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Jackson and McClellan: A Study in Leadership and Doctrine

by

Kent Thomas
Major, Armor

School of Advanced Military Studies
U.S. Army Command and General Staff College
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

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Major, Armor

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Name of Student: Major Kent Thomas, Armor

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Approved by:

[Robert M. Epstein, Ph.D.] Monograph Director

L. D. Holder
[Colonel L. D. Holder, M.A.] Director, School of Advanced
Military Studies

Philip J. Brookes
[Philip J. Brookes, Ph.D.] Director, Graduate Degree
Programs

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ABSTRACT

JACKSON AND MCCLELLAN: A STUDY IN LEADERSHIP AND DOCTRINE, by Major Kent Thomas, U.S. Army, 47 pages.

Central to the waging of war at the tactical level is the interplay between leadership and doctrine. Within a doctrinal context, the Army must develop leaders capable of winning the next war. This study examines the balance between leadership and doctrine and identifies the characteristics that distinguish the great leader from the also-ran.

The vehicle for this examination is a comparison of two American Civil War generals, Stonewall Jackson and George McClellan. Purporting to support the same doctrine, the two men achieved remarkably dissimilar results on the battlefield. This analysis demonstrates that the reasons for that difference lay primarily in the realm of leadership rather than in the implementation of doctrine, and identifies the leadership principles key to success at the tactical level of war.

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INTRODUCTION

As the United States Army prepares itself for war, it must ask itself several questions. First of all, what doctrine best suits the needs of the force? That must in turn be determined by asking what kind of conflict is expected, and then, if doctrine should vary by theater of war. If, as happens to be the case, the U.S. Army is preparing for war at varying levels of intensity and in widely different theaters, it must be questioned whether the doctrine it espouses should be prescriptive or open ended.

The next major question that must be asked is what kind of leader best suits the needs of the Army? Does the Army seek leaders willing to operate solely within doctrine? If so, do they want a predictable, known quantity, well based in doctrinal instruction? Does such instruction create a team player who recognizes the limits of his charter and stays within predictable boundaries?

Or perhaps does the Army seek a bold, intense, audacious, risk taking leader? Such a leader may not be predictable, but is innovation more important? Is the Army willing to accept leaders who do not fit in well with the team concept, but who get things done when times are tough?

Such comparisons result in an interesting dilemma. Doctrine is critical to coordinated effort during war, but how much doctrine is enough? The U. S. Army's capstone writing in the area, Field Manual 100-5¹, is open ended yet also supportive of mission type orders. Some leaders find it too loose, and demand templates and menus for employment of forces. Others decry the rigidity of even those loose restrictions and call for greater freedom for the commander.

Alongside that dilemma, the Army must develop its leaders. It is therefore important that the Army understand what kind of leader it wants. Peacetime leaders tend to centralize control and are directive and detailed in their planning and execution. Many successful combat leaders however, have functioned best with little more than their senior commander's intent as guidance. The good bureaucrat who meticulously keeps track of each piece of equipment and religiously complies with environmental impact assessments may be important during peace, but will he be effective during war? On the other hand, can the Department of Defense survive leaders who regularly break the rules and operate on their own agenda? Of course it cannot. Somewhere there has to be a middle ground.

The purpose of this study is the examination of the balance between doctrine and leadership at the tactical level of war. It seeks to determine if, given an equal grasp of doctrine, there are characteristics that distinguish the great leader from the also-ran, and if so, can they be identified and used as a basis for selecting and training future officers?

To eliminate as many independent variables as possible, I have chosen to compare two generals of similar background and experience, fighting under similar conditions: Thomas Jonathan Jackson and George Brinton McClellan. Both men were in the same class at West Point and both studied under Dennis Hart Mahan, receiving similar exposure to U.S. Army doctrine, such as it was at the time. Both Jackson and McClellan gained wartime experience in the war with Mexico, largely under the same commander. They both devoted time to the study of war following their combat experience, and both came to similar conclusions regarding the doctrine they preferred. Both men also left the Army between the Mexican and Civil Wars, and both returned to duty when called.

albeit on opposing sides. Finally, both men fought in the same theater of war during the same period of time, with forces of remarkable similar composition and experience. One man rose above his problems and led well, while the other fell prey to his difficulties and failed.

The study is based on two related assumptions. The first is that lessons can be learned from historical analysis, and the second that such lessons transcend history and are not negated by technological change.

From the study I hope to learn if Stonewall Jackson was more successful for some key reason. Was he a better leader? Did he adhere more closely to doctrine? How great a player was doctrine in his success? On the other hand, I also hope to learn the reasons behind McClellan's failure. Was he a weak leader? Did he adhere closely to doctrine, or did he stray? Was either doctrine or leadership a key player in his failure? Finally, I hope to derive implications important to today's Army in the area of selection and development of leaders.

The framework for the study was structured around several principles that have been critical to the success of tactical level leaders throughout history. Those principles include the concept of social contract, selection of capable subordinates, leading from the front, implementation of doctrine, vision or understanding of the overall intent, and perhaps most importantly, the human or moral factor.

As used here, social contract refers to a philosophical compact between the leader and the led. It is an unwritten and generally unspoken acknowledgement that the leader will not risk the lives of his men unnecessarily. To be sure, men will be risked and some will die, but not in a

wasteful manner. In return for that commitment, the soldiers surrender control of their individual action and obey the orders of their leaders.

The social contract was especially important during the Civil War for two reasons. First, both armies were largely volunteer. Their junior leadership was relatively inexperienced, and had it been required to maintain control with force alone, it would probably have failed. Secondly, the increased lethality of weapons forced battlefield dispersal. Had soldiers not been individually motivated to remain and fight, the leadership would have been hard pressed to make them stay.

Selection of good subordinates has been another of the principles critical for battlefield success. The leader cannot be everywhere at once, and many decisions must be made in his absence. The decisions may not be critical in and of themselves, but taken as a whole they constitute much of the reason why a battle is won or lost.

Positioning is also important for the leader. The general who can place himself at the critical point in time and space to affect the tempo and pace of the fight is much more likely to win. During the Civil War that meant leading from the front. It also had important ramifications. First of all, the leader who did not go forward was seldom in a position to make key decisions. If he had good subordinates that might be acceptable. If he did not select his subordinates well however, the damage done by his absence was compounded. Secondly, failure to lead from the front violated the social contract. Not only did such a leader fail to share danger with his soldiers, his absence from the critical point in the battle meant they were often risked needlessly.

Doctrine for Jackson and McClellan was largely the product of Dennis Hart Mahan, the Dean of the United States Military Academy. Taking

Napoleonic battles, Jominian writing, and the American philosophy of using largely volunteer forces to wage war. Mahan developed a doctrine employing the strengths of each. From Napoleon he took the concepts of speed, concentration, and coordination of large forces on the battlefield. From Jomini he took the concepts of interior lines as important for rapid concentration and communication, objective point, strong bases of operation, strategic maneuver as key to engaging fractions of the enemy with the bulk of one's forces, and the use of movement to throw an army of the decisive points of the enemy without compromising one's own. To these he added a belief that fortification and entrenchment were the only way to protect an inexperienced force in battle.

The result was an eclectic doctrine, one that emphasized the value of maneuver to create a favorable battle situation and effective tactical coordination of divisions and corps prior to and during the battle. The doctrine relied heavily on good intelligence to make the bold moves possible. The successful practitioner of such doctrine had to be an active leader with a well developed sense of speed and time and their relationship to terrain. Simply understanding the concept in an academic sense was not enough. Application was key.

