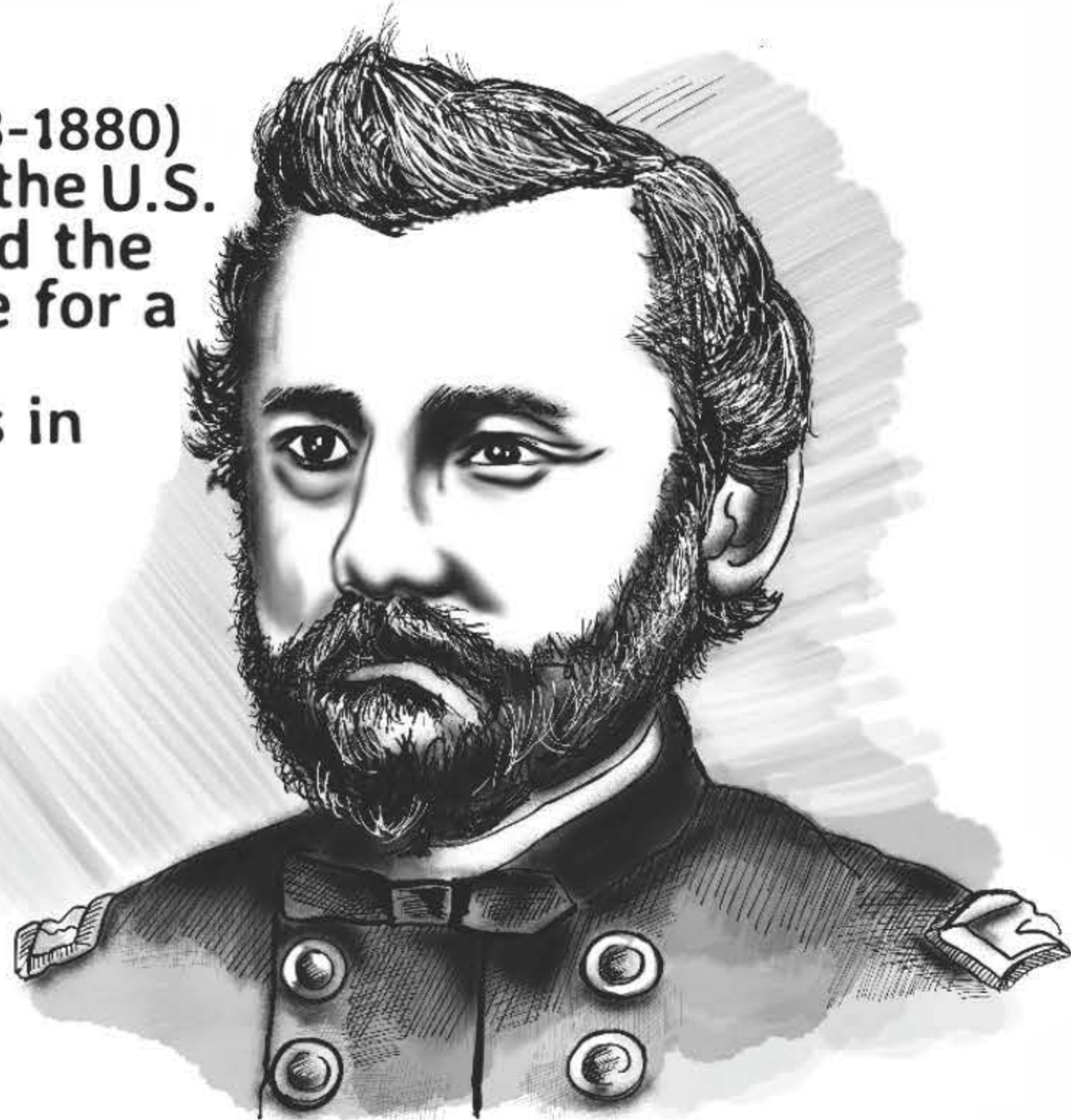
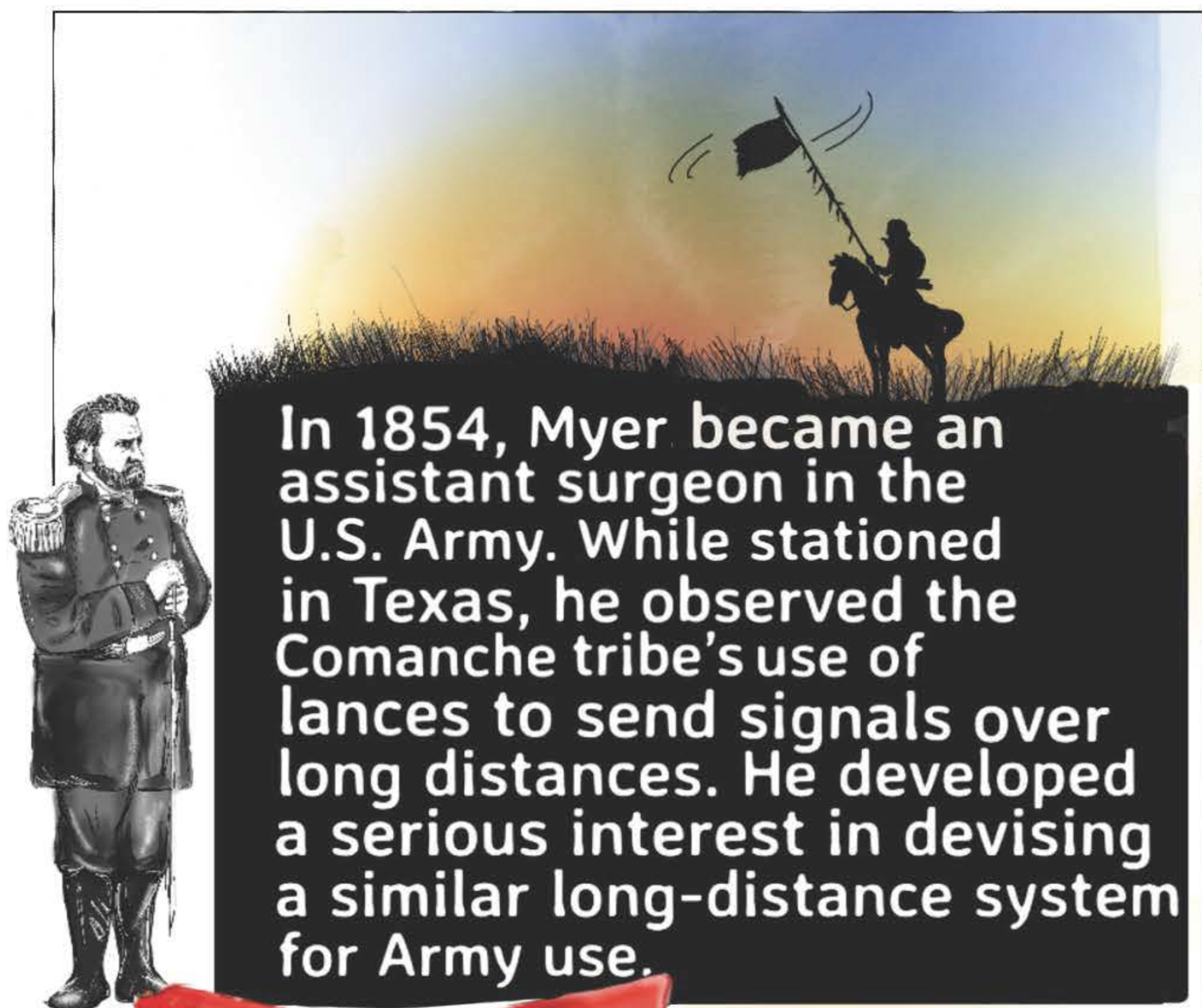
