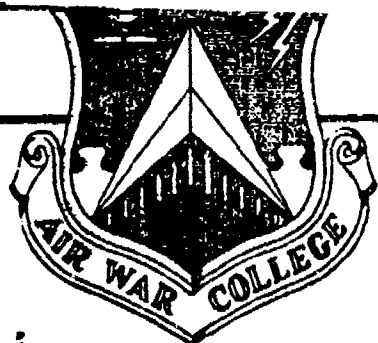


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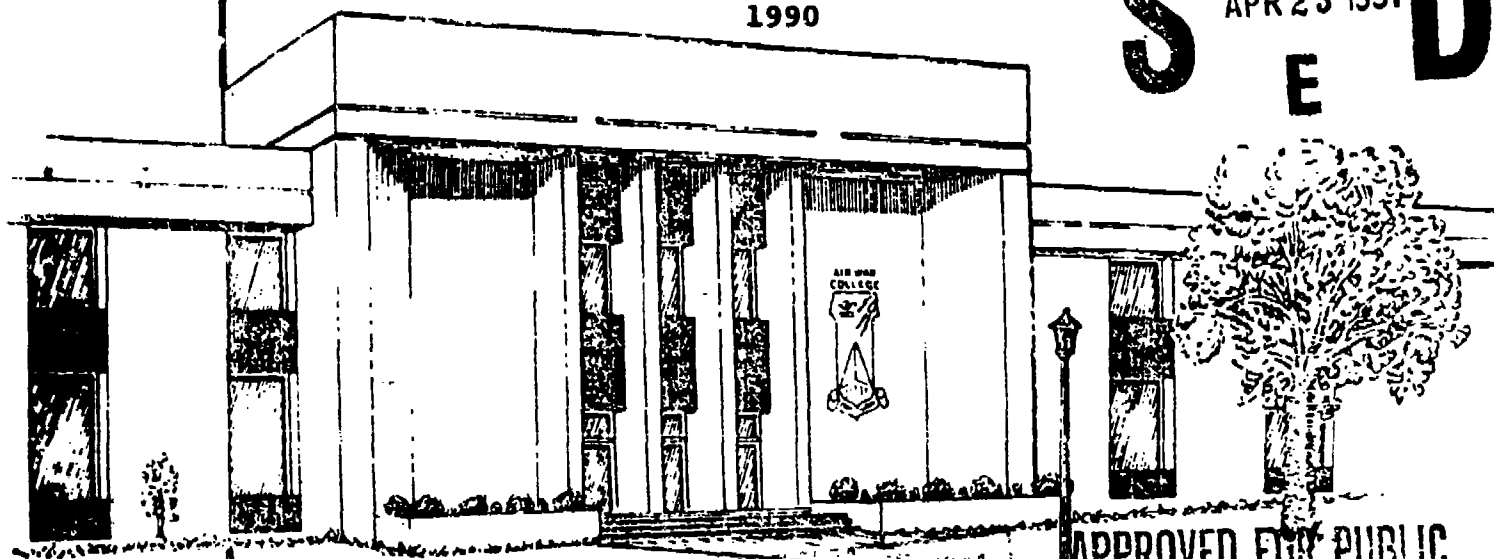
RESEARCH REPORT

A STRATEGIC WARFIGHTING STUDY OF THE CIVIL WAR

LIEUTENANT COLONEL THOMAS N. CHAPMAN

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AIR UNIVERSITY
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

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AIR WAR COLLEGE

AIR UNIVERSITY

A STRATEGIC WARFIGHTING STUDY OF THE CIVIL WAR

by

Thomas N. Chapman

Lt Colonel, USAF

A DEFENSE ANALYTICAL STUDY SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY

IN

FULFILLMENT OF THE CURRICULUM

REQUIREMENT

Advisor: Dr. Howard M. Hensel

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

May 1990

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TITLE: A Strategic Warfighting Study of the Civil War AUTHOR:
Thomas N. Chapman, Lieutenant Colonel, USAF

The American Civil War is a superb warfighting study. Generally considered a turning point in the history of warfare, many of the traditional Napoleonic principles of war were discarded by Civil War generals and replaced with strategy and tactics still valid to the warrior of 1990. For example, the maneuver and speed of turning movements replaced Napoleonic frontal assaults while the advantage of the tactical defensive was repeatedly validated.

This study analyzes four key campaigns in the Civil War to include Chancellorsville, the Peninsular Campaign, Chickamauga, and Vicksburg to determine what principles of war proved successful for the victor and, equally important, what mistakes proved disastrous for the loser. It is through the lessons of history that each generation learns what brings success or failure to the field of battle.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lieutenant Colonel Thomas N. Chapman (M.B.A., University of Texas at Austin) is an Administrative Officer who has served in a variety of jobs in his career. From a Student Training Squadron Commander at his first assignment to his last position where he was the Chief of Protocol for Tactical Air Command, his billets have covered the spectrum of the Administration career field. He served with the 388th Tactical Fighter Wing at Korat RTAFB, Thailand in 1972-73 where he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal. Colonel Chapman is a 1984 graduate of Air Command and Staff College.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

All great captains have accomplished great things only by conforming to the rules and natural principles of the art of war. That is to say, by the nicety of their combinations and the reasoned relation of means to ends, and of efforts to obstacles. Whatever may have been the audacity of their enterprises and the extent of their success, they succeeded only by conforming to rules and principles.

Napoleon in Maxim One-Hundred Twelve

The American Civil War is a superb warfighting study. Fellow countrymen, divided by allegiances, fought to sustain very differing social systems. They were led by general officers who applied the traditional principles of objective, offensive, concentration, economy of force, mobility, surprise, security, and simplicity in contrasting styles. Leading Civil War generals like Lee, Grant, McClellan, Jackson, Hooker, Longstreet, Meade, were all products of the West Point theory of war. Having fought side by side throughout their careers, they were forced to campaign against former comrades and close friends throughout the Civil War.

Campaigns were waged by opposing commanders who understood their opposition's personal warfighting philosophy

of strategy and tactics and, more importantly, their tendencies under the stress of combat. Robert E. Lee repeatedly capitalized on his personal knowledge of George B. McClellan during the Peninsular Campaign, and on Hooker during the Battle of Chancellorsville.

It was the basic familiarity between forces and commonality of backgrounds that make the Civil War a productive study for all students of warfare. This is a warfighting paper. It's purpose is to show how traditional principles of war were observed, or disregarded, by Northern and Southern commanders. Specifically, this study will analyze and assess Hooker's disaster at Chancellorsville, McClellan's failed Peninsular Campaign against Lee, Rosencrans' failure at the Battle of Chickamauga, and finally, Grant's successful turning maneuver at Vicksburg. The magnificent maneuvers of Lee at Chancellorsville, the boldness of Grant at Vicksburg, and the poor demonstration of offense by McClellan during the Peninsular Campaign speak loudly to our 1990's combat leaders. It is through these lessons of history that each generation learns what brings success or failure to the field of battle.

CHAPTER II

THE BATTLE OF CHANCELLORSVILLE

The study of the Union defeat at Chancellorsville is a study of hesitancy in the face of opportunity, solid strategy that was poorly executed, cunning deceit, and contrasting leadership styles. Much of the controversy and 'lessons learned' of Chancellorsville center around the actions of Maj Gen Joseph L. 'Fightin Joe' Hooker, the Commander of the Army of the Potomac.

