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Configurations, Volume 25, Number 4, Fall 2017, pp. 447-473 (Article)

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press
DOI: *https://doi.org/10.1353/con.2017.0028*

"Moulder[ing] into nothingness among the rocks": Sharpshooters in *Gardner's Photographic Sketch Book of the Civil War*

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ABSTRACT: During the American Civil War, sharpshooters were contested figures in the Northern media. Magazines published romanticized profiles of Union snipers, while simultaneously worrying about the deadliness of Confederate sharpshooters. Years after the war, in 1896, the aging painter Winslow Homer wrote that the sharpshooters' task was as "near to murder as anything I ever could think of in connection with the army." Accompanying this sentiment, Homer sketched, in the letter, a soldier trapped within the crosshairs of a sniper's scope. I use this sketch, along with Homer's words to his friend, as a way to understand the significance of two battlefield portraits of deceased Confederate sharpshooters found in Alexander Gardner's iconic *Photographic Sketch Book of the Civil War*. Art historian Anthony Lee posits that the photographic book, as a whole, is an "effort at imaginative recovery." The past, for Gardner, is "unromantic," and the future, "uncertain, and unpromising." Locked in Gardner's camera's scope, the Southern sharpshooter is memorialized as a failed warrior, while the Northern sharpshooter is allowed to safely fade from memory. As figures of moral controversy and anarchic disunion, the sharpshooters of both armies must be consigned to the past in order to pave the way for the tenuous Federal future.

"Near to murder as anything I ever could think of"

In 1896, the aging painter Winslow Homer penned a letter to his friend George Briggs. Homer reminisced back to April of 1862, when, during the siege of Yorktown, a Union sharpshooter allowed

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Homer to peer through the sharpshooter's telescopic sights. The view through the rifle's scope made a permanent impression. On the letter's fifth page, Homer wrote, "This is what I saw," above which he sketched the image of a man in the center of the scope's crosshairs. Homer's sketch is not violent—there is no combat, no excitement; rather, it feels measured, almost engineered. The sketch's crosshairs split the man into equal sections, quartering him, like an animal to be slaughtered. No emotion, no glory, only business. The view of a soldier trapped in the crosshairs left Homer with the feeling that sharpshooters' tasks were as "near to murder as anything I ever could think of in connection with the army and I always had a horror of that branch of the service."[1] Indeed, it is not difficult to imagine the shock of being able—as in Homer's sketch—to count the buttons on the jacket of the man one is about to kill. Where previously a rifleman would need to be within sight and sound of his target, the rifle and the telescopic rifle-sight enabled sharpshooters to kill unseen, and in some cases, unheard. A few months after Homer's experience of viewing the soldier through the sharpshooter's scope, the November 15, 1862 edition of *Harper's Weekly* featured Winslow Homer's engraving *The Army of the Potomac: Sharpshooter on Picket Duty* (which served as the basis for Homer's 1863 painting *The Sharpshooter on Picket Duty*).[2]

Among artists, Winslow Homer was not alone in his discomfort with sharpshooting. Alexander Gardner, one of the foremost documenters of the Civil War, displays a similar distaste for sharpshooters' long-range and out of sight tactics. Four years after Winslow's Homer's intimate portrait in *Harper's* of the sharpshooter at work, Alexander Gardner devoted two photographs in his *Sketch Book of the Civil War*, "A Sharpshooter's Last Sleep," and "The Home of a Rebel Sharpshooter," to showing the terrible death that awaits sharpshooters.[3] Gardner's images and their accompanying text do not overtly condemn sharpshooters, but neither do they laud sharpshooters' roles in the war. The two photographs of deceased sharpshooters stand out because they are the only two intimate individual portraits in a book filled with landscapes and panoramas. Gardner's

1. Winslow Homer, "Letter to George G. Briggs, 1896," Winslow Homer Collection, Smithsonian Institution Archives of American Art.

2. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given Winslow Homer's discomfort with the subject matter, his painting *The Sharpshooter* failed to sell until finally Charles Homer, Winslow Homer's older brother, purchased it anonymously.

3. Alexander Gardner, *Gardner's Photographic Sketch Book of the Civil War* (New York: Dover, 1959), plates 40 and 41.

Sketchbook depicts several death scenes—most famously "A Harvest of Death" and "Field Where General Reynolds Fell," which both depict deceased soldiers forming a line leading into the horizon—along with several portraits of groups of soldiers, but with the exception of the dead sharpshooters, Gardner refrains from intimate photographs. The collection is more concerned with documenting the war's places than its people.

Besides the sharpshooter portraits' compositional uniqueness, the photographs are fictions presented as documentary facts. In the text, Gardner claims to have stumbled upon one sharpshooter "lying as he fell"[4] and the other hidden away "in a lonely place."[5] In *Gettysburg: A Journey in Time*, William Frassanito shows, through comparing six corresponding photos, that Gardner's two sharpshooter portraits are staged. Gardner captured and developed at least four other negatives of the same scenes. The excluded photographs show that the body pictured in the two images is the same man repositioned in different locations. In fact, Frassanito doubts that the soldier is a sharpshooter, "but instead an ordinary infantry man, killed while advancing up the slope."[6] In one of the omitted photos of the same scene from "Home," a blanket is visible under the body, likely used by the photographers to drag him up to the desired position. The rifle as well is "definitely not the type used by sharpshooters."[7] The images and their accompanying prose are not documentary, but carefully curated displays.

Through the image of the Southern sharpshooter, entitled "The Home of a Rebel Sharpshooter," Gardener neuters the threat of the Southern sharpshooter by presenting his defeat to the viewing public. Although not without compassion, Gardener consistently portrays the dead Confederate troops in terms of rebellion and treason, and cites their demise as a direct consequence of their actions. Accompanying the famous "Harvest of Death" photograph, Gardener wrote that the Southern soldiers were "killed in the frantic efforts to break the steady lines of an army of patriots . . . they paid with life the price of their treason, and when the wicked strife was finished, found nameless graves, far from home and kindred."[8] Justice for a treasonous rebel, regardless of battlefield bravery, is to die anony-

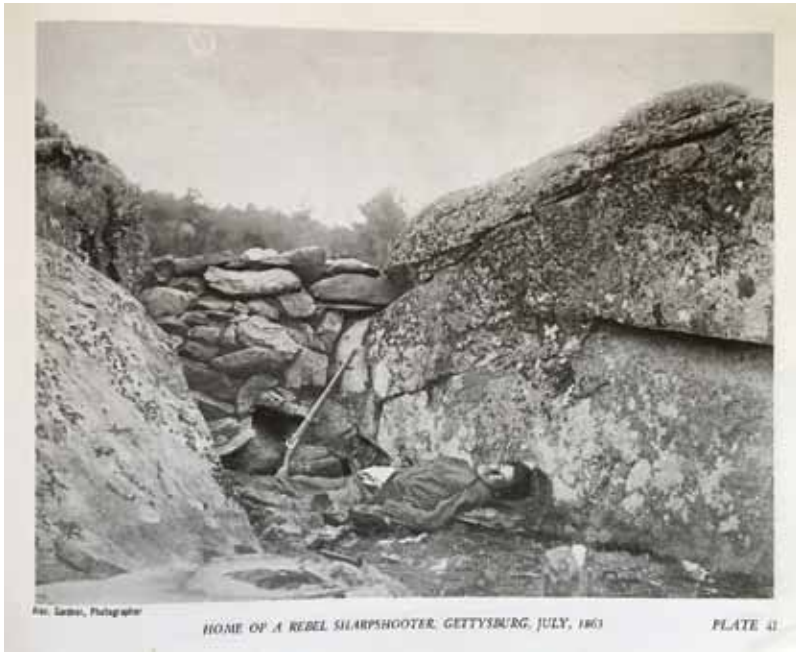
4. Ibid., plate 40.

