

Abe Lincoln's Army in the Sky



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Thaddeus Lowe in his balloon the *Intrepid*

The Civil War took place in America between 1861 and 1865. It was a war between the states over slavery. The states in the South wanted slaves. The states in the North did not. The North and South fought each other.

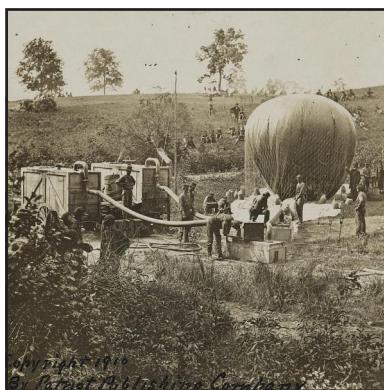
Abraham Lincoln was president in the North. He lived in the White House in Washington, DC. He wanted to end slavery. He wanted to end the Civil War.

Thaddeus Lowe went to President Lincoln with an idea. His idea was to use hot air balloons to help the North win the war. A hot air balloon can take you 500 feet into the sky, which enables you to see for 25 miles in every direction. When you are high up, you can see what the enemy's army is up to. You can see what its troops are doing, how many men they have, and where they are going. This can help you know how to fight them. This can help you win the war.

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President Lincoln loved Lowe's idea. He understood how the hot air balloons could help the North win the war. Lincoln formed the first American air force. It did not have planes (because planes weren't invented yet); it had balloons.

Each hot air balloon was tethered to the ground by a long rope to keep the balloon from flying away in the wrong direction. A pilot took the balloon up 500 feet. He looked around and wrote down what the Southern troops were doing. When he was done, the pilot took the balloon back down and reported to the army leaders what he saw. Now the army leaders knew what to expect from the Southern army. They knew how far away the enemy was. They knew how many men the enemy had. They could use this information to make better plans for how to fight the enemy. This helped the North win the war.



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**Filling a hot air balloon
on the battlefield**

