

“GIT TIN STUFF”

Towards Total War and Confederate Mobilization (1863 - 1864)

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PREFACE

The first article in this series, “Equipping Confederate Forces at the Onset of the Civil War,” was read and discussed by many NPMA property professionals. I thank you all for your encouragement, critical comments and suggestions. My wife, Barbara; Marsha Campbell; Jim Dieter and Tom Williams have been particularly helpful on this article, reviewing drafts, editing text, and making valuable recommendations.

The information contained in these articles is from a historical perspective, which is quite different from typical offerings in *The Property Professional*. Although we may think present-day challenges are new, they are not.

The second article covers the two most significant years in the Civil War, 1863 and 1864. Early Confederate victories were followed by invasion and defeat, leading to restructuring of the management of equipment and materials by the South. Such concerns as finance, acquisition sources, government contracting, movement and distribution, and centralized vs. decentralized equipment and material management were as critical then as they are today. In addition, the impact of logistics support decisions and capabilities on significant Civil War events is discussed.

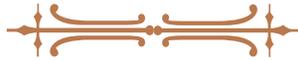
PART TWO INTRODUCTION

Like the first article, this article’s title also contains “Gittin Stuff,” a term attributed to controversial Confederate Major General Nathan Bedford Forrest to describe logistics and supply support.

After the initial buildup for war, both the Confederate and United States governments focused on changes in strategy. Recognizing that the Union was in the war for the long haul, Confederate President Jefferson Davis realized that all Southern resources; manpower, production, and financial assets, must be mobilized to fend off the Northern invasion. United States President Abraham Lincoln understood that to defeat the South and restore the Union, armies of the North must destroy the South’s capability to wage war.

These clashing philosophies resulted in a significant buildup of Confederate industry offset by its nearly total destruction by Union invading forces. How logistics aspects influenced key battles in the East and West, Gettysburg and Vicksburg, are addressed. This article concludes with perhaps the Civil War’s most significant event, the re-election of President Lincoln in November 1864, and its consequences for the Confederate cause.





TRANSITION FROM ARTICLE ONE

After Lee's withdrawal from Antietam, the winter of 1862-1863 put a severe strain on the Confederate supply system. Lee's letters to President Jefferson Davis referred to barefoot and destitute troops. Davis forwarded Lee's reports to Quartermaster General Myers for action. Using a standard bureaucratic approach, Myers ordered Lee's quartermaster to submit new requisitions for supplies that were not on hand or purchased. In March 1863 Myers lectured Lee on using forage throughout the countryside even though his army was already on short rations.

Supply chain delays were terrible. For

example, thirty carloads of uniform cloth sat on sidings in Charlotte, North Carolina, and trains took two weeks to move thirteen boxes of clothing and shoes from Florida to Dalton, GA (Richmond Enquirer, November 28, 1862) To make matters worse, both Union troops and local citizens, who were suffering on the home front, looted unguarded trains.

The Quartermaster and Commissary bureaus received increased criticism from the press and the public. Many supply personnel were capable, but others were inefficient or even corrupt, disregarding regulations and wasting what little was available. By the spring of 1864 over nine hundred quartermasters, some handling over \$1 million quarterly, had not yet turned in their accounts for the first two quarters of 1862.¹

Efficient and competent public servants could only be developed through time and training. The Confederate government did not have enough of either.

The Quartermaster Bureau was never able to supply enough wagons, tents, blankets or clothing and the Commissary Bureau was unable to feed the massive armies consistently. Only the Ordnance Bureau can be considered successful, providing sufficient arms and ammunition throughout the entire war. A normally modest man, Ordnance Chief General Josiah Gorgas wrote in his diary on April 8, 1864, "I have succeeded beyond my utmost expectations. From being the worse supplied of the Bureaus of the War Department it (Ordnance Bureau) is the best."²

Peachtree Street, Atlanta, GA 1864 after Union forces captured the City

Courtesy The National Archives



ORGANIZATION AND MANPOWER

Organizational changes were indicated and manpower needs adjusted as the war grew in size and scope. Each of the logistics bureaus attempted to respond to growing requirements from the armies and pressures caused by the Union occupation and blockade.

