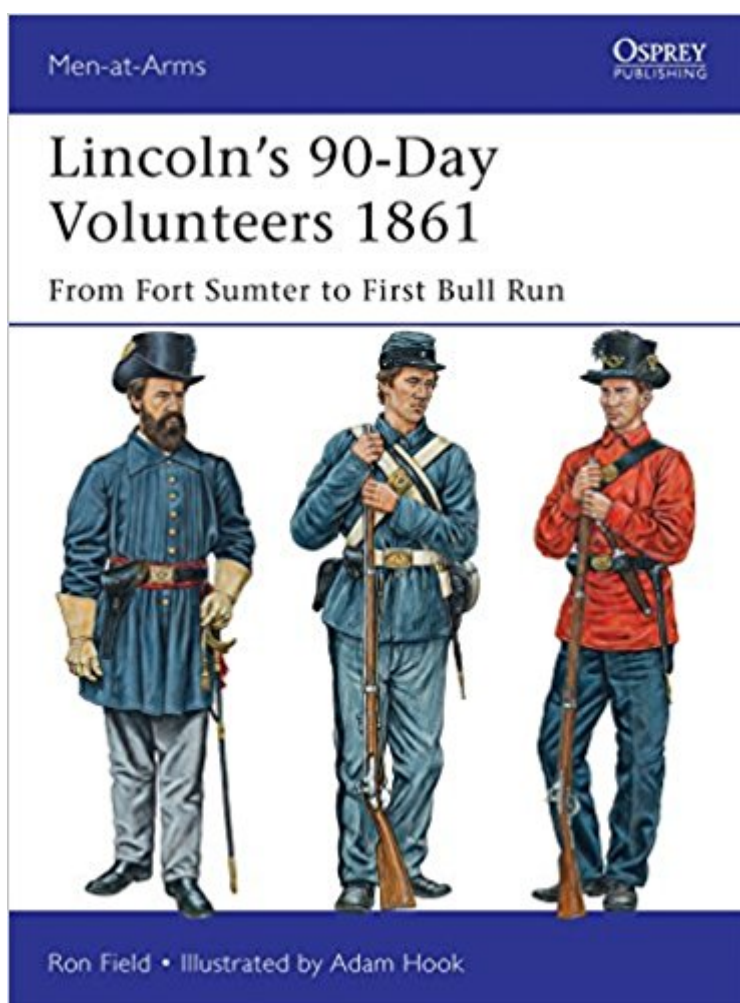


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Lincoln's 90-Day Volunteers 1861: From Fort Sumter To First Bull Run (Men-at-Arms)



Synopsis

On April 15, the day after the fall of Fort Sumter, President Abraham Lincoln issued a call for 75,000 volunteers to enlist for three months' service to defend the Union. Featuring specially commissioned full-color artwork, this is the engaging story of the first wave of soldiers who volunteered to defend and preserve the Union in 1861, based on detailed research in US sources, including many eye-witness accounts of their very varied uniforms and equipment. When war broke out with the Confederate bombardment of Fort Sumter, South Carolina, on April 12-14, 1861, the regular US Army numbered just 16,000 troops, most of them scattered widely, and far from what would clearly become the main theater of operations between the two capitals - Washington, DC, and Richmond, Virginia. It was at this time Lincoln called for a three-month enlistment from volunteers. The 90-day period was, of course, entirely unrealistic, and would be followed by further and much more extensive mobilizations; but for the first few months, when Washington itself was in real danger, the defense of the capital depended on a hastily gathered army of militiamen and volunteers from those states that declared their immediate loyalty to the Union. These units were mostly entirely inexperienced, barely trained, weakly officered, and provided with the most motley uniforms, equipage, and weapons. Nevertheless, they bought the Union time during the first vital months. This period ended with the First Battle of Bull Run (Manassas) on July 21, at which only some 2,000 of General McDowell's 28,500 Union troops were regulars. This ground-breaking study draws upon a very wide range of period sources to describe and illustrate the actual appearance of this diverse and colorful force, including photographs, eyewitness accounts in period newspapers and letters, the reports of government agents, and the records of the many manufacturers who received orders to clothe and equip their state troops. The units were composed of separate companies drawn from both wealthy and poorer communities, so varied widely in style, from copies of fashionable French uniforms to plain working-men's clothing. There were no rules at this date specifying that the North should wear blue and the South gray, and the extremely mixed appearance of both armies caused much dangerous confusion. Fully illustrated with specially commissioned artwork and rare period illustrations, this engaging account brings to life the first wave of volunteers who stepped forward to defend and preserve the Union in 1861.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“Aptly punctuates the colorful and extremely diverse appearance of the first Union volunteer units in the early days of the war.”
— Toy Soldier & Model Figure magazine

Ron Field was Head of History at the Cotswold School in Bourton-on-the-Water, Gloucestershire, UK, until his retirement in 2007. Awarded a Fulbright Scholarship in 1982, he taught History at Piedmont High School in California from 1982 to 1983. Ron was also associate editor of the Confederate Historical Society of Great Britain, from 1983 to 1992. He is an internationally acknowledged expert on US military history, and was elected a Fellow of the Company of Military Historians, based in Washington, DC, in 2005.