5. Ibid., plate 41.

6. William A. Frassanito, *Gettysburg: A Journey in Time* (New York: Scribner's, 1975), p. 187.

7. Ibid., p. 192.

8. Gardner, *Gardner's Photographic Sketch Book of the Civil War* (above, n. 3), plate 36.



mously and alone. The rebellion must be buried, literally and figuratively, in order for the Union to be restored. Similarly, the Southern sharpshooter is found "in a lonely place," and Gardner claims that when he returned to the same spot months later, the soldier's skeleton remained, untouched by those appointed to bury the dead. Gardner's sharpshooter photographs subvert the romanticism commonly associated with the soldiers of both armies. Gardner insists that sharpshooters die alone, isolated from friends, family, and nation. Of the Confederate sharpshooter depicted in "Home," Gardner asks, "Was he delirious with agony, or did death come slowly to his relief, while memories of home drew dearer as the field or carnage faded before him?"[9] While memorializing the death, Gardner also makes certain that his reader understands that '"Missing' was all that could be known of him [the sharpshooter] at home."[10] The price of rebellion, and sharpshooting, is to die in a secluded foreign place, unknown and lost to friends and family.

"Last Sleep" presents a more difficult photograph to read on its

9. Ibid., plate 41.

10. Ibid.

own. Gardner does not identify the dead sharpshooter as either Northern or Southern, but the text describing the photograph is equally as bleak as that accompanying the Confederate sharpshooter. The unidentified sharpshooter is destined to "moulder into nothingness among the rocks."[11] As with the Confederate sharpshooter, Gardner consigns the unaffiliated sharpshooter to a lonely grave. Gardner's cynicism toward a man who could be a dead Union soldier, in "Last Sleep," is an odd move for a man of unabashed pro-Union sentiment. However, sharpshooters, in Northern discourse, were paradoxical figures: associated with those whom the Union perceived as its treasonous enemies—Native Americans and Confederates—and yet, ironically, also frequently portrayed as an essential part of the United State's military; simultaneously technologically advanced and primitive, uniting the most advanced European firearms with indigenous battle tactics. There is no way to determine Gardner's motives for his sharpshooter portraits, but within a post-Civil War context it is difficult to read them as anything besides a condemnation of the anarchic forces opposing Federal hegemony on the North American continent. An anarchic self-determined soldier like a sharpshooter cannot be also be an instrument for reuniting a nation torn apart

11. Ibid., plate 40.

by civil war. So, Gardner takes aim with his camera to memorialize sharpshooters, and the rebellion of Native Americans and Confederates, as necessary causalities of war. Sharpshooters, like the primordial frontier with which they are associated, must be tamed in order for the United States to achieve its Manifest Destiny. To understand the significance of Gardner's sharpshooter photographs, and his antipathy toward sharpshooting as a cultural practice regardless of faction, it is necessary to understand the history of sharpshooting in the United States and the popular perceptions about the sharpshooters of both armies.

"That most necessary of all adjuncts to an invading army—sharpshooters"

During and immediately after the Civil War, sharpshooters loomed large in the American imagination. Wartime periodicals, both Northern and Southern, reported on sharpshooters and their role in modern warfare with great interest. Taking into account some of the most widely read Northern periodicals (*Harper's Weekly*, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Magazine*, *The Liberator*, and *Scientific American*), the sharpshooter references a variety of—occasionally contradictory—traits. The sharpshooter, as presented to the Northern reading public, embodied all the mythos of the American nation: innovation, Westward expansion, the wilderness, self-sufficiency, independence, the democratic citizen-soldier, self-taught skill, technological innovation, and even abolitionism.

Northern sharpshooting units, the most famous being Hiram Berdan's two regiments, were recruited in reaction to the North's fears of the supremacy of the citizen-soldiers that composed the Southern infantry.[12] Despite the immense Union advantage in manpower and manufacturing, both Northerners and Southerners perceived that, man for man, "one Southron could lick ten Yankees—or at least three."[13] To compensate, many Northerners felt that they too ought to become competent, self-sufficient soldiers. In one of Berdan's initial letters to General Winfield Scott proposing a sharpshooter regiment, Berdan states that sharpshooters, in contrast to the regular Union army, "will be required to supply themselves with everything in the way of arms and uniforms."[14] Like the Confederacy's initially

12. William Edwards, *Civil War Guns* (Harrisburg: Stackpole, 1962), p. 210.

13. James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 316–317.

14. Roy M. Marcot, *U.S. Sharpshooters: Berdan's Civil War Elite* (Mechanicsville: Stackpole, 2007), p. 9.

un-uniformed, self-supplied irregular infantry, Berdan's sharpshooters would be an all-volunteer regiment composed of men who knew how to handle their equipment with little to no training. An article from the October 5, 1861 edition of *Frank Leslie's* makes a case for the importance of rifleman and sharpshooters as a response to the Confederacy's early advantage in this area:

> From the very commencement of the present war we have felt the want of that most necessary of all adjuncts to an invading army—sharpshooters—what the whiskers are to a cat, and the antenna to an insect, sharpshooters are to an advancing corps. . . . Like all great commercial nations, the United States found herself terribly deficient in this most necessary arm.[15]

Sharpshooters' ability to sense what lies ahead, too see far, makes them valuable. As in Homer's sketch and Gardner's photographs, a sharpshooter's job was to frame the enemy: to learn where he is, what he does, and then lock him in the rifle-sights for execution. *Frank Leslie's* seems anxious that the North would fail due a lack of military foresight. Unlike the South, with its self-trained and equipped sharpshooters, the male citizens of the commercial, industrial North possessed little native ability in marksmanship and long-range scouting. In a November 1862 article, *Scientific American* urges the Union to raise more sharpshooters, explicitly in reaction to the Confederate Army, which has "made many thousands of sharpshooters," many of whom "go to the field with their 'old familiar rifle,' and shoot where they please."[16] Here again, sharpshooters are associated with the citizen militia. They arrive self-trained and equipped with their own weapons. The Southern sharpshooters are not merely soldiers recruited for battle, but also a prepared reserve force who band together and begin training "long before they are called for."[17] *Scientific American* singles out those who join their hypothetical reserve as the "Noble defenders of our land," and from those, further specifies those who volunteer for sharpshooting duty as "the noble few."[18] Sharpshooting is an exclusive occupation, only for those who show the most aptitude and skill. Emphasizing that the sharpshooter is a self-trained soldier, *Scientific American* extols its readers, "[W]ithout leaving your business you can become an excellent sharpshooter by

15. "REVIEW OF THE BERDAN RIFLE REGIMENT," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, October 5, 1861, pp. 325–326.

16. "SHARPSHOOTERS," *Scientific American*, November 22, 1862, p. 330.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

spending a few moments each day with your rifle or shotgun."[19] The irony of a sharpshooter employing a shotgun aside, the ideal sharpshooter takes the initiative to obtain his own weapon and improve his marksmanship. The sharpshooter is a militiaman, ready to fight whenever his country needs him.

Northern periodicals' representations of sharpshooters united the national center with its regional periphery. Laudatory stories in wartime editions of *Harper's Weekly* and *Frank Leslie's* about "California Joe," a rugged, Wild West figure, and member of Hiram Berdan's sharpshooting regiment, suggest that industrial economy saps men's vitality, which must be rejuvenated by soldiers from the rugged, masculine frontier. *Harper's Weekly* characterized California Joe thus:

> He stands as straight as an arrow, has an eye as keen as a hawk, nerves as steady as can be, and an endowment of hair and whiskers Reubens would have liked for a patriarchal portrait. He has spent years of his life shooting grizzly bears in the forests and fastnesses of California, and carries a telescopic rifle that in his hand will carry a long ways and with terrific accuracy. [20]

A rugged self-made man, California Joe returned from the frontier to the East coast to help in the fight to save the Union. His military experience is sparse, but the wilderness has honed his sharpshooting skills. One week later, on August 9, *Frank Leslie's* published a similar article stating that California Joe "bears so great a resemblance to old Leatherstocking, that had not Judith very foolishly chosen the British officer instead of Nat Bumpo, we might well have considered him the grandson of Cooper's celebrated character."[21] James Fennimore Cooper's protagonist, significantly, learned his hunting and fighting prowess from the Delaware tribe. The sharpshooter is at once a primal American and the bearer of technological innovation, living in and trained by the wilderness and its inhabitants, but armed with the newest and best equipment.