The final two principles are invariably linked in the successful leader. Vision or *Coup d' Oeil* is that inner understanding of both the plan and the resulting interaction of forces on the battlefield. The human factor links vision with doctrine and creates the truly superior leader. Moral courage plays an additionally important part in the equation because it is from the leaders sense of moral right and wrong that the force develops its own standards.

Taken together, these principles create what history sees as a successful tactical leader. The following narrative and analysis compare and contrast two apparently similar leaders who achieved very different results.

JACKSON: PRE-CIVIL WAR

Thomas Jonathan (Stonewall) Jackson entered West Point in 1842, having already learned how to survive in a harsh and demanding world. He was shy and reticent, but nevertheless had a well developed code of right and wrong, one that harbored no excuse for its infringement.² While in that sense he was demanding, he was also a very caring individual, always willing to lend a hand to less fortunate classmates. As early as his cadet years, Jackson had already developed the keen powers of concentration that would later be his hallmark, as evidenced by the record of his intent method of study.³ Despite this, he was not seen by the West Point faculty to be exceptional in any way. In 1846 he quietly completed his studies, graduated seventeenth in his class, and secured a commission in the artillery.

Jackson actively sought duty with the Army in Mexico. Having done so, he found a place in Captain John B. Magruder's battery of artillery. He first saw action at Contreras under General Winfield Scott, where he was commended for his efforts. He was later cited for heroism at the battle of Chapultepec where, operating independently from his unit, he demonstrated individual courage under fire and a singleness of purpose that gave U.S. forces time to reinforce, regain the initiative, and avoid defeat.⁴ During that battle he established his penchant for leadership from the front and his intense devotion to duty, traits that would become hallmarks of his leadership. They would be two of his most enduring qualities. By the end of the war, Jackson was breveted to Major, a

promotion phenomenal even in the Mexican War. No other member of his class did so well.

Just as important as his record of individual performance however, was the fact that he had had the opportunity to observe the problems inherent in going to war with poorly trained troops. The lessons he learned would be recalled and applied as he trained his forces for combat in Northern Virginia fifteen years later. Those same lessons would also be available for many others destined to lead units in the Civil War, but would not be learned by all of them, just as not all of them would grasp the importance of leading from the front. For those who did so, there would be battlefield victory, for those who did not, defeat.

Following the war in Mexico, Jackson returned to garrison duty, first in New York and later in Florida. In March 1851, he was appointed the Professor of Artillery Tactics and Natural Philosophy at the Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, Virginia. VMI had been founded twelve years previously, and although staffed with Regular Army officers and run much like West Point, it did not provide officers for the Regular Army. Its education was of immediate value only for those who entered the state militia.

It is doubtful that the position was eagerly sought by any of Jackson's contemporaries. Promotion, while slow, was at least regular in the mainstream Army. VMI was far from that. Jackson however, took a much different view. He believed "That a man who had turned, with a good military reputation, to pursuits of a semi-civilian character, and had vigorously prosecuted his mental improvement, would have more chance of success in war than those who had remained in the treadmill of the garrison."⁵ It was with this view that Jackson turned his back on the everyday life of a

peacetime army and taught optics, mechanics, and astronomy, while closely studying Napoleon in his free time. As the result of his study, he became a great admirer of Napoleon's genius, speed, daring, and energy.⁶ That admiration would later be reflected in Jackson's use of Napoleon's leadership style in the maneuver and commitment of corps and divisions in battle.

In retrospect, the time spent at VMI would return tremendous dividends to Jackson. The time for reflection and study would allow him to master his profession while avoiding the mind numbing routine of the frontier army. Apparently there was something to his point. As G.F.R. Henderson put it: "That Jackson's ideas were sound may be inferred from the fact that many of the most distinguished generals in the Civil War were men whose previous career had been analogous to his own."⁷

McClellan: Pre-Civil War

George Brinton McClellan also entered West Point in 1842. He was only fifteen years old but had been granted an age waiver because of demonstrated academic excellence at the University of Pennsylvania.⁸ As a cadet he exhibited both an exceptional aptitude for mathematics and a magnetic personality. Unlike Jackson, his academic excellence brought him to the attention of the faculty and his engaging personality made him extremely popular among his peers.⁹

In 1846 McClellan graduated second in his class and selected the Corps of Engineers as his branch. He was initially assigned to an Engineer company training for the war in Mexico, and was transferred there just after the conclusion of the battle of Monterey.

By the time McClellan arrived in Mexico, problems had already arisen with the volunteer units raised for the expedition. Not only were the units undisciplined and uncontrolled, but their officers were also weak. McClellan was deeply concerned about the state of affairs that he observed.¹⁰ His concern about training and officering of volunteer units would remain with him for the rest of his life, and would be a major issue for him when he took command of the Army of the Potomac.

McClellan served under Zachary Taylor for one expedition, then was transferred with his unit to Winfield Scott's army. Scott was to have a profound influence on him. A much better long range planner than Taylor, Scott planned in detail and thus avoided many of the snap decisions that Taylor found himself forced into. Having seen both Generals in action, McClellan found Scott's approach more to his liking.¹¹ Scott's influence would later be seen in many of McClellan's decisions as a General Officer.

McClellan saw his first action of the war under Scott at Vera Cruz. Rather than take the city by frontal assault, Scott elected to conduct a siege. McClellan was instrumental in the success of that effort by locating a water supply key to sustaining the defense of the city. Scott's interdiction of that supply forced the enemy to surrender.

At Cerro Gordo, Scott used his engineers to reconnoiter enemy positions and by doing so found an unprotected flank approach that he used to advantage. During the attack itself, McClellan was attached to Pillow's secondary attack. The great confusion he observed there among the volunteer soldiers "convinced him of the inability of raw volunteers to consummate tactical success in the traditional 'mass assault' style."¹² That belief would have great impact on McClellan's planning during the Civil War.

At Contreras, McClellan would discover a ravine that would be the key to victory. He would also be present to observe Scott threaten Mexico's capital to draw its army out so he could defeat it. McClellan would attempt much the same ploy outside of Richmond in 1862.

During the summer of 1847, McClellan had the opportunity to observe Scott's difficulties with political interference from Washington. President Polk, intent on resolving a peace treaty with Mexico, had empowered Nicholas Trist, his diplomatic representative in Mexico, with full authority to conclude a peace treaty. Scott felt his authority had been usurped and had great difficulty coming to terms with the situation. While McClellan was present to watch this interplay, he would learn little from it. Years later his own political involvement would be a source of great trouble for him.

McClellan emerged from the war a brevet Captain. He had been cited for bravery three times and promoted after both Contreras and Chapultepec. Following the war he was initially assigned to an engineer company at West Point. Although not on the faculty, he became very active in Professor Dennis Hart Mahan's Napoleon Club. His work of note included detailed studies of both the battle of Wagram and Napoleon's Russian Campaign.

Reassigned in 1851, McClellan spent three years in a series of assignments surveying the Red River in Arkansas and mapping a route for the transcontinental railroad west from the Mississippi River to Oregon. At his own request he was reassigned to line duty with the 1st Cavalry Regiment in 1855, then was detached and sent to the Crimea as a member of the Delafield Commission. During that trip, he had the opportunity to view the Prussian Army, the ruins of the Russian defensive works in the Crimea, and to speak with officers and men who had been involved in the siege. Although his

writings were limited to cavalry observations in keeping with his charter as a member of the commission, McClellan returned from the trip as one of the most knowledgeable officers in the U.S. Army concerning current doctrine and its implementation.