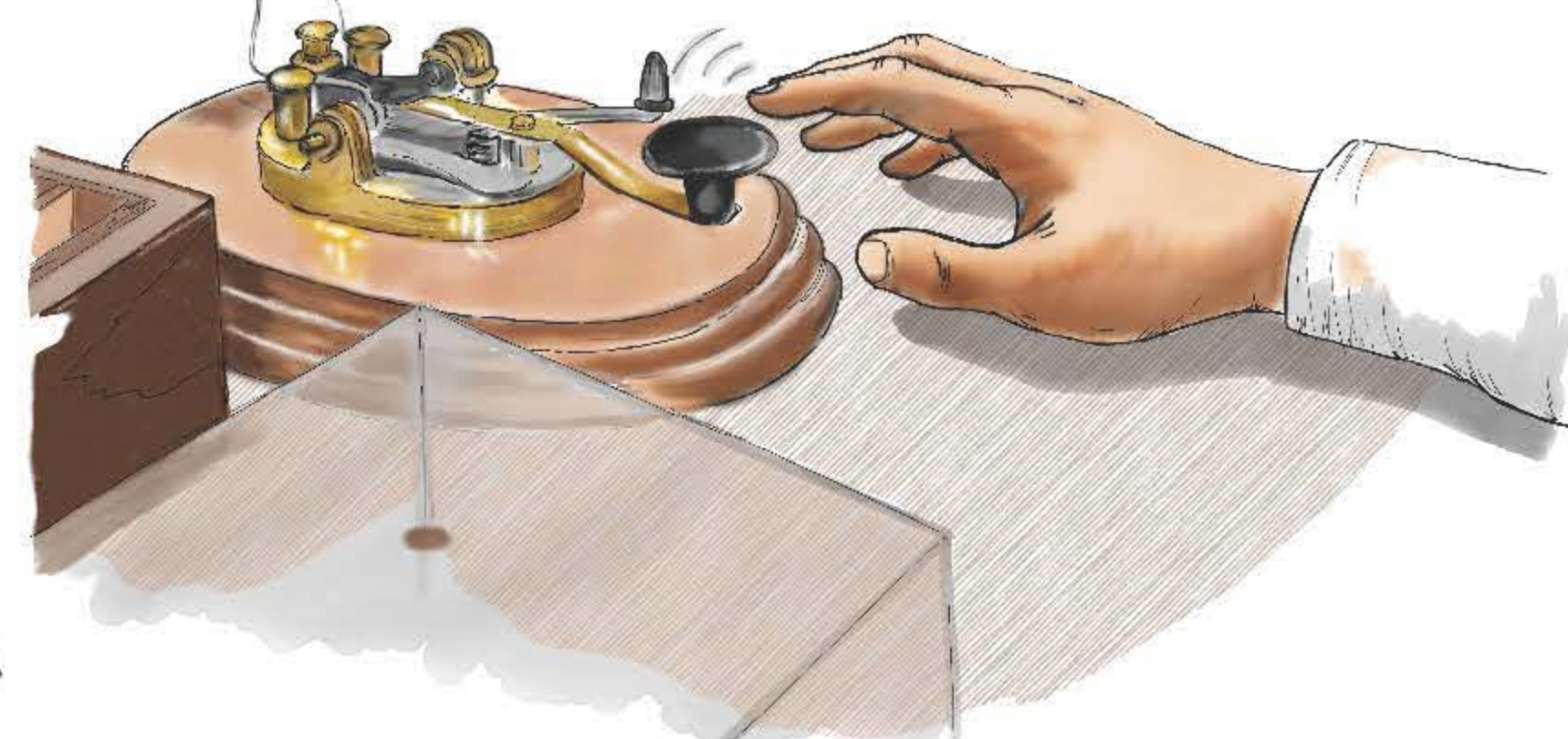


