

Chapter 1

The Nature of War in September 1862

In order to understand the events in Maryland in mid-September 1862, it is necessary to have some understanding of the nature of war in America at that time. We will start with a primer of war in the Eastern states in 1862.

Armies on the Move

In September 1862, Union general George B. McClellan's Mobile Army of the Potomac had approximately 90,000 troops present, 3,219 wagons, 315 ambulances, and 32,885 horses and mules. If he put the whole army on a single road, it would extend for more than forty miles; and if the front were attacked, it could not be reinforced from the rear for more than two days. The answer was to divide the army into corps.

A corps consisted of two or more divisions and contained its own contingent of cavalry, artillery, transport, and administration. In effect, it was a small, self-contained army. Union army corps contained ten to twenty thousand men. When the army was on the march, the various corps could be assigned different routes to avoid clogging the roads and extending the column too long. The general idea was for the corps to separate to subsist, advance, or retreat, but to unite to fight.

An army commander's principal assistants were his corps commanders, and it was normally to them and to his cavalry commander that he gave his orders.

If the commander wanted to move faster and keep the roads as unclogged as possible, he might order that each man carry three days' rations on his person, and that all supply wagons (except those carrying ammunition) and ambulances be moved off the road.

If two opposing armies were headed for a battle, the one with the road layout that allowed the quickest concentration of forces enjoyed the advantage.

Moving armies were “screened” by their cavalry. Each army’s cavalry operated between it and its enemy. If a group of Union cavalrymen tried to see if the Confederates occupied the next town down the road, they would encounter a group of Confederate cavalrymen who would block their access. The Confederate cavalry at this time, under its redoubtable commander, Maj. Gen. Jeb Stuart, was particularly efficient at screening, and generally dominated the Union cavalry.

When only the cavalry were in contact, casualties were generally very light. There was a saying among infantrymen that no one had ever seen a dead cavalryman. To cite an example, Confederate general D. H. Hill, when writing of the Union casualties at the battle of South Mountain, mentioned Union losses of 1,812 infantry and artillery and one cavalryman, and then added, “how killed is not explained.”¹

When the two moving armies desired to contest a location, a battle involving the infantry and artillery ensued. Each cavalry then took up position on the flanks of its own army. The battles resulted in major bloodletting, but usually lasted no more than a day or two.

Tactics

When troops were on the move, they normally marched in a column of fours. However, to fight, they deployed into what was known as a “line of battle.” A line of battle was perpendicular to the line of march and consisted of two rows of troops, shoulder to shoulder, one row right in front of the other, facing the enemy. The officers stood behind the troops. The rifles were single shot and had to be loaded through the muzzle. The troops would fire in volleys, the first row shooting while the second row was loading, and then would reverse positions.

The action usually began when the enemy was one hundred to three hundred yards away. The tactics were designed for the era of the musket. Muskets were short-range weapons and notoriously inaccurate. The rifles the troops now carried were not. They could kill at half a mile, and they were deadly accurate. The outdated tactics resulted in frightful casualties. More casualties were suffered in one day in the battle of Antietam than the country had experienced in the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812 combined.

When an army approached the battlefield where the enemy was located in force, it could often see little of the enemy, if in fact anything at all. Only hills, woods, cornfields, or orchards might be visible, concealing the enemy. Consequently, before committing the entire line of battle, “skirmishers” were employed. Skirmishers consisted of a thin line of troops that were not restricted to a formation when advancing, but were permitted to take advantage of the features of the terrain, such as crouching behind rocks or trees. It was their function to determine where the enemy was, how he was deployed, and in what strength. When they had served their purpose, a line of battle was oriented, and they withdrew through the line of battle.

The artillery of the time could fire shot, shell, or canister. Shot was simply solid, non-exploding spheres that bounced along the ground. A soldier’s head would not significantly slow up a bounce. Shell contained exploding charges. Canister was simply cans full of pellets equivalent to heavy buckshot. Shot and shell were used at long range. A bombardment of shot and shell could be an unnerving experience, but usually did not inflict many casualties. Canister was used only at short range against advancing infantry and was deadly.