He returned to an army stymied in its own development by disagreement and political maneuvering. Frustrated by a lack of change and little chance of promotion, McClellan resigned his commission in 1857. He initially took a job as the Chief Engineer for the Illinois Central Railroad, but by 1860 would advance to the presidency of the eastern division of the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad.

JACKSON: THE CIVIL WAR

On the eve of the Civil War then, both Jackson and McClellan were away from the mainstream Army, one teaching at VMI and the other running a railroad. Symptomatic of the condition of the Army in 1860 however, they remained two of the most knowledgeable among their peers in the study of war and its changes during their lifetime. Their studies would interestingly enough lead them to similar doctrinal conclusions concerning war. Their conduct of battle however, would differ radically.

Having been at VMI for ten years, Jackson was out of contact with the Regular Army. While he had not seen a soldier for years though, he had studied war extensively. His biographer Henderson, believed that "in the campaigns of Napoleon he had found instruction in the highest branch of his profession, and had made his own the methods of war which the greatest of modern soldiers both preached and practiced."¹³

Jackson was reluctant to accept the war, but once it had been declared, he offered his services to his native state, Virginia. Upon receiving instructions from the new government, he marched his cadets to Camp Lee. Arriving there, Jackson found chaos. The units gathered at Camp Lee were unaware of even the basest of military behavior, and had no conception of discipline. Both the officers and soldiers were citizens first and soldiers second, and felt they owed their allegiance to their state, not to the Confederacy. Finally, arms were scarce and uniforms unavailable.¹⁴ The only people with any idea of where to start and what to do were the West Point graduates, and while over one fourth of them had come to the South to serve, most had been placed into higher commands and were unavailable to get the Army started down the right path.

Out of a job after having delivered his cadets, Jackson volunteered to assist in drilling the new recruits. Soon after that he was made a Colonel of Virginia volunteers, and sent to command Harper's Ferry. He was not well received. His arrival deposed former militia officers who the central government of the Confederacy had relieved. They resented Jackson's arrival and made his initial steps more difficult than they were going to be anyway.

Jackson saw control of information as his first problem. No sooner had he done something than word of it was leaked to the enemy. He took immediate steps to stop that. He refused to discuss plans with anyone not needing the information, being especially tight about information overheard by civilians. He began touring outposts in nondescript attire to gain information on the terrain without at the same time, giving information to the enemy. It was a stark departure from the pomp and social activity of the former commander, and aroused no small amount of controversy. Jackson also

instituted rigorous drill for both the officers and men in an attempt to teach the elements of maneuver. It was a taxing discipline but would prove well worth the effort later in the war in the context of the social contract.

While Jackson personally saw to the burden of arming and munitioning his force, the training never ceased. As soon as drill was passable he began conditioning marches. By the time of First Manassas, he would field a force superior to any other on the battlefield. The path he used however, was not easy. Officers who could not perform were relieved, a dangerous tactic in a political army. Despite the dangers though, Jackson somehow managed to select the right man for the job in most cases. It would prove to be a great advantage. One need only look at the volumes of complaints other Civil War generals made concerning subordinates to realize that Jackson's achievement was far greater than it seems at first glance.

Additionally, Jackson used the building block approach to season his units. Like Napoleon, he used small, easily won victories to expose his men to combat and build their confidence.¹⁵ Moreover, while his plans would always be bold and aggressive, they would remain simple, and thus be easily grasped by his inexperienced subordinates.

From Harper's Ferry until his death at Chancellorsville in 1863, Jackson would be a key player in the operations of the Army of Northern Virginia. he would fight in the Shenandoah Valley, against McClellan on the Peninsula, at Second Manassas, Chantilly, Antietam, Fredericksburg, and finally at Chancellorsville. For the purpose of this study though, I wish to briefly examine the Shenandoah Valley and Peninsula fighting, then move on to concentrate in greater detail on his actions moving north from Richmond and at

Antietam. It is in those battles that Jackson best evidenced his grasp of the principles of tactical level leadership.

Jackson's rampage up and down the Shenandoah Valley early in 1862 diverted attention from Lee in Richmond, allowing Lee time to prepare for McClellan's attack. During this period he exhibited his vision of battle as a dynamic whole. Recognizing that speed and agility were necessary if his smaller force was to defeat Banks' superior numbers, Jackson repeatedly moved quickly to avoid decisive engagement, then maneuvered the Union forces into positions where he could defeat them in pieces, thus removing their strength advantage. Against Banks at Strasburg, New Market, and Winchester, Jackson demonstrated the advantage speed and agility can give to a smaller force. His diversion was so successful that President Lincoln dispatched an entire Corps of McClellan's Army to chase him. Once he had their attention, Jackson retained it long enough to deny McClellan their use in attacking Richmond, then making use of his own interior lines, he moved to support Lee near Richmond, again demonstrating his excellent grasp of doctrine. That action had a severe psychological if not physical impact on McClellan. Already convinced he faced an army far larger than it actually was, he became more and more convinced he could not conduct a successful attack. His paralysis opened a great opportunity for the Confederacy.

As McClellan withdrew from the Peninsula in August 1862, Lee sent Jackson north to flank Pope's newly formed army, hoping to force battle with Pope before McClellan could move to reinforce him. While beyond the scope of what I wish to cover here, Jackson's maneuvers were operationally telling. Singlehandedly, he forced the Union force to turn to meet him, then hid from it until Longstreet and Lee could move within supporting range.

Tactically he was also superior. At Cedar Run he predicted the weak point of the enemy line, positioned himself forward, and was present to make key decisions that forced the tide of battle to turn.¹⁶ At Groveton he maneuvered to the rear of a superior force, quickly engaged it, then withdrew before it could decisively engage him. At Second Manassas he somehow understood that Pope expected him to defend, and attacked instead, completely surprising Pope. In each of these actions he evidenced the advantage in concentrating forces in space and time while using movement to preclude the enemy doing the same. It was a masterful demonstration of doctrinal application in the Napoleonic mode.

By the end of the summer, Confederate spirits were high. McClellan's Army had been driven from the peninsula and Pope's from the Rappahannock. In Richmond it was widely believed that a single victory on northern soil within range of Washington might bring about the end of the war. In light of this, Jackson was instructed to cross the Potomac on 2 September, and by 14 September had seized Harper's Ferry. During that movement he demonstrated as had Napoleon, what a well conditioned force could do. In three and one-half days his corps covered 60 miles, crossed two mountain ranges, and forded the Potomac River. Having accomplished that, they remained under arms the night prior to taking Harper's Ferry, took that garrison, hurried back to cook two day's rations, then marched 17 miles back to the Potomac. It was a remarkable feat, made even more noteworthy in that they were ill fed and largely without shoes.¹⁷ It was also an excellent example of Jackson's understanding that space and time could be used to enhance his advantage during battle. Like Napoleon, he insisted on speed and maneuverability while never abandoning preparation for the sake of speed. His

move from Frederick to Harper's Ferry serves as a good example. Having received Lee's instruction to move, it was clear that time was critical. Jackson is recorded as having marched with even more than his usual haste, but not before conducting a thorough map reconnaissance and issuing orders to his preceding cavalry to control word of his movement by detaining civilians who might alert the enemy to his presence.¹⁸

Several days later, Jackson's Corps held the right flank of Lee's Army at Antietam. He began the fateful day of 17 September in a precarious position, facing advancing Union forces with part of his force still moving up from Harper's Ferry. When McClellan began his attack by throwing Hooker's Corps against Jackson, things were close (see map). Both Jackson and Hooker commanded seasoned forces. The corn field over which they fought would be pivotal to the battle. It would also be the location of the bloodiest fight of the war.

