



Compiled Military

Part III: The record of events

Unidentified soldier in Confederate uniform of the 11th Virginia regiment with knapsack and bedroll. Library of Congress. LC-DIG-ppmsca-41003.

In honor of the sesquicentennial of the American Civil War, this is the fifth in a series of articles about records at the National Archives in Washington, D.C., that are useful in researching the war and its participants.

In the last two issues of *NGS Magazine*, we learned about the information content of records *inside* and *outside* the Compiled Military Service Record (CMSR) jackets of individual volunteer soldiers of the Civil War (Union and Confederate). In this article, we learn about additional compiled records that are *separate* from the CMSR jackets of individual soldiers.

The record of events

The Civil War “record of events” (ROE) refers to the information about a company’s activities recorded on company muster rolls or morning reports. This information was not included in individual soldiers’ CMSRs because it would have been time consuming and inefficient to copy that

information onto a card for everyone listed on the muster roll. Instead, it was copied just once and placed in an ROE jacket for that company.

The ROE are uneven in content. Some muster rolls have copious notes while others contain very little, so the richness of detail varies widely. Some give day-by-day narratives of a company’s activities, while others simply note that the company was stationed at a certain place during the reporting period (usually two months). Although they rarely name individual soldiers, the descriptions of the activities and movements of the company can be used, in conjunction with information from the soldier’s CMSR and pension file, to determine where the soldier was and what he was likely doing (unless he was absent because of capture, hospitalization, furlough, desertion, detached service, or death).

Union ROE have been microfilmed as National Archives (NA) Microfilm Publication M594, *Compiled Records Showing Service of Military Units in Volunteer Union Organizations* (225 rolls), and are part of Record Group (RG) 94, Records of

Service Records

the Adjutant General's Office, 1780s–1917. The records are generally arranged by state, then type of service (cavalry, artillery, infantry, etc.), then by regiment, then by company, then chronologically. M594 is available to researchers at the National Archives Building, Washington, D.C.; Allen County Public Library, Fort Wayne, Indiana; Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison; and the Family History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah, and by loan through its Family History Centers nationwide. Selected rolls are available at certain NA regional facilities and various public libraries.

Confederate ROE have been microfilmed as NA Microfilm Publication M861, *Compiled Records Showing Service of Military Units in Confederate Organizations* (seventy-four rolls), and is part of RG 109, War Department Collection of Confederate Records. The records are generally arranged by state, then type of organization (cavalry, artillery, infantry, etc.), then regiment, then by company, then chronologically. M861 is available to researchers at the NA Building; National Archives Southeast Region, Atlanta; Birmingham Public Library, Birmingham, Alabama; Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville; Cabell Library, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond; and the Family History Library, and by loan through its Family History Centers nationwide. Selected rolls are available at certain NARA regional facilities and various public libraries.

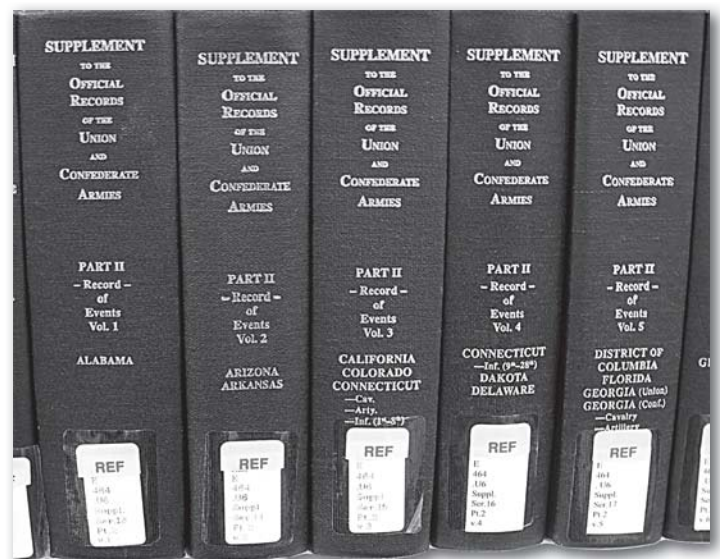
The ROE have also been published as part of Janet B. Hewett, et al., *Supplement to the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 100 volumes (Wilmington, N.C.: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1994–2001). The editors silently provided punctuation and corrected place name misspellings and other anomalies.