"No passion; all went by crank, / Pivot, and screw"

The sharpshooter was as much a symbol of technological innovation as battlefield prowess. Art historians Nicolai Cikovsky Jr. and Randall Griffin both perceive anxiety about long-range killing in Winslow Homer's engraving and painting of *The Sharpshooter*.[22] Shooting tar-

19. Ibid.

20. "CALIFORNIA JOE," *Harper's Weekly*, August 2, 1862, pp. 492–493.

21. "CALIFORNIA JOE, THE FAMOUS BERDAN SHARPSHOOTER," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, August 9, 1862, pp. 309–310.

22. Nicolai Cikovsky Jr., "The Sharpshooter," in *Winslow Homer*, eds. Nicolai Cikovsky Jr. and Franklin Kelly (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 39–40; Randall

gets from a distance is a military practice too eerily similar to hunting for food, and too mechanistic to sustain romantic or honorable notions of war. In a lengthy analysis of Homer's painting, Christopher Kent Wilson argues that the painting's title, *The Sharpshooter on Picket Duty*, should be understood as ironic, for the simple reason that Homer's sharpshooter "is not on picket duty."[23] Pickets were passive warriors, tasked with watching the enemy's movements and warning their encamped army of any surprise movements. Homer's painting (and engraving) shows something quite different: a hunter in search of prey. Wilson writes, "[S]harpshooting reduced the enemy to a distant target and transformed the marksman into a cool and aloof figure who killed and terrorized without passion or warning."[24] In the image's composition, the sharpshooter is, literally, aloof. We peer up at him, while he calmly scans for targets on the unseen horizon. The picket's job was to be aware of all of his surroundings, to move about and keep watch. The sharpshooter is focused on a single spot, his vision guided by the telescopic sight fixed to his rifle. In a 1996 issue of *Imprint*, Marjorie P. Balge-Crozier characterizes *The Sharpshooter* in particularly nihilistic terms, as "an enemy who came to symbolize the amorality of the war, the complex action of a world in which the survival of the fittest is not guaranteed and the universe seems indifferent to man's fate."[25] The sharpshooter nullified traditional notions of military valor. No matter how brave a soldier, they were still susceptible to the unseen, unheard sharpshooter.

As the above-referenced art historians suggested, the sharpshooters' rifles contributed to the sharpshooters' mythos. Gardner's photographs feature his fictional sharpshooters' rifles prominently, and the anxiety that art historians see in Homer's *The Sharpshooter* concerning the role of technology resonate with other wartime concerns about the advancing role of technology in warfare. Christopher Kent Wilson quotes Melville's poem "A Utilitarian View of the Monitor's Fight," in conjunction with the sharpshooters' rifles: "No passion;

C. Griffin, "The Sharpshooter," in *Winslow Homer: An American Vision* (New York: Phaidon, 2006), pp. 23–25.

23. Christopher Kent Wilson, "Marks of Honor and Death: *Sharpshooter* and the Peninsular Campaign of 1862," in *Winslow Homer: Paintings of the Civil War*, ed. Marc Simpson (San Francisco: Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, 1988), pp. 24–45, at 39.

24. Ibid. (The sharpshooter reduces his subject to a distant mediated image, not unlike the photographer.)

25. Marjorie Balge-Crozier, "Through the Eyes of the Artist: Another Look at Winslow Homer's *Sharpshooter*," *Imprint: Journal of the American Historical Print Collectors Society* 21:1 (1996): 2–9, at 6.

all went by crank, / Pivot, and screw, / And calculations of caloric."[26] Like the ironclad's engines, gears, and impenetrable armor, the sharpshooters' rifles and scopes insulated them from the intimate violence that had long defined warfare. Despite sharpshooters' relatively small role on the battlefield, their scoped rifles became symbols of technological revolution and a transforming (and not always welcome) mode of warfare.

The sharpshooter's rifle and scope are part of a larger shift in the relationship between humans and technology in warfare. The famous duel between the *USS Monitor* and the *CSS Virginia* looms large in Civil War lore and defines our understanding of the role of technology in the Civil War. Historian of technology David Mindell writes in his book *War, Technology, and Experience aboard the USS Monitor* that the battle between *The Monitor* and *The Virginia* epitomized and mythologized the technological advances of the Civil War. The ships' battle was more significant as a popular symbol of the changing mode of warfare than as a revolutionary event in the history of technology. In reality, the *Monitor* did not "revolutionize warfare. Rather, it redefined the relationship between people and machines in war."[27] Sharpshooters, with their state-of-the-art rifle and telescopic sight, are similarly mythologized. Mindell's analysis of the *Monitor*'s rhetorical power parallels Joseph Bilby's and Paddy Griffith's thoughts about sharpshooters.[28] Both agree that the infantry's great fear of sharpshooters and sharpshooters' notorious public image was disproportionate to the relatively small number of soldiers killed by sharpshooters. Sharpshooters did not merely anticipate evolving infantry tactics, but also represented technology's ever-increasing role as a mediator in warfare. Sharpshooting as a tactic was a prophetic break with typical European military theory. During the nineteenth century, infantry tactics evolved to emphasize firepower, open tactics, and individual initiative, and the sharpshooter represents a radical iteration of these changes.[29]

The advent of long-range rifles (and, for Mindell's purposes, im-

26. Wilson, "Marks of Honor and Death" (above, n. 23), p. 40; Herman Melville, *Battle Pieces and Aspects of the War* (Boston: Da Capo Press, 1995), p. 62.

27. David A. Mindell, *War, Technology, and Experience aboard the USS Monitor* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), p. 7.

28. Joseph G. Bilby, *Civil War Firearms: Their Historical Background, Tactical Use, and Modern Collecting and Shooting* (Conshohocken: Combined Books, 1996), p. 123. Paddy Griffith, *Battle Tactics of the Civil War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 102.

29. Steven T. Ross, *From Flintlock to Rifle: Infantry Tactics, 1740–1866* (London: Frank Cass, 1996), p. 184.

penetrable ironclad ships) shifted the battlefield emphasis from personal valor to technological superiority. David Mindell notes that ironclad battleships nearly became heroes themselves, eclipsing the crewmen.[30] From the sailors' perspective, *The Monitor*'s heat and toxic fumes posed a greater threat to their safety than the enemy's guns. Sharpshooters, unlike the *Monitor*'s crew, faced no unique danger from their rifles but nonetheless experienced a comparable technological mediation. Their long-range weapons and scopes allowed them to remain out of sight and engage in an inglorious form of battle from a position of comparative safety. A few lines from Melville's *Battle Pieces* illuminate some of the anxiety surrounding the changing relationship between humans and technology. Melville hints at the irony of modern warfare in his poem the "In the Turret," when he asks, "What poet shall uplift his charm, / Bold Sailor, to your height of daring," when the greatest threat to safety appears to be the sailor's confinement within "a craft which like a log / Was washed by every billow's motion."[31] Questions about the heroism of those of who served on ironclads persisted long after the war. Indeed, the *Monitor's* commander Samuel Dana Greene killed himself in 1887, apparently partially in response to persistent scrutiny of his personal heroism and competence as a battle commander.[32]