The fighting was intense. By 0730 in the morning, no brigade in either Lawton or Jones' divisions (CSA) had the commander it had begun the battle with. By midday Jackson was driven back, but only at a fearful price to the Federals. As he had withdrawn moreover, he had straightened his line and moved to more defensible terrain. Despite only limited success, McClellan committed Sumner's Second Corps against Jackson early in the afternoon. Sumner was able to break the Confederate line, and for a short time it appeared Jackson had lost.

In the midst of the battle though, Jackson remained collected. He moved forward to the point of the break, and gave direct instructions to McLaws as to how and where to counterattack. As McLaws executed Jackson's instructions,

he fell in upon one of Sumner's flank divisions, destroying it. Its destruction forced Sumner's withdrawal.

One reason that Jackson knew where to be and what action was appropriate must be attributed to his habit of close personal reconnaissance of the battlefield. Throughout his service, he insisted on detailed reconnaissance and battle planning. During the Valley fighting and at Second Manassas, it had resulted in stunning victories over much larger forces because it allowed Jackson to concentrate forces in time and space to impact most heavily on the enemy. At Antietam it worked for him once again.

Having been driven back by Jackson, McClellan struck Lee's other flank, hitting Longstreet's Corps (see map). Why the attack had not taken place at the same time as the initial one against Jackson remains unexplained. It was "as if McClellan's plan was to attempt each section of Lee's line in succession."¹⁹ Had McClellan struck Longstreet earlier, Lee would have been unable to move A.P. Hill's division into to line to strike the Union flank as it hit Longstreet. Without that attack, the Union forces might well have succeeded. The day ended with Lee fully aware that he could not stop McClellan again. McClellan was unaware of that however. Despite having an unused corps still in reserve, he withdrew the following morning, satisfied with Lee's weakening rather than with the destruction that lay within his grasp.

Jackson would go on to fight well at Fredericksburg, then would fall victim to his own men's mistaken bullets at Chancellorsville. His loss would be a deep one for the Confederacy.

McClellan: The Civil War

The outbreak of the Civil War found McClellan making a great deal of money as the President of the eastern division of the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad. Although happy in civilian life, he quickly answered President Lincoln's call to duty. Originally going to Pennsylvania to serve, he was convinced along the way to remain in Ohio. As the senior officer from Ohio, he was first made a Major General of Volunteers.

Like Jackson, he faced tremendous organizational problems. The state's war stocks were either useless or nonexistent, and the officers as poorly trained as the men they led. McClellan strongly advocated the dispersal of Regular Army officers to the volunteer units as cadre, but met with no support in Washington. His memories of problems with volunteer units in Mexico had not dimmed with age. He was determined to avoid a repetition.

McClellan's problems only grew in scope when he was given command of the Department of the Ohio, encompassing all federal forces in Ohio, Tennessee and Illinois. The position also made him a Regular Army officer again however, and he was able to obtain some regular officers for his staff, somewhat easing the situation.

McClellan's forces were immediately challenged in western Virginia where, on 3 June 1861, they routed Confederate forces under Colonel George A. Philippi. Their first real action however, took place at Rich Mountain in July. In a position reminiscent of Cerro Gordo, McClellan attempted to avoid frontal assault and turn his enemy by maneuvering to the rear. Although not viewed as such, the battle was a harbinger of what McClellan would evidence

throughout the war, an academic grasp of doctrine without the vision to see it through to execution on the battlefield. Theoretically he knew what he wanted to do at Rich Mountain. Unfortunately, his subordinates did not, and the maneuver succeeded by only the slimmest of margins. Rather than recognize his problem though, McClellan bemoaned his lack of trained leaders and begged Washington for additional trained forces.²⁰ He would never progress to the point that he questioned his implementation of doctrine, position during battle, or ability to visualize battle as it was rather than what he wished it to be.

The results of First Manassas brought McClellan to Washington in July 1861. He came with three overriding considerations: the necessity for professional leadership, the importance of adequate leadership, and an aversion to reliance on tactical mass assault in the offense. Unfortunately, he did not also bring with him a grasp of how to develop those elements, then combine them to achieve victory on the battlefield. McClellan faced monumental problems building the Army of the Potomac into a fighting force, but that is beyond the scope of this study. Instead, I will focus on two major phases of McClellan's tactical leadership: his performance on the Virginia Peninsula early in 1862, and his actions at Antietam after having been returned to command in September 1862.

On the Virginia Peninsula McClellan led the best trained, equipped, and supplied army in American history.²¹ Instead of developing and exploiting its capabilities however, he misused it to the extent that it was largely ineffective. Rather than harden it and train while advancing overland toward Richmond, McClellan chose to move the army by water to the tip of the Yorktown Peninsula and from there attack Richmond. He did so because he believed it would minimize the necessity of maneuvering his inexperienced

Army while also lessening the problem of overland resupply across what was by that time, a northern Virginia devoid of crops capable of sustaining an army on the move. Unfortunately, it proved not only to be a poor alternative, but also a wasted opportunity to develop his social contract with his army.

Known as a great planner, McClellan was anything but that on the Peninsula. First of all he failed to reconnoiter the ground adequately prior to beginning the campaign. As a result, he did not know that swamps across the lower part of the peninsula would allow John Magruder to hold his 50,000 man army up for a month with fewer than 15,000 men.²² Once on the ground moreover, he compounded the problem by not using his cavalry to either reconnoiter or harass the enemy, leaving his forces open to exactly that from the enemy. Secondly, failure to grasp the problems that heavy rain would bring to an army spread across rain swollen rivers meant that McClellan left his right flank exposed to enemy attack with little chance of reinforcement once the bridges washed out. Finally, McClellan was unable to depart from his original plan and accept the absence of McDowell's Corps. Instead, he delayed with the hope that McDowell would be returned until his army had been weakened by weather, enemy harassment, and illness to the point it was relatively ineffective. The one hope he did have to affect the campaign failed when he refused to support a naval attack up the James River with a coordinated land assault against shore batteries because "circumstances must determine the propriety of a land attack," whatever that meant.²³ When the Federal fleet was stopped at Drewry's Bluff, only a mile from Richmond, McClellan's best chance at taking the enemy capital was probably lost.

The entire campaign was a terrible waste of initiative and manpower. Recognizing this, President Lincoln relieved McClellan in August 1862, and

replaced him with General John Pope. Pope would, in return, blunder so badly in his withdrawal to Washington that McClellan would be returned to command following Second Manassas.

Given another chance at defeating Lee, McClellan again failed. As Lee advanced into Maryland in September 1862, his attack order fell into McClellan's hands. For once, the General who never had accurate intelligence had a crystal clear picture of what his enemy intended to do. McClellan was however, unable to take advantage of the windfall. He hesitated over nine hours before issuing orders to pursue Lee. During that time he openly gloated about having the order in front of visiting civilians, one of whom turned out to be a Confederate sympathizer who quickly got word to Lee.

Part of his hesitation can be attributed to the confused state of command in the Federal Army. President Lincoln had relieved McClellan then returned him to command in less than a month. Halleck was the new General-in-Chief of the Army and was uncertain of his role between the President and the commander in the field.²⁴ Some of the hesitation though, must also be attributed to moral cowardice. McClellan simply did not have the will to make things happen. As one author put it, "McClellan was invariably nonplussed by the unexpected."²⁵ In addition to lacking will, McClellan also lacked the ability to react in a timely manner. He had no previous experience with the rapid concentration of forces. Instead, he always relied on the deliberate buildup and attack. His army was a product of his creation. Neither it or he were trained to react quickly. That pattern of behavior conflicted directly with doctrine, which stressed speed and rapid concentration of forces as key to victory. The penalty for that failure pursued him throughout the Civil War. At Yorktown, he consumed an entire month besieging defenses that he could have

taken with a single offensive thrust, then delayed over a day after the Confederate withdrawal from those defenses to begin his pursuit. At Seven Pines, McClellan drove the enemy back then immediately began to prepare defensive positions rather than pursue. That mold could not be easily broken. As a result, great opportunities were lost.

