



Harriet Tubman, an African American abolitionist and humanitarian, played a crucial role in the Union Army during the Civil War. Born into slavery in Maryland around 1822, Tubman's life was marked by courage, determination, and an unwavering commitment to freedom. In addition to her remarkable work as a conductor on the Underground Railroad, helping countless enslaved individuals escape to freedom, Tubman made significant contributions as a nurse, spy, and scout for the Union Army. Her selflessness and strategic intelligence not only saved lives but also provided vital information that helped turn the tide of the war in favor of the Union. This essay will delve into Harriet Tubman's invaluable contributions to the Union Army during one of America's darkest chapters - the Civil War.

## Early life and escape from slavery

At the age of around 27, Tubman made the courageous decision to escape slavery herself. In 1849, she embarked on a perilous journey northward along the Underground Railroad. Traveling at night and relying on an intricate network of safe houses and sympathetic individuals who helped guide enslaved people to freedom, Tubman successfully reached Philadelphia.

But instead of settling into a newfound freedom for herself, Tubman felt compelled to return south multiple times over the next decade to rescue family members and others still trapped in bondage. Her determination was fueled by her own personal experiences as well as her unwavering belief in equality and justice for all.

Tubman's successful escapes from slavery not only demonstrated her courage but also highlighted her resourcefulness and strategic thinking - qualities that would become invaluable during her time serving with the Union Army during the Civil War.

## Underground Railroad activities

Tubman's efforts extended beyond guiding individuals to freedom; she also provided shelter and assistance for those seeking refuge along their journey. In addition to ensuring safe passage for enslaved people, Tubman worked tirelessly to raise funds for their liberation by speaking at public gatherings and soliciting donations from supporters. Her tireless dedication not only saved lives but also inspired others to join the fight against slavery.

Harriet Tubman's activities on the Underground Railroad demonstrated her unwavering commitment to justice and equality. Through her remarkable efforts, countless individuals were able to find freedom and start new lives away from the shackles of slavery. These experiences would later shape Tubman's contributions during her time serving with the Union Army in one of America's bloodiest conflicts - the Civil War.

## **Involvement with the Union Army**

Tubman's involvement with the Union Army began in 1862 when she joined as a nurse and cook. Her experience caring for enslaved individuals on the Underground Railroad made her well-equipped to provide medical assistance to wounded soldiers. Tubman's capabilities extended far beyond nursing duties.

Recognizing her intelligence, determination, and knowledge of the southern terrain, Union military leaders soon realized that Tubman could be a valuable asset as a spy and scout. She became one of the first women in U.S. History to lead an armed expedition during wartime. Tubman utilized her extensive network of contacts from her time on the Underground Railroad to gather information about Confederate positions and activities.

Her contributions as a scout were pivotal in planning strategic raids against Confederate targets along coastal areas such as South Carolina and Florida. Tubman's expertise enabled Union forces to navigate treacherous swamps, avoid enemy detection, and successfully carry out surprise attacks.

Harriet Tubman's involvement with the Union Army showcased not only her bravery but also her ability to adapt and excel in various roles. Her work as a nurse, spy, and scout was instrumental in helping secure victories for the Union side throughout the Civil War. It challenged societal norms by demonstrating that women - particularly African American women - were capable of making significant contributions on the battlefield.

### **Role as a scout and spy**

During the Civil War, Tubman's knowledge of the land and her ability to navigate through dangerous territories made her an invaluable asset to the Union Army. Her experiences as a conductor on the Underground Railroad provided her with intimate knowledge of escape routes and secret hideouts used by enslaved individuals. This expertise allowed Tubman to serve as a scout for Union forces, providing crucial information about Confederate positions and movements.

Tubman's bravery extended beyond scouting; she also served as a spy for the Union Army. Disguised as a slave or servant, Tubman would gather vital intelligence from Confederate camps, including troop movements, supply routes, and military plans. Her espionage work was instrumental in helping Union forces gain strategic advantages over their adversaries.

As a scout and spy, Harriet Tubman risked her life time and time again for the cause of freedom. Her contributions not only saved countless lives but also aided in securing important victories for the Union during one of America's most pivotal conflicts - proving that even in times of war, courage knows no bounds.

## **Combahee River Raid and liberation of enslaved people**

One of Harriet Tubman's most notable contributions during the Civil War was her involvement in the Combahee River Raid. In June 1863, Tubman served as a spy and scout for the Union Army, providing valuable intelligence about Confederate positions and strategic locations. Her knowledge of the region proved instrumental in planning and executing a daring raid along the Combahee River in South Carolina.