Maj Gen Hooker entered the Army from West Point in 1837 as an artillery officer. Following assignments in Florida during the Seminole War, participation in the Mexican War, and a personal confrontation with Maj Gen Winfield Scott, he resigned his commission in 1853 to become a California farmer. With the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, he repeatedly offered to return to active duty. Equally often, his request was disapproved. Unpopular with his West Point classmates, his ambitious reputation and disagreeable personality were only exceeded by his recognized courage as a combat leader. Therefore, he was eventually appointed as a Brigadier General by the President and given a Command. (8:131)

Hooker's outstanding service, combined with Lincoln's general frustration with his general officer corp, led to

advancement and ultimate command of the Army of the Potomac in January of 1863. Hooker inherited an army in chaos. Soundly defeated at Fredericksburg, poor morale and a need for reorganization characterized his command. Additionally, Hooker, as Burnside before him, was pushed by the Administration to take the offensive as soon as possible. To his credit, Hooker restored a degree of confidence and enthusiasm in preparation for the spring offensive. He rebuilt his general officer staff and satisfied many of the troop's gripes of Army life.

Lee, on the other hand, was near a high-mark of the war for his Army. Although outnumbered, Lee had defeated Maj Gen Burnside at Fredericksburg, and now held a strong position among the bluffs overlooking the Rappahannock River as it wound through Fredericksburg. Morale was strong throughout his command, notwithstanding the high cost in life of the Fredericksburg victory. More importantly, he had superb subordinates who had become accustomed to his thinking during the past year. Stonewall Jackson, Jubal Early, A.P. Hill, and Jeb Stuart were aggressive to the man, and were valuable assets to Lee. (8:133)

Lee was increasingly unsure whether he could stop a strong attack from his position in Fredericksburg. Longstreet had been dispatched to Suffolk to gather provisions, leaving Lee's 60,000 to face Hooker's 120,000. It was a typical scenario for Lee.... his leaner, meaner, tougher fighting and better lead forces were outnumbered, outgunned, and outsupplied by the Army

of the Potomac. Stuart's cavalry, covering both flanks, was increasingly important as an intelligence network for Lee. (8:134)

Hooker, on the other hand, intended to take the offensive in the spring of 1863, but with no intention of frontally assaulting Lee as Burnside had previously done. His plan was to draw Lee out of his defenses by maneuver, forcing an open battle, thereby eliminating Lee's tactical defensive advantage at Fredericksburg. This would make the contrasting size in forces an advantage for the North. Hooker intended to cross the majority of his troops on the Rappahannock River north of Fredericksburg, accomplishing a turning maneuver on Lee's rear approximately seven miles west of Lee's position in Fredericksburg.

Using two tactical maneuvers, the first being deceptive in nature, he hoped to ease the major effort of turning Lee's left flank. First, General John Sedgwick was to demonstrate across the river below Fredericksburg with two corps, threatening Lee's right flank. The second was a cavalry crossing of the Rappahannock north of Fredericksburg at Kellys' Ford. Led by Brig Gen George Stoneman, this 12,000 strong cavalry division would deploy two weeks prior to the movement of the main force at Fredericksburg, striking at Lee's railroads leading from Richmond to Fredericksburg. Stopping the flow of reinforcements was Stoneman's goal.

Unfortunately, both diverting maneuvers were failures.

Hooker had initially ordered Sedgwick to demonstrate south of Fredericksburg, but not attack. Then changing his mind, he ordered an attack if success seemed likely. Hooker's orders were reversed during dispatch and Sedgwick, thoroughly confused, decided to limit his action to a demonstration. Lee was not deceived by Sedgwick. He continued to believe that "...if a real attempt is made to cross the river, it will be above Fredericksburg." (8:134) Most likely, Hooker made a tactical mistake when Sedgwick did not achieve a victory over Jackson's troops south of Fredericksburg. This violation of the principle of offense significantly compromised the principle of surprise for the remainder of the campaign.

Stoneman's mission was equally doomed. He encountered several days of heavy rain, stopping his maneuver at the upper Rappahannock fords. Stoneman's expedition eventually crossed as planned and managed to inflict serious damage on Confederate rails and property. However, they failed to stop the majority of Lee's forces around Richmond from moving forward as reinforcements. (9:270)

Hooker's forces began their main crossing on 29 April as scheduled. Each corp crossed, without opposition, at either Kelly's Ford, Ely's Ford, or Germana Ford. It's interesting that Jeb Stuart spotted parts of two corps crossing Germana's Ford and was able to confirm Lee's earlier suspicions of Hooker's intent. On 30 April, Hooker completed the aggressive maneuver and found himself sitting on Lee's rear and left flank

at Chancellorsville. While Lee had never been fooled by Sedgwick, he, nevertheless had been successfully turned. To this point, Hooker had overcome bad weather for Stoneman and poor judgment with Sedgwick.

Hooker then violated the principles of offensive and maneuver. Even though his troops were concentrated, his site at Chancellorsville secured, and his cavalry running amok behind enemy lines, he did nothing. The order to his staff on 30 April read... the General directs that no advance from Chancellorsville be made...(8:135) His senior staff could not believe Hooker's hesitation. Morale among the troops, which had been skyhigh since out maneuvering Lee, fell precipitously. The fruits of their labor were rapidly slipping away, awaiting Lee's typically aggressive moves.

Lee wasted little time in responding. His plan was even bolder than Hooker's. He ordered Generals Anderson and McLaws to march toward Chancellorsville and hold Hooker in place until Stonewall Jackson could be brought up from his location at Hamilton's Crossing to support them. Jubal Early's division of 9,000 was left at Marye's Hill in Fredericksburg as a pinning force on Sedgwick's corp. Lee was aggressively splitting his army before the enemy and would split it again to allow for the successful attack on Hooker's forces. Lee's use of the principle of maneuver, surprise, and economy of force were clearly his keys to success in this campaign.

Hooker began to move eastward on 1 May, heading directly

for Jackson's and McLaw's forces. Skirmishes ensued and Hooker appeared to have the upper hand with his superior numbers. Unfortunately for the North, Hooker suddenly lost his nerve and ordered a retreat back to Chancellorsville. No one understands why Hooker issued this order in the face of an enemy he was defeating. Regardless, this violation of the principle of the offensive allowed the aggressive Lee additional time to mass his troops, secure his position, and plan his future moves.

Lee, unsure of Hooker's motive for retreating to Chancellorsville, ruled out a frontal assault as futile. "It was evident," he says, "that a direct attack upon the enemy would be attended with great difficulty and loss in view of the strength of his position and his superiority of numbers." (1:77) Stuart then convinced Lee that Hooker's right flank was exposed. He insisted that Jackson, with him screening, could successfully turn Hooker's forces. Lee agreed and again split his forces before the enemy and commenced a turning maneuver on Hooker.

Jackson began his maneuver early on 2 May. Quickly his forces were observed by one of Hooker's division commanders as he moved away from the front. Hooker briefly considered the potential of a turning maneuver, but quickly dismissed that idea. Instead, he read Jackson's movement as a retreat and countered with an attack by Sedgwick upon Marye's Heights at Fredericksburg. (8:138)

About 1600 hours on 2 May, Jackson reached a point on

Orange Turnpike west of Hooker's right flank. Following a difficult deployment of his troops amongst the underbrush and thickets of the Wilderness region he was ready to attack the unsuspecting Union. Lee and Jackson had been brilliant at using the principles of economy of effort, mobility, and surprise. Now the principle of the offensive would be used.

