



Seaside News



Civil War Drummers

During the Civil War, boys under the age of eighteen were not allowed to join the military without permission from their guardian(s). Yet thousands of boys under eighteen joined as musicians such as drummers, fife players, and buglers.

The youngest drummer in the Union Army is said to have been nine years old. Most drummers ranged in age from twelve to seventeen.

Drummers were thought of as the heartbeat of the army for their drum signals and calls helped keep order in the camp and on the battlefield. The drummers learned over a hundred drum calls and tunes.

The drummer began as early as 5 a.m. and could end the day as late as 10:30 p.m. In camp, drummers communicated the daily activities of the soldiers, such as meals, roll call, sick call, and drills. A drum signal could carry farther than an officer's voice making it essential during battle when the drum was used to send orders to advance, halt, load weapons, fire, or retreat.

Drummers also performed chores and helped officers, surgeons, cooks, barbers, and dentists. They helped boost the soldiers' moods by playing patriotic songs. Drummers were always on call in case they were needed for special jobs such as signaling an attack by the enemy. While drummers were not soldiers, they saw bloody battles, helped bury the dead, and take care of the wounded. Photo: John Clem, Civil War drummer boy.

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MOODS ENEMY DRILLS TUNES BURY MEALS
 COOK ADVANCE SOLDIERS DENTISTS DRUMMER
 BARBERS BUGLERS RETREAT HELPED SIGNALS
 WOUNDED BATTLEFIELDS PATRIOTIC MUSICIANS
 WAR CIVIL SICK ROLL FIFE

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Questions

1. How old was the youngest drummer in the Union Army?
2. What other instruments were played during the Civil War?
3. How many drum calls and tunes did drummers learn?
4. What kind of chores did drummers do?
5. How did drummers cheer up soldiers?

1. Nine years old
2. Fifes and bugles
3. Over a hundred
4. Take care of the wounded and bury the dead.
5. By playing patriotic songs.

JOKE OF THE MONTH

What did the beach say as the tide came in?

Long time, no sea.