Although I introduced the ROE to you as simply a jacket containing cards, archival reality

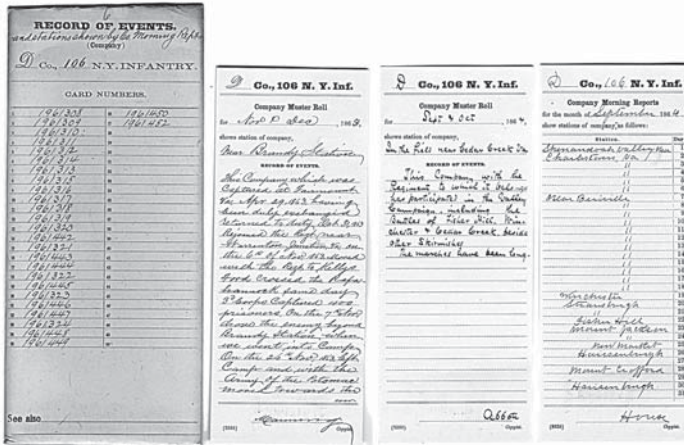
is a little more nuanced. The full ROE for a unit may, in fact, have three different pieces to it, even though all were filed and microfilmed together. Let me explain.

First, there may be general notation cards with determinations made by the Adjutant General's Office concerning the service of the unit, identification of officers, or other information that was found in original records other than muster rolls and returns.

Second, there is usually an envelope ("jacket") with the title "Record of Events" or "Captions and Record of Events" with cards providing details about unit movements and activities that was recorded on original muster rolls and returns. Some cards provide the captions (titles) of muster-in and muster-out rolls with the certifications by the mustering officers verifying the accuracy of the rolls. Some cards may simply have administrative information, such as references to another unit with which the unit was merged.



Selected volumes from Janet B. Hewett, et al., *Supplement to the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 100 volumes (Wilmington, N.C.: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1994–2001).



Jacket and selected record of events cards, Co. D, 106th New York Infantry. M594, Roll 130.

Third, there may be a card labeled “Additional Card Abstracts of Records” followed by cards that the War Department failed to place inside the ROE jacket for that unit.

Researchers should review the “Regimental” and “Field and Staff” ROE as well as those for the ancestor’s specific company, since they may contain additional information about regimental activities not provided in a specific company’s ROE. Reviewing the ROE for other companies in the same regiment may also be useful. Some units that served three months or less may not have any ROE.

Example of Company D, 106th New York Infantry (Union)

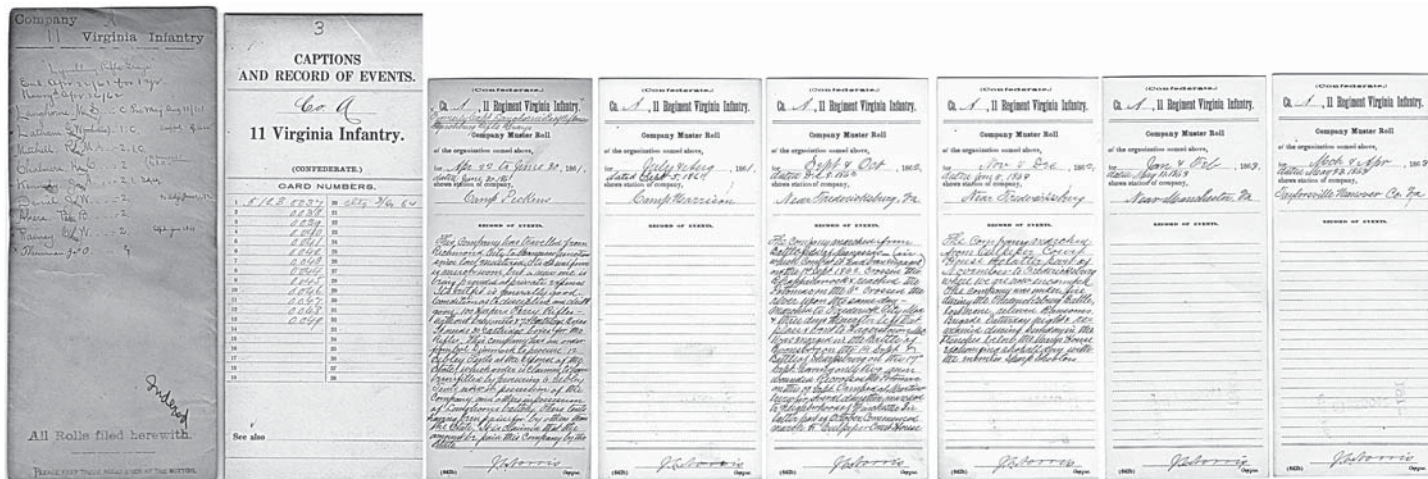
Company D’s muster roll for November–December 1863, recorded near Brandy Station, Virginia, reports that “This Company which was captured at Fairmount Va., Apr. 29, 1863, having been duly exchanged returned to duty Oct. 31, 1863. Rejoined the Regt. near Warrenton Junction, Va., on the 6th of Nov. 1863. Moved with the Regt. to Kellys Ford, crossed the Rapahannock same day. 3d Corps captured 400 prisoners. On the 7th Nov. drove the enemy beyond Brandy Station where we went into Camp. On the 26th Nov. 1863, left Camp and with the Army of the Potomac moved towards the Rapidan which was crossed at Jacobs Ford same day. On the 27th 3rd Corps attacked the enemy near Locust Grove, battle lasted until night. On the 28th moved