In general, cavalry was not intended or expected to engage in stand-up fights with infantry; that is, unless the cavalry occupied an especially advantageous feature, such as a mountain pass. Cavalry was equipped only with carbines and pistols (as well as sabers) and hence was at a disadvantage when fighting with infantry, which was equipped with rifles. When cavalry did fight with infantry, it was always dismounted, with the horses a safe distance behind. The horses were considered too valuable to risk.

Intelligence

In a word, intelligence, or information on the enemy’s size, movements, and intentions, was awful. There was no formal intelligence service in the armies in September 1862 as there is today. General McClellan, recognizing the problem and being the enterprising type that he was, contracted with the Pinkerton Detective Agency to serve this function for him. The Pinkertons proved to be to military intelligence what the Keystone Cops were to law enforcement. It is said that they employed such scientific strategies as peering out cellar windows

and counting the legs marching by—and then forgetting to divide by two. In any event, McClellan could have gotten far better estimates of the numbers of enemy facing him if he had just counted his own troops and multiplied by two.

When a moving army moved through enemy territory, as the Confederates were doing in September 1862, they would cut any telegraph wires connecting the area with its own army. There was no aerial reconnaissance and no radio; if an invading army was covered by a cavalry screen, as the Confederate army was in September 1862, the opposing army, in this case the Union army, had few means of finding out how many of the enemy there were, where they were, what they were doing, or where they were going. To gain information, the defending army had to depend on reports from its cavalry or friendly civilians passing through the area, or on reports from outposts on the perimeter of the area of operations that still maintained communications.

Reports by friendly, even intelligent and conscientious civilians, were likely to be gross exaggerations, as well as misleading. An individual who had never experienced ten horsemen galloping past his house and who now saw a thousand, or who watched an infantry column march past from dawn to dusk, was likely to be enormously impressed and greatly exaggerate the number. Furthermore, if his house was on the Frederick-Hagerstown turnpike, and the troops were headed in the direction of Hagerstown, he was likely to say they were going to Hagerstown, even though they may have turned off at the next intersection. Reports based on civilians who had mingled with enemy soldiers were also usually wrong, inasmuch as the enemy soldiers normally did not know either their own strength or their destination. The Confederate general, Stonewall Jackson, not only kept his intentions from his closest associates, but purposely created false information in anticipation of it being passed to the enemy.

One of the best sources of intelligence for an invading army was the newspapers, and the leaders eagerly purchased and read the latest periodicals of the area as they advanced. The ultimate example of bad intelligence came somewhat later, in late June to early July 1863, when the Confederate cavalry commander, Gen. Jeb Stuart, despite access to all the latest newspapers, was unable to find his own army.

In mid-September 1862, intelligence on the Confederates' numbers, location, and intentions was such that confusion reigned at the Union headquarters.

Generals and Troops

In 1861, before the outset of the Civil War, the United States Army, authorized by Congress, consisted of 12,689 enlisted men plus officers. The officers included twenty-two colonels and fewer than ten generals. By 1865, more than two million men had served in the Union and Confederate armies, and there were 1,988 Union and 344 Confederate generals. (There were thirty-eight General Smiths.) Where did all these generals come from?

Since the War of 1812, the United States had participated in only one foreign war. That was the War with Mexico in 1846-47. The war had lasted less than twenty-one months and had involved fewer than 100,000 Americans. This was the experience pool for the Civil War.

The senior officers of the Civil War consisted primarily of officers who had served in the peacetime army, veterans of the Mexican War, graduates of West Point or the Virginia Military Institute, or connected politicians wishing to serve. In this regard, West Point graduated fewer than fifty per year, on average, in the twenty years preceding the war, and VMI even fewer. If a person could combine any two qualifications from the aforementioned list, such as being a West Point graduate with Mexican War experience, or a politician with Mexican War experience, he could count on at least a colonelcy at the outset.

