

Technology in the Civil War (4)

Reading

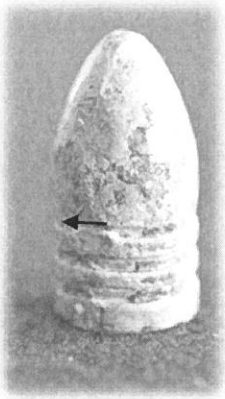
Many historians consider the American Civil War as the first modern war. This was the first war where transcontinental (across the nation) communication played an important role. Telegraphs allowed Union generals to communicate quickly and journalists to write stories with their newspapers. Photographs also became important to the Civil War. Although photographs were taken in a few earlier conflicts, this was the first war truly documented. Over a million photographs were taken during the Civil War.

This was also the first war in which railroads were crucial in moving large numbers of soldiers and large amounts of supplies quickly over long distances. This was an advantage used by the Union, since the Confederacy was lacking large miles of railway.

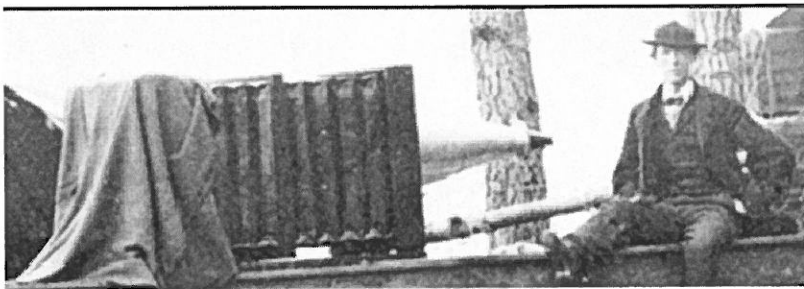
The weapons of the Civil War were increasingly deadly as well. The lead mini-ball was first used in this war and it was quicker to load and more accurate than any bullet before. However, with the old style of "line-fighting" this bullet proved to be extremely fatal. True machine guns were not invented for another twenty years, but the Gatling gun, a rotating bundle of gun barrels each firing in turn, was in use. The speed of a Gatling gun is limited only by how fast the barrels can spin, and they are still in use on helicopter gunships.

Technology in the Civil War (4)

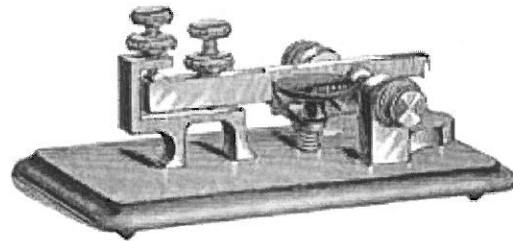
Photographs



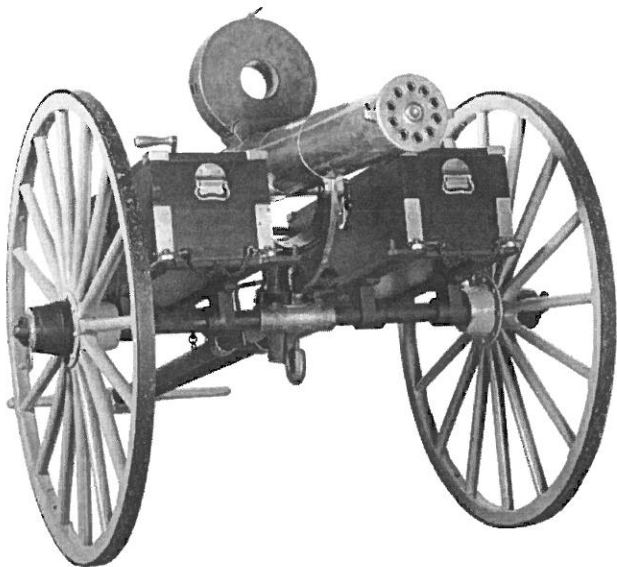
Civil War Mini-ball, this bullet would flatten when it entered the body shattering bones and bursting arteries



A Civil War camera and photographer



Mechanical Telegraph Instrument.



A Gatling Gun used in the Civil War. It was the first gun that resembles a modern day machine gun.

A Telegraph machine, this used Morse Code (a series of dots and dashes) to send messages across large distances

Technology in the Civil War (4)

Primary Sources

"My Dear Friend, It may be interesting to you to know how I came to invent the gun which bears my name; I will tell you: In 1861, during the opening events of the war, I witnessed almost daily the departure of troops to the front and the return of the wounded, sick, and dead. The most of the soldiers lost their lives, not in battle, but by sickness and exposure incident to the service. It occurred to me if I could invent a machine--a gun-- which could by its rapidity of fire, enable one man to do as much battle duty as a hundred, that it would, to a great extent, supersede the necessity of large armies, and consequently, exposure to battle and disease be greatly diminished. I thought over the subject and finally this idea took practical form in the invention of the Gatling Gun."

Source: R.J. Gatling, June 1877

"The camera is the eye of history."

Source: Mathew B. Brady, Civil War Photographer

"But there were, too, heart-rending groans and shrill cries of pain piercing the air, and despairing exclamations, "Oh, Lord! Oh, Lord! or "Let me die" or softer murmurings in which the words "mother" or "father" or 'home" were often heard." [Pain caused from the new weapons of the Civil War]

Source: General Carl Schulz, Division Commander, Union Army