Sharpshooters challenged the notions of military heroism embedded in the regular infantry's tactics. Due to sharpshooters' unheroic, predatory battle tactics, the Northern infantry shared Homer's and Gardner's discomfort with sharpshooting. For them, the sharpshooter was "a remote and isolated figure, who attacks, but never confronts his enemy," not really even a person, but "a cold passionless extension of his distant and deadly weapon."[33] While the infantry fought their opponents in pitched battles—sometimes hand-to-hand—the sharpshooter lurked and executed his unsuspecting targets from a distance. The infantry, similar to Homer, understood sharpshooting as "a vicious and unceremonious tactic that amounted to nothing more than murder."[34] The infantry's frustration was likely exacerbated by press coverage that praised the sharpshooter as a type of super-soldier. In the July 4, 1863 issue of *Harper's Weekly*'s, the maga-

30. Mindell, *War, Technology, and Experience aboard the USS Monitor* (above, n. 27), pp. 3–4.

31. Herman Melville, *Battle Pieces and Aspects of the War* (Boston: Da Capo Press, 1995), p. 55.

32. Mindell, *War, Technology, and Experience aboard the USS Monitor* (above, n. 27), pp. 138–140.

33. Wilson, "Marks of Honor and Death" (above, n. 23), pp. 37, 40.

34. Ibid., p. 37.

zine opined, "A company of coolheaded, clear eyed sharpshooters is generally worth, in actual warfare, a brigade of ordinary troops."[35] By implication then, the "ordinary troops" were shortsighted, unsteady, and of a lesser caliber than the more valorous and deadly sharpshooter.[36] Confederate sharpshooters in particular accumulated a substantial list of killed officers, but otherwise, sharpshooters, when serving as what we would now consider snipers, inflicted mostly psychological damage on armies. Despite the relatively small chance of dying by a sharpshooter's bullet, the marksman remained an object of fear and fascination.

Discomfort with sharpshooters extended beyond the regular infantry into the upper echelons of the Union Army command. Sharpshooting's negative connotations by the war's end among the infantry and certain members of the public were foreshadowed by early disapproval from Assistant Secretary of War Thomas A. Scott and the Ordnance Chief James Ripley, both of whom viewed Berdan and his sharpshooting units with suspicion.[37] Scott and Ripley criticized Berdan and his sharpshooters out of a combination of personal dislike for Berdan and a distaste for Berdan's desire to outfit his units with special rifles and uniforms. Sharpshooters disrupted the uniformity that Scott and Ripley desired as part of the project of modernizing the US Army. Ever since the near disaster of the War of 1812, US military officials strove to modernize the US military, and the under the tutelage of their French advisors, modernization meant standardization, uniformity, and interchangeability. Following the industrial zeitgeist, the ragtag US Army would be transformed into a well-oiled machine. Merritt Roe Smith notes that nineteenth-century American military advances were not solely utilitarian, "but also strengthened popular beliefs in progress, prosperity and perfectibility."[38] By the time of the Civil War, the newly established Ordnance Department successfully standardized military's small arms and artillery. This, however, was no easy feat, and the resources required were such that only the government could afford to thoroughly standardize

35. "WANTED—A RESERVE FORCE," *Harper's Weekly*, July 4, 1863, p. 418.

36. In reality, sharpshooters likely had little influence on the outcome of the war. See Bilby, *Civil War Firearms* (above, n. 28), p. 123.

37. Edwards, *Civil War Guns* (above, n. 12), p. 212; Marcot, *U.S. Sharpshooters: Berdan's Civil War Elite* (above, n. 14), pp. 18, 44–46.

38. Merritt Roe Smith, "Army Ordnance and the 'American System of Manufacturing,'" in *Military Enterprise and Technological Change*, ed. Merritt Roe Smith (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), p. 40. Smith goes on to argue, "[O]n these ideological foundations rested the viability of republication institutions and the promise of American life."

their technology.[39] Despite the private sector's inability to mimic the military's material advances, the ideology of standardization, uniformity, and interchangeability permeated American industry. American industrialists believed that an "orderly and well-regulated work environment would not only promote efficiency but also instill values conducive to the moral growth and well-being of the country."[40] Standardized was a moral statement as well as a pragmatic goal.

According to prevailing industrial ideology, the Confederate army was morally as well as technologically inferior. With a mere ninth of the North's manufacturing capabilities, any Confederate desires to field a regular army on par with the Union's were never achieved. From the start, the Confederate army was a motley assortment of local militias and private armies (like Wade Hampton's South Carolina "legion").[41] Berdan's sharpshooters' employment of Southern military tactics threatened not only the newly established military order, but also the Northern ideology of perpetual modernization (and hence standardization). In Assistant Secretary Scott's and Brigadier General Ripley's eyes, sharpshooters represented a step backwards, morally and technologically.

"The skulking way of war"

Although radical from a mainstream continental European point of view, nontraditional infantry tactics, such as sharpshooters', were practiced by Europeans in America as a matter of survival from the seventeenth century onward. The origins of sharpshooting in America lie in the initial conflicts between European settlers and Native Americans. The soldiers of the two groups would be become the first American sharpshooters as a result of hybridization between European weaponry and indigenous tactics. Patrick Malone recounts, in *The Skulking Way of War*, how the first European colonists slowly adapted to the Native American's "skulking way of war" and abandoned mainstream European military wisdom. From the beginning, employing indigenous battle tactics was contentious. Some colonists warned that mimicking indigenous tactics such as "skulking behind trees and taking . . . aim at single persons" would lead to defeat, while others praised God for showing the colonists "the vanity of our military skill. . . . Now we are glad to learn the skulking way of war."[42] Regardless of the colonist's sentiments, it is safe to say that

39. Ibid., p. 78.

40. Ibid., p. 85.

41. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom* (above, n. 13), pp. 308–338.

42. Patrick Malone, *The Skulking Way of War: Technology and Tactics among the New*

American sharpshooting, like Cooper's Natty Bumpo, finds its roots in indigenous warfare. Two hundred years later, skulking remained a controversial topic, as shown by Ripley's and Scott's discomfort with Berdan's units. Civilized modern armies fought in well-ordered regiments, met their enemies head on, and did not conceal themselves from sight. "Skulking," despite its proven tactical effectiveness in America, remained difficult to disentangle from partisan rebellion against a superior state-supported force. Sharpshooting, in a modern industrial context, was a tactic for a politically illegitimate army.

Sharpshooting, from a Northern perspective, was then doubly treacherous: a tactic of both Confederates and Native Americans. Native Americans fought on both sides of the Civil War, but historical accounts indicate that they sided with the Confederacy in greater numbers and played a more significant role in its military. The reasons for their allegiance are complex. The "Five Civilized Tribes" (Cherokee, Chickasaw, Creek, Choctaw, and Seminole) felt cultural affinity with the Southern states, and generally perceived the Confederate government to be less treacherous than the Union.[43] Additionally, the majority of Native Americans in the Northern states had been already been forcibly removed, while tens of thousands still resided in the South. A number of Native Americans became famous during their service in the Confederate army, most notably Cherokee chief Stand Watie, the only Native American in either Union or Confederate armies to achieve the rank of brigadier general, and the last Confederate general to surrender to the Union. Furthermore, the few Native Americans who served in the Union army gained the most distinction as sharpshooters in Company K of the First Michigan Sharpshooters.[44]

In one remarkable instance, the Northern press appropriated the sharpshooter image from the South and Native Americans by characterizing sharpshooters as abolitionists. Midway through the war, *The Liberator*, in its March 18, 1863 edition, employed the figure of the sharpshooter as a metaphor for early, prewar abolitionists. The article describes these men as a "small band of select pioneers," who are sent out by their "skillful commander" into enemy terri-

England Indian (Lanham: Madison Books, 2000), p. 6.

43. For a full account of Native Americans in the Civil War, see Laurence M. Hauptman, *Between Two Fires: American Indians in the Civil War* (New York: The Free Press, 1995); Bradley R. Clampitt, ed., *The Civil War and Reconstruction in Indian Territory* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015); and Anne J. Bailey, *Invisible Southerners: Ethnicity in the Civil War* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2006).