At approximately 1800 hours, the attack order came from Jackson upon General O.O. Howard's unsuspecting troops of the XI Corp. Howard had been warned at noon that an attack from the west was slightly possible. Howard scoffed, believing the Wilderness thicket to be virtually impenetrable. He and Hooker continued to disbelieve even after Howard's pickets reported seeing troop formations to their west.(8:140) Jackson's attack shocked and terrorized Howard's forces. Those few Union soldiers who attempted to stand and fight were easily overcome. Most simply broke and ran in disorder and panic. As Lee later said," the enemy made a stand at a line of breastworks across the road at the house of Melzie Chancellor, but the troops of Rodes and Colston dashed over the entrenchments together and the flight and pursuit were resumed and continued until our advance was arrested by the abatis in front of the line of works near the central position at Chancellorsville."(1:77)

Darkness and the speed with which Jackson's troops had moved created enough disarray that the advance was ultimately stalled by the Union forces. Counterattack by the Union forces was now a threat to Lee. With numbers overwhelmingly in his

favor, Hooker again lost his nerve and violated the principle of the offensive. No counterattack order was given.

As the firing ceased for the evening, a tragedy occurred. Jackson, on a reconnaissance ride toward the enemy lines was mistaken for the enemy and shot by his own men. The volley of fire from the Southern troops was returned by the nearby Federals, hitting Jackson's next in command, A.P. Hill. While Hill recovered from his wounds, Jackson didn't. This great warrior died within days following the shooting.

As the morning of 3 May dawned, Hooker still had Lee's forces divided three ways and controlled the valuable Hazel Grove location. The open ground of Hazel Grove provided the salient point from which Hooker could have launched a counterattack. Instead, he ordered Sickles to withdraw this tactically important position. Jeb Stuart quickly moved in and seized Hazel Grove. Ironically, it was an artillery barrage from Hazel Grove that would injure Hooker at his headquarters at Chancellorsville.

Lee's forces pressed forward with a furious attack as the principle of the offensive was successfully applied. The injured Hooker, treated by some accounts with brandy during the battle, ordered a retreat northward to the Rappahannock. The disheartened Union troops were pushed hard by Stuart on the right and Anderson on the left. By 1000 hours on the 3rd, Lee's forces met at Chancellorsville and occupied Hooker's Headquarters.

Meanwhile, Sedgwick's 27,000 men had been ordered by Hooker to advance on Early's holding force at Fredericksburg on the previous evening. Sedgwick successfully drove Jubal Early from Marye's Heights and moved toward Lee's rear. Lee countered with a daring tactical move. Using the principle of the offensive and economy of force, he divided his divisions, leaving only 20,000 to frontally check Hooker's 60,000. The majority of his forces were turned eastward to face Sedgwick. A desperate battle ensued at Old Salem Church just 3 miles east of Chancellorsville. Sedgwick was soundly defeated and retreated northward to the Rappahannock.

Extraordinarily, Hooker forfeited his last chance for success at Chancellorsville. Had he attacked Lee's holding force, he, undoubtedly would have pushed forward and relieved the pressure on Sedgwick. He did nothing. In the words of one of Lee's commanding officers, "so extraordinary a situation has seldom been seen in war,...an army of 60,000 men, strongly fortified, was held in check for six-and-thirty hours by 20,000, while not seven miles away raged a battle on which the whole fate of the campaign depended."(1:79)

This final blow to Hooker's forces brought the end to the Chancellorsville campaign. As Lee prepared to attack on 6 May, he discovered that Hooker had moved his entire force north of the Rappahannock River into retreat.

Assessment

Most military strategists would agree that a concentration of superior combat power at the point where the enemy least expects attack will hasten victory. This basic principle was successfully employed by Lee at Chancellorsville. Using the principles of surprise, maneuver, and offense he clearly outdueled 'Fightin Joe' Hooker.

As the study of Chancellorsville shows, Hooker devised an outstanding plan. His turning maneuver, supported by a calvary raid into Lee's interior lines, and the feint by Sedgwick at Fredericksburg were tactically sound. Even a halfhearted demonstration by Sedgwick coupled with bad weather for Stoneman still gave the bold plan opportunity. However, Hooker's apparent loss of nerve once he turned Lee in the Wilderness allowed Lee to execute an even bolder Clausewitzian counter-turn. "In such a battle," Clausewitz explained, "the attacker's turning movement, intended to give his attack a better chance and his victory a greater scale, is countered by a subordinate turning movement, which is aimed at that part of the enemy's force that has executed the original envelopment."(6:254)

Lee clearly unnerved the normally courageous Hooker. We'll never know why Hooker acted as he did, only what cruel fate awaits combatants who disregard sound warfighting principles.

CHAPTER III

PENINSULAR CAMPAIGN

The Peninsular Campaign offers the 1990's warrior an opportunity to study one of the most colorful and controversial military leaders of the Civil War. Maj Gen George B. McClellan, dashing, arrogant, and full of promise, bitterly disappointed a President who desperately sought victory to save flagging Union morale. McClellan's failures during the Peninsular Campaign can be traced directly to poor use of the principles of war, indecision in the face of the enemy, and, most likely, Lincoln's obsession with the security of Washington DC.

General-in-Chief of the United States Army Winfield Scott, had proposed his 'anaconda plan' as a military strategy for ending the war. It was a gentle approach to dealing with the South in keeping with the President's wishes. After considerable debate within the government, Scott's plan was accepted. Essentially, it was a fourfold strangulation policy to include: (1) blockading of the Atlantic and Gulf ports, (2) controlling the Mississippi River thereby dividing the Confederacy, (3) establishing posts along the Mississippi to ensure the Union controlled the powerful river, and (4) maintaining military posts along the Confederacy's northern border to ensure there was no movement of troops or goods from south to north and vice-versa. (2:7)

General Scott planned only for an army of observation in the Eastern Theater. Their primary job would be immediate security of the Washington DC area. This decision resulted in early military disaster for the Union at the Battle of First Bull Run in July of 1861. As a result, the President initiated operations within the Virginia theater and installed the young, popular George B. McClellan as the Commander of the newly forming Army of the Potomac. McClellan had distinguished himself in the Mexican and Crimean Wars following graduation from West Point at the age of only nineteen. He was credited as being a "realistic, aggressive, and efficient officer who had shown himself to be operationally successful at a time when there were very few proven successes among Union generals."(11:2)

McClellan assumed command on 26 July 1861 and began preparations for a counteroffensive against General Joseph Johnston's Confederate forces who had entrenched themselves at Manassass following their victory in First Bull Run. However, to the frustration of the President, McClellan spent months organizing and training his forces, never moving against Johnston as Lincoln pressured him to do. Instead, McClellan blamed the enemy's overwhelming numbers at Manassass as the reason for his inaction. Fooled by Allan Pinkerton's (his intelligence chief) estimates which doubled the size of Johnston's actual force strength, he was immobilized.(10:3)

A consummate organizer, McClellan did, in fact, create an

army that was well structured and believed in itself. However, the President was unimpressed and increasingly intolerant as McClellan's inactivity dragged into a fourth month. Pressured for an offensive, McClellan eventually rejected a move against the Confederate forces at Manassass and devised his own plan to capture Richmond...known as the Peninsular Campaign.

McClellan would not divulge his plan even to the President. His well-acknowledged arrogance even astonished his supporters. Only a Presidential Order on 31 January 1862 requiring the Army of the Potomac to advance against the opposition at Manassass prompted McClellan to fully discuss details of his strategic plan with the Administration.