Another source of senior officers in the North was the leaders of the ethnic communities, the votes of which the administration was anxious to secure. The largest ethnic community of 1860 was the German-American community. They were the Hispanics of the time. If an individual was a leader of this community, his prospects of a colonelcy were excellent. If he was a leader with military training and experience in the "Old Country," his prospects were even brighter. For example, Franz Sigel, who came to the United States for the first time in 1852, was a community leader who had attended the military academy at Karlsruhe. He was a major general in the Union army by 1862.

Then there were political generals who had sufficient political clout that they were given their commissions with no military experience at all. It is said that some had to learn which end of the gun the bullet came out.

Major General George B. McClellan, who commanded the Army of the Potomac, was a thirty-five-year-old graduate of West Point. Four of his seven senior generals were also young men under forty who had graduated from West Point in the years 1845-47, the last years in which they could participate in the Mexican War. None of them had risen higher than the rank of captain in the peacetime army and hence, up to 1861, had never commanded more than a hundred men. With the outbreak of the war in 1861, they jumped rank up to colonel, or major general in the case of McClellan, with nothing in between. In contrast to the McClellan team, fifty-five-year-old Robert E. Lee had risen through each rank in the peacetime army to colonel, and then to general in the Confederate army. Furthermore, Gen. Winfield Scott, the general in chief of the peacetime army, considered Lee the best officer in the army. Thus, in September 1862, the contest between Lee and McClellan and his ilk was, in a sense, a contest between an experienced professional and amateurs who were still learning.

In the North, the tradition that no officer could be senior to George Washington still prevailed. Inasmuch as George Washington was a lieutenant general and not a full general, Union officers bunched up at the rank of major general. Division commanders, corps commanders, and army commanders were all major generals. The Confederacy did not adhere to this tradition, and army commanders, such as Lee, were full generals.

As for the troops, by September 1862, most, but not all, were in for the duration. At the outset of the war, everyone expected a short war, and troops were enlisted for as little as ninety days. There were still some short-term enlistees in the army in September 1862. There is an old saying that no one wants to be the last man killed in a war. When an enlistee could count the days until he was to get out and walk safely and unmaimed back to his home, he was unlikely to take any risks. Panic in combat is contagious, and one bad (short-term) regiment could determine the outcome of a battle. In general, short-term regiments were assigned to what were believed to be the backwash areas of the war—such as Harpers Ferry.

The West Point Clique

Although both armies contained numerous political generals, the top posts in both went to West Pointers. In fact, the number

of West Point graduates in top posts went beyond all logic. In the South, this might be explained in part by the fact that the president of the Confederacy, Jefferson Davis, was himself a West Point graduate. However, there was no comparable explanation for the North. If these leaders consisted primarily of professionals who had chosen a military career, attended and graduated from the military academy, remained in the peacetime army and rose in rank to lieutenant colonel or colonel, their preponderance in top leadership posts might be logical. This, however, was usually not the case. Many had served only a short time after graduation, then had resigned as junior officers and pursued civilian careers. Others had graduated only five years or less before the war and sometimes, as in the case of Gen. George Armstrong Custer, less than one year. Most Civil War West Point generals had never risen higher in the peacetime army than captain and had never commanded more than a hundred men. It almost seemed that the magic four years itself was all that was required.

The preponderance of West Point generals in top positions in both armies was even more remarkable when one considers that, at the time, West Point was primarily an engineering school. The top graduates usually entered the topographical engineers, rather than the combat arms of infantry, artillery, or cavalry. The topographical engineers, although in the army, were involved in all government construction, including such things as lighthouses and even the capitol building. Consequently, they often acquired little to no experience in combat or troop command.

To cite an example of the wartime promotion potential of West Pointers, of the class of 1846, twenty-three members served in the Civil War. Of these, twenty rose to the rank of general and two to the rank of colonel; at least one of the colonels probably would have risen to general had he not died prematurely. Of the twenty generals from the class, ten served the Union, and ten the Confederacy.

