Gathering for quinine and whiskey rations, as these soldiers are, may have saved the Union, according to Michael Flannery of the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Flannery visited Pitt this fall as a C.F. Reynolds Medical History Society lecturer. He notes that the average foot soldier, for both the North and the South, would have been twice as likely to die of a camp disease than a war injury. For instance, malaria afflicted its share of Union soldiers (522 in 1,000), yet it may have been the Union’s secret weapon. The North’s blockade of Southern ports that received Peruvian cinchona bark (the raw material for the malaria antidote quinine), its ability to keep the high and dry ground on the battlefield, and its ready supply of reinforcements for sickened men all made an “appreciable impact,” notes Flannery. “The longer the war continued, the longer disease became an ally of the North,” he says.