

LOGISTICS AND SUPPLY

As stated by an unidentified Quartermaster officer in 1863:

"The amount necessary to supply an army is almost beyond belief."

To put the herculean task of supplying an army in the field into perspective consider the authorized daily ration for one Union soldier:

20 ounces of fresh or salt beef or 12 ounces of bacon.

1 pound of hard bread or 18 ounces of flour.

Additionally, the following was issued to every 100 men:

15 pounds of beans or peas.

10 pounds of rice or hominy

10 pounds of coffee

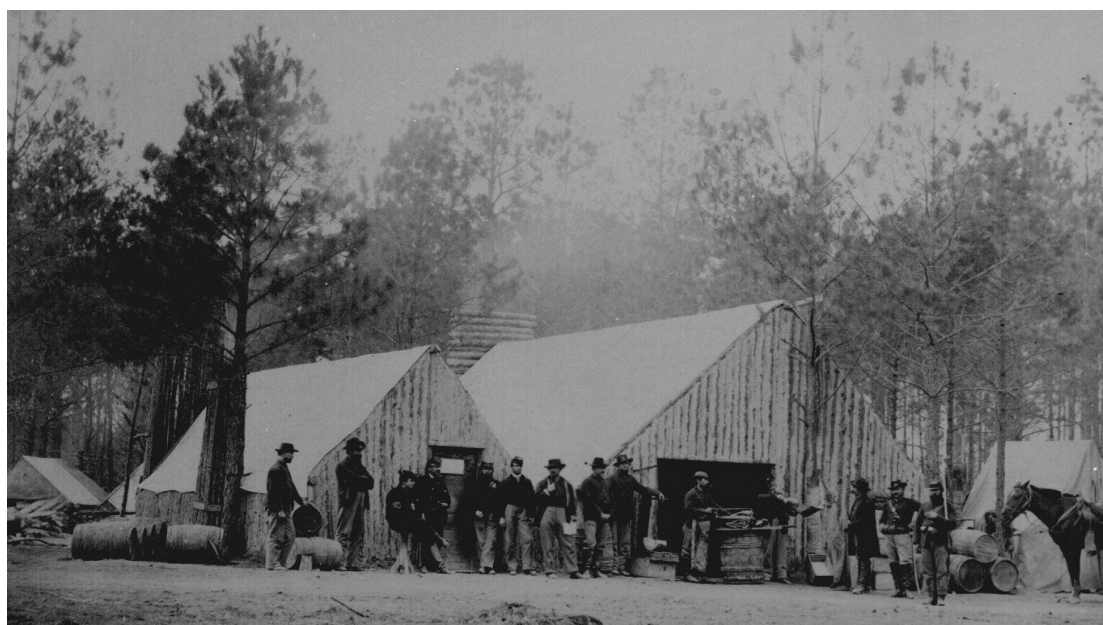
15 pounds of sugar

4 quarts of vinegar

4 pounds of salt

4 ounces of pepper

30 pounds of potatoes

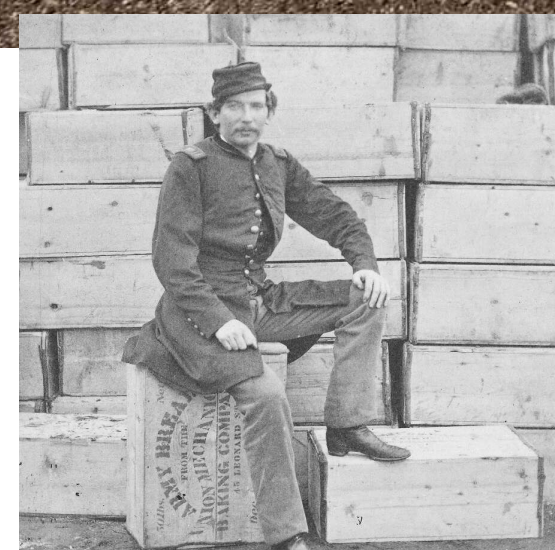


A Field Commissary

This amounted to about 3 pounds of food per man per day. Everything was shipped in crates or barrels which added about 3 more pounds to the aggregate weight of a soldier's daily ration. This food was moved to the soldier by army wagon. The typical army wagon was pulled by 4 horses or mules and carried an average of 1,400 pounds. The daily ration for each horse or mule was 10 pounds of hay and 14 pounds of grain. This all had to be moved as well. Army cavalry and artillery horses had the same requirement of grain and fodder.

Railroads, of course, played a big part in moving this vast amount of stores. Both armies used a combination of steamships, railroads and ultimately wagon trains to move these supplies. One railroad car could carry as many supplies as 15 army wagons. Access to railroads and navigable rivers was critical in keeping an army provisioned.

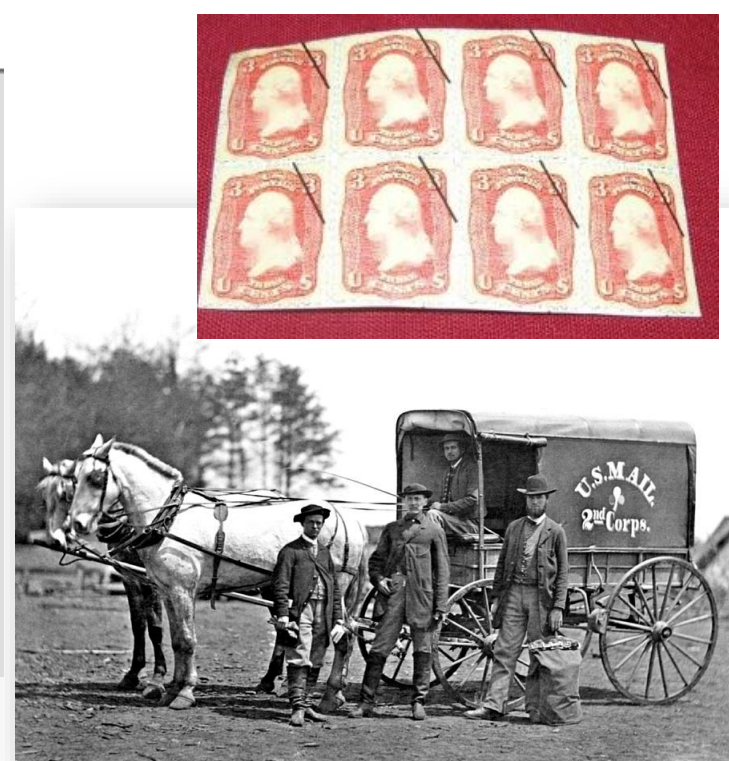
In addition to the foodstuffs, an army in the field required tents, camp equipment, cooking equipment, replacement clothing, blacksmith equipment, saddlery, medical supplies, veterinary supplies, and forage for the animals. This was in addition to the tremendous amount of munitions that had to be moved daily.



A Union 6 gun artillery battery had 180 horses requiring 4,320 pounds of fodder a day.



Steamships, trains and wagons were all utilized to move supplies.



Recognizing that mail and packages from home was a tremendous part of keeping morale high among the troops, the U S Postal Service assigned personnel to operate mail wagons and tents in the field.

Because gummed stamps often turned into sodden bits of paper, soldiers were allowed to write "Soldier's Letter" on the envelope and postage was collected upon delivery.

The United States banned mail between the North and South in August 1861 and in order to prevent fraudulent use of the large quantity of U S Postage stamps in the Seceded states, postage stamps were redesigned in August of 1861 and Northern patrons could trade them in one-for-one.