

## **Galvanized Yankees**

A small number of Civil War soldiers served in both the Confederate and Union armies. Soldiers who fought first for the Confederacy and afterward for the Union were called “galvanized Yankees”—a reference to metal that has a thin galvanizing layer of zinc placed over steel. “In the process the surface color of the metal is altered, but underneath the coating the steel is unchanged. During the Civil War, in both Northern and Southern prison camps, soldiers sometimes decided to ‘galvanize,’ or change sides, to save themselves from the horrors of prison life. Like the metal, these galvanized soldiers in many cases were still ‘Good old Rebels,’ or ‘Billy Yanks,’ underneath their adopted uniforms.”