

Henry Jackson Hunt

You are Henry Jackson Hunt. Born in 1819 in the frontier settlement of Detroit, in the Northwest Territory, you a graduate of the US Military Academy at West Point and a career artillery officer of the United States Army. You have seen active service in three conflicts: the war with Mexico (1846-1848), the civil strife in Kansas (1856), and the war in Utah (1857).

As one of the three authors of the official manual *Instructions for Field Artillery*, you enjoy an enviable reputation as an authority on the administration, training, and employment of artillery units. In the present Rebellion, you have put this knowledge to good use, first as the commander of a single battery and then as the chief of artillery of the Department of Northeast Virginia. In the first assignment, you covered the retreat of Union forces that had been defeated at the battle of Bull Run. In the second posting, you played a key role in the design and creation of the belt of fortifications that protected the city of Washington.

At present, you are serving as chief of artillery of the Army of the Potomac. This office gives you considerable influence over the employment of all artillery units within the Army of the Potomac and immediate command of the Artillery Reserve. (The latter is a command composed of all batteries that have not been assigned to one of the subordinate formations of the Army of the Potomac. Thus, a battery can either be assigned to the Artillery Reserve or to a particular army corps, division, or brigade.)

As a rule, the heavier the gun, the greater the likelihood of it being assigned to the Artillery Reserve. That said, at any given time, the Artillery Reserve also contains a number of batteries of types commonly assigned to brigades, divisions, or army corps. In other words, the Artillery Reserve serves both as a home for batteries armed with heavier artillery pieces and a pool for batteries armed with lighter weapons.

Over the course of nearly two years of the present Rebellion and the two or three years of relative peace that preceded it, you learned a great deal about the changes taking place in both the design of artillery pieces and the projectiles that they fire. Thus, you know well the characteristics of rifled artillery pieces, the “Napoleon” 12-pounder smoothbore gun-howitzer, and the older smoothbore artillery pieces of types used by many of the Rebel batteries. Similarly, you know the difference between the cylindrical “bolts” fired by rifled guns and the old-fashioned cannonballs fired by smoothbore weapons, as well as the various exploding shells available for each type of weapon.



Colonel Henry Jackson Hunt, Chief of Artillery, Army of the Potomac