When McClellan finally did move, it was too late. Having been notified of the compromise of his plan, Lee had given subsequent orders to block the mountain passes that McClellan needed to attack him.

McClellan had greater problems than merely slow reaction too. Once moving, his army exhibited little of the coordination taught by Napoleon and Mahan. Regiments moved and engaged in combat with little organization from division or corps. The result, both in the pursuit and at Antietam, would be courageous fighting by individual regiments with little overall success because divisions and corps had no coordinated plan for their soldier's sacrifice.

McClellan pursued Lee for two days, driving him to ground at Antietam. Having forced Lee to stop however, McClellan seemed unprepared for the next step. Confusion reigned among his corps commanders. Orders were vague. Units were intermingled and had little idea of any overall Federal plan. Instead of going forward and sorting things out, McClellan remained near his headquarters.²⁶ Moreover, while reconnaissance would have been relatively easy given the unsettled positions of the two armies, it was done poorly. Lessons McClellan had learned in Mexico were forgotten. Engineers were not used to closely evaluate the battlefield and enemy positions. Cavalry was not thrown out to guard the flanks. Most damning however was McClellan's initial delay in issuing orders to pursue Lee. The time between the discovery of the order and the issuance of instructions to Federal forces was far too great.

Having been outflanked by his more agile enemy throughout the war, McClellan relinquished his single best opportunity to end the war in 1862 because he could not react quickly.

When McClellan finally began the attack on 17 September, it was piecemeal and uncoordinated. Rather than strike a decisive blow along the Napoleonic model, he sent in one corps after another in a series of limited, disastrous attacks that were thrown back one by one (see map). Hooker's I Corps was sent in at dawn, but not followed by Mansfield's XII Corps until sometime after 0730, giving Jackson time to defeat each in turn. Still later, Sumner's II Corps was sent forward, but it could not even arrive together and took horrible losses from McLaws' counterattack. Burnside's IX Corps was not even ordered forward until 1000,²⁷ had trouble crossing the river, and even though it seized high ground important to the battle, no one else was sent to reinforce the success. Porter's V Corps, Franklin's VI Corps and Pleasonton's Cavalry Division were never even used.

By anyone's standard it was an inept attack. McClellan the student of Napoleon, Jomini, and Mahan, violated some of their basic principles. He struck frontally rather than find the enemy's line of operation and sever that. Having decided to attack frontally, he failed to mass his forces. He was unable to create the battle he envisioned because his orders were vague and he would not move forward to influence the developing battle. In the end, some 23,000 of his soldiers were elsewhere prior to the battle while over 20,000 of those present went unused.²⁸ Thousands of brave soldiers were needlessly sacrificed. Finally, when McClellan had Lee ready for defeat, he chose to fall back and prepare to defend. Lee arose on the 18th prepared for defeat only to

watch McClellan withdraw. By withdrawing his own forces to Virginia, Lee was able to preserve the Army of Northern Virginia for battle another day.

McClellan would later attempt to blame his subordinates for his failures on the Peninsula and at Antietam, but in truth, the failure was his own. His orders were vague²⁹ and his generals while weak, were there because McClellan retained them. In his own story, McClellan indicated he retained McDowell after First Manassas out of pity, only later determining him to be unfit for command in the field.³⁰ At Antietam, only his old friend Burnside had his full confidence prior to the battle,³¹ yet Burnside's inability to fathom the enemy's moves and strike decisively were major components of McClellan's failure to defeat Lee. This inability to select good subordinates further weakened his already shaky command structure.

ANALYSIS

The comparison of Jackson and McClellan leaves one with an impression of two men very similar in education, experience, and doctrinal belief, yet vastly different in battlefield effectiveness.

Jackson appears to have had a number of strengths. First of all, he prepared for war. At VMI he studied Napoleon in depth. Like Napoleon he was meticulous in his preparation and study of maps prior to movement.³² His plans were generally well developed and the concept clear to subordinates. Prior to battle, he usually briefed his subordinate commanders thoroughly, ensuring they understood his intent.³³ He also thought ahead, planning his every movement. Jackson was seldom surprised because he was prepared for battle.

Jackson was also a man of vision. Clausewitz wrote of the need for an inner eye or *Coup d' Oeil* in the great leader.³⁴ In many ways, Jackson fulfilled that description. He saw more than just numbers arrayed against him on the battlefield. His inner sense of the battlefield turned the tide of the battle at Antietam when he threw McLaws against Sedgwick's unprepared division. He was noted for his ability to select scouts, a key element in learning the enemy's intent. In the same sense, he possessed a vision beyond the information available. Somehow he seemed to know what the enemy would do next. He possessed an instinctive faculty for divining the intention of his enemy. That ability allowed him to pull the strings that made his enemy react in the manner he wanted them to.

Jackson also had the ability to select good subordinates, a benefit McClellan never enjoyed. In Stuart and Ashby, Jackson found men temperamentally and physically appropriate for the task of leading cavalry far to the enemy rear.³⁵ While it is true his topographical engineer, quartermaster, chief of artillery, and commissary all had pre-war experience in their field, his chief of staff was a Presbyterian clergyman chosen for his energy and ability and the rest of the staff selected for character alone.³⁶ Jackson's ability to mold these men into a cohesive force made a great difference, especially when fighting an enemy that was destroying itself with infighting.

Jackson was also a master of operational security. His concentration on keeping the enemy unaware of his intentions not only aided his movements, but it created an aura around him as well, one of mystery and uncertainty. How greatly that uncertainty weakened the Union forces facing him while strengthening his own position is not quantifiable, but it was well known and

certainly a key element in drawing McDowell away from the Virginia Peninsula to chase him in the Shenandoah Valley.

Jackson also possessed what Clausewitz called a sense of locality.³⁷ He was continually aware of what was going on around him in battle. As Henderson put it: "He never failed to detect the key-point of a position, or to make the best use of the ground."³⁸ At both Kernstown and Port Republic he seized the key ground without a moment's hesitation, somehow sensing where it was.

Perseverance was still another of Jackson's traits. Having carefully planned the battle, he stuck with his plan. Unlike other generals, he always stayed with his plan. His ability to exhibit perseverance in the face of chaos was yet another of Clausewitz's elements of great leadership.³⁹ Examples of this were seen time and time again. At First Manassas, Jackson was informed by Bee that his forces were being beaten back. His response was to tell Bee to "give them the bayonet." When, later in the same battle, he was informed by one of his officers that the day was going against them, his reply was: "If you think so sir, you had better not say anything about it."⁴⁰

Other examples also exist. When Jackson had Banks in retreat at Strasburg, he continued the fight through the night despite the exhaustion of his men, because he knew he had Banks reeling and to relent would provide the enemy the opportunity to regroup. At Antietam, he understood the importance of perseverance when he told McLaws to attack despite a penetration of the line, somehow knowing that the attack would turn the tide of the battle.