During this mission, Tubman guided Union gunboats through treacherous waters to free over 700 enslaved people who were working on plantations along the riverbanks. This audacious act not only struck a significant blow to the Confederate war effort but also provided hundreds of men, women, and children with their long-awaited freedom.

Tubman's leadership and bravery during the Combahee River Raid showcased her unwavering commitment to justice and liberation. Her ability to navigate dangerous situations while maintaining composure under pressure made her an invaluable asset to the Union Army. The success of this raid not only saved lives but also demonstrated that African Americans had an active role to play in securing their own freedom during one of America's most tumultuous times.

## Contributions to the abolitionist movement

Harriet Tubman's contributions to the abolitionist movement cannot be overstated. Not only did she risk her own freedom repeatedly by returning to slaveholding states, but she also became a prominent speaker and advocate for the cause of emancipation. Tubman worked closely with other notable figures in the movement such as Frederick Douglass, sharing her firsthand experiences of slavery and rallying support for the abolitionist cause.

Tubman's personal story of escape and resilience resonated deeply with audiences across the country. She used her platform to highlight not only the horrors of slavery but also the humanity and strength of enslaved individuals. Her powerful speeches challenged prevailing stereotypes about African Americans and helped shift public opinion towards supporting their rights.

Tubman's work as an Underground Railroad conductor provided valuable intelligence on slaveholders' practices, plantation locations, and routes taken by escaping slaves. This information proved instrumental in organizing rescue missions and strategically planning emancipation efforts.

Through her ceaseless advocacy work both on and off the battlefield, Harriet Tubman played a pivotal role in advancing the cause of abolishing slavery. Her determination to fight for justice transformed her into an icon of resistance against oppression, inspiring generations to come.

## Post-war activism and support for women's suffrage

Following the conclusion of the Civil War, Harriet Tubman's activism did not wane. She continued to fight for social justice and equality, particularly focusing on women's suffrage. Tubman recognized that the rights and freedoms she had fought for during the war should extend to all individuals, regardless of gender.

Tubman became an active member of various women's suffrage organizations and used her powerful voice to advocate for equal voting rights. She believed that women should have a say in shaping their country's future just as they had played a vital role in its progress during times of conflict.

In her later years, Tubman also dedicated herself to establishing homes for elderly African Americans who were marginalized by society. Her tireless efforts to uplift others exemplified her selflessness and commitment to improving the lives of those around her.

Harriet Tubman's post-war activism underscored her belief in the inherent dignity and worthiness of all individuals. Her work as an abolitionist, nurse, spy, scout, and advocate laid a strong foundation for future generations fighting against discrimination and injustice. Through her remarkable contributions both during and after the Civil War, Harriet Tubman left an indelible mark on American history - one that continues to inspire people today.

## **Legacy and recognition of Tubman's contributions**

Harriet Tubman's contributions to the Union Army and the Civil War were not fully recognized during her lifetime. Her bravery and dedication have since been acknowledged, cementing her place in history as an American hero. In 1863, she became the first woman to lead an armed expedition during the Combahee River Raid, where she successfully liberated over 700 enslaved people. Despite facing great personal risks, Tubman never wavered in her commitment to freedom.

In recognition of her remarkable achievements, Tubman was posthumously awarded several honors. In 1978, she was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame for her leadership and activism. In April 2016, it was announced that Harriet Tubman would replace Andrew Jackson on the front of the \$20 bill—an extraordinary testament to her enduring legacy and impact on American history.

Today, Harriet Tubman serves as a powerful symbol of strength and resilience against oppression. Her tireless efforts on behalf of others continue to inspire generations of individuals fighting for justice and equality. As we reflect upon our nation's history and ongoing struggles for freedom, we must honor Tubman's memory by amplifying marginalized voices and working towards a more inclusive society – one that embodies the spirit of courage exemplified by this extraordinary woman who dedicated herself selflessly to helping others find their way out of darkness into light.

## **Conclusion**

Harriet Tubman's contributions to the Union Army and the Civil War were nothing short of extraordinary. From her early life as a slave to her daring escapes and work on the Underground Railroad, Tubman exemplified bravery, determination, and selflessness. Her decision to join the Union Army as a nurse, spy, and scout showcased her strategic intelligence and unwavering commitment to freedom. Tubman's invaluable contributions not only saved lives but also provided crucial information that helped turn the tide of the war in favor of the Union. Her legacy serves as an inspiration for generations to come - a reminder that one person can make a profound difference in fighting for justice and equality. Harriet Tubman will forever be remembered as an American hero whose courage and resilience left an indelible mark on our nation's history.