

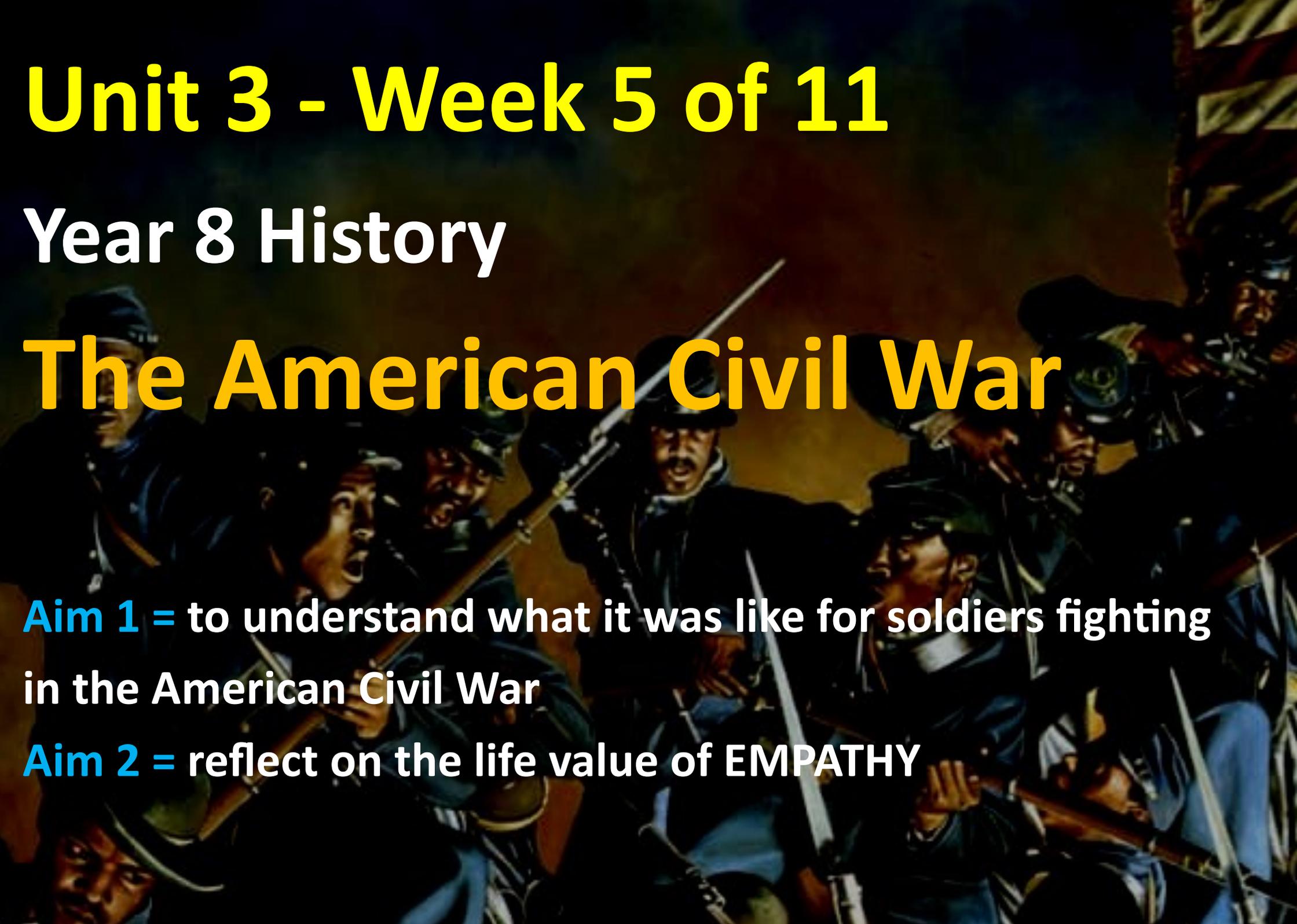
# Unit 3 - Week 5 of 11

Year 8 History

## The American Civil War

**Aim 1** = to understand what it was like for soldiers fighting in the American Civil War

**Aim 2** = reflect on the life value of EMPATHY



My Dear Wife;



I dressed the wounds of 64 different men - some having two or three each. Yesterday I was at work from daylight till dark - I am completely exhausted. The days after the battle are a thousand times worse than the day of the battle – the dead are sickening but they suffer no pain. But the poor wounded mutilated soldiers that yet have life make a most horrid picture. I pray God may stop such infernal work - through perhaps he has sent it upon us for our sins. Great must have been our sins if such is our punishment. Carrie I dreamed of home night before last. I love to dream of home it seems so much like really being there. I saw you in some place I cannot really know where -you kissed me - and told me you loved me - Was not that quite a soldier dream?

**William Child, Major and Surgeon**  
**5th Regiment New Hampshire Volunteers ( Union )**

1

We went hungry, for six days not a morsel of bread or meat had gone in our stomachs - and our menu consisted of apple; and corn. We toasted, we burned, we stewed, we boiled, we roasted these two together, and there was not a man who had not a bad attack of diarrhea. Our under-clothes were foul and hanging in strips, our socks worn out, and half of the men were bare-footed, many were lame and were sent to the rear; others, of sterner stuff, hobbled along and managed to keep up, while gangs from every company went off in the surrounding country looking for food. . . Many became ill from exposure and starvation, and were left on the road.