In the execution of his plan Jackson was as vigorous as he was thorough. While vigorous however, he never fell into the trap that Clausewitz described when he warned that vigorous execution cannot become a burst of

blind passion, that at some point command must become less a matter of personal sacrifice and increasingly concerned with the safety of others and the common goal.⁴¹ Instead, Jackson skillfully blended personal and organizational boldness into battlefield advantage. Much like Napoleon, he never waited for his enemy to become fully prepared, but struck him the first blow. He was always conscious of unit positioning and masterfully coordinated divisions in combat, a key to the successful implementation of doctrine. Jackson demonstrated this in the Valley Campaign, in his maneuvers against Pope in Northern Virginia late in August 1862, and again at Antietam.

While an expert on doctrine for his times, Jackson was not bound by its teachings. He understood that circumstances on the battlefield can vary enough that a maneuver which at one point is unsound can become necessary at yet another point. He never saw doctrine as binding and in that lay yet another of his strengths. Where Napoleon would never have agreed that division of forces was wise, Jackson deliberately divided his on more than one occasion. At Port Republic that division was not only appropriate, it was masterful in that it led to the defeat of an enemy superior in numbers just as it was about to crush Jackson's forces.

Another important element to remember is Jackson's preoccupation with the social contract. He trained his soldiers rigorously, demanded tremendous sacrifices of them, and saw many of them die, but he also ensured they were not sacrificed needlessly. When he planned long forced marches he ensured their loads were lightened so they would arrive fresher and fight better.⁴² At Strasburg he forced his corps to fight through the night despite its exhaustion because he knew losses would be greater if he allowed the Union forces to regroup and solidify their defense. At Second Manassas he pushed

his corps into the attack despite its great losses because he understood the enemy was off balance and could be more easily defeated. His ability to view battle as a whole and use his force to best advantage maximized both its combat power and the social contract.

Most important in all of this however, was the final result. Jackson was able to create a fighting force strong in the factors that Clausewitz deemed important in war: a skillful commander, a brave, bold yet disciplined army, perseverance, surprise, concentration of forces in space, and unification of forces in time.⁴³

As a skillful commander, Jackson created the conditions under which his force thrived. Not only was he personally brave, but he developed bravery in his men. They repeatedly attacked despite overwhelming odds and they almost always won. Jackson's willingness to personally risk death inspired others to do the same. He understood as would S.L.A. Marshall almost one hundred years later, that "at the high tide of danger leaders got out front. They stimulated audacity by themselves being audacious."⁴⁴

His army was also adaptable. Because of Jackson's concern with security, the forces seldom knew where they were headed next, but they were always ready to go. Henderson relates a story in his biography of Jackson that clearly describes the relationship. When turned out for an unexpected march, the men were asked where they were going. Their laughing reply was, "We don't know, but 'Old Jack' does."⁴⁵ They had discovered the advantage that speed, security, and conditioning gave them. Jackson had seen to that discovery through thorough preparation and training.

Jackson's forces persevered too, hanging on often when others thought they could not. Pope knew Jackson should not attack at Second Manassas and

was not prepared when Jackson did so. An army morally weaker than Jackson's might well have accepted the same conclusion and not attacked. Jackson's army knew this however, and went forward willingly. By doing so they once again achieved surprise, a key to their success.

Finally, Jackson was a skillful practitioner of the doctrinal concentration of forces in space and unification of forces in time. His results were even more apparent when he fought Northern generals unable to achieve the same and defeated their larger forces with his smaller, more agile force. His ability to move to contact quickly more than once spelled the outcome of the battle.

Jackson was not without his weaknesses however. He was an intensely driven man. While that intensity allowed him to develop plans of great depth yet of equally great simplicity because he could work to the exclusion of everything else, it also caused him problems. He saw to his moral duties with the same intensity. At times that resulted in his being misunderstood. His problems with the officers of the Virginia militia at Harper's Ferry and later with members of the Confederate States Congress were unnecessary, but probable in that he dealt with them coldly. He was also quick to place his subordinates under arrest for perceived failures. Usually he had to later release them once cooler heads prevailed.

Jackson also insisted on viewing overall welfare as always overriding individual need. On more than one occasion that led to the hanging of an offender when leniency might have been appropriate. Finally, Jackson insisted on leading from the front, even when he had capable subordinates. The policy certainly had its rewards, but when it cost the South one of its great leaders, it suddenly became a fault.

McClellan outwardly possessed many of the same strengths as Jackson. He too was a man of preparation. He had extensively studied war both historically and on the battlefields of his lifetime. He spent months preparing for the campaign on the Virginia Peninsula, striving to find the right combination of men and doctrine to take Richmond.

He was a man of vision too. He clearly believed that First Manassas had been a telling blow to the Union and understood that the Federal Army could not afford another such experience. As a result, he exhaustively trained and prepared for the attack on Richmond, even to the extent that he moved by water rather than overland in an attempt to save his army and avoid small battles of attrition while he moved on Richmond.

McClellan understood the importance of how he took Richmond. In his mind, the capital was the key to the defeat of the Confederacy. If he could take it, the rebellion would fail. As a student of war moreover, he had seen the advantage of maneuver and the horrible waste of unnecessary frontal assault. What he failed to see unfortunately, was the doctrinal linkage between maneuver and frontal assault. One served to enhance the effectiveness of the other, while either alone was inadequate. Jackson understood the synergism of employing both to advantage. Regrettably for the North, McClellan did not.

McClellan was also a man of perseverance. He remained steadfast in his determination to wait to attack Richmond until his army was prepared. That took tremendous courage in a city like Washington, where so much political power could be brought to bear. McClellan's perseverance also surfaced in his care for his soldiers. It would have been much easier in terms of planning and coordination to attack Richmond overland, but he did not believe his inexperienced soldiers and leaders were up to the task. McClellan understood

war was not going to be easy, but wanted to make things as smooth as possible. His soldiers in turn, understood his care for them. He was a very popular leader. One example of this was seen when he reassumed command of the *Army from Pope outside of Washington following Second Manassas*. As the soldiers learned of his return, a cheer went up from the ranks of the marching Army.⁴⁶

Unfortunately, McClellan's weaknesses far outweighed his strengths. Unlike Jackson, he seldom went forward to share risk with his forces, appearing only after a victory or defeat.⁴⁷ Rather than go forward to assess Magruder's actual strength on the Yorktown-Warwick defensive line, McClellan chose to remain at his headquarters and believe Pinkerton's inflated estimates of Confederate capability. Had he gone forward in the pursuit of Lee to Antietam, he might have been present to discipline Franklin for moving too slowly or Burnside for failing to concentrate forces for the attack. Instead, he spent much of the day at his headquarters reading and sending dispatches.⁴⁸ As a result, lives were wasted needlessly.

In the same vein, McClellan had some peculiar ways of demonstrating his declared care for his soldiers. Rather than strain them on an arduous overland movement toward Richmond, he chose to go by water. By doing so, he lost the opportunity to harden his soldiers and train his officers.

While his preparation was thorough, it was also too lengthy. He took so long to prepare that it advantaged his enemy. During the Virginia Campaign, any consistent effort would have shown the actual weakness of the Confederate line, but McClellan simply could not move. Before Antietam, he had a tremendous opportunity to move on Lee before Lee knew his plan had been

intercepted. Again, McClellan was unable to plan quickly enough to take advantage of the situation.

Having sacrificed speed and agility for mass, McClellan was never able to bring his superior mass to bear in a telling manner. On the Virginia Peninsula he planned a "prompt, direct, and vigorous offensive,"⁴⁹ then waited over a month in front of the Yorktown-Warwick defenses, allowing the enemy to wear his forces down while strengthening their own position. At Antietam he piecemealed his attack rather than throwing his superior mass at any one point in the Confederate line. Both actions meant casualties were higher than they had to be, a violation of the social contract.