Essentially, McClellan's plan was a move by water to Urbanna, Virginia, south of DC and due east of Richmond. This would allow a tactical turn of Johnston's position, threatening the Confederate's communications and the city of Richmond... both the responsibility of Johnston to defend. The turning maneuver might accomplish three things;(1) force Johnston to turn to his rear and fight at a tactical disadvantage,(2) allow McClellan to seize territory between Richmond and DC, or (3) capture Richmond before Johnston could move from Manassass to protect it.

Frankly, McClellan's plan for capturing Richmond made the President uncomfortable. Lincoln was looking for a victory near Washington to bolster his support, and was fearful for the security of the city if McClellan's main force moved to far

south. However, McClellan firmly believed that his strategic plan would be more decisive for the capture of Richmond than a frontal assault on Johnston's entrenched position at Manassass. He also saw little problem with the security of DC. He foresaw that his turning maneuver would force Johnston to fight him. Any attempt by Johnston to move north on DC would endanger his own lines of communication with Richmond.

Slowly and reluctantly, McClellan swayed the President. Finally, on 8 March, 1862, eight months after assuming Command of his army, McClellan received a Presidential Order and begun his first military operation against an opposing force.

A surprising move by Johnston forced an early change to McClellan's strategy. On 9 March, Johnston abruptly abandoned his entrenchments at Manassass and headed south toward the Rappahannock in what appeared to be a defensive move to bolster Richmond. This move ruined McClellan's plan to use Urbanna as base of operations for the tactical turn of Johnston. Instead, Ft. Monroe then became McClellan's new base with a move up the Peninsula between the York and James River. Lincoln, increasingly concerned about DC's security, ordered McClellan to position a strong force at Manassass so the Confederates could not recapture this ground. This was the first of several moves by Lincoln that would whittle away the forces available to McClellan for his Peninsular Campaign.

McClellan arrived on the Peninsula in late March. The Federal Navy's inability to secure the York and James Rivers

compelled McClellan to move his 50,000 troops over land toward Yorktown. In addition, on 3 April the President ordered that General McDowell's Corp be kept in Washington to ensure its safety. This appeared a political move by McClellan's enemies to discredit him. (10:12) He spent the remainder of the campaign attributing his failure to a shortage of troops and lack of support from Washington. Some historians argue that he might not have had the mass he needed for the offensive operation he was attempting. (10:13)

McClellan's initial move toward Yorktown was quickly stymied by Jeb Magruder along the Warwick River. Magruder, realizing he was outnumbered by a factor of 3:1, relied upon tactical deception as a transparent force multiplier. Constantly shifting his units, he was able to deceive McClellan much as Johnston had done at Manassass. McClellan was unwilling to use the principle of mass to his advantage. He would later write that a swollen Warwick River kept him from moving his forces against the Confederates. History, however, leaves us with the impression that Magruder, as Johnston, knew his enemy's conservative nature. McClellan abandoned his offensive operation at the beginning and undertook, instead, a siege operation against Magruder. The timing and tempo of his effort as well as the principle of maneuver were affected. The delay allowed Johnston to move south in a position astride Magruder on the Warwick. This eliminated McClellan's opportunity to turn Johnston. Instead, he now frontally faced

him far south of Richmond.

Lee, Johnston, and Magruder seemed to find McClellan's inaction confounding, if not amusing. Lee would say, "no one but McClellan could have hesitated to attack." (10:14) Regardless, the siege operation ended on 3 May when the Confederates withdrew northward from the Warwick. They felt it pointless to maintain a position that could be overrun at any time by a Northern attack.

As McClellan advanced up the Peninsula, he clashed with the rear guard of the retreating Confederates on 5 May, reaching the Chickahominy River on 17 May. McClellan made a dangerous tactical move and split his forces between the north and south sides of the river. Two of his five corps were deployed to the south side where the high level water of the Chickahominy made it impossible for the forces to assist each other. McClellan was trying to protect his northern communications base at White House while linking up with McDowell's forces who had just been released to move southward from DC in his support.

Johnston tried to benefit from McClellan's tactical maneuver error, and developed an excellent plan to attack across the full line of McClellan's two corps south of the Chickahominy. Known as the Battle of Fair Oaks, Johnston moved against the two northern corps on 31 May. Poorly organized and rusty from months of inactivity, the Confederates were repulsed. In the process Johnston was wounded. Jefferson Davis

relieved the wounded commander on 1 June 1862 and placed Robert E. Lee in command of the Army of Northern Virginia.

McClellan could have counterattacked the Southern forces, most likely annihilating that portion of the Confederate army. Disregarding the principle of offense, mass, and maneuver, and fearful of risking defeat, he hesitated. In response, he consolidated two of the three remaining corps on the southside of the river leaving only Porter's corp alone on the northside.

It's at this point that the actions of Stonewall Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley significantly affected McClellan's Peninsular Campaign. In late March Jackson had attacked General Banks' army at Kernstown in a diversionary battle that prevented Banks from sending reinforcements to McDowell who was massing for a move south to help McClellan. Jackson's smaller force was defeated, but the northern troops who had been deployed to assist McDowell were recalled.

Jackson remained inactive until late April when Lee ordered him to again attack Banks who was attempting to use Fredericksburg as a base of operation against Richmond. As Jackson began to move, Banks assumed wrongly he was headed to Richmond, so a portion of his troops were deployed on to McDowell. Jackson reacted quickly, defeating a portion of the Union army while enroute to attack Banks. Jackson then successfully defeated a Union outpost at Front Royal, prompting Banks to leave Fredericksburg. Engaged by Jackson at

Winchester, he was again defeated and retreated. Jackson, pursuing the defeated Banks, sent panic through Washington. In reaction, Lincoln again recalled McDowell to the north side of the Rappahannock eliminating his usefulness to McClellan. Jackson had superbly blended the principles of economy of force, offense, timing, mobility, and surprise to significantly affect events around Richmond.

Lincoln made every effort to thwart Jackson's further moves. Sending Fremont and McDowell to trap Jackson, he promptly retreated toward Winchester. Finally forced into battle, Jackson's forces defeated Fremont and McDowell on successive days at Cross Keys and Port Republic. Both Union forces retreated, giving Jackson the advantage of interior lines as he moved to link with Lee at Richmond.(1:32)

Even as Jackson was completing his brilliant campaign in the valley, Lee was grappling with his next move. McClellan, likewise, was deciding the best approach to move on Richmond from his base along the Chickahominy. He logically realized that attacking Richmond would be easiest from the south side of the Chickahominy, and kept the majority of his force there. However, he felt compelled to keep Porter's corp on the north side because of his northern supply base at White House.

On 12 June, Lee sent Stuart's calvary to reconnoiter the Federal right flank. Stuart reported to Lee that he found it unprotected. Lee, using mass, maneuver, and surprise, decided to target Porter's isolated corp on the right flank and force

McClellan to retreat down the Peninsula to protect his supply base. Lee summoned Jackson from the Valley for a conference with his division commanders, A.P. Hill, D.H. Hill, and Longstreet. Lee made a daring decision. Deciding to attack McClellan's right wing (Porter) with a 2:1 advantage, Magruder and Huger's 30,000 were left on the south side of the river to hold McClellan's 70,000. Once defeated and in retreat, Lee hoped to pursue and destroy McClellan's army.