44. Hauptman, *Between Two Fires* (above, n. 43), pp. 124–144.

tory to learn the lay of land and scout out the enemy's positions. The sharpshooter corps is "an absolute necessity in the plan of the commander. It is formed of picked men, known for their vigilance and fidelity."[45] *The Liberator* cleanses sharpshooters of their former associations and baptizes them into the abolitionist movement and Union war effort. The sharpshooter/abolitionist is a forerunner—a man ahead of his time and ahead of the enemy's movements. As in the *Frank Leslie's* article, the sharpshooter anticipates and plans for the future. He is the first to discover the enemy's whereabouts, and potentially the first to engage in combat.

It is not surprising that the abolitionist press (and Northern press, generally) would want to wrest the image of the far-seeing sharpshooter from Confederate hands. With a string of embarrassing defeats under Generals McDowell, McClellan, and Burnside, foresight seems to be what the Army of the Potomac severely lacked. Given the Confederacy's effective espionage network during the early part of the war, the Southern armies must have seemed gifted with prescient vision. In the first battle of Manassas (July 21, 1861), Rose O'Neal Greenhow warned P. G. T. Beauregard of Irvin McDowell's advance, and later, at Front Royal in May 1862, Belle Boyd kept Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson informed of Union troop movements.[46] In a war where Confederate armies were often one step ahead of the Union, the Northern public would certainly have resonated with calls for a better advance guard to protect their beleaguered armies, and a home guard to protect themselves.

"A small force of picked men . . . armed with Whitworth telescopic rifles"

The Southern and Southern-sympathizing press, such as it existed, presents a different picture of sharpshooters than the Northern press. In fact, periodicals based in the South rarely mention sharpshooters at all. Moving across the Atlantic, the Confederate-funded journal, *The Index*,[47] and the sympathizing *Illustrated London*

45. "HOW NATIONS BECOME FREE," *Liberator*, March 18, 1864, p. 46.

46. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom* (above, n. 13), pp. 340, 456.

47. Edited by Henry Hotze, the *Index* was published in London from May 1, 1861 until August 12, 1865. The Confederate treasury funded the *Index*, and Hotze was instructed to convince the British public of the Confederacy's legitimacy and ability to win its independence. Born in Zurich, Switzerland, Henry Hotze was the ideal propagandist for the Confederacy's voice in Europe. His intelligence, manners, and devotion to highbrow justifications of the plantation system enabled Hotze to make a name for himself in Southern society. Although the *Index* was primarily to serve as a Confederate mouthpiece, Hotze had literary ambitions for the magazine as well. The *Index* remained mea-

News[48] provide a treasure-trove of material. In these London-based magazines, the sharpshooter is ubiquitous, mentioned frequently in conjunction with wartime reporting. Sharpshooters often appear in accounts of battles and are praised for their bravery and skill, but they are never singled out. Unlike *Harper's Weekly*, *Scientific American*, *The Liberator*, or *Frank Leslie's*, neither *The Illustrated London News* nor *The Index* meditates on the role of the sharpshooter nor urges the South to recruit more of them. Where the Northern press valorizes the sharpshooter and romanticizes especially deadly ones like California Joe, the Southern-oriented press treats the sharpshooter as an ordinary, foundational part of the army. Sharpshooters compose omnipresent regiments and are attributed with remarkable feats, but not mythologized in the same fashion as the Northern press. The Southern-sympathizing periodicals' more subtle representation corroborates the Northern anxiety that the South's sharpshooter's are superior, or at least more numerous. Late in the War, General Lee himself singled out a regiment of sharpshooters for their prowess: "The conduct of the sharpshooters of Gordon's corps, who led the assault, deserves the highest commendation."[49] It is notable here too

sured in tone and devoted to accurate reportage of not only the Civil War, but also world affairs. At its apex, the magazine boasted correspondents in multiple Northern cities, as well as Ireland, Germany, France, Italy, and possibly Australia. Throughout its publication, the *Index* remained covert, with Hotze publishing his pro-Confederacy pieces under the guises of an Englishman, Frenchman, American, and so forth. The magazine published a total of 172 weekly issues, and the height of its circulation was approximately 2,250, 400 of which were shipped to the United States. See "The Index," in *Illustrated Civil War Newspapers and Magazines*, last modified 2007, http://www.lincolnandthecivilwar.com/SubLevelPages/TheIndex.asp; and Coleman Hutchinson, *Apples and Ashes* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012), pp. 191–196.

48. The *Illustrated London News* is a scholarly topic in its own right, with multiple archives across the Internet, and even a published biography of its founder, Herbert Ingram. The magazine bears the distinction of being the first illustrated news source in English, with its first edition appearing in 1842, and then publishing continuously until 1994. Besides the magazine's distinguishing images, it published many of England's great literary figures of the nineteenth and twentieth century. The magazine remained in the Ingram family's control for over one hundred years. The *Illustrated London News* was published weekly, in editions of varying length and price. The first edition entered the publishing world with a bang: a full sixteen pages covered with thirty-two woodcuts (and costing six-pence). Although not giving specific dates, the *Guardian* reports that, at the magazine's zenith, it enjoyed a circulation of over three hundred thousand, and was the news and commentary magazine of choice for the Victorian middle class. See Patrick Leary, "A Brief History of the Illustrated London News," ILN Historical Archive, http://gale.cengage.co.uk/images/PatrickLeary.pdf; and Jemima Kiss, "Illustrated London News Archive Goes Online," *Guardian*, April 15 2010, *https://www.theguardian.com/media/2010/apr/15/illustrated-london-news-archive-online*.

49. "Headquarters of the Armies of Confederate States," *Index*, April 13, 1865, p. 231.

that the sharpshooters *lead* the assault, rather than lurking in wait for a victim (as depicted in Homer's painting).

Reports in *The Index* and *The Illustrated London News* complicate military historians' generally low opinions of the battlefield usefulness of sharpshooters. Perhaps the definition of "sharpshooter" differs between the contemporary military historians and the writers for the London-based magazines. Military historians and Northern periodicals tend to use "sharpshooter" to refer to regiments of soldiers who supported a larger body of troops through sniping and scouting, while the Confederate-sympathizing magazines report on the actions of entire regiments of sharpshooters engaging in pitched battle. Either way, *The Index* and *The Illustrated London News* both detail several accounts of Confederate sharpshooting regiments engaging in what seems to be consequential combat. This does not exclude the possibility that Confederate sharpshooters worked in smaller units, only that their actions were not reported as aggressively.[50] However, in stories told by *The Index* and *The Illustrated London News*, Southern sharpshooters are soldiers on the front lines of combat.

Two accounts from *The Index* report sharpshooters fending off (and even capturing) gunboats and ironclads on rivers. The first article, published in the July 24, 1862 edition, recounts a sharpshooter regiment single-handedly defeating a Union gunboat:

> An interesting incident occurred in the Pamunkey on Thursday. A raft battery, protected with iron sides, was annoying our troops in that direction, when a regiment of sharpshooters was detailed to capture it. They proceeded to the brow of a hill immediately commanding the battery, and opened fire down into it. About a dozen Yankees were killed and wounded by the volley, a shock which took them so much by surprise that they concluded to give up; so, hoisting a shirt out upon a pole, the survivors sung out, "We surrender!" Our sharpshooters immediately went down, took possession, and sent the craft to the bottom of the river.[51]

The rafts' iron sides might protect it from artillery, but it was still vulnerable to the sharpshooters' rifles. The victory is nearly immediate; there is no lengthy exchange of barrages. The sharpshooters employ the terrain to their advantage, move above the boat, and

50. John Anderson Morrow makes the case that Confederates armed with Whitworth rifles were deployed in units of one or two, much like modern sniper detachments. See John Anderson Morrow, introduction to *The Confederate Whitworth Sharpshooters* (Atlanta, 2002), pp. i–xii.

