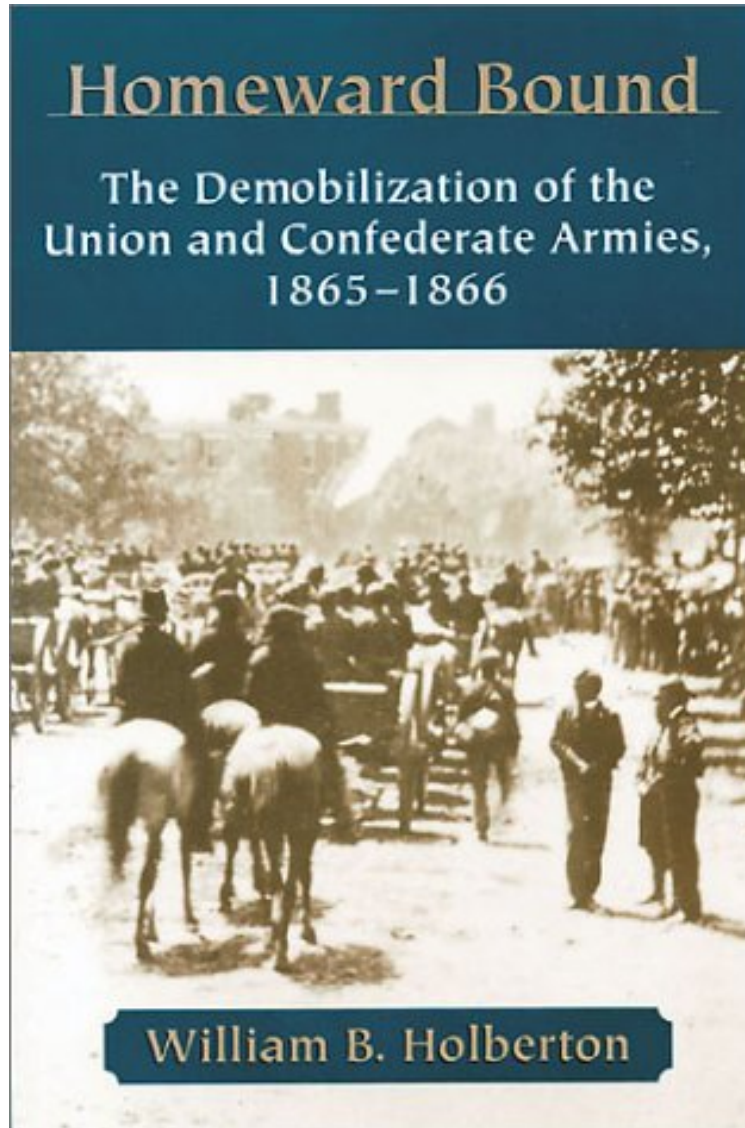


## Homeward Bound

*William B. Holberton*

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**William B. Holberton : Homeward Bound** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Homeward Bound:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. This answers a big historical question - how did a million men get home?By Mum BettyI bought this book as a result of doing some family history research. I found the war diary of my great great grandfather's regiment, but it raised many questions about how he got home from Raleigh, NC where he was late in April, 1865 to Minnesota in mid-July. My professional historian husband wanted to know: how DID the Federal Government in 1865 disband the largest citizen-soldier army ever to have existed up until that time? I'd never

thought of that question, nor the fact that up until then no government had tried. Also, how did the Confederate soldiers get home? This book is the result of a labor of love compiled from a life-time of research, and was published after his death by the author's friends. It is a fitting monument to the author's painstaking and careful research and scholarly interests, and is well-written and thorough. The way in which the Federal Government organized the demobilization in 1865-6 set the pattern for all later American citizen-soldier wars: World Wars 1 and 2 and other conflicts involving large numbers of non-professional military personnel. That the men got home, got paid, got pensions when needed, was all due to the careful way in which those who organized this demobilization proceeded within the context of a war-torn landscape and badly disrupted infrastructure. If you are interested in the Civil War, you should be aware of this last and final phase of the war. If you want to find out how anything so massive is organized on a rational basis, then you need to read this. (Perhaps a good read for today's project managers!) And, if you want to find out what happened on an individual and unit level, this will also prove helpful (as it did for me). There is much of human interest here, and this is a valuable source for any Civil War buff or any family historian whose ancestors were caught up in either side of this conflict.

4 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

Clarifying a Chaotic Time in U.S. History  
By Dr. Victor S. Alpher  
I'll admit I find books such as these appealing, for the writers (in this case deceased before publication) are assembling information from lifelong passionate study, in this case, the American Civil War. This topic is long neglected--the demobilization of the Armies. One would think that the period between Appomattox and the official end of Reconstruction was one of relative non-events...yet on personal levels, from which William Holberton draws, it was a period of passion and uncertainty that we would hardly bear quietly today. During this time, however, was laid the blueprints for many current political issues--political correctness, repatriations to victims of slavery, the development of the Southern Heritage movement in various forms, and regionalization of the South which would last another 140-plus years. As an example, hear the yearnings of a member of the 56th U.S. Colored Infantry Regiment, bound to return to the border state of Missouri... "There has several redgements who enlisted one year after we did mustered out and gone home. We stood on the bank and she teers to think that we who had batled for our country over two years should still be retained and deprived of the privilege of seeing those who are so sear to us" (p. 139). This, from a man who came from those whom sociologists only recently learned had "family units" and loyaltie that would make a modern divorce lawyer wince. And consider the many who died of disease AFTER the war, or the Ohioans in occupation who were camped south of New Orleans, only to fight alligators, polluted waters, only to move on to the occupation of Texas, an even more formidable assignment, many dying daily of dysentery and like illnesses. My only criticism of this book would be the relative lack of documentation of Confederate demobilization--not surprising, given the manner in which Confederate veterans were treated. Unfortunately, Lincoln's "with malice toward none...with charity for all" dictum was not held in wide esteem or knowledge. The country today would be better for recognition that Confederates (often black or African-American, Jewish, or members of some other "minority" were fighting as Cicero said, "Pro Aris et Pro Focis" (for home and hearth) against an invasion, as much as for political beliefs. A volume beloning in any Civil War historian or student's library.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

Little Known Story of the Civil War  
By Thomas G. Matowitz Jr.  
I found this book fascinating. I have read about the Civil War all my life, but have never previously seen an account of how the great armies were dispersed and sent on their way home. I thought the book was well written in an engaging style. It is most unfortunate that the author did not live to see it's publication and receive the recognition he deserved for this fine book.

What happened to the hundreds of thousands of men in the Union and Confederate armies after they lay down their arms? According to William Holberton, many of these men had miles to travel before they were discharged from service, and the passage of these miles included some rather unique situations and experiences. As always, there was bureaucratic red tape and mishandled orders, and in some cases, tragic accidents, such as the Sultana disaster. Beginning with the surrender at Appomattox Court House, the author takes the reader through all the aspects and phases of demobilization, including the Grand Review in Washington, the desertions of soldiers overly eager to return home, the differences between Union and Confederate demobilization, the repatriation of prisoners of war, and the deferred demobilization of many black troops.

About the Author  
The late William Holberton was a retired priest living in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. He spent the years since his retirement researching and writing *Homeward Bound*, his first book. He had previously published related articles in magazines such as *Civil War Times Illustrated*.