# How important was Mathew Brady’s war photography?

The Civil War was one of the first widely photographed wars, with images being shared around the United States. Images included documentary-style images of battlefields and portraits of soldiers. Why do you think soldiers were so keen to have portraits of themselves taken?

America swarms with the members of the mighty tribe of cameristas, and the civil war has developed their business in the same way that it has given an impetus to the manufacturers of metallic air-tight coffins and embalmers of the dead. The young Volunteer rushes off at once to the studio when he puts on his uniform, and the soldier of a year's campaign sends home his likeness that the absent ones may see what changes have been produced in him by war's alarms. In every glade and by the roadsides of the camp may be seen all kinds of covered carts and portable sheds for the worker in metal acid and sun-ray. Washington has burst out into signboards of ambrotypists and collodionists, and the "professors" of New York, Boston, and Philadelphia send their representatives to pick up whatever is left, and to follow the camps as well as they can.

* *The Times* [of London]*,* August 30 1862

**Task: Consider the prompt: ‘Mathew Brady’s photographs are not important because they do not show scenes of battle.’ Do you agree with this statement?**