Albert Myer (1828-1880) is the father of the U.S. Signal Corps and the man responsible for a revolution in communications in the U.S. Army.



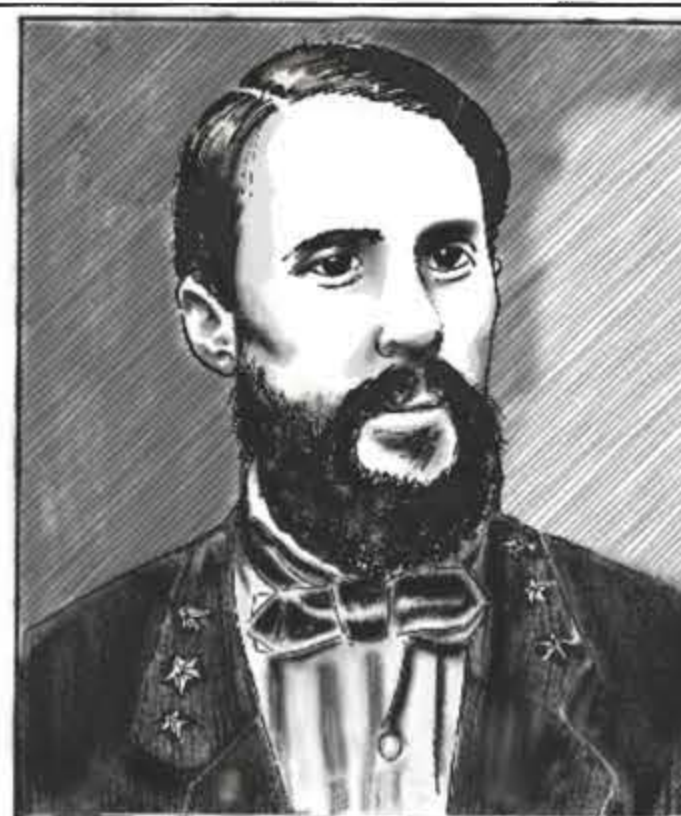
Myer, from Buffalo, New York worked as a telegrapher as a teenager. Later, while studying medicine at Buffalo Medical College, he worked for the New York State telegraph system.