In the prewar years, the graduating class at West Point usually contained fewer than fifty members. Thus, the generals on both sides who were classmates were likely to be well acquainted. Often, they had forged friendships that endured a lifetime. To cite some examples, Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, ultimately the general in chief of the Union armies, and Gen. James Longstreet, the Confederate general second in command to Lee, were not only

classmates, but lifelong friends. Grant had married Longstreet's cousin, and Longstreet was best man at the wedding. After the war, President Grant appointed Longstreet to important posts in his administration. Union general McClellan and Confederate general Jackson were four-year classmates and graduated together in 1846. Friendship between Union and Confederate general classmates often continued during the war. Union general George Armstrong Custer and Confederate general Thomas Lafayette Rosser were known to picnic together during the war. When Confederate general George Pickett married, his Union army friends forwarded him a silver tea service through the lines.

When the Confederate army invaded Maryland in September 1862, its commanding general, both corps commanders, cavalry commander, and seven of its nine division commanders were West Point graduates. The corresponding head of the Union army, General McClellan, his cavalry commander, and five of his six corps commanders were all West Point graduates. Most of these generals on both sides knew each other from West Point days.

All eight Confederates who acquired the rank of full general were West Point graduates, as were all Union generals who commanded the Army of the Potomac or were general in chief, other than the first, and probably the best, Gen. Winfield Scott.

Were these West Point graduates the most talented people available for top command? Possibly not. As the war turned against the South, others, who had attended no military academy, began rising to the top, based solely on their accomplishments. These included Generals Nathan Bedford Forrest, Richard Taylor, John B. Gordon, Wade Hampton, and Patrick Cleburne. Forrest was a slave trader, and Taylor and Hampton were plantation owners—the natural leaders of the Old South. Gordon was a lawyer, and Cleburne was an Irish émigré and lawyer.

Organization

The basic organizational building block of the military during the Civil War was the regiment. A regiment, at the time of formation, consisted of ten companies. Each company contained a hundred men and was headed by a captain. The regimental commander was a colonel, and his deputy a lieutenant colonel. Regiments were normally recruited in a single area, and many of

its members were likely to know one another. The colonel might be a congressman from the area or some other political notable.

The regiments were usually recruited by state and bore their state's name throughout their existence. For example, the first infantry regiment recruited in Indiana would be forever known as the First Indiana Infantry, the second as the Second Indiana Infantry, and so on. The colonel and lieutenant colonel were usually appointed by the governor. The other officers were often elected. When a regiment was formed, the members often signed up for a given obligated period of service; when that time expired, they expected to go home, regardless of the situation then prevailing.

In the North, there was a tendency not to replenish losses a regiment might incur due to illness or casualties, but rather to create more new regiments. This practice provided for greater political patronage.

Two or more regiments formed a brigade, which was commanded by a brigadier general. Two or more brigades formed a division, which was commanded by a major general. Two or more divisions formed a corps, which was commanded by a major general in the North or a lieutenant general (after 1862) in the South. Two or more corps formed an army, which was commanded by a major general in the North or a full general in the South. A battalion consisted of a number of companies less than a regiment and, in most cases, was not a fixed administrative organization but one created temporarily for a special situation. A battalion was commanded by a major.

The basic unit of artillery was the battery. A battery consisted of four or six cannons of the same caliber. In the early phases of the war, batteries were distributed to the brigades. However, as the war progressed, there was a tendency to concentrate the artillery directly under the corps commanders, with a reserve directly under the command of the army commander. Next to the cavalry, the artillery was the biggest user of horses. It took six horses or mules to move each cannon.