Lee's plan was bold and risky. Dividing his army and leaving only a small force to face the bulk of McClellan's army on the south side of the river was subjecting Richmond to possible attack. Had McClellan realized how small a force was before him, he could have easily overrun them taking Richmond uncontested. (10:19) One may only speculate that Lee was gambling on the cautious consistency of his opponent.

Lee issued his plan of attack on the 24th of June. Unfortunately, the usually bold Jackson kept the plan from succeeding. Jackson inexplicably settled into a bivouac on the day of the attack. As a result, A.P. Hill, who was to coordinate his attack with Jackson, went into the Battle of Mechanicsville alone. The campaign proved disastrous for the Confederates. Soundly defeating the Southern forces, Porter was able to withdraw to the south side and link with the remainder of the Union army. McClellan, having defeated Lee, and facing a smaller force, astounded his staff by withdrawing his entire army to the James River. With superior mass, McClellan could

have moved on Richmond or faced Lee in a showdown. He did neither. McClellan again believed he faced an enemy of over 200,000.(10:20) His final chance for victory on the Peninsula was gone.

As McClellan retreated toward Harrison's Landing on the James(southeast of Richmond) his corps were attacked by flank and in the rear during a series of engagements known as the Seven Days' Battle, lasting until 1 July. The initial attack came at Gaine's Mill where Porter's corp had been redeployed. While the Union's lines were broken by a Confederate attack on the 27th, McClellan still occupied a defensively strong position on the southside of the James River with the advantage of interior lines. Had sufficient troops been sent to Porter, he might have countered and defeated Lee. McClellan then could have moved against Magruder and Richmond. However, Gaines's Mill remained a defeat and McClellan continued his retreat.

As McClellan approached the James on 28 June, Magruder made an attack on his rear at Savage Station followed on the 30th by a rear guard attack at Frayser's Farm. This prompted panicky dispatches by McClellan to Washington. "Another day of desperate fighting. We are hard pressed by superior numbers....You must send us very large reinforcements by way of Fortress Monroe, and they must come promptly....If none of us escape we shall at least have done honor to the country...."(10:40)

Malvern Hill, the last of the Seven Days' Battles,

occurred on 1 July. McClellan had retreated to a wide mound called Malvern Hill, adjacent to the James River. Lee, trying hard to destroy the Union army, decided to frontally assault McClellan. Unable to mass his forces and artillery firepower, Lee was repulsed by a Union army led by General Porter.(8:52) This allowed the Union army to complete their retreat to Harrison's Landing, and ended the Peninsular Campaign.

Assessment

McClellan's actions on the Peninsula cost the Union army 20% of its forces while inflicting a 30% casualty rate upon Lee's army. By the criteria of attrition, McClellan's strategy had worked. Although he failed at capturing Richmond as he retreated south to the James no artillery was left behind and he returned very little of his acquired land. Lincoln, on the other hand, felt that McClellan's lack of success had damaged northern public morale more than all of the Western successes could counter balance. McClellan achieved neither a political victory for Lincoln nor a military one for the Army.

Truthfully, Lee never defeated McClellan's army. Yet, his bold use of the principles of offense, surprise, maneuver, and economy of force saved Richmond from capture. He repeatedly thrust superior combat power against McClellan's weakest point. His warfighting approach confused and panicked McClellan.

History generally lays the failure of the Peninsular

Campaign at McClellan's feet. In summary, we saw a general easily deceived by Jackson, Johnston, and Lee. Deathly afraid of defeat, he repeatedly criticized the Lincoln Administration for sending him to battle with significantly inferior numbers. In fact, he outnumbered the Confederate forces throughout the campaign, sometimes 2:1. As a result, McClellan refused to use his offensive capability and the advantage of maneuver. The stalemate along the Warwick River, his inability to counterattack following the Confederate defeats at Fair Oaks, Mechanicsville, and some say, Malvern Hill were the most damaging of his decisions. In each of these instances, he shied from attacking a smaller force and marching onto his Richmond objective. General Joe Hooker in the Report of the Committee as recorded in journals of the time insisted that the Union forces could have moved in to Richmond by the second day following the Battle of Williamsburg. He thought also that after the Battles of Fair Oaks or Malvern Hill a march upon Richmond would have succeeded. When asked to what he attributed the failure of the Peninsular Campaign, Joe Hooker said, "I do not hesitate to say that it is to be attributed to the want of generalship on the part of our commander." (9:128)

CHAPTER IV

BATTLE OF CHICKAMAUGA

The Battle of Chickamauga in September of 1863 is remembered more for its endless series of tactical moves, missed communications, and clashing personalities than for its strategic importance to the Southern victors. However, it provided a Confederate boost in morale following devastating losses at Vicksburg and Gettysburg.

Chattanooga, Tennessee held strategic importance for both sides. Surrounded by mountains, dense woods, and the Tennessee River, it was the center of a critical rail network. To the northeast, rail lines through Chattanooga connected it with Knoxville and Lynchburg, Virginia. Northwest rail lines connected it with central Tennessee. Other rails connected the city with northern Alabama and Atlanta.

Most observers saw the terrain surrounding Chattanooga as a plus for the defender. However, the defender of the city in August of 1863, Maj Gen Braxton Bragg, Commander of the Confederate Army of Tennessee, viewed it more as a protective barrier, shielding Maj Gen William Rosencrans' Army of the

Cumberland from view. Bragg, unpopular with his staff and troops and prone to retreat from battle quickly, was content to wait out the next move of his enemy.

Rosencrans, not known for his boldness either, was barraged by complaints from General Halleck about his lack of aggressiveness toward Chattanooga. Undeterred by the criticism, he developed a plan of deceit to convince Bragg that his right flank was being turned.

Using the principles of maneuver, mobility, and surprise, Rosencrans outmaneuvered his adversary and captured Chattanooga without battle. Rosencrans marched his troops through the Cumberland Mountains, giving all indications that he was sweeping left and north of Chattanooga. In addition, Maj Gen Burnside had been deployed northeast of Chattanooga, at Knoxville, in what appeared to be a supporting army. Rosencrans successfully feigned a link-up between these two armies. The terrain north of Chattanooga favored this type of maneuver and Bragg bought the deceit. The Federals repeatedly appeared upstream, simulated building of pontoons, pounded on empty barrels to indicate boat building, and even shelled the city from the north. (11:9) Yet, all the while, the majority of the army was massing southwest of the city on Bragg's left.

Bragg was so confident of an attack from the north, that he redeployed several corps to meet a combined assault by Rosencrans and Burnside as they came across the Tennessee. However, on 31 August, he learned from an informer that a large

Union force had crossed the river at Caperton's Ferry, southeast of Chattanooga. (8:176) Bragg's cavalry was dispatched and confirmed the report. However, it was too late to redeploy. Rosencran's brilliant movement behind the Raccoon-Sand Mountain Range, south of Chattanooga, had successfully turned Bragg's forces in Chattanooga. Knowing that an attack would cut his interior lines with Atlanta, Bragg had no choice but to retreat his forces from Chattanooga.

Rosencrans, overconfident from his stunning tactical maneuvers, concluded that Bragg's retreat from Chattanooga was actually a withdrawal to Atlanta. Because of poor intelligence, he was wrong. Rosencran's would trade places with Bragg and be the one now deceived. As Hattaway and Jones described Bragg, "he would give an uncharacteristically superior performance as he helped to further the notion of a demoralized withdrawal" (7:448) He planted sham deserters into Union hands who spread stories of mass desertions and low morale among Confederate forces. All the while, he was massing his army with reinforcements from Generals Johnston and Longstreet.