In 1854, Myer became an assistant surgeon in the U.S. Army. While stationed in Texas, he observed the Comanche tribe's use of lances to send signals over long distances. He developed a serious interest in devising a similar long-distance system for Army use.

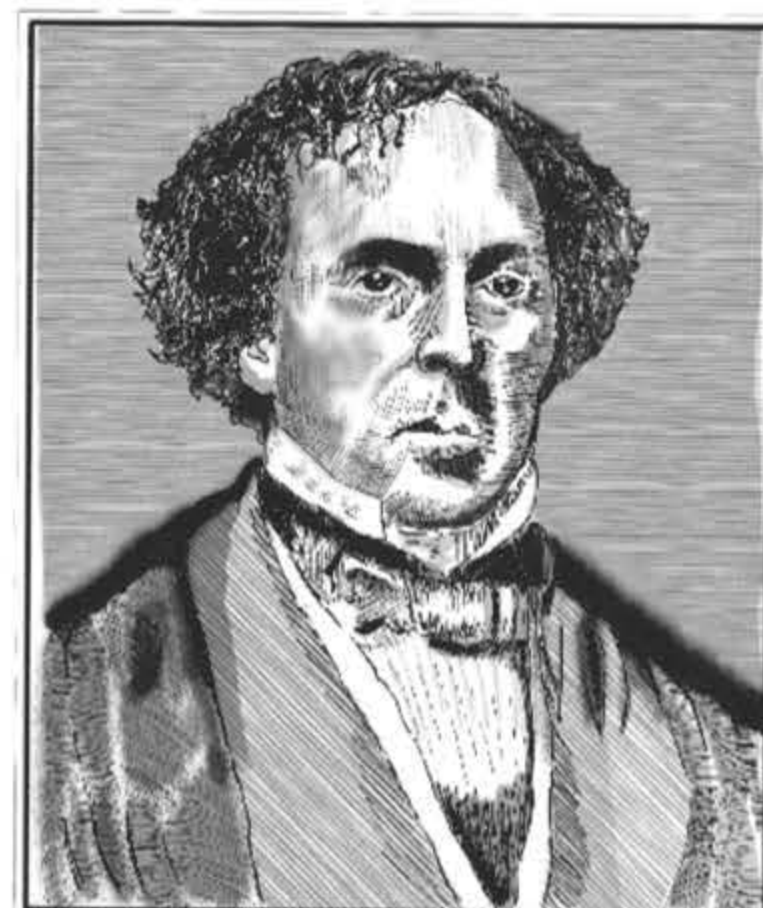


Prior to this time, if an army unit in the field wanted to send a message to another unit, the commander had two choices: first, if the message was long, he might send a runner. Or, he might fire off a rocket that exploded in a color that had a prearranged meaning.



The secretary of war John B. Floyd, recommended that the system be adopted and that Myer be appointed the Army's chief signal officer.

Between 1858 and 1860, Myer and his principal assistant, Edward Porter Alexander, developed, tested, and refined the signaling system.



Congress approved this in June 1860.