Communications

If intelligence was awful in September 1862, communications were merely very bad. Telegraph, which was invented in 1844, was already widespread. Telegraphic communications required a

wire from the sender to the receiver. An enemy reaching the wire at any place along the line could monitor the signal, intrude, and send his own signal, or simply cut the wire and terminate any possibility of communications. Telegraphy used Morse Code—that is, dots and dashes. The skill of a telegrapher was such that it could not be acquired in a few days. It was like playing the piano—it took time to get good. Consequently, most of the operators during the Civil War were civilians. The speed of transmission on any line was determined by the poorest operator. If one could send and receive at thirty-six words per minute, and the other at twenty words per minute, the top speed was limited to twenty words per minute.

Each Union corps had a special telegraphic wagon with operators that it hoped to connect to the nearest line.

Delays of several hours in the receipt of telegraphic messages were common. The transmission of the message itself took time. A message of three hundred words might require fifteen minutes. Then there was the time of delivery. The intended recipient of the message was likely to be an important person who was usually not at the telegraphic terminal. Telegraphic communications were not suitable for conferencing or discussions, so messages had to be carefully phrased to avoid misunderstandings and confusion.

In addition to telegraphic communications, both sides used visual signaling. This entailed the use of a single large signal flag (four feet square) by day, or a torch by night. At night, rockets were used to gain the attention of the other station. In modern signal flag systems, two flags are used, and a single posture of the two flags denotes a letter. In the Civil War system, only one flag was used, and the signaler had to move the flag or torch four times to denote a single letter. The speed of visual signaling (as now) depended upon the skill of the sender and receiver, but because of the system then in use, it was very slow at best. With a spy glass, visual signaling could be used up to a distance of about fifteen miles.

Visual signal stations demanded height to obtain distance. Stations might be set up on a mountain, in a church steeple, or on a wooden platform constructed for the purpose. Because of the height and field of view, the same station was used as an observation post, and the signaler could originate his own messages depending on what he could see.

Because of the exposed position of the signaler, the station could not be close to the front. It was not considered a good idea to be standing atop a platform waving a big flag when an enemy rifleman was within a couple hundred feet, contemplating who he was going to shoot next.

Logistics and Transportation

To understand the events of September 1862, it is necessary to have some understanding of logistics and transportation as it existed at that time: an army, to exist and to move, required supplies. This included food and medical supplies for the troops, ammunition, and last, but certainly not least, feed and fodder for the horses and mules. The experiences of World War I showed that as late as 1915, supplying the horses and mules with feed and fodder required 50 percent more tonnage than supplying the troops with food. In fact, the amount of horse feed and fodder that the United Kingdom shipped to its expeditionary force in 1914 and 1915 exceeded the tonnage of the ammunition shipped.

There were three ways to transport supplies in 1862. These were by horse (or mule) and wagon, by railroad, or by water. Water was by far the most efficient, and horse and wagon by far the least efficient. A supply wagon was pulled by up to six horses (or mules). As of 1914, the average army ration for a man weighed 1.7 kilograms, and that for a horse, 10 kilograms. A horse, then, required almost six times the ration of a man. Thus, if six horses pulled one wagon, they consumed the equivalent rations of thirty-six men.

If a two-day trip was required for a wagon to travel from the supply depot to the front, instead of a one-day trip, twice as many horses and wagons would be required, since now, for every wagon reaching the unloading point, a second one would just be reaching the halfway point. Furthermore, the farther the wagons were required to travel, the greater the percentage of their cargo would be consumed by the horses pulling it. For a one-day trip to the front, six horses would consume thirty-six equivalent man rations on the trip out, and an additional thirty-six on the way back. For a two-day trip, they would consume seventy-two equivalent man rations out, and seventy-two back. As the supply line lengthened, ever more horses and wagons would be required, and the horses

would consume an ever-greater proportion of what each wagon could carry. Thus, it was imperative that an army keep the horse and wagon part of its supply line as short as possible, and that it rely on rail or water to the maximum degree possible.