forward toward Mine Run where the enemy was found in force. On the 31st commenced to fall back toward the Rapadan [sic] which was recrossed at Culpeper Ford, Dec 2d 1863. Returned to the Old Camp on the 3d inst. Since which time have build Winter Quarters.”

Commentary on Company D’s September–October 1864 muster roll was more succinct: “This Company with the Regiment to which it belongs has participated in the Valley campaign, including the Battles of Fisher Hill, Winchester & Cedar Creek, besides other skirmishes. The marches have been long.” Additional details of its movements during those two months, however, are provided by the stations (locations) noted on its company morning reports: Shenandoah valley near Charlestown, Virginia, 1–6 September; near Beriville [sic], 7–18 September; Winchester, 19 September; Strasburgh [sic], 20–21 September; Fisher Hill, 22 September; Mount Jackson, 23–24 September; New Market, 25 September; Hairsenburg [sic, Harrisonburg]; 26–27 September; Mount Crofford [sic], 28–29 September; Harisenburgh [sic], 30 September–14 October; Strasburgh [sic], Virginia, 15 October–8 November. In all, there are twenty-seven ROE cards for Company D, plus thirty-four regimental ROE cards and seventeen field and staff cards.¹

Example of Company A, 11th Virginia Infantry (Confederate)

Company A was originally known as Captain Longhorne’s Company of Rifles or Lynchburg Rifle Grays. The commentary from its muster roll for 22 April–30 June 1861 reflects the general optimism and logistical ambiguities resulting from the initially popular and unplanned war: “This company has travelled from Richmond City to Manassas Junction since last mustered. Its old uniform is much worn, but a new one is being provided at private expense. Its outfit is generally good. Conditions as to discipline and drill good. 100 Harpers Ferry Rifles without bayonets & 70 Cartridge Boxes. It needs 30 cartridge boxes for the Rifles. This company has an order from Col. Dimmock to procure 12 Sibley Tents at the expense of the State which order is claimed to



General information card, jacket, and selected record of events cards, Co. A, 11th Virginia Infantry, M861, Roll 66.

have benefitted [sic] by procuring 6 Sibley Tents now in possession of the Company and others in possession of Longhoons [sic] battery. These tents having been paid for by others than the State. It is claimed that the amount be paid this Company by the state."

The lengthy commentary from its muster roll for September and October 1862 reflect a very busy period: "The company marched from Battlefield of Manassas (in which combat it had been engaged) on the 1st Sept. 1862, crossed the Rhappahanock [sic] & reached the Potomac on the 6th, crossed the river upon the same day – marched to Frederick City Md. & three days thereafter left that place & went to Hagerstown, Md. Was engaged in the Battle of Boonsboro on the 14 Sept. & Battle of Sharpsburg [Antietam] on the 17th Sept. having only two men wounded. Recrossed the Potomac on the 19 Sept. Camped at Martinsburg for several days then marched to neighborhood of Winchester. In latter part of October commenced march to Culpeper Court House." The November–December 1862 ROE card was this company's last card containing commentary on its activities. In all, there are fourteen ROE cards for Company A, plus seven regimental ROE cards and nine field and staff ROE cards.²

Conclusion

The record of events provides something quite valuable. Like a diary, it is history written as it

happened in the words of someone who was there, who recorded a summary of the events while still fresh. The ROE enhances the story of an ancestor's Civil War service with details not included in his CMSR. 🌲

Notes

1. National Archives Microfilm Publication M594, *Compiled Records Showing Service of Military Units in Volunteer Union Organizations*, roll 130, Company D, 106th New York Infantry.
2. National Archives Microfilm Publication M861, *Compiled Records Showing Service of Military Units in Confederate Organizations*, roll 66, Company A, 11th Virginia Infantry.

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