The ambulances were full, and the whole route was marked with a sick, lame, limping lot, that straggled to the farm- houses that lined the way.

**Private Alexander Hunter**  
**17th Virginia Infantry.**



2

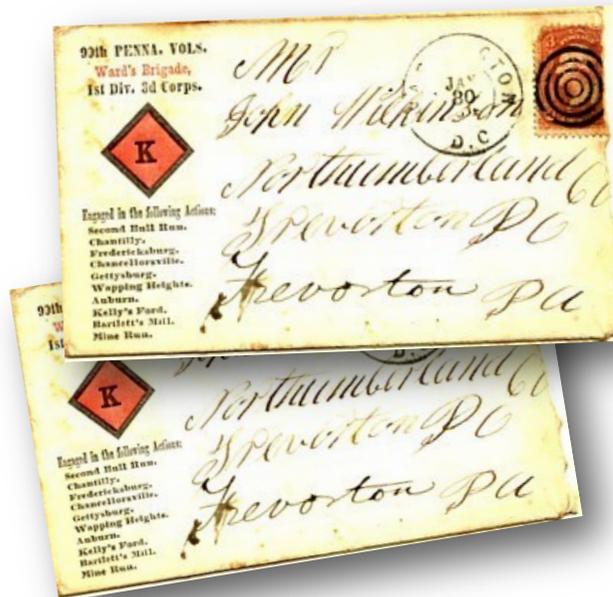
Captain Bachele had a fine Newfoundland dog, which had been trained to perform military salutes and many other remarkable things. In camp, on the march, and in the line of battle, the dog was his constant companion.

The dog was by his side when he fell.

**Union Major R. R. Dawes, 6th' Wisconsin.**



3



The country people lined the roads, gazing in open-eyed wonder upon the long lines of infantry ... and as far as the eye could reach, was the glitter of the swaying points of the bayonets. It was the first ragged Rebels they had ever seen, and though they did not act either as friends or foes, still they gave liberally, and every haversack was full that day at least. No houses were entered - no damage was done, and the farmers in the vicinity must have drawn a long breath as they saw how safe their property was in the very midst of (our) the army.

**Private Alexander Hunter, 17th Virginia Infantry - Sept 21st, 1862.**

# Soldiers' Letters



*'We have just returned from a trip into East Tennessee where we got big amounts of everything to eat and everything we eat is so good to me as I had been starved out so long on some bread & beef, all that we got while we were here besieging Chattanooga. up there we got sweet potatoes, chickens, wheat bread and everything that was good for a poor soldier. Oh, how I do wish that I could be at home now, for it is getting late in the evening and I have had nothing to eat since breakfast ... I know you will say poor John, but this is only a chapter in military service which we often read, but I am content ...The independence of the country is what I want and I am I am willing to suffer for ...'*

**Confederate soldier, John H Sweet .9th Tennessee Infantry**  
**Letter to parents , 1863.**



5

4

The truth is, when bullets are whacking against tree trunks and solid shot are cracking skulls like eggshells, the consuming passion in the breast of the average man is to get out of the way."