A Rosencrans' communication of 12 September alerted Washington to potential problems. Becoming nervous about his exposed right flank, he declared its vulnerability if Bragg chose to move toward the Tennessee River via better roads. Halleck responded by ordering Grant at Vicksburg and Burnside at Knoxville to reinforce Chattanooga. Two days later the

danger was confirmed as intelligence reports showed Confederate forces moving south through the Carolinas. While not all of Longstreet's reinforcements would reach Chickamauga in time, Bragg still outnumbered the Union's 60,000. However, Rosencrans enjoyed the position of the tactical defensive which proved important as the Battle Chickamauga proceeded.

Bragg's first effort came in McLemore's Cove between Missionary Ridge on the west and Pigeon Mountain on the east. The usually conservative Rosencrans had impetuously moved so far south of Chattanooga that he was desperately extended on the right. His wings were three or four days marches apart... a poor use of the principles of mobility and security. General Thomas' corp was in the center of Lookout Valley southeast of Chattanooga. Unwittingly, he allowed the leading division to move toward Lafayette, through McLemore's Cove. His objective, as ordered by Rosencrans, was to proceed on this route to pursue Bragg into northern Georgia. Instead, he marched into a concentration of Bragg's forces. Initially undetected by Thomas, Bragg ordered an attack on the unsuspecting troops in McLemore's Cove. However, the attack never came as Bragg's command authority was continually challenged. The Confederate commander simply disobeyed the attack order, allowing the Union forces under General Negley to retreat to friendlier surroundings.

Rosencrans realized he was in serious trouble if Bragg attacked. His forces were widely scattered throughout the

mountains. However, Bragg delayed until most of Longstreet's troops arrived giving Rosencrans four critical days to concentrate. This delay violated the principle of timing, surprise, and maneuver, and damaged his tactical offensive to retake Chattanooga.

Bragg's plan to attack Rosencrans' left flank, roll up the Chickamauga River, and position his army between the Union forces and Chattanooga, was further delayed because his troops were improperly positioned and the location of the enemy was unclear. For example, Bragg's objective was to frontally assault Maj Gen Crittendon's corp, whose left flank extended much further north than Bragg thought. "Impressive orders, faulty intelligence, defective troop positions, and poor timing produced another stillborn plan. Lieutenant General D.H. Hill later criticized Bragg saying his poor generalship was caused by a lack of knowledge of the situation and a lack of personal supervision of the execution of his orders." (8:177) Unity of command clearly seemed Bragg's Achilles heel.

Throughout the night of 18 September, Rosencrans was shifting his army north in response to Bragg's moves. Convinced that Bragg was maneuvering to turn his left, he hoped the northward move would provide sufficient concentration to keep Bragg from separating his army from Chattanooga.

On the morning of 19 September, General Thomas ordered General Brannan's division to move against an isolated Confederate division to his east. This commenced the Battle of

Chickamauga. Once engaged, Brannan found himself combating two divisions, one being calvary. The seesaw battle lasted all day with little form and even less conclusiveness. Bragg shifted his forces to his north flanks and Rosencrans responded by shifting troops to strengthen Thomas. The battle concluded as a standoff at sunset with Bragg vowing to press an attack at dawn on the 20th. He still intended to cut between Rosencrans and Chattanooga, driving the Federals into a tenuous position in McLemore's Cove.

Throughout the night, the Federals constructed breastworks to protect their defensive positions. Bragg, in turn, reorganized his army, placing Polk in charge of the right wing and Longstreet in charge of the left. This, he hoped, would lead to better coordination. Actually, it created further problems. Unhappy with D.H. Hill, he demoted him from command, yet failed to inform him.

As the second day opened, Rosencrans remained on the tactical defensive, while Bragg continued to press on the offensive. Bragg planned to lead with an attack on the right with Polk commanding Hill's old divisions. The attack would move down the line until Longstreet would attack on the left. Hill, who had not been apprised of his demotion, claimed never to have received orders to move his two(now Polk's) divisions into combat. As a result, the attack on the left to have begun at 0600 hours did not commence until 1000 hours. By this time, Bragg's advantage of maneuver and surprise had vanished.

Thomas, upon whom the delayed attack was made, repulsed it with reinforcements from the right flank. Polk and A.P. Hill had wanted to encircle Thomas, yet attacked in succession instead of en masse. This disregard for mobility and maneuver when engaging a force protected by breastworks and the advantage of the tactical defensive caused the failure.

At about 1030 hours, a courier reported to Rosencrans that a significant gap had developed between Woods and Reynolds' divisions, providing an opening in the center of his army. In fact, the courier was unable to see Brannann's division because of the density of the woods.

Rosencrans should have consulted with his Chief of Staff, Brig Gen James Garfield, who knew the correct location of Brannan's division. He did not. Instead, he dictated an order directing Woods division to move immediately to his left, closing on Reynolds as soon as possible. To do this, Woods had to pull back, move behind Brannan to his left and approach Reynolds from the rear. This ridiculous order was not challenged by Wood, undoubtedly fearing the rath of Rosencrans if he disobeyed. His left flank should never have been exposed without positive proof of Brannan's location. McCook's division, to Wood's right, did his best to plug the hole. In the fog of war, Rosencrans had created a gap on his line while trying to plug another perceived one. This disastrous tactical move was the determining factor in the Battle of Chickamauga.

As fate happened, the quarter mile gap was penetrated

immediately as Longstreet opened his massed attack on the left at 1100 hours. Longstreet, using superior mass, poured three divisions through the opening. The right wing of the Union army disintegrated into chaos, separating Rosencrans and the entire headquarters from his left flank. The advance and breakthrough of the divisions was later described, "on they rushed, shouting, yelling, running over batteries, capturing trains, taking prisoners, seizing the headquarters of the commander..."(11:34) This one maneuver resulted in the capture of 8,000 men, 15,000 small arms, and 51 pieces of artillery.(7:451)

Longstreet disregarded his original order to turn left once he broke through the Union front. Wanting to take further advantage of the Union mistake, Longstreet turned right against Thomas trying to roll up the Union line. His deep attack was a tactical marvel. However, Bragg failed to follow-up with either fresh troops for Longstreet or a renewed attack on the left, pinching Thomas. It's appears neither Longstreet nor Thomas fully knew of the extent of the Union disaster. Therefore, General Thomas was able to bravely sustain his position. Pulling together the remnants of his right wing, he fought Longstreet with determination and grit. The afternoon's fighting demonstrated the advantage that tactical defense has over the offense. Eventually defeated and forced to retreat from the field after dark, the valiant Thomas would forever be known as the "Rock of Chickamauga".(11:34)

Assessment

The victory at Chickamauga may have prolonged the Confederacy's life an additional year. Yet, we're shown no overall strategic brilliance by either the victor, Bragg, or the loser, Rosencrans. For example, Rosencrans' deceit and maneuver to capture Chattanooga without a battle was masterful. Bragg could hardly be faulted for believing that Rosencrans would link with Burnside from the north and attack down through the valley that ran east and west along the Tennessee River. The natural terrain coupled with the massing of available troops made this tactic logical.

Rosencrans followed this Lee-like boldness and maneuver with poor tactical performance once he captured Chattanooga. Spreading his troops too thin along a line south of the city, he invited an attack from Bragg. This was followed by a lack of support from the armies of Burnside and Grant. Both were idle and were ordered to Rosencrans' assistance. Neither supported as they should.