McClellan also appeared to be unable to make a coordinated attack. In western Virginia he succeeded at Rich Mountain by only the slimmest of margins. At Drewery's Bluff he found himself unready to support the Navy, even though it might well have meant the fall of Richmond. Most damning however, he failed to coordinate the attack of his corps at Antietam, resulting in tremendous unnecessary losses.

Doctrinally, McClellan professed a belief in maneuver over frontal assault and in the use of Corps as maneuver forces,⁵⁰ but in practice found himself unable to either maneuver or conduct frontal assault well. When he maneuvered on the Peninsula, he seldom was willing to fight to increase his advantage. When he elected to conduct a frontal assault at Antietam, he failed to maneuver to support it. Also at Antietam he had corps to use, yet failed to produce a clear plan for their employment, again resulting in the needless waste of lives. In many ways it was as if he had never progressed beyond an understanding of company level tactics. In that fault he was not alone. As Richard Ewell put it, "the officers of the prewar Army learned everything about

commanding a company of fifty dragoons on the western plains and nothing about anything else."⁵¹ McClellan had the unfortunate fate however, to fight against two generals who overcame that shortcoming, Lee and Jackson. That he failed to rise to the occasion may not have been his fault, but his failure remains his own nevertheless.

McClellan also failed to adequately prepare for weather and terrain. His maps and intelligence for the movement up the Virginia Peninsula proved to be entirely inadequate. The swamps across the bottom of the peninsula were far more extensive than he had expected. The addition of enemy fortifications and seasonally poor weather proved to be a greater obstacle than an overland march would likely have been. McClellan would later acknowledge that his maps had been poor,⁵² but no evidence exists that he paid any special attention to their quality or accuracy prior to the beginning of the campaign. Had he exerted the slightest effort it would not have been difficult to find someone knowledgeable of the area. After all, the Army had maintained a garrison at Fort Monroe for years. Anyone who had been stationed there could have told him more than he apparently knew before setting foot on the Peninsula.

While he may have had vision, McClellan could not be said to possess *Coup d' Oeil*. He could not "see" the battlefield as it really was. Throughout the war his intelligence was notably poor.⁵³ His happenstance collection effort and reliance on Pinkerton agents left him with extreme overestimations of enemy strength and little of use. When that failing was coupled with McClellan's unwillingness to go forward to see and influence the battle, he was doomed to failure. Although he always outnumbered his enemy, he could seldom bring himself to move against them. A noted Napoleon scholar, on the

Peninsula he failed to realize the danger of a flank thrown across a flooding water obstacle until the enemy attacked it. At Seven Pines and Antietam he was so obsessed with the possibility of retreat that he allowed the probability of victory to slip away.

Finally, he seldom used his cavalry to gain a feel of the enemy. On the Peninsula that meant his enemy was free to move about him with its cavalry, harassing his lines of support and slowing his advance. At Antietam it meant he relinquished the opportunity to interdict A.P. Hill's advance to reinforce Lee, and perhaps change history. Is it little wonder then that McClellan was regularly beaten by men who rose above their past experiences, planned in detail, used their cavalry to gain information and interdict enemy movement, maintained strict security about their movements, and stayed forward in battle to influence the action?

McClellan also lacked Jackson's ability to select and mold his subordinates into a cohesive force. Where Jackson was justifiably criticized for being too harsh with his subordinates, McClellan was not. He was however, anything but satisfied with them. After the war he bemoaned not having relieved McDowell when he had the chance to.⁵⁴ He would also be critical of other of his subordinates later on, with particular attention given to Burnside for his slow movement at Antietam. For the most part however, the fault was his own. At the beginning of the war he asked for experienced Regular Army officers or West Point graduates to fill key billets. In most cases he received exactly that.⁵⁵

McClellan can also be criticized for lacking a clear understanding of his part in President Lincoln's plan for winning the war and reuniting the nation. He was never able to understand why Lincoln denied him the use of McDowell's

Corps on the Peninsula. During that campaign he went so far as to attempt independent negotiations for the end of the war between the U.S. Army and the Confederacy, even though he was by then no longer even the General-in-Chief of the Army,⁵⁶ much less someone vested with negotiating authority for the Union.

Finally, McClellan lacked moral courage. He is an excellent example of what Clausewitz described when he wrote: "Given the same amount of intelligence, timidity will do a thousand times more damage in war than audacity."⁵⁷ In the context of Clausewitz's framework and Napoleonic doctrine, McClellan was simply unable to mold his army into a strong moral force. His singular failure became magnified many times over because of his position and influence with the Army of the Potomac. Instead of becoming an offensively minded aggressive force that avidly sought its enemy, the army under McClellan became an army "led by men who had known defeat, and who owed their defeat, in great measure, to the same fault--neglect to employ their whole force in combination."⁵⁸

A number of lessons can be drawn from the comparison of Jackson and McClellan. Both men were intelligent, earnest, and well versed in the art of war for Generals of their time. They both understood doctrine inasmuch as one existed for the U.S. Army of the mid-1800s. Both men also made their plans largely in consonance with that doctrine.

However, as Clausewitz wrote: "Everything in war is very simple, but the simplest thing is difficult."⁵⁹ In much the same sense, doctrine is not difficult to understand, but its application can be much more difficult than its grasp. The best planned operations are subject to the friction of war. McClellan was brought up short by that friction. Unable to adequately

recognize good versus bad intelligence, he never knew what he was missing. Jackson not only demanded good intelligence, he seemed to intrinsically know what to believe and what to discard. McClellan was a victim of continuously poor operational security and was repeatedly victimized by it, while Jackson was a master of security and benefited tremendously from its advantages.

For all his reputation for preparation, McClellan did not obtain proper maps before engaging in major operations, nor did he send cavalry forward to reconnoiter his route of advance. As a result, the friction he faced was far greater than it needed to be. In contrast, Jackson not only obtained good maps, he pored over them in detail, obtaining every advantage they offered before making plans, issuing orders or moving forces. Where possible, he developed even better information by sending cavalry forward or obtaining first hand information prior to movement.

McClellan cared for his troops by easing their burden, but neglected to harden them for the rigors of wartime movement. Jackson hardened his forces then eased their burden when he could. Consequently, he was able to get more from his men.

McClellan had vision, but he lacked *Coup d' Oeil*. He understood doctrine but did not have the "inward eye" necessary to see all he had to see to win. While he may have academically understood war, he did not adequately grasp its moral dimension. Consequently, McClellan was not prepared to commit his full being to understanding and winning the battle. Jackson by comparison was, and won the battle.

McClellan possessed what Clausewitz described as a brilliant mind but not a strong one. Clausewitz was adamant that the former was important, but the latter a prerequisite, for success.⁶⁰ McClellan possessed an innate

intelligence but lacked the presence of mind to apply his intellect to the battlefield. The result was a man who hesitated at critical decision making points. His hesitation in turn, became timidity and his timidity destroyed his chance of victory.

McClellan also learned the wrong lessons from past experience. He had seen in Winfield Scott's performance in Mexico a great planner and maneuver leader but failed to see Scott's audacity and willingness to take chances. Jackson on the other hand, apparently saw both sides of Scott's character and was better able to apply the whole concept of maneuver and fighting to war.

McClellan saw Scott confronted with disloyal and incompetent generals but failed to see what action Scott took against them. When faced with similar problems, he did not know what to do to correct them. Jackson, while harsh, never found it difficult to relieve or discipline a subordinate he considered to be out of line.

McClellan saw Scott beset by politicians, but failed to see that Scott eventually cut himself off from them and fought his own battle. When faced with similar problems, McClellan instead became embroiled in political maneuvering that brought about both his failure as a field commander and as a political influence in Washington.