LOGISTICS BUREAUS AND STAFFS

Confederate ordnance, commissary, and quartermaster officers were not held in high esteem by the government. In November 1863, General Braxton Bragg, the Commanding General of the Army of Tennessee, recommended to President Davis that these officers be given greater rank and compensation. He wrote, “the chiefs of these departments are second only in importance to the commander-in-chief, and yet they are allowed only by sufferance, not recognized by law, and with the paltry rank and pay of majors.”³

One such quartermaster assigned to the 18th Louisiana Infantry, Major Silas T. Grismore, wrote in his reminiscences, “No persons connected with the Confederate armies received so much abuse as the quartermasters, whilst but few, if any, officers performed more arduous and constant duties than did those of the Q. M. Department....Let forage be plenty or scarce, let the roads be good or bad, let the sun shine or the rain fall, subsistence had to be procured, provisions transported, and the army material moved.”⁴ Property managers and logisticians today often deal with a similar lack of respect and understanding of their value.

The most senior logistics officers were also low graded, not commensurate with their titles and responsibilities. Quartermaster Chief, Colonel Abraham Meyers served at his appointed rank until replaced by Brigadier General Alexander R. Lawton in February 1864; Commissary General Lucius Northrop served at the rank of Colonel until his replacement in February 1865, by Brigadier General Isaac Munroe St. John; and Josiah Gorgas, the exceptional Ordnance Chief, was finally promoted from Lieutenant Colonel to Brigadier General on November 10, 1864. Gorgas’ biographer, Frank E. Vandiver, refers to him as con-

tributing more to the success of the Confederacy than anyone except Robert E. Lee.⁵

THE QUARTERMASTER BUREAU

By 1863 Quartermaster General Meyers had assumed increased purchasing and manufacturing responsibilities and had identified a need for centralized management. The Quartermaster bureau, housed on Capitol Square in Richmond, swelled to a staff of eighty-eight clerks and one messenger, shuffling paperwork and attempting to keep up with the demands of the armies in the field.⁶

For months the Bureau had been troubled by conflicts between staff officers, who reported to Meyers, and field commanders and their quartermasters, who reported to army commanders. Meyers divided the Confederacy into eleven purchasing districts to improve support, one for each state except for the Tenth District (Arkansas and Missouri), and the Eleventh (Tennessee and Kentucky). A “principal purchasing officer,” responsible for contracting and purchasing, headed each district. These purchasing officers were not responsible to army commanders and administered their depots under the “exclusive control” of the Quartermaster General’s Office. They were required to submit monthly reports of materials purchased, manufactured, issued and on hand to Myers.⁷ Chief Quartermasters of each army had to cease all purchasing except for forage and fuel, unless in enemy territory. This centralized approach helped the Bureau to manage its limited resources and, by mid-1863, Meyers had built up a sizable organization.

However, supply shortages and complaints from the field continued. After Gettysburg, Lee convinced President Davis to replace Meyers, although it proved difficult since he had many friends in Congress. Finally, Brigadier General Alexander R. Lawton of Georgia was selected to replace him in August 1863, although due to bureaucratic foot-dragging Lawton was not confirmed and promoted until February 1864.

Lawton did not immediately recognize all the problems that he had inherited. Summer campaigning had seriously depleted stocks of shoes, blankets and other equipment, but his Bureau was not con-

cerned due to anticipated receipt of imports in the fall. The Union Navy then dealt the South a severe blow. In September and October two ships, the Hebe and the Venus, loaded with shoes and winter clothes, were sunk off the North Carolina coast.⁸ To make matters worse, when General Lawton finally formally assumed the position of Quartermaster General, the Government could not account for nearly seventy million dollars. Additionally, unpaid bills to Southern manufacturers amounted to \$47.6 million and were increasing rapidly.⁹ If confronted with a financial audit, the Quartermaster Bureau would have failed miserably.

Richmond’s centralized supply system now relied on signed requisitions submitted to the depot nearest the ultimate recipient. The release of stock from those depots was often slow and inconsistent. The Charleston Mercury, August 26, 1863, wrote that for troops to be supplied, they needed “a requisition, drawn up and signed by the proper officer according to the conditions of some unbending and inflexible law.”