51. "LATEST DIRECT INTELLIGENCE FROM THE SOUTH," *Index*, July 24, 1862, pp. 195–196.

find the armor's weakness. The sharpshooters win as much by the element of surprise and mobility as they do by firepower. An unseen enemy, they reveal their position only when they are ready to attack. A second account from the May 7, 1863 edition tells a similar story:

> The Yankee gunboats on the Tennessee River have been driven back by our sharpshooters. Two ironclads endeavoured to land at Tuscumbra this morning at daylight, and were attacked by our cavalry outposts. Heavy cannonading ensued, but it was ineffectual, and the effort to land the party was unsuccessful. The ironclads then backed down the river and retired.[52]

Aided by cavalry, the sharpshooters beat back two assaulting ironclads. The boats' artillery does little damage to the presumably concealed infantry. In both accounts, the superior Union firepower and technology is beaten back by Southern marksmanship and tactics.

The Illustrated London News associates Southern sharpshooters with overcoming difficult odds through tactical use of geography and weapons, much like the Native American fighters in the colonial wars. In the December 5, 1863 edition of *The Illustrated London News*, the magazine's "Special Artist and Correspondent to the South" (Frank Vizetelly[53]) recounts his adventures with "a small force of picked men," who, "armed with Whitworth telescopic rifles," ambush a Federal supply train in the mountains. The Confederates follow "Indian trails" through the mountains to avoid Federal scouts, and when they reach their destination, promptly conceal themselves behind rocks to await the wagon train. When the supply train arrives, the Confederates open fire and cause "the most dire confusion," and soon the road is "choked with dead and dying men," and the Union troops "fled, panic-stricken." The accompanying woodcut adorning the front page features the Confederates concealed behind rocks, with one exception: one man (perhaps the officer?) stands atop a rock (in open view) waving his hat in the air.[54] While the majority of

52. "SOUTHERN WAR NEWS," *The Index*, May 7, 1863, p. 21.

53. A good deal of the *Illustrated London News'* reporting on the South came from its artist/correspondent Frank Vizetelly. Joshua Brown notes that Vizeltelly "gained some fame in the South" (although he was still overshadowed by Northern artists for public fame, broadly). On at least one occasion as well, *Harper's Weekly* reprinted Vizetelly's engravings and commentary on the ambush of a Union baggage train by sharpshooters from the Army of Tennessee (possibly by stealing them from an intercepted blockade runner). Additionally, since the Confederate sharpshooters were occasionally armed with Whitworth rifles of British manufacture, the British reading public might have expressed some interest in the fate of Confederate sharpshooters. See Joshua Brown, *Beyond the Lines: Pictorial Reporting, Everyday Life, and the Crisis of Gilded Age America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), p. 52.

54. Frank Vizetelly, "ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE WAR IN AMERICA," *Illustrated London News*, December 5, 1863, p. 574.

the sharpshooters are hidden, the man atop the rock places himself in plain view of the retreating wagon train, as if taunting them to return fire. This display is the opposite of Winslow Homer's calm, calculating Union sharpshooter concealed in the forest canopy.

The Southern-sympathizing press displays a more nonchalant mood about sharpshooters' emerging role. Sharpshooters feature prominently in *The Illustrated London News*' January 1863 reportage on the ill-fated Federal attack on Fredericksburg in December 1862. On January 3, 1863, *The Illustrated London News* reprinted the *New York Times'* account of the December battle for Fredericksburg. During the initial Union assault, the "Rebel sharpshooters stubbornly contested every inch of ground as our skirmishers advanced."[55] Once the Federal army accomplishes its advance, it is exposed to more of the "enemy's sharpshooters posted behind a stone wall." When the main Federal assault commences, the Southern sharpshooters, joined by more infantry and artillery, unleash a hail of "murderously-aimed missiles," such that the Union soldiers "were literally mowed down."[56] In the reprinted *New York Times*' story, the sharpshooters are "stubborn," unmovable, while the assaulting Union troops are implicitly compared to Tennyson's suicidal, valorous Light Brigade. The *Times*' correspondent quotes "cannon to right of then, cannon to left of them." He then writes that the failed Union assault lasted for "fifteen immortal minutes" before being beaten back.[57] The Southern sharpshooters are not Homer's or Alexander Gardner's lone hidden snipers waiting for prey, but a fighting regiment. A second account (also of the battle of Fredericksburg), published by *The Illustrated London News* nearly one month later, in the January 31, 1863 edition, is accompanied by two illustrations of regimental sharpshooters. The first illustration is a panorama of the Union bombardment of Fredericksburg, and the second a battle scene from atop Marye's Hill. Of the bombardment, the artist reports, "[T]he town is on fire in various places from the shelling, but 300 Mississippians still hold their ground as sharpshooters on the Confederate bank, annoying the heads of the columns as they appear on the bridges." The sharpshooters provide a screen for Lee's main force, which is amassing behind them. Eventually, Lee allows the "dense masses [of] the enemy [to] cross" the river and assault the now entrenched Confederate army that the Mississippi sharpshooters screened. The result of

55. "THE BATTLE OF FREDERICKSBURG," *Illustrated London News*, January 1, 1863, p. 18.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid

the maneuver is "the dreadful slaughter of the assaulting troops."[58] The second illustration (of the dreadful slaughter) shows two disorderly lines of Confederate infantry atop Marye's Hill repelling a sea of orderly Union columns advancing from below. It is unclear if these infantry are sharpshooters, but their disordered line is similar to the open formations of sharpshooters in others of *The Illustrated London News'* images.

The Southern sharpshooters' refusal to fight in a line recalls Eliza Richards's analysis of lines in wartime poetry and journalism in her essay "Correspondent Lines." Richards expounds on a *Harper's Weekly* article by Alexander Waud; both read the line as "an elegant symmetry of violence . . . an organizing principle that makes the distinction between strategic killing and pointless carnage."[59] Richards goes on to write, "[T]he strength of the collective will and obedience to command that led these men to fight and fall so thickly is apparent, configured in shapes formed by lines of the dead."[60] Battlefield sketches often depicted rows of the dead, lying where they had fallen, in the same orderly lines in which they marched into battle (Gardner depicts lines of dead soldiers in "The Harvest of Death"). Lines indicate discipline, order, and death with a purpose. If this is true, then the disordered Southern lines of sharpshooters defeating the ordered lines of the Northern infantry, as well as the industrial steel of its ironclad riverboats, would have been an especially threatening image to the Northern public.

Despite the Union Army's general technological superiority, the mythos of the Southern sharpshooter extended into the realm of technology. The Whitworth rifle, employed by a select few of the Confederacy's best marksmen, was synonymous with sharpshooting. Joseph Bilby suggests that the Whitworth was by far the most effective sniper rifle in the war, and that long-range killing was a Confederate specialty.[61] The rifles were incredibly costly: $100 for single rifle, and up to $1,000 for a rifle equipped with a telescopic sight, full kit, and 1,000 rounds of ammunition.[62] The rifles were distributed primarily to sharpshooter units in the Army of Northern Virginia and the Army of Tennessee, and given to whichever

58. Ibid.

59. Eliza Richards, "Correspondent Lines: Poetry, Journalism, and the U. S. Civil War," *ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance* 54:1–4 (2008): pp. 145–170, at p. 151.