The American Civil War is an absolutely fascinating subject that a person could spend hours studying. This book is helpful in that it gave me a detailed snapshot of what it was like to be a freshly recruited Union soldier at the beginning of the war. The varied uniforms were very well drawn, and ably described. I particularly liked how the states were each talked about and illustrated in detail, which gave me a good idea of their specific situation. I gained a better appreciation of the soldiers in the Union army, and the challenges they had to face due to unpreparedness and lack of organization.

At the very beginning of the Civil War, President Lincoln called for 75,000 state militiamen to augment the tiny 16,000-man standing U.S. Army in securing the national capital and various federal forts and installations. The states not already in secession from the Union attempted to provide these troops. Their story is the basis of the Osprey Men-at-Arms Series book "Lincoln's

90-Day Volunteers 1861". Veteran writer Ron Fields provides a brief introduction and chronology before launching into a discussion of the volunteer units by state. Seventeen states and the District of Columbia provided troops, either existing militia units with their unique uniforms, or newly raised formations which wore a grab-bag of civilian and mixed military apparel. Fields provides a short synopsis of what most of the units did in their short term of duty; few saw any combat. There is a decent selection of period photographs of the volunteers. Illustrator Adam Hook provides some nicely-done color plates detailing the various uniforms. At under 50 pages, "Lincoln's 90-Day Volunteers 1861" is a fairly lightweight entry notable first for the incredible variety of uniforms worn by Union forces until the Army had a chance to standardize the issue, and second for the sheer confusion that attended the call-up of volunteers. Recommended.

The focus seems to be the ninety-day volunteers who fought at Bull Run, not on the ninety volunteers overall. Missouri, where five regiments of US volunteers and five regiments of United States Reserve Corps troops were raised in St. Louis alone, goes unmentioned. All of these troops were raised immediately following the crisis at Fort Sumter. The book is the usual Osprey quality, but the content isn't consistent with the scope implied by the title.

Well written and researched book about an esoteric subject. This book is a must for miniature war gamers, Civil War re enactors and uniformologists. This book would be interesting for Civil War buffs as well as military historians.

LINCOLN'S 90-DAY VOLUNTEERS, 1861: FROM FORT SUMTER TO FIRST BULL RUN
RON FIELDS
OSPREY PUBLISHING, 2013
QUALITY SOFTCOVER, \$17.95, 48 PAGES, CHRONOLOGY, TABLES, ILLUSTRATIONS, PHOTOGRAPHS, BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX
Throughout The War Between The States, an estimated 2,100,000 men served for a time in Union blue. While the service and sacrifice of most of these men have been properly recognized in the vast annals of War Between The States historiography, there still remains many soldiers who history seemingly forgot. Interestingly, and perhaps most notably is the forgotten history of the very first Northern volunteers to arrive in Washington, D.C. after President Lincoln's April 15, 1861, call-to-arms. Three days after the distressed president's call, an estimated 475 Pennsylvanians (from Eastern and Central Pennsylvania), comprising five volunteer militia companies, arrived in the nation's capital. Following the bombardment and subsequent capitulation of Fort Sumter on April 14, 1861, President Lincoln, after only one month in office, found himself faced with the greatest crisis to ever confront the young

American nation. Recognizing the Southern rebellion can now be reconciled only with force, Lincoln issued a call for 75,000 volunteers to serve for a period of 3 months or 90 days. Throughout northern communities, eager men of all ages and from all socio-economic and occupational backgrounds flooded recruiting offices to answer the call. Within a few days, and in many instances, within a matter of hours, thousands of volunteers departed home and family to begin their journey as soldiers. Three days after Lincoln's call, the first volunteer troops arrived in Washington, D.C. Travelling along with volunteers was a detachment of regular U.S. Army troops who were ordered to report to Fort McHenry in Baltimore Harbor. Commanding this detachment was a man who in less than a week resigned his commission in the U.S. Army to take up arms with the Confederacy, and who, on 4 July 1863, surrendered the city of Vicksburg to General U.S. Grant: John C. Pemberton. These First Defenders—as those 90-Day Volunteers would later be termed—spent the majority of their 3-month term of service on guard and garrison duty in and around the nation's capital. The majority of these men would, however, re-enlist in the summer of 1861 into three-year units. Years after the end of hostilities, it was observed that hardly a single battle that was fought in the four years of war that the first defenders weren't represented. Their individual war records would fill volumes of history. Although these soldiers witnessed much more of the brutalities and hardships of war than during their three-month term of service as members of the First Defender units; they would always carry the torch of their achievement and take great pride in being the very first volunteer troops to arrive in Washington, D.C. after Lincoln's April, 1861 call-to-arms.

LINCOLN'S 90-DAY VOLUNTEERS, 1861: FROM FORT SUMTER TO FIRST BULL RUN is a well-written and detailed account of those first Union volunteers who answered Lincoln's call. Complimenting this excellent book are the soldier photographs as well as the color plates which show the different types and colors of the uniforms worn by these soldiers. Author Ron Fields covers each one of the states and their respective units that they sent to Washington, D.C. With the ongoing 150th Anniversary of The War Between The States, this is one book that should be in your personal library.

Lt. Colonel Robert A. Lynn, Florida Guard
Orlando, Florida

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