**Pvt. David L. Thompson, Company G**  
**9th New York Volunteers.**

6



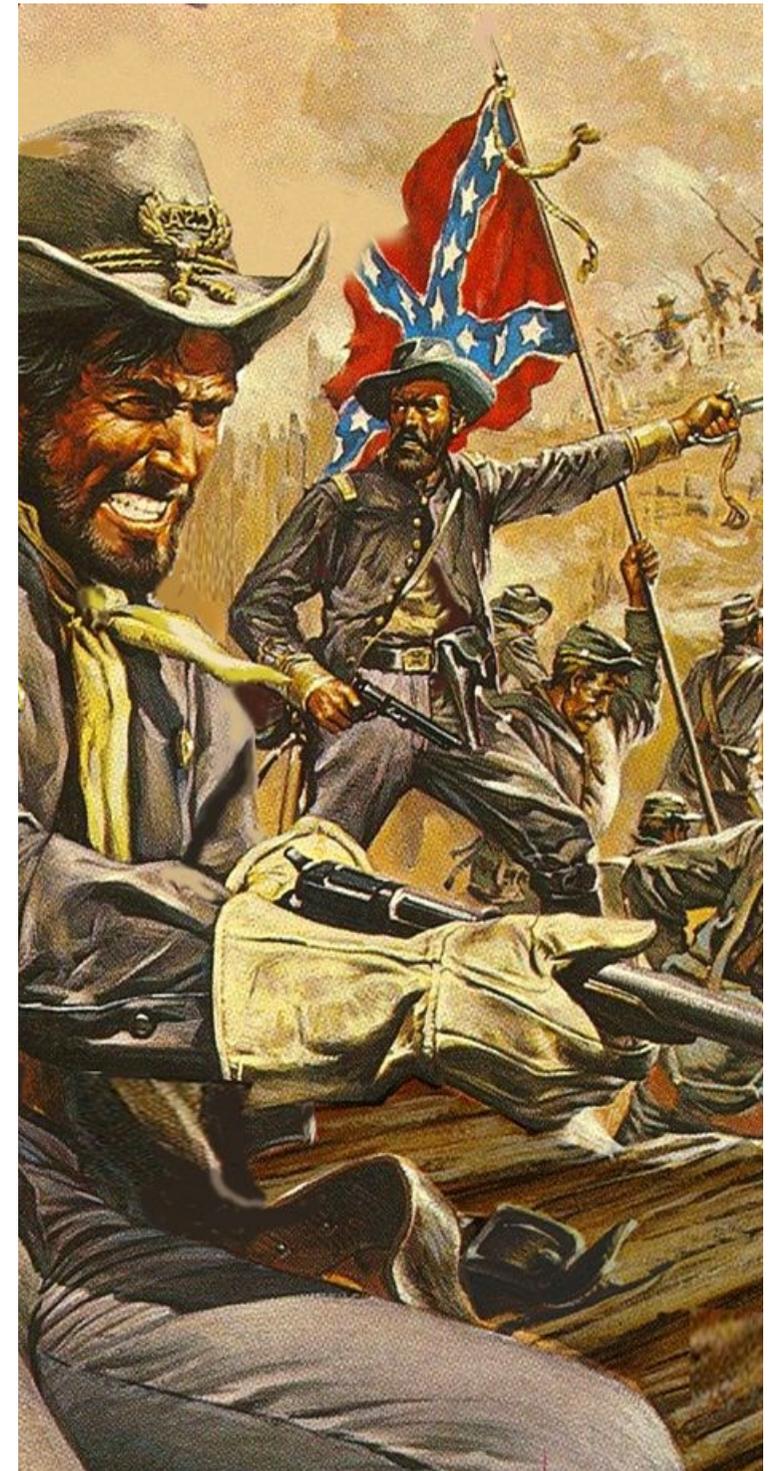


A strong, sturdy-looking Reb was coming laboriously on with a Yank of no small proportions perched on his shoulders. Wonderingly I joined the group surrounding and accompanying them at every step, and then I learned why all this especial demonstration; why the Union soldiers cheered and again cheered this Confederate soldier, not because of the fact alone that he had brought into the hospital a sorely wounded Federal soldier, who must have died from hemorrhage had he been left on the field, but from the fact, that was palpable at a glance, that the Confederate too was wounded. He was totally blind; a Yankee bullet had passed directly across and destroyed both eyes, and the light for him had gone out forever. But on he marched, with his brother in misery perched on his sturdy shoulders. He would accept no assistance until his partner announced to him that they had reached their goal - the field hospital. It appears that they lay close together on the field, and after the roar of battle had been succeeded by that painfully intense silence that hangs over a hard-contested battlefield; where the issue is yet in doubt, and where a single rifle shot on the skirmish line falls on your ear like the crack of a thousand cannon. The groans of the wounded Yank reached the alert ears of his sightless Confederate neighbor, who called to him, asking him the nature and extent of his wounds. On learning the serious nature of them, he said: "Now, Yank, I can't see, or I'd get out of here mighty lively. Some darned Yank has shot away my eyes, but I feel as strong otherwise as ever. If you think you can get on my back and do the seeing, I will do the walking, and we'll sail into some hospital where we can both receive surgical treatment." This programme had been followed and with complete success.

We assisted the Yank to alight from his Rebel war-horse, and you can rest assured that loud and imperative call was made for the surgeons to give not only the Yank, but his noble Confederate partner, immediate and careful attention.

**J. O. Smith.**

**Roulette Farm Field Hospital.**





# Civil War Soldier Letters Activities

 **Mission:** to choose and complete activities .... Newb =  Normal =  Legendary = 

Read letters  
1- 4

Write down any 5 questions  
you would like to ask the soldiers

Write down 5 words you don't  
know the meaning of

Sketch any scene  
described in one  
of the letters

Read letters  
1- 6

Write down 10 things you learned  
from these letters

List 3 things that are  
corroborated in letters 1-6

Paint a picture  
OR a full colour  
drawing OR write  
a poem inspired  
by these letters

Read All Letters  
And Extracts

Write your own version of a  
soldier's letter

Explain what happened in letter 7  
in LESS than 50 words

## Answer ...

The most shocking thing you read?  
The most interesting thing you read?  
Letter 1 - Does William Child think it better  
to be injured or killed?

## Answer ...

Letter 1 - Does William Child think it  
better to be injured or killed?  
Letter 5 - Why is John Sweet happy to  
fight in such awful conditions?

## Answer ...

Letter 1 - Does William Child think it  
better to be injured or killed?  
Letter 4 - What is the KEY point he is  
trying to make in this letter?  
Letter 5 - Why is John Sweet happy to  
fight in such awful conditions?

# End of **Week 5 of 11**

Reminder / homework / assignment ...

