rest [I] can prevent anyone feeling that I lack the pluck to face what others do." And on the eve of marching through South Carolina with Sherman in 1865, a veteran corporal in the 102nd Illinois wrote simply, in language he might have used three years earlier, of "the soldier's person—more valuable to him than all else in the army, save his honor." 

The pride and honor of an individual soldier were bound up with the pride and honor of his regiment, his state, and the nation for which he fought, symbolized by the regimental and national flags. "None but soldiers can know how sensitive the men of a good regiment are of its reputation," wrote a lieutenant in the 2nd Michigan. Unit pride created a sense of rivalry with other regiments that sometimes took the form of denigrating their courage. A soldier in the elite 5th Wisconsin wrote with contempt of the 26th New Jersey, which "ran like sheep" at Chancellorsville, leaving the 5th to fight the enemy front and flank. While the 26th "turned their backs to the Rebels . . . not a man in our Regiment was shot in the back and all our dead lay with their heads toward the enemy."  

This disparagement of a regiment from another state was typical. Regimental honor was associated with state pride. When several hundred men from New York regiments broke and ran at the battle of Kinston in December 1862, soldiers in the 23rd Massachusetts threatened to shoot them, according to a member of that regiment. "Our boys called them cowards, and told them to go back to their regiments but they did not know where their regiments were—though the bullets were whistling around us we had to laugh at the excuses of these cowards." 

In the Confederacy, North Carolina regiments endured a great deal of disdain from those of other states, especially Virginia. Union victories over small armies composed mainly of North Carolina troops at Hatteras Inlet, Roanoke Island, and Newbern early in the war rubbed salt in the psychological wounds of North Carolinians. One general from the Tarheel State made the soldiers in his brigade pledge "not to visit wife, children, or business till we have done our full share in retrieving the reputation of our troops and our state." When North Carolinians fought courageously in later battles with the Army of Northern Virginia, particularly at Fredericksburg, a major in the 46th North Carolina was elated. The conceited Virginians had been put in their place. "It was the proudest day of my life," wrote the major after Fredericksburg. "It was a proud day for the old state."  

Individual soldiers whose courage nobody questioned nevertheless shared the humiliation of units with which they were identified—company, regiment, state. A lieutenant in the 75th New York, a veteran of many battles in which his regiment had performed well, was deeply ashamed when the regiment broke at Third Winchester. "This was the first time the 75th had ever run and I felt the disgrace," he wrote in his diary. "I never felt so bad in my life. . . . and I cared little whether I was shot." Such a feeling of dishonor could become a powerful spur to
courage in the next battle. When the 22nd Wisconsin fell apart in its first two battles and was subsequently assigned to rear-area guard duty in Tennessee, a private wrote with bitter shame that “the regiment is disgraced in the eyes of this army and its Commander.” He hoped they would be sent to the front and get a chance to salvage their reputation, “for pride is what makes a soldier. It seems to me as if I could not bear the thought of the 22nd going back [home] as they are now.” The regiment did redeem itself as part of one of the best brigades in the 20th Corps during Sherman's Georgia campaign of 1864.

Unit pride and loyalty prompted many three-year veterans in Union regiments to reenlist in 1864. “I have studied on your advice,” wrote a sergeant in the 12th Iowa to his parents, who had urged him not to reenlist. But he did, because more than three-quarters of the veterans in the 12th had reenlisted and the regiment would therefore retain its designation. The 12th had a proud history, and if this sergeant did not reenlist he feared he would be “put in another Regt to serve the remainder of my term, perhaps that Regt has disgraced itself in some previous engagement.” Anyway, what would he do after leaving the army if the war still raged? “Do you have the least idea that I could remain quietly at home and see those boys who have been with me constantly for over two years, who have endured the same hardships have been through the same dangers, and now leave them to bear my burden? Not much.”

The most meaningful symbols of regimental pride were the colors—the regimental and national flags, which bonded the men's loyalty to unit, state, and nation. The flags acquired a special mystique for Civil War soldiers. Color bearers enjoyed a special pride of place—and also a special risk, since the enemy directed its heaviest fire against the colors. But “the post of danger is the post of honor,” to quote a Civil War phrase used so often that it became a cliché. There was rarely any shortage of volunteers to carry the flags if the color bearers were shot down. One of the most honorable feats a regiment could accomplish was to capture enemy colors; the worst shame imaginable was to lose its own colors to the enemy.