60. Ibid., p. 154.

61. Bilby, *Civil War Firearms* (above, n. 28), pp. 120–123.

62. Fred L. Ray, *Shock Troops of the Confederacy: The Sharpshooter Battalions of the Army of Northern Virginia* (Asheville: CFS Press, 2006), pp. 274–277.

man was the most accurate marksman, who would sometimes be instructed to pick off Federal officers.[63] The first Whitworths appear to have entered the Confederacy on blockade runners in 1862, and their first referenced field use was in 1863. Despite the Confederacy's having only 250 of the rifles in action, the Whitworth gained notoriety in the press, both Northern and Southern.[64]

The Whitworth rifle and its parent company were well known in the Northern press. The Whitworth rifle was produced by the British Whitworth Ordnance Company, which was a rising concern among arms manufactures in the mid-nineteenth century. Joseph Whitworth, the owner and namesake, was something of machinist prodigy. In the September 3, 1853 issue, *Scientific American* reports that Whitworth developed a machine for measuring down to one-millionth of an inch, which he debuted at London's Crystal Palace (still standing from the 1851 World's Fair in London).[65] The Whitworth rifle, as well as the company's artillery, was singular in that it was rifled with a hexagonal bore and fired a hexagonal projectile. The rifle bullet was also longer and slenderer than others of the time, about half an inch longer than the bullet of the more popular Enfield.[66] As such, ammunition was difficult to come by, so the Whitworth Company typically sold the rifle with a hexagonal bullet mold.[67]

The Northern press readily acknowledged the superiority of the

63. Due to the short supply of Whitworth firearms, the Confederacy issued them to the best marksman in a sharpshooting regiment. Confederate scout and sharpshooter Berry Benson, in his memoirs, reports that his regiment was issued several Whitworths in the spring of 1863. The rifles had been brought from England on a blockade runner, and one of them was given to Benson's friend Ben Powell, "who was known to be an excellent shot." Benson also credits Ben Powell with killing Major General John Sedgwick with a shot from his Whitworth rifle. A May 5, 1864 edition of *Harper's Weekly* appears to corroborate Benson's story, as it reports Sedgwick's death "by a sharp-shooter," although it does not state what type of bullet killed the General. See Bilby, *Civil War Firearms* (above, n. 28), p. 119; Ray, *Shock Troops of the Confederacy* (above, n. 62), p. 275; Berry Benson, *Berry Benson's Civil War Book: Memoirs of a Confederate Scout and Sharpshooter*, ed. Susan Williams Benson and Edward J. Cashin (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2007), pp. 69–70; "MAJOR-GENERAL JOHN SEDGWICK," *Harper's Weekly*, May 28, 1864, pp. 349–350.

64. Bilby, *Civil War Firearms* (above, n. 28), pp. 120–123; and Ray, *Shock Troops of the Confederacy* (above, n. 62), pp. 274–277.

65. "The Crystal Palace," *Scientific American*, September 3, 1853, p. 403.

66. "THE WHITWORTH, ENFIELD AND AMERICAN RIFLES," *Scientific American*, August 17, 1861, p. 99.

67. Bilby, *Civil War Firearms* (above, n. 28), pp. 121–122; Ray, *Shock Troops of the Confederacy* (above, n. 62), pp. 274–277.

Whitworth rifle. The August 17, 1861 issue of *Scientific American* ran an article comparing the range and accuracy of three rifles: the Whitworth and Enfield (both British), and one simply called the "American."[68] Of the three, the magazine reported that "the Whitworth rifle was the best that could be adopted." The Whitworth was as accurate at 1,000 yards as the Enfield was at 600. *Scientific American* even urged that "if the Whitworth rifle surpasses all that are made in America, let us adopt it." This advice fell on deaf ears, though, and the Whitworth remained the unique property of the South. The London-based, Confederate-funded *Index* agreed with *Scientific American's* assessment. In a March 31, 1864 review of recent book on firearms, *The Index* stated that, in comparison to the Enfield, "we believe there is no doubt of the infinite superiority of the Whitworth rifle as a marksman's weapon."[69] Their only concern with the rifle was its "delicate character," which they thought "unfit it for the use of the common soldier." The Whitworth was considerably lighter than other marksman's rifles, and was known to foul easier than its heavier counterparts.[70] Despite positive coverage by *Scientific American*, the Union appears to have never considered the Whitworth, although some may have been offered for sale to the general public in New York City.[71]

According to reports in *The Illustrated London News* and *Harper's Weekly*, the Whitworth rifle was known and feared by the Federal troops. The Whitworth became infamous for its long range, incredible knockdown power, and the unique shriek of its hexagonal projectiles. In the November 1863 issue, *Harper's Weekly* published a first person account of the battle of Gettysburg, in which the author recalls coming under fire from the "fiendish Whitworth projectile, and the demoniac shriek of shells."[72] Another account published in *The Illustrated London News* is particularly poignant:

> A correspondent from General Sherman's army says that the Whitworth rifle in use by the Southern skirmishers and sharpshooters is a weapon greatly to be feared, as persons nearly a mile and a half from the Confederate skirmish line have been wounded when they thought themselves safe from anything

68. "THE WHITWORTH, ENFIELD AND AMERICAN RIFLES," *Scientific American*, August 17, 1861, p. 99.

69. "LITERARY NOTES," *Index*, March 31, 1864, p. 203.

70. Ray, *Shock Troops of the Confederacy* (above, n. 62), p. 274; and Bilby, *Civil War Firearms* (above, n. 28), p. 121.

71. Bilby, *Civil War Firearms* (above, n. 28), p. 121.

72. "THE FOURTEENTH AT GETTYSBURG," *Harper's Weekly*, November 21, 1863, pp. 747–748.

> except solid shot and shell. One soldier was standing upon a log crossing a creek, about one mile and a quarter from the nearest Confederate line of rifle pits, and a comrade was talking with him, when one of these fatal messengers came crashing through both thighs, and with this mortal wound he sank into the water. An officer, speaking of it, says—"They break the bone of a man's limb like a solid shot from a cannon." Deserters say that each division of the Confederate front is furnished with about fifty of these rifles, which are used in their skirmish line.[73]

This report likely exaggerates the number of Whitworths in use, but the exaggeration indicates the rifle's notoriety. The Confederates as well were impressed by the rifle's power. Berry Benson tells of a single Whitworth bullet killing two Union solders at Petersburg.[74] Aided by the British Whitworth (or possibly even eclipsed by it), the Southern sharpshooter became anathema to the Northern armies.

"Moulder into nothingness"

Before diving back into the significance of Gardner's fictitious images, there are two words of caution regarding the *Sketch Book*'s reception in the late 1860s and its enduring reputation thanks to the 1956 Dover Edition reprint. First, Emily Godbey warns that the "influence of the Dover edition today conceals a critical element of Civil War photography as it was practiced at Antietam and Gettysburg and as contemporary audiences experienced it: the predominance of stereograph images."[75] Although photographs of the war were certainly available for the viewing public, Godbey argues that the more arresting media representation of the war was the three-dimensional illusion of the stereographic image.[76] This is not to suggest that photographs were unimportant, but that stereographs were likely the prevalent media experience. Secondly, Anne E. Peterson reports that while the *Sketch Book* received coverage in *Harper's*, the *Sunday Morning Chronicle*, and *The Art-Journal*, sales of the book were low because "the book was costly, people wanted to forget the war and not many were likely to spend money on a book of war views."[77] The two volumes were enormously expensive: the 1866 price tag of $150 trans-

73. "FOREIGN AND COLONIAL INTELLIGENCE," *Illustrated London News*, October 10, 1864, p. 357.

74. Benson, *Berry Benson's Civil War Book* (above, n. 63), p. 70.

75. Emily Godbey, "Terrible Fascination: Civil War Stereographs of the Dead," *History of Photography* 39:3 (2012): 265–274, at p. 267.

76. Using a stereography viewer, a person would look through a pair of peepholes to see an illusion of a three-dimensional image.