There was yet another consideration. Any wagon train or railroad, particularly if passing through or near enemy territory, was subject to surprise attack by enemy cavalry. Thus, it had to be protected, which required still more feed and fodder. Inasmuch as an attack could take place at any point and at any time, protection had to be provided at all points and at all times. Considering this situation, all other factors being equal, an army moving away from its supply base receded in strength, and one moving toward its base grew in strength.

In September 1862, the very poverty of the Southern army provided it an advantage of sorts. Each Southern soldier expected less, received less, and could make do with less. In addition, Southern armies of the time displayed a greater capability to feed themselves off the land they passed through.

There was one area where the Union possessed an absolute superiority over the Confederates, and that was in the matter of navies and waterway control. In general, the Union exercised near complete control over the high seas, as well as any contested inland waterways. The Union was thus able to use this safe and cheap means of transport to a degree that the Confederacy could not. General McClellan was one of the first to recognize this advantage and hence initiated his Peninsula campaign to seize Richmond, wherein his supply line was largely via water, rather than over land.

Lee's invasion of the North in September 1862 was governed by two logistics and transportation considerations. First, Lee had to secure his own supply line. This he proposed to do by transferring it from the direct route to Richmond to the Shenandoah Valley, which was not only safer, but made better use of available railroads. Second, Lee's major objective of the invasion was not to capture Washington, as commonly believed, but to severely damage the enemy's transport system. One of the most vulnerable parts of a rail line was where it crossed a major river. In his invasion, Lee hoped to destroy the bridge carrying the Pennsylvania Railroad over the Susquehanna River and the bridge carrying the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad over the Potomac River. In addition, he hoped to destroy the aqueduct carrying the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal over the

Monocacy River. If successful, he would cut three of the major transportation arteries linking the East with the West—which would severely affect Union operations in both theaters.

Nomenclature

There are two names for every battle in the Civil War. The Confederates named a battle after the nearest town, while the Union named it after the nearest stream. Thus, there are the battles of Manassas and Bull Run, Sharpsburg and Antietam. Likewise, the Union named its armies after rivers, and the Confederates after states. Thus, there are the Union Army of the Potomac and the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia.

Union corps, divisions, and brigades were usually referred to by their numerical designations. However, the Confederate corps, divisions, and brigades were almost always referred to by the name of their first commanders. Thus, there was Kershaw's brigade in McLaws's division in Longstreet's corps. The original names usually prevailed, even though the unit might be under a new commander.

A Gentleman's War

Winston Churchill said that the U.S. Civil War was the last gentleman's war. This was still true in September 1862, although things did deteriorate after that time. In September 1862, civilians were usually not harmed, property was usually respected, women were not raped, and, even in enemy country, soldiers watched their language in the presence of women, and officers tipped their hats to them. Men were still considered as good as their word.

When one side captured troops of the enemy, they were usually released or "paroled" after surrendering their rifles, if they promised not to fight again until they were formally exchanged by their governments for an equal number of prisoners from the other side. Captured officers were usually not even asked to surrender their sidearms. However, if an officer who had been paroled returned to combat without an exchange, he was considered no gentleman and might be subject to execution if recaptured.

After a surrender, the winners and losers often chatted amicably, exchanged newspapers, and bartered coffee for tobacco or

anything else, until the losers marched off under their own officers to their own territory.

In the summer of 1862, the two sides formalized the granting of paroles with the conclusion of the so-called Dix-Hill Cartel. It held that all prisoners held by the North or South would be paroled within ten days of capture and sent to their own lines to await a formal paper exchange, when they would be freed to rejoin the fighting.

With the parole system, it seems that the losers often fared better than the winners. While the winners marched off to their next battle where they could be killed or maimed, the losers marched off to a safe haven in their own territory.

In the North, it was decided that it was not a good thing to be too easy on those of its own men who had surrendered and were awaiting exchange. There had to be some onus attached to the fact of surrender. Consequently, it set up special camps to hold parolees awaiting exchange. The conditions in these camps were less than ideal, and there were restrictions, such as no alcohol.