There were three positions for the flag:

to the left = 1
to the right = 2
to the front = 3

In this system,

11 = a 1221 = B

3 = end of word

333 = end of message



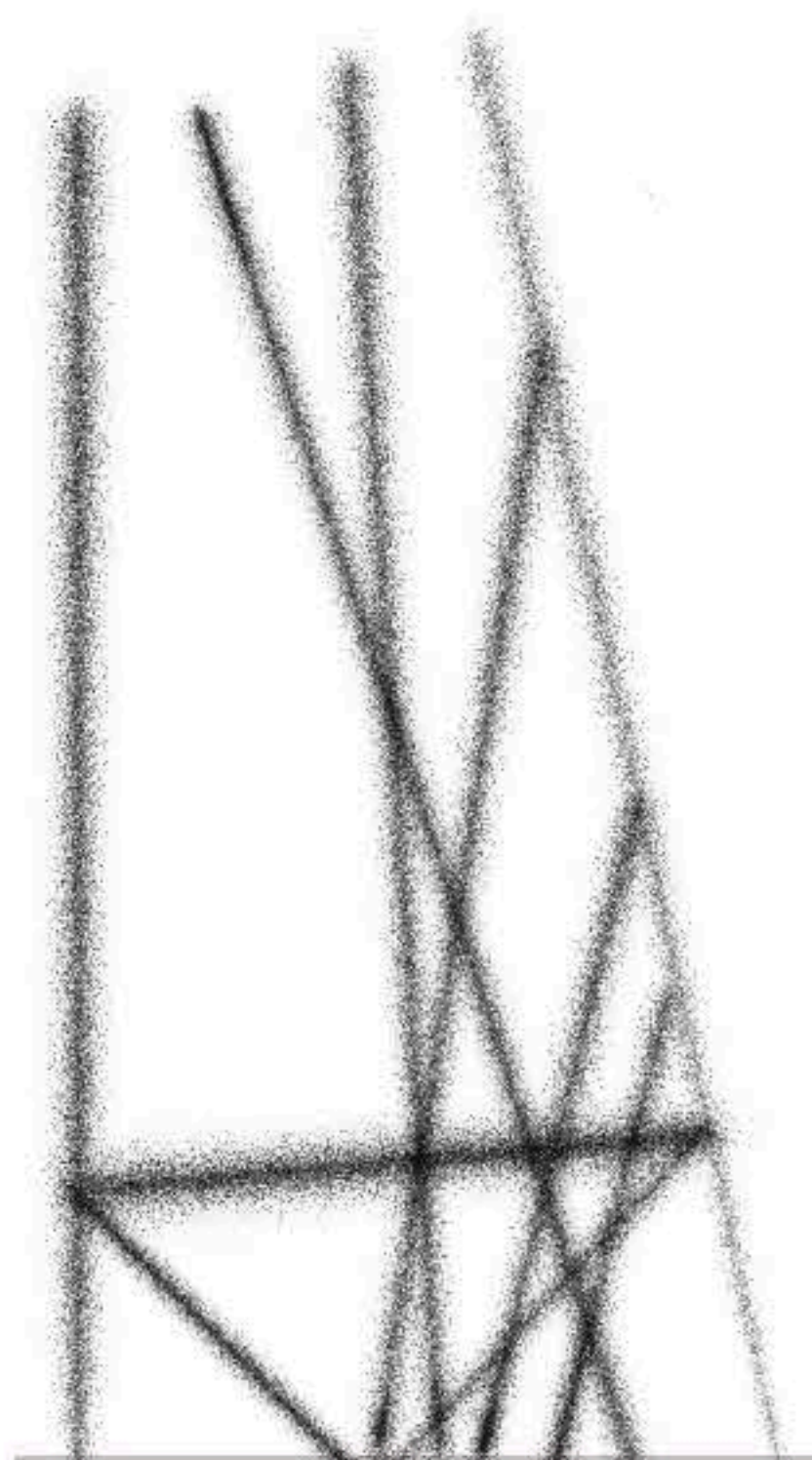
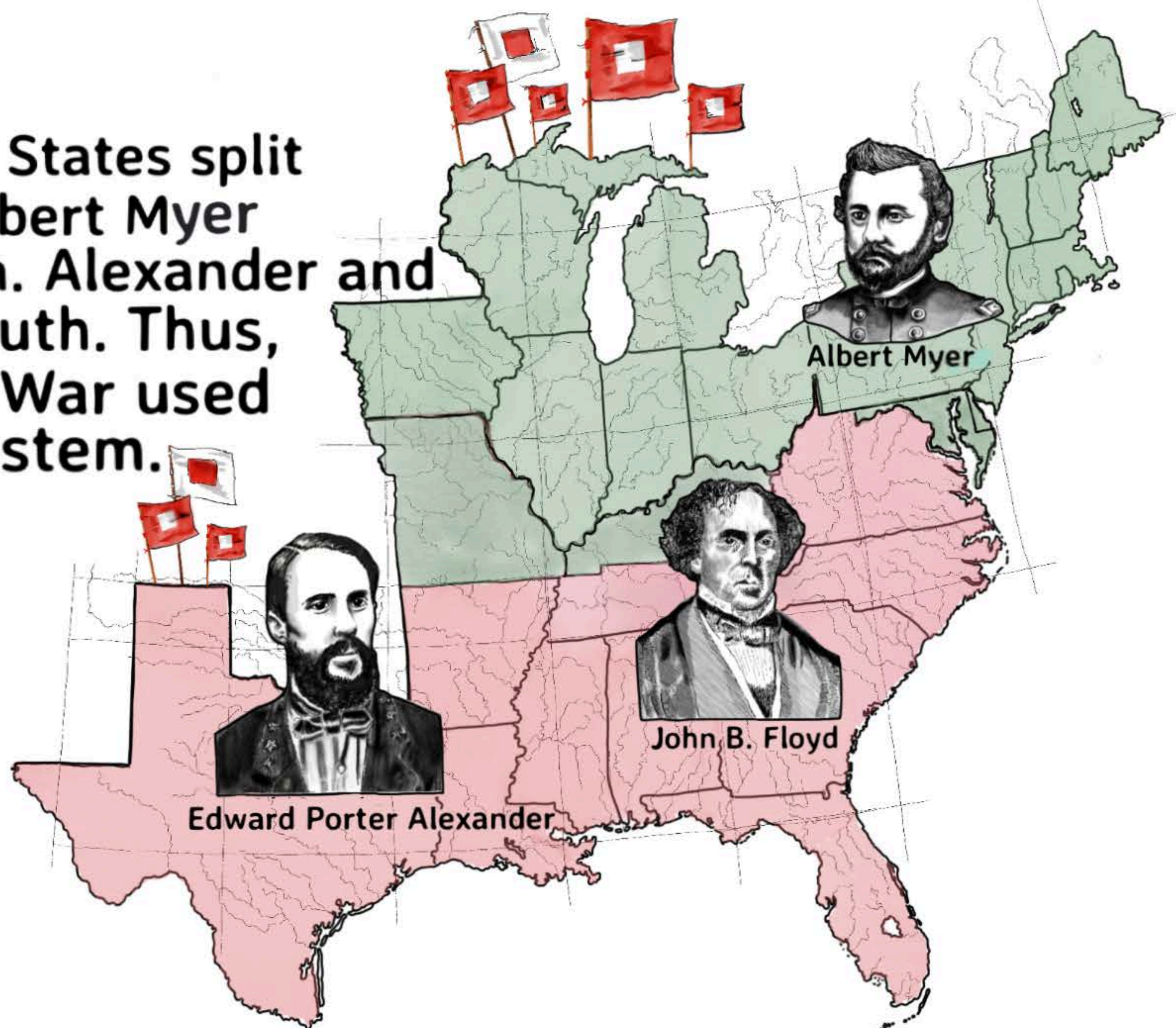
OCT 2020

A Revolution in COMMUNICATIONS

#008



In 1861, when the United States split into North and South, Albert Myer remained with the union. Alexander and Floyd went with the South. Thus, both sides in the Civil War used the same signaling system.



Both sides signaled from high places that had visibility for miles.



In some locations, they built towers to increase the visibility of the flag signals over long distances.

At night, the signalman used a torch. Another torch would be placed at his feet as a reference point.



The need to communicate visibly from high places meant that messages sent by flag signal could be seen by the enemy as well as the intended recipient. Both sides realized the need to devise cipher systems to protect their messages from the enemy.