77. Anne E. Peterson, "Alexander Gardner in Review," *History of Photography* 34:4 (2010): 356–367, at p. 364.

lated to approximately $2,000 as of 2010.[78] On top of the staggering price tag, the book covered a grisly topic most Americans did not yet want to actively remember. Gardner's original title for the collection was *Memories of the Rebellion*, which he changed prior to the book's publication. This title was announced in *Harper's Weekly*, but "Gardner had second thoughts . . . at a time when more people wanted to forget the recent war."[79] Despite the book's exclusiveness, "seeing a photograph of a dead soldier had the same startling effect on its nineteenth-century audience, separating the book from anything else of its kind."[80] The book was reserved for the elite buyer, and was slightly indecorous, but received coverage from at least three major magazines, and presented a seemingly comprehensive visual narrative of the Civil War unlike anything the American public had previous experienced.

As evidenced by Gardner's transition from "Memories" to "Sketch Book" for the volumes' titles, the *Sketch Book* was intended to be an objective, standardized, and universal portrayal of the war, not a collection of subjective, personal memories of various events. Art historian Anthony Lee writes that Gardener wanted the *Sketch Book* to be "a compendium of places, not people, of views, not portraits,"[81] and goes on to posit that the photographs are an "effort at imaginative recovery."[82] The past, for Gardner, is "unromantic," and the future, "uncertain, and unpromising."[83] Having also worked as a portrait photographer, Gardner wanted his *Sketch Book* to reveal the broad vistas of the Civil War—the landscape of the American nation—not the individual faces and subjective experiences. Lee notes that, for photography, "the view was the new mode and carried a professional meaning—more institutional, more weighty, more national, more legitimate."[84] A book of wartime portraits would not adequately commemorate the nation for which over half a million soldiers died. The portrait view particularizes, while the landscape view nationalizes. Like Winslow Homer's soldier trapped in the sharpshooter's

78. Ibid., p. 363.

79. Ibid., p. 362.

80. Ibid., p. 368.

81. Anthony Lee, "The Image of the War," in *On Alexander Gardner's* Photographic Sketchbook of the Civil War, ed. Anthony Lee and Elizabeth Young (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), pp. 9–51, at p. 14.

82. Ibid., p. 23.

83. Ibid., p. 50.

84. Ibid., p. 16.

telescopic sight, the wartime portrait would place the viewer into a paradoxical relationship with the soldier: simultaneously intimate in detail and yet alienated by time and distance. After four disorienting years of civil war, the nation needed a balm for its confusion, not a reminder of those who had died. With all of this in mind, how ought we read the Gettysburg sharpshooter portraits?

On one level, we could read the dead sharpshooters through the lens of Eliza Richard's "correspondent lines." In this case, sharpshooters are the highly skilled yet anarchic counterpoint to the purposeful carnage of the ordinary, standardized troops. Gardner writes that sharpshooters were "seldom used in line, but were taken to the front and allowed to choose their positions."[85] Sharpshooters, at least in Northern periodicals, terrorize the enemy from a distance. They ambush rather than charge, and kill with a single shot, rather than a uniform and standardized regimental volley. The "unromantic past" that Gardner imagines in his sharpshooter portraits is the sly deadliness of the sharpshooter's self-ordered, anarchic aim; the memory of pointless carnage wrought by those who refuse to fight in ordered, honorable lines. The standardized modern regiment is far more violent, yet also more purposeful—orderly fighting in defense of an orderly nation. The only glimmer of hope is that the "unromantic past" of the sharpshooter will "moulder into nothingness."[86] The ordered regimental assault that comes after the sharpshooters' hunting and skirmishing is the valorous future: strategic, fought in lines—death with a purpose. Sharpshooters, both Northern and Southern, need to be forgotten in the aftermath of the Civil War. As a contested figure, at least for the North, sharpshooters must be either completely appropriated from the South and Native Americans or scrubbed from the national imagination. While Northern periodicals attempted to do the former, Gardner's portraits perform the latter: the hunter has become prey to the photographer's lens.

Gardner, the portrait photographer, is a type of sharpshooter.[87] Both are invisible shooters who seek vulnerable bodies to lock into their optics. The view through Gardner's camera lens is not unlike the view that Winslow Homer recalls from the sharpshooter's telescopic sight, except that Homer's image shows the target prior to killing, and Gardner's after. On one level, the reason for Gardner's

85. Gardner, *Gardner's Photographic Sketch Book of the Civil War* (above, n. 3), plate 40.

86. Gardner, *Gardner's Photographic Sketch Book of the Civil War* (above, n. 3), plate 40.

87. Gardner the landscape photographer, then, is a member of the standardized regular infantry: he "shoots" the objective national whole, rather than the subjective individual part.

representations of dead sharpshooters, rather than living, is obvious: sharpshooters operate in hiding, away from regiment and camera. In action, sharpshooters can only be represented imaginatively, and hence subjectively, as through Homer's print for *Harper's* and his later painting. Sharpshooters live in the artist's imagination. Their hiddenness undergirds their mystique. To demystify sharpshooters, Gardener reveals them. And in revealing them, Gardner ensures their death. While Homer's representations (with the exception of the crosshairs sketch) position the painter as imagined viewer, Gardner's photos position the photographer as the victor in a sharpshooting duel. An objective representation of a sharpshooter requires a dead sharpshooter.

Gardner's sharpshooter photographs, staged as they are, exploit the soldier's corpse. Emily Godbey notes that stereographic photography was closely connected to the erotic or pornographic display of bodies.[88] Although Gardner's photographs invite a public viewing experience different from the stereograph's private (scope-like) viewing, they similarly display the bare or vulnerable body for an audience, seemingly unmediated by artist or technology. Gardner's photographs of corpses also parallel the rise of photography as a medical practice. As an empirical record-keeping method, physicians took photographs of diseases and wounds to aid with diagnosis and treatment. Erin O'Connor writes that this "empirical" nineteenth-century medical photography represents diseases superficially—as a purely external phenomenon—and in doing so, erases the photograph's human subject. The individual collapses into "the identity of disease."[89] The objective "hard facts" of the disease subsume the subjective, imaginative identity of the afflicted body.[90] The "hard facts" of Gardner's photographs are a dead sharpshooter; there can be no other objective representation. Only in death does a sharpshooter become empirical. Following O'Connor, a sharpshooter's corpse is merely a vehicle for the objective reality of death. The corpse is real; the person, imaginative.

Portraits of a dead Confederate sharpshooter and dead unidentified sharpshooter bury both the feared rebel soldier and the subversive spirit that sharpshooters in general embodied. Despite sharpshooters' service in the Union army, they remained anarchic soldiers

88. Godbey, "Terrible Fascination: Civil War Stereographs of the Dead" (above, n. 75), p. 270.

89. Erin O'Connor, "Camera medica," *History of Photography* 23:3 (1999): 232–244, at p. 235.

90. Ibid., p. 238.

primarily associated with rebellious Southerners and Native Americans and the untamed frontier. As such, sharpshooters could not be instruments for reuniting a nation torn apart by civil war. Gardner takes aim with his camera to memorialize sharpshooters and the rebellion of Native Americans and Confederates as necessary causalities of war. Of "Last Sleep," Gardner writes that the dead sharpshooter who took the lives of "many distinguished officers . . . will moulder into nothingness."[91] The sharpshooter, like a hunter, fights using guile, not bravery. His open tactics are suspect, and he preys upon those, like Union officers, who are brave enough to lead ordered regiments on the battlefield. Similarly, the sharpshooter in "Home" is found in a "lonely place," of "comparative security," and from that vantage, "picked off our officers."[92] The sharpshooter is not on the field of battle, but lurking in the corners, waiting for some unfortunate enemy to capture in his sights. But, as Gardner's photographs show, the Confederate sharpshooter is not invincible. Gardner recounts that he returned to the battlefield much later to find that the body lay "bleaching, unrecognized, and alone."[93] Sharpshooters might be abandoned and forgotten on the battlefield, but they live long into the future locked into the intimately lethal crosshairs of Gardner's photographs.

91. Gardner, *Gardner's Photographic Sketch Book of the Civil War* (above, n. 3), plate 40.

92. Ibid., plate 41.

93. Ibid., plate 41.