Unfortunately for the South, Bragg showed little sustained brilliance. He appears one of the poorest leaders of the war. He displayed poor unity of command and his authority seemed constantly threatened. As Grant later said of him, "Bragg was a remarkably intelligent, and well-informed man, professionally and otherwise.... But he was possessed of an irascible temper.

and was naturally disputatious..."(11:47) His staff did not support him, nor did he they. Transferring D.H. Hill's command without informing him, led to a communication breakdown that stymied the order of Confederate battle on 20 September. His commanders repeatedly failed to obey him. His response was outbursts of temper and threats of court-martial as he hurled at Hill and Hindman following their poor performance at McLemore's Cove.

Ultimately, the defeat at Chickamauga must lie with Rosencrans' tactical performance. Since the battle was fought in the woods with communications naturally poor, he needed to concentrate on his command authority. He earlier had placed his headquarters far from the action. This proved fatal. The weakened right allowing Longstreet to pierce deep and wide was clearly Rosencrans' fault. If all had gone well, Longstreet's superior mass may still have overpowered McCook and Wood. Yet, had the gap not occurred, it would have been harder for Longstreet to roll up the Federal line. Thomas' tactical defensive position and personal tenacity may have stopped Longstreet.

Unfortunately for Rosencrans, the defeat at Chickamauga relegated him to a secondary role for the remainder of the war. Unfair as it may be, Rosencrans would forever be known as the "general of one mistake". (11:44)

CHAPTER V

THE FALL OF VICKSBURG

Confederate forces under the command of Maj Gen John C. Pemberton unconditionally surrendered to Maj Gen US Grant and the Army of the Tennessee on the 4th of July 1863, ending seven weeks of siege action and costing the Confederates control of the Western theater. However, the battle for Vicksburg had extended over a period of nearly of fifteen months, from May 1862 to July 1863, forming a remarkable chapter in Civil War history.

Union failures began in June of 1862 with a thwarted naval attack on Vicksburg. This was followed by the defeat of Sherman at Chickasaw Bayou in December and the Union efforts to reach the rear of the Confederate forces by the Yazoo Pass, the Lake Provciever Canal, and the Sunflower Bayou. The final and most stunning chapter of the Battle of Vicksburg began on 30 April with Grant's landing at Bruinsburg. From that day until 4 July we see the tactical brilliance, boldness, and stubbornness of a general that would finally emerge as the one capable to lead the Union states to victory.

Conquest of the Mississippi Valley became Lincoln and

Halleck's highest priority, well above the importance of Virginia. Failures by the Army of the Potomac against Lee had apparently sapped the President's enthusiasm for capturing Richmond or soundly defeating the Army of Northern Virginia. As Halleck said, "in my opinion the opening of the Mississippi River will be to us of more advantage than the capture of forty Richmonds." (2:140)

Grant had devised several plans for attacking Vicksburg, each repulsed by the Confederates or thrown out as unworkable. Finally, he resorted to a maneuver that would tactically turn the Confederate forces south of Vicksburg. Grant decided to march his forces southward into Louisiana through swampland generally considered impassable. Once below Vicksburg, he would load troops on transports and cross to the eastern shore. His need for naval support to deceive the Vicksburg defenders during his turning maneuver came from an enthusiastic Commodore David Porter. Porter's main task was to run empty transports down the Mississippi, past the Confederates by night.

Two of Grant's commanders, McClernand and McPherson began moving their troops southward on 1 April while his third commander, Sherman, remained behind to demonstrate against the heavily defended bluffs at Vicksburg. Grant's troops reached Hard Times on the west side of the Mississippi about 20 April. Porter, in the meantime, had run past Vicksburg twice, each time meeting substantial success with minimal losses. Moving further downstream, he arrived at the Confederate fortified

post of Grand Gulf, exactly on the opposite bank from Grant's two corps. Five hours of bombardment by Porter proved futile, forcing Grant to move further south for his crossing. On 29 April, he loaded his forces onto transports and ferried his entire two corps safely to Bruinsburg on the eastern side of the Mississippi. Using tactical deceit and superb mobility and maneuver, Grant had boldly turned Pemberton's forces defending Vicksburg.

Grant proceeded northward to capture Port Gibson on 1 May. Unimportant from a tactical perspective, it still allowed Grant to mass his forces for his march further inland. His next objective, a few miles north, was Grand Gulf. The Confederates, badly outnumbered, quickly retreated. Grant now had his bridgehead and forward supply base. This location also provided a link-up with Sherman's corp who had traveled over the same path as the rest of the forces.

Pemberton, unnerved by the rapid turning maneuver of Grant, wired General Joseph Johnston at nearby Jackson for advice. Johnston responded, "if Grant's army crosses, unite all your force to defeat it. Success will give you back what was abandoned to win it." (1:101) Clearly, Johnston intended for the Confederates to leave the fortified positions of Vicksburg and defeat Grant in the location of Pemberton's choosing. Even if defeated, Pemberton could save his army through tactical retreat. In retrospect, this use of the tactical offensive and mobility seemed solid advice. Unfortunately, Jefferson Davis

wired Pemberton and countermanded that guidance," want of transportation of supplies must compel the enemy to seek a junction with his fleet after a few days absence from it..."(1:101) Davis totally disregarded the successes that may be achieved when a bold commander abandons his line of communications and supplies to launch a campaign. Davis evidently had forgotten the successes of Winfield Scott during the Mexican War, as he captured Mexico City without a line of communication or supplies. Pemberton's mind was set. He followed Davis' guidance and settled in to defend Vicksburg.

Grant's next bold move was exactly opposite what Davis had predicted. Grant's plan, to this point, was predicated on the use of Grand Gulf as a staging base. Once McClernand's troops helped General Banks to capture Port Hudson, Banks would then move north to support Grant. However, Grant changed his mind when notified of a one week delay by Banks. He altered his plans believing this delay would allow the Vicksburg defenders to reinforce their strength to a point that even the combination of he and Bank's forces would still not be sufficient for success. Grant decided to operate independent of Banks, cutting loose from his supply and communication lines. Believing his forces could forage off the countryside, he used his supply wagons primarily for ammunition. While foraging would succeed in the fertile land of southern Mississippi, the cutting of his communication lines reduced his turning movement to a raid. As one expert said," he protected

himself against an attack from the rear by leaving himself without a rear to be attacked."(2:143)

Grant was submitting Pemberton to a strong dose of tactical brilliance. The Union leader decided against an attack on Vicksburg, in favor of defending his flank. He was justifiably concerned over the extent of damage that could be done by Johnston's forces at Jackson if he moved his entire forces toward Vicksburg. He decided to use the principles of mobility and maneuver to attack and defeat Johnston's force, first, then turn his attention to Vicksburg. These were unorthodox yet stunning tactics. Additionally, once Jackson's troops were defeated, Grant would be astride the Confederate line of communications that linked Vicksburg and Jackson.

Grant's army advanced in three columns. McPherson took the right wing leading to Jackson. McClernand marched on the left flank using the Big Black River as his protection on the left with Sherman following.

Jefferson Davis disregarded the principle of unity of command, making Pemberton's task of defending Vicksburg even tougher. Davis ordered Johnston to assume control of the Mississippi operation from his location at Jackson.(8:108) Clearly this would be a mistake if the Union split the two forces. Command and control would be almost impossible. This did occur. Pemberton seemed confused during the remainder of the Union campaign, and the entire Vicksburg operation was crippled.

