



## The American Civil War

The American Civil war is now recognised as the first great modern war. In an attempt to gain superiority, each side employed new methods which have become recognised tactics for subsequent war situations. These are just a few of the developments that set the American Civil War apart from previous conflicts.

**Photography:** Mathew Brady was one of the first 'war correspondents' to accompany the troops and record images using photographs. Action photographs were not possible because the exposure process took up to ten seconds using the wet plate process used at the time. He used a specially adapted darkroom wagon. The photographs could not be reproduced in the newspapers of the day, but many were used as the basis for line engravings in illustrative publications. Despite these drawbacks, it was the first time that such shocking pictures had been seen (unlike the romantic images previously produced in paintings). For the general public, the stark reality of these pictures destroyed at a stroke, romantic notions of the Civil War.



**Submarines:** The H.L. Hunley a small, hand-powered submarine, was privately built at Mobile, Alabama, in 1863 to support the navy of the confederate forces. Following trials in Mobile Bay, she was transported to Charleston, South Carolina, in August 1863 to serve in the defence of the port. Despite a series of accidents in which many crew men drowned, she began a series of attempts to attack United States Navy ships on blockade duty off Charleston. On 17th February 1864, these efforts were successful. H.L. Hunley approached the steam sloop of war USS Housatonic and detonated a spar torpedo against her side. The federal ship sank rapidly, becoming the first warship to be lost to a submarine's attack. The H.L. Hunley however did not return from this mission, and was presumed lost with all hands.

**Railroads:** General Johnston arranged for the rapid transportation of more than 8000 men by train from the Shenandoah valley to reinforce the confederate army at Bull Run. This was the first large-scale demonstration of the strategic importance of railways in times of conflict. Most of the railways in the South relied upon the industrial North to provide tracks, locomotives and rolling stock and so as the war dragged on, it became a constant battle to keep the southern railroads in working order.