Paroled prisoners generally took their status seriously. On September 12, 1862, Union colonel Augustus Moor was captured by the Confederates in a cavalry clash in Frederick, Maryland. Two days later, as the Union troops advanced toward the Confederate position on South Mountain, they encountered Colonel Moor walking down the road toward them from the Confederate position. They asked him if the mountain pass was strongly fortified. Moor replied that he could not tell them, inasmuch as he had been paroled, but then as an afterthought added, "My God! Be careful!"²

In September 1862, Union and Confederate army commanders were still commonly exchanging courteous messages with each other relating to humanitarian and other matters. At the battle of Chantilly in August 1862, Union general Philip Kearny was killed, and his body fell into the hands of the Confederates. General Lee of the Confederate army sent the following message to General McClellan of the Union army:

Headquarters Army of Northern Virginia
Oct. 4, 1862

Mjr. Gen. George B. McClellan,
Commanding Army of the Potomac

General: I have the honor to inclose a letter to Mrs. Philip Kearny, and at the same time commit to your care the sword, horse, and saddle of Major-General Kearny, which fell into our hands at the time of his death. Mrs. Kearny expressed a great desire to obtain the sword and horse of her husband, and I beg leave to hope that it may be convenient to you to forward them to her.

The horse has accompanied the march of the army since its capture, and may have suffered from the journey. The bridle was either lost at the time of the capture or has not been recovered.

I am, most respectfully, your obedient servant,

R.E. Lee
General, Commanding³

McClellan replied as follows:

Headquarters Army of the Potomac
October 5, 1862

General R.E. Lee
Commanding Army of Northern Virginia:

General: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 4th instant, inclosing a letter to Mrs. Philip Kearny, and, at the same time, committing to my care the sword, horse and saddle of Major-General Kearny, to the end that, in accordance with the expressed wish of Mrs. Kearny, they may be placed in her keeping. The articles have been received, and, with the letter, will be forwarded to Mrs. Kearny by the earliest opportunity. I beg you to accept my thanks for your courteous and humane attention to the request of the widow of this lamented officer. I shall be happy to reciprocate the courtesy when circumstances place it in my power to do so.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Gen. B. McClellan
Major-General, Commanding⁴

When the Union surrendered Harpers Ferry, Confederate general A. P. Hill, who accepted the surrender and paroled the garrison, agreed to lend the surrendered Union officers

twenty-seven wagons and the corresponding teams of mules to cart off their personal possessions, with the understanding that the wagons and teams would be returned at the earliest opportunity.

Apparently, this was not done quickly enough, and General Lee sent General McClellan the following message:

Headquarters Army of Northern Virginia
October 2, 1862

Maj. General George B. McClellan
Commanding U.S. Forces on the Potomac

General: Maj. Gen. A. P. Hill of the C.S. Army, who had charge of the arrangements connected with the paroling of the prisoners at Harpers Ferry on the 15th ultimo, permitted General White to have the use of 27 wagons and teams, to carry the private baggage of the officers to some point convenient for transportation.

It was agreed between these two officers that these wagons and teams should be returned within our lines at Winchester in a few days, or, if that place should be in the hands of United States forces, then to the nearest Confederate post. I think proper to make known to you the above agreement, in order that some arrangement may be made for the return of the wagons and teams.

I am, most respectfully, your obedient servant,

R.E. Lee
General, Commanding⁵

McClellan answered Lee's message as follows:

Headquarters Army of the Potomac
October 6, 1862

General R.E. Lee
Commanding Army of Northern Virginia

General: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter 2nd instant, in regard to the return of 27 wagons and teams, furnished by Maj. Gen. A. P. Hill for the use of certain paroled officers of the United States Army. These wagons and their teams are

now on their return from Washington, and are expected here in two days. Upon their arrival, I will send them immediately to such place as you in the mean time be pleased to designate.

I am, General, very respectfully your obedient servant,

Gen. B. McClellan

Maj. Gen., Commanding⁶

And so it went.