Pemberton was aware of Grant's rapid northeasterly move, but was uncertain of its objective. Therefore, he dispatched a force toward Grant, with instructions to engage his rear and flank, if possible. Pemberton, certain that Grant was swinging east in order to turn him at Vicksburg, deployed three divisions to a location called Edward's Station, on the rail line between Vicksburg and Jackson.

Grant seized this opportunity to further confuse Pemberton. Using economy of force, security, and deceit, he split his forces, sending McClernand in a more northerly route to reinforce Pemberton's belief that the initial attack would come against Vicksburg. Sherman and McPherson maintained their original path toward Jackson.

On 12 May, Union forces had reached Raymond, a point only a few miles southwest of Jackson. Here they encountered the first of Pemberton's forces. The Confederate commander, believing he was attacking a smaller force attempted to envelop the left flank. Outnumbered 3:1 by the Union forces, the Confederates were forced into retreat after a tough battle. Clearly, Grant's tactics to split McClernand from the rest of the Union forces led Pemberton and his commanders to believe that the engagement at Raymond was against only a small part of Grant's army. Had they known they were pitted against superior numbers, it's doubtful the Confederate attack would have occurred.

Grant again split his forces after the Battle of Raymond.

sending McPherson northerly into Clinton, a town on the Jackson-Vicksburg line. Sherman was ordered directly into Jackson. At this point, Johnston sought Pemberton's help in turning McPherson's rear at Clinton, using the 17,000 troops he'd moved to the rail line only a short distance from Clinton. Pemberton refused his request, suggesting that Johnston abandon Jackson and link their forces southwest of the city.(1:102) It was an absurd suggestion as 25,000 Union troops stood between Pemberton and Johnston. In addition, had Pemberton followed Johnston's request and attacked McPherson's rear at Clinton, a significant portion of Grant's army may have been defeated.

Jackson commenced his attack of Jackson on 14 May. Johnston's 6,000 troops held for a while against Grant's combined corps of 25,000. However, it was futile, and he retreated northward from Jackson in a well-executed maneuver.

Grant was determined to halt any consolidation of the two Confederate forces. Leaving Sherman behind in Jackson with two divisions, he advanced rapidly toward Pemberton's troops on the rail line at Edward's Station between Jackson and Vicksburg. Sherman's task was twofold: (1) to keep the retreating Confederate forces from regrouping and moving against Grant's rear, and (2) destroy Jackson's industry and railroad assets.(2:143) Both he did quite well.

Pemberton, in the meantime, made no effort to unite with Johnston's forces. Instead, he moved south determined to

strike at Grant's lines of communication. Obviously, this would be a phantom effort as Grant had no substantive line of communication. With the Confederate forces in total confusion, Pemberton decided, at Johnston's further urging, to retrace his line of march and move toward a united position north of the Vicksburg-Jackson rail line. Unfortunately for Pemberton, these disorganized maneuvers left his army scattered over the countryside. His efforts to unite with Johnston were thwarted when he encountered the lead element of Grant's forces at Champion's Hill, just south of the rail line. His poor employment of mobility had left him at a disadvantage as he struggled to unite all of his forces to meet Grant. (8:113)

Pemberton was in command of three divisions at Champion's Hill, holding a solid defensive position. Grant attacked about 1030 on 16 May and used maneuver, mass, and mobility to drive the Confederates from their position by nightfall. As General Stevenson, one of Pemberton's division commanders, would report, "the enemy in columns of divisions moved steadily around our left forcing it to change direction to correspond, and this movement was so rapid as to keep my line in constant motion by the left flank. About half past ten...the enemy...attacked Lee and Cummings. The enemy now made a vigorous attack in three lines upon the whole front. They were bravely met...but this could not last..." (1:103) Pemberton was able to retreat his beaten forces westward to the Big Black River and elude a pursuit by Grant. Grant had achieved his

goal....Pemberton and Johnston were left with no hope of joining their forces.

There was one last indignity for Pemberton to endure before he finally retreated into Vicksburg. Reaching Big Black River, Pemberton intended to hold only long enough to allow for the entire retreat of his forces from Champion's Hill. He fashioned makeshift bridges and readied himself for retreat across the river and back into Vicksburg. Unfortunately, he was pursued by a Union army growing in strength and morale. Although his flanks were secured by waterlines on both sides, the Union forces attacked and thoroughly routed Pemberton's troops. Panicked, many could not cross the bridge and became prisoners. Grant was very close to achieving the greatest Union victory in the Western theater.

By nightfall on 18 May, Grant and his forces had reached the outer fortifications of Vicksburg. Side by side were the corps of Sherman, McPherson, and McClernand. Grant, refusing to wait, ordered an attack on Vicksburg on 19 May. Heavily repulsed by the Confederate defenders, Sherman's corp. alone, sustained forty percent casualties.

Grant demonstrated a true disregard for wise warfighting when he ordered another frontal assault following the first disaster. The second assault sustained even greater casualties than before. The Federal loss in the two assaults exceeded 4,000.(1:105) Some historians characterize Grant as unimaginative during this portion of the war.(8:116) All other

moves he made during the Vicksburg campaign were skillful and considerate of sound warfighting principles. He was repeatedly bold and calculating. The two costly assaults were more likely examples of human frailty. His troops were tired, hungry, and success was very close. His impatience was understandable. Unfortunately, he overestimated his own ability and underestimated the determination of the Southern spirit.

After two costly repulses, Grant settled into siege operations. He made every effort to ensure the Confederates neither escaped nor received relief. In addition, Halleck sent reinforcements that brought Grant's size to over 70,000. (8:118) This 2:1 advantage over Pemberton kept Johnston's forces from assisting. By July, Pemberton saw the futility of his effort and began negotiations with Grant for surrender. On 4 July, Pemberton surrendered 30,000 men and 50,000 arms and other equipment of the Confederacy. This final defeat of Vicksburg, gave the Union total control of the Mississippi and split the Confederacy.

Assessment

The capture of Vicksburg was the most important event of the Civil War in the Western theater. Grant has rightfully been praised for his bold moves and brilliant tactics. Clearly, he outgeneraled Pemberton. His crossing of the Mississippi to flank Pemberton, his decision to capture Jackson while

abandoning his lines of communication and supplies, and his defeat of the Confederates at Champion's Hill are outstanding illustrations of successful offensive action. His use of maneuver to split his forces enroute to Jackson and mask his true intentions clearly kept the Southerner's guessing. The analogy of a boxer who bobs, weaves, and feints, against his opponent is characteristic of Grant throughout the Vicksburg effort. Even an outstanding opponent, and Pemberton certainly wasn't, would have struggled to defeat Grant.

On the other hand, Pemberton's actions were marked throughout by indecision. Johnston made every effort to convince Pemberton to leave his defensive position and engage Grant early in the operation at a place of Pemberton's choosing. Johnston stressed that an eventual siege would be doomed to failure. Davis' countermanding of Johnston's guidance hastened the Vicksburg defeat and destroyed any unity of command. Additionally, Pemberton failed to attack Grant's rear at Jackson as Johnston asked....a clear violation of the principle of mass and offense. Probably, the Confederate's last chance to save Vicksburg was lost on this decision.

"Nothing is so important in war as an undivided command," said George Washington in his fourth rule of war. Napoleon adopted the same principle in his sixty-fourth Maxim: "Nothing is more important in war than unity of command." (1:106) Disregard for this warfighting principle at Vicksburg stands as a prime cause of failure and as a lesson to the 1990's warrior.

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