Perhaps the best description of the powerful mystique associated with the colors comes from a noncombatant. In December 1862 Walt Whitman visited his brother George, a lieutenant in the 51st New York, after he had been wounded at Fredericksburg. Finding his wartime vocation, Walt Whitman stayed in Washington as a volunteer nurse, learning as much about soldiers as anyone outside that frater-
soldiers this could be quite literally a fate worse than death; it was a powerful incentive for fight rather than flight.

Primary group cohesion has presumably existed among combat soldiers from time immemorial and has been implicitly understood by those who experienced it. But it was the studies of German, American, and British soldiers in World War II by social scientists that gave the concept a hard analytical edge and a language to describe it. These studies have multiplied since the 1940s; most armies have incorporated the theory of primary group cohesion into their training and doctrine.25

"For the key to what makes men fight," wrote one modern student of combat motivation, "we must look hard at military groups and the bonds that link the men within them." The answer, according to another analysis, lies in "the intense loyalty stimulated by close identification with the group. The men are now fighting for each other and develop guilty feelings if they let each other down. . . . This spirit of self-sacrifice, so characteristic of the combat personality, is at the heart of good morale."26 In World War II the soldier "became increasingly bound up with his tiny fraternity of comrades. . . . In the last analysis, the soldier fought for them and them alone." Or as William Manchester put it in his memoirs of service in the American Marine Corps during World War II: "Those men on the line were my family, my home. They were closer to me than . . . my friends had ever been or ever would be. They had never let me down, and I couldn't do it to them. . . . Men, I now knew, did not fight for flag or country, for the Marine Corps or glory or any other abstraction. They fight for one another."27

Civil War armies presented no exception to the importance of primary groups. Indeed, the territorial basis of company recruitment reinforced this cohesion by bringing friends and relatives together in the same unit, thus linking primary groups at home with those in the army. In many cases, especially in Confederate regiments, two or more biological brothers enlisted in the same company. Soldiers' letters contain many references to the "band of brothers" theme—literal as well as metaphorical. "We feel like the kindest of brothers together" (10th Virginia Cavalry). "You would not believe that men could be so attached to each other we are all like brothers" (1st Ohio Heavy Artillery).28 "We love each other like a band of brothers" (11th Georgia). We all "seem almost like brothers. We have suffered hardships and dangers together and are bound together by more than ordinary ties" (8th Texas Cavalry). A corporal in the 9th Alabama returned to his regiment in October 1862 after convalescence at home from a wound in the battle of Glendale. "A soldier is always nearly crazy to get away from the army on furloughs," he observed, "but as a general thing they are more anxious to get back. There is a feeling of love—a strong attachment for those with whom one has shared common dangers, that is never felt for any one else, or under any other circumstances."29

The significance of this bonding became clear in combat. A veteran in the 122nd New York tried to explain how it worked. His sister had asked what kept him going through the carnage of the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, Cold Harbor, and Petersburg. "You ask me if the thought of death does not alarm me," he replied. "I will say I do not wish to die . . . I myself am as big a coward as any could be," he admitted in July 1864, "but give me the ball [bullet] before the coward when all my friends and companions are going forward. Once and once only was I behind when the regt was under fire, and I can't describe my feelings at that time none can tell them only a soldier. I was not able to walk . . . but as soon as the rattle of musketry was heard and I knew my Regt was engaged I hobbled on the field and went to them. . . . The untrained and old soldier are different in many respects. As to life the new one looks out for himself in or out of Battle, the old one when away from his companions thinks of them and goes in and the danger to himself is forgotten."30

The experience of combat did more than strengthen existing bonds; it also dissolved the petty rivalries and factions that existed in some regiments and forged new bonds among men who saw the elephant together. "Those who had stood shoulder to shoulder during the two terrible days of that bloody battle," wrote an officer in the 54th Ohio after Shiloh, "were hooped with steel, with bands stronger than steel." After the 6th Missouri (Union) fought its first battle at Chickasaw Bluffs, a captain who had previously lamented the bickering and backbiting among its officers wrote that "we all feel proud of our men and there is a better feeling among the officers." After the 83rd Pennsylvania suffered 75 percent casualties in the Seven Days battles, a private commented that "it seems strange how much the rest of our company has become united since the battles. They are almost like brothers in one family now. We used to have the 'aristocratic tent' and 'tent of the upper ten,' and so on, but there is nothing of that kind now. We have all lost dear friends and common sorrow makes us all equal."31
The fire of battle could even fuse the breach that existed in many companies between the pious and the profane. Not only did some of the profane suddenly get religion, but also some of the pious found surprisingly admirable qualities in their blasphemous brethren. "I have now spent a whole year with my comrades in battle," wrote a teetotaling private in the 23rd Massachusetts. "Every one of them is as a brother to me. . . . The members of Company F have won from me a lasting love. It is true many of them are very profane and the demon whiskey is not refused by many of them but with all their faults I love them because they are brave, generous, intelligent, and noble-hearted."32

