The Quartermaster dealing out the Allowance.
A Sampling of Civil War Patriotic Covers

IT HAS been said that the Civil War produced the world's first truly literate armies. One result of this was the struggle's rich legacy of letters, diaries, and memoirs. Another — less important for history, but possibly more colorful — was the proliferation of what philatelists term "Civil War patriotic covers."

The thousands of homesick soldiers and the anxious loved ones left behind them created a vast tide of mail. Many of the letters were carried by envelopes decorated in keeping with the fervid emotions and sentimentality of the time. The fad for these began as early as 1860, and they bore everything from flamboyant patriotic emblems to crudely drawn caricatures of current personalities and events — not to mention scenic sketches suggestive of present-day picture postcards.

Many of them were distributed by the New York firm of Charles Magnus, while others were manufactured in Philadelphia, Cincinnati, and elsewhere. They have long been a favorite subject for collectors, and since most of them were printed on cheap paper which deteriorates easily, they have become increasingly rare.

In 1944 the widow of Charles H. Graves, a Duluth insurance dealer, state legislator, and onetime minister to Sweden, presented his collection of some 350 such covers to the Minnesota Historical Society. They are preserved as a part of the institution's manuscripts collection. As a Civil War centennial offering, a few examples are here reproduced in their original size and colors.

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OFFICER:—FRONT FACE!!

"Why in th' thunder don't you cast your eyes to the front!!"
Death to Traitors

To Mr.

Reg't, Co. Captain

Col. Com'y

Camp

Jeff. Davis's Allies in his savage Rebellion!