Finally, McClellan saw Scott confronted with an ill trained and poorly led army, but did not see Scott's sequential building of that army through small, easily won battles and hardening along the route of march. Jackson did see that process and used it to great advantage when he commanded.

There is no question that McClellan strove mightily to succeed. Lacking so many of the tools necessary for success however, he failed. While intelligent and doctrinally sound, he fell into the trap that S.L.A. Marshall

described when he wrote: "Human nature is the one constant not transformable through the reiteration of doctrine. We may find a better way to use men's powers through heavier ordeal. But we will not change cockroaches into butterflies."⁶¹

CONCLUSION

Stonewall Jackson then, emerges as a superior leader who was able to implement doctrine better because of his grasp of leadership principles. George McClellan on the other hand, understood doctrine, but he did not implement it effectively. His failure to fulfill the principles of leadership mentioned earlier played a large part in his overall ineffectiveness.

Battle will always be uncertain. The leader who, like McClellan, insists on centralized control, cannot expect to also deal with the many changes that will inevitably occur during combat. McClellan understood doctrinally what had to be done. He wanted that to happen. He was unable to cause that doctrine to be executed however because of a failure in his leadership. Jackson in contrast, prepared well, distributed control, then moved forward to control the point he believed most important to the battle.

While the evidence presented tends to demonstrate that leadership made the difference though, it does not also demonstrate that leadership alone can win battles. Leaders will undoubtedly continue to say things like General Bruce Clarke did at St. Vith when he stated: "No tactics applied; I just got units down the road to the east of St. Vith."⁶² Such statements however, can be made only with the implied understanding that the units knew what to do once they got down that road. Without a doctrinal underpinning, leadership has little

foundation upon which to build. Doctrine provides a common reference for the employment and maneuver of forces, but it has its limits. Leadership in turn, serves as the catalyst that ties physical force to moral strength, focuses that combination, then uses it in the amount needed, where needed, and at the time needed to create a synergistic whole that achieves victory.

IMPLICATIONS

What then does the U.S. Army need in a doctrine? It may not be necessary to look beyond a general doctrine suitable for a wide variety of applications. This study shows that leaders will implement doctrine based on situation, experience, personality, vision, and personal attributes.

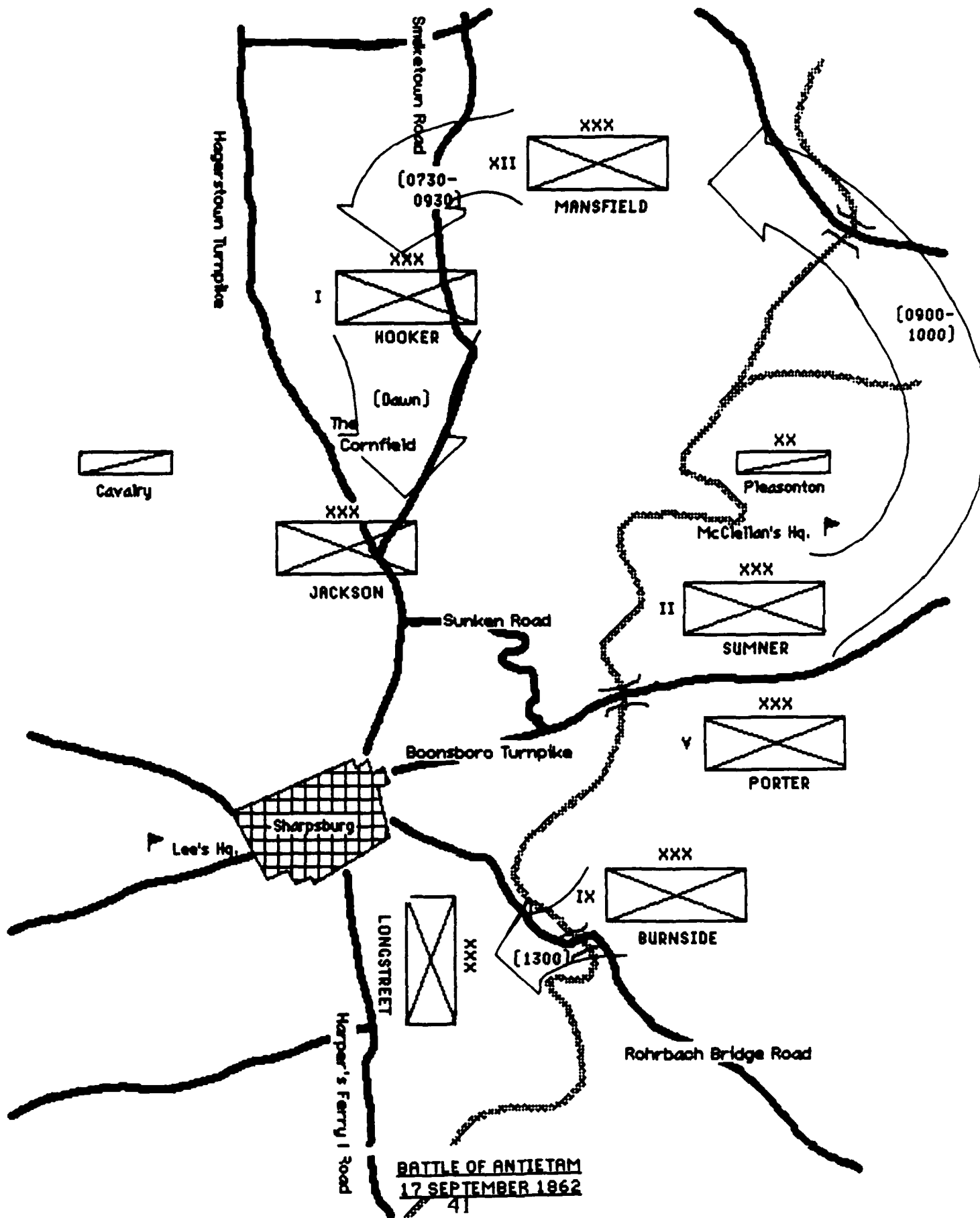
Leadership training on the other hand, demands our attention. As an organization the Army needs to decide what it wants in a leader. This study indicates that the bureaucrat who is successful during times of peace may not be what we need during war. If that is so, the system may need to be changed so it can recognize and develop the leaders we need. Recognition of peculiarities common to the superior wartime leader may be a part of that change.

Secondly, given that we need common battle drill and normative thinking among junior leaders to achieve cohesive consistent effort, where do we make the switch to thinking on a grander scale? Are we as guilty as the Army of the 1800s in that we do not adequately teach leadership above the company level? Do our higher level military schools address the problems of leadership at those levels or do they concentrate largely on doctrinal instruction?

Current Army literature is replete with discussion of warfighting and warfighters, but does the Army really encourage the development of such leaders? Jackson saw war as an intense, personal, hands-on experience that involved his entire being. McClellan saw it much more as an intellectual exercise. Which kind of leader are we developing today?

Setting aside the Regular Army, are we saying and doing the correct things with the Reserves and National Guard? Are they proportionately much different than the volunteers that Jackson and McClellan had to deal with? Certainly they are better trained and led, but their preparation time for war is far shorter. We expect such units to deploy with Regular Army units at the outbreak of war. Should greater focus be placed on their leadership to avoid tragedies similar to those seen at the beginning of every war we have fought?

If, as this paper postulates, leadership is the key to winning battles at the tactical level, these questions must be answered. Failure to do so leaves the Army open to repeats of First Manassas. We cannot afford that in a world grown ever smaller in terms of preparation time for war.



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