The ties of comradeship caused many a soldier to resist a soft assignment away from his company or even to refuse promotion if it meant transfer to another unit. An aristocratic South Carolinian turned down a chance to transfer from the infantry to an elite cavalry outfit because "I am very proud of this company . . . & I am too much attached to my intimate friends to seek an opportunity of parting with them." A lieutenant in the 20th Massachusetts refused promotion to captain in another company. "It is a pretty hard thing to throw away a chance of rising," he explained to his father, but "I can't make up my mind to leave my own company. I have got really attached to the fellows." A Quaker captain in the 5th New Jersey faced a different kind of decision. His wife and mother pressed him to resign; his Quaker brethren threatened to read him out of Meeting if he did not do so. "Yet I should leave with much regret the men who stood manfully by me in the hours of danger through which I have passed," he told his wife. In the end he could not bring himself to leave them, and was killed at Second Manassas.33

This officer's death separated him from his company more decisively than resignation would have done. As the war went on, casualties rent the cohesion of some veteran regiments almost to the vanishing point. Cohesion is a renewable resource, with new men bonding to old and veterans bonding more closely. In time, however, attrition became a deadly foe to cohesion—and therefore to the qualitative as well as quantitative combat effectiveness of a unit. By August 1862 the South Carolina infantryman who had refused to leave his company to join the cavalry the preceding May left it to join the artillery because his company had "been stripped of some of my best friends" by casualties in the Peninsula campaign. A sergeant in the 55th Illinois found it "very lonely here" after Shiloh. "Most of the boys from the village are either in their long home or have been sent down the river on account of wounds." After the Shenandoah Valley campaign of 1864 had decimated Jubal Early's army, a Confederate officer lamented that "my best friends have fallen so fast, that in the army I feel as if I were left alone."34

One of the most influential studies of primary group cohesion attributed the persistent fighting power of the Wehrmacht even as the Third Reich collapsed around them to the bonds of camaraderie among squads and platoons in the German army.35 The principal critique of this interpretation, however, points out that the enormous casualties and consequent turnover of personnel in the Wehrmacht by 1942 left no core primary group around which to cohere. "Real primary groups do not fully explain combat motivation due to their unfortunate tendency to disintegrate when they are most needed," wrote Omar Bartov in his study of Hitler's Army, but the "idea of attachment to an ideal 'primary group' . . . clearly does have a powerful integrating potential." By ideal primary group Bartov meant the Nazi ideology of Aryan racial brotherhood. "The Wehrmacht began to manifest its most remarkable fighting power precisely at a time when the network of primary groups which had ensured its cohesion during previous Blitzkrieg campaigns began to disintegrate." Nazi ideology portrayed the Soviet Union as a mortal threat to German civilization. These "ideological arguments . . . [and the] ideological cohesion of the troops" enabled the Wehrmacht to continue fighting after 1942 with far greater determination and against far greater odds than at any other time.36

Bartov's thesis, while perhaps overstated, offers a suggestive way to analyze the ideological attachments of Civil War soldiers to something beyond their comrades in squad or company: to nationalism, liberty, democracy, self-government, and so on. When primary groups disintegrated from disease, casualties, transfers, and promotions, these larger ideas remained as the glue that held the armies together. Whether or not these commitments constituted "combat motivation," they certainly provided "sustaining motivation" for armies composed mainly of volunteers. Sustaining motivation is not unrelated to combat motivation, for armies cannot fight if they do not exist. And with respect to Civil War armies, a strong case can be made that the most patriotic and ideologically committed volunteers were the best combat soldiers, because they believed in what they were fighting for. It is time to examine what Civil War soldiers called "the Cause."