

THE CITY RECORD

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Roll Call

By: Nathaniel Graham Shepherd

“Corporal Green!” the orderly cried.

“Here!” was the answer, loud and clear.

From the lips of the soldier who stood near—
And “Here!” was the word the next replied.

“Cyrus Drew!” – then a silence fell—

This time no answer followed the call;
Only his rear-man had seen him fall,
Killed or wounded, he could not tell.

There they stood in the failing light;
These men of battle, with grave dark looks,
As plain to be read as open books,
While slowly gathered the shades of night.

The fern on the hillsides was splashed with blood,
And down in the corn where the poppies grew
Were redder stains than the poppies knew;
And crimson-dyed was the river’s flood.

For the foe had crossed from the other side
That day, in the face of a murderous fire
That swept them down in its terrible ire—
And their life-blood went to color the tide.

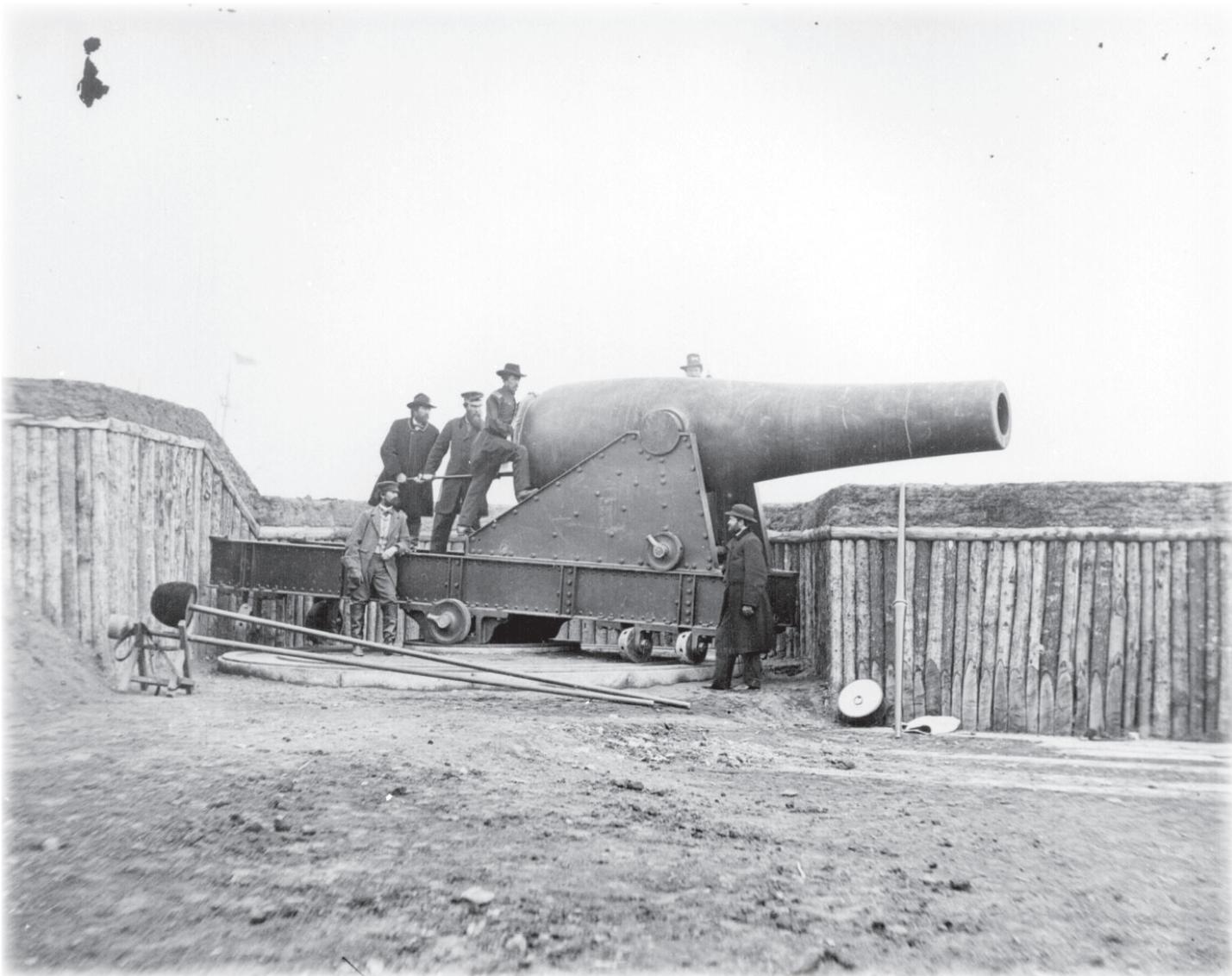
“Herbert Kline!” At the call there came
Two stalwart soldiers into the line,
Bearing between them this Herbert Kline.
Wounded and bleeding, to answer his name.

“Ezra Kerr!” – and a voice answered “Here!”
“Hiram Kerr!” but no man replied.
They were brothers, these two, the sad wind sighed.
And a shudder crept through the cornfield near.

“Ephraim Deane!” – then a soldier spoke;
“Deane carried our regiment’s colors,” he said:
“Where our ensign was shot I left him dead,
Just after the enemy wavered and broke.

“Close to the roadside his body lies;
I paused a moment and gave him drink;
He murmured his mother’s name, I think.
And death came with it and closed his eyes.”

‘Twas a victory; yes, but it cost us dear—
For that company’s roll, when called at night,
Of a hundred men who went into the fight,
Numbered but twenty that answered “Here!”



15" Redman Gun of Battery Rodgers
Alexandria, Virginia
From National Archives