Gorgas and Northrop also implemented centralization of their Bureaus’ activities during 1863. These policies would remain in effect with some modifications until the end of the war. The Government had succeeded in removing authority for the distribution of supplies and equipment from field commands to conserve war materials. However, shortages in manpower, supplies and transportation continued to plague the Confederacy, and its mushrooming bureaucracy in Richmond led to increased inefficiency and corruption.¹⁰

PERSONNEL AT PRODUCTION FACILITIES

Personnel shortages proved to be a significant problem to both the Government and contractors. The Confederate Government issued three Conscription Acts during the war, each successively broadening the age limits for induction into the army.

Factories with government contracts could request exemption from the draft for their workers; however, they also had to accept price controls mandated by the Quartermaster Bureau. Throughout the war the Confederacy rationed limited manpower between front line units and production facilities.

Government factories lacked skilled labor due to wartime commitments. The Exemption Act of October 11, 1862, placed restrictions on the drafting of essential support personnel such as shoemakers, tanners, blacksmiths, wagon-makers, and millers.¹¹ However, successive Secretaries of War did not enforce exemptions; they merely recommended them. Of course, commanders such as Lee often chose to refuse the “suggestions.”¹² Many examples of personnel shortages exist.

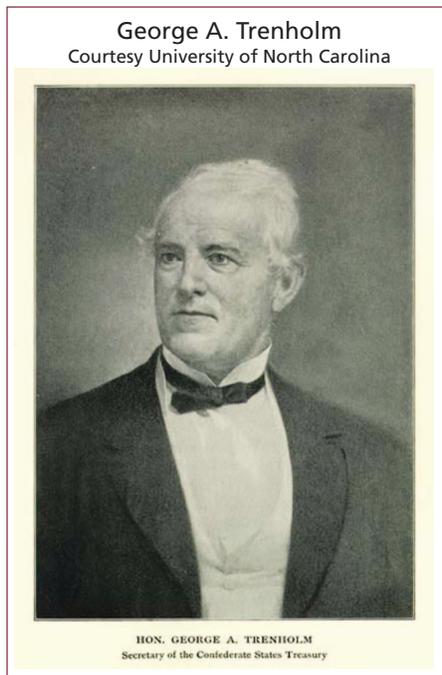
During Dahlgren’s raid on Richmond in March 1864, an expert barrel straightener was drafted into service and killed in action. His loss resulted in a drop in production at the Richmond armory of at least 360 rifles per month.¹³ In September 1864 General Rains, Commander of the Augusta Powder Works, was responsible for supplying essential small arms rounds. The local enrolling officer removed a number of bullet moulders without Rain’s knowledge, impairing production.¹⁴

The Superintendent of Railroads William Wadley reported he could do nothing to improve the failing transportation network, since so many of his mechanics had been conscripted by the army. General Lee fought to retain Wadley’s mechanics, which coincidentally impacted his own supply support.¹⁵

By the end of 1863 Southern manpower depletions, through casualties and desertion, caused the Confederate Congress to consider drafting all able-bodied railroad workers under forty-five and replacing them with older men or disabled soldiers. Railroad presidents lobbied against the measure, stating that one train could transport in one day what a thousand wagons took five days to transport. The proposal died in committee.¹⁶

FINANCING THE WAR

The Confederacy entered the war with limited financial resources. One of the government’s first actions was to create a Treasury Department to develop sources of revenue. The minimal amount of specie (gold and silver) confiscated from Federal mints, military equipment captured from the U. S. Army and enemy property impressed from southern sites only provided short-term financial and materiel sup-



port. Confederate Secretary of the Treasury Christopher G. Memminger assumed his duties and immediately began floating government loans and creating an instant national debt. During the summer of 1863, disastrous Confederate losses, especially Vicksburg, caused concern among creditors, who knew if the South lost the war, Confederate securities and currency would be worthless. Throughout the war the Confederacy authorized four issues of Confederate currency estimated at \$2 billion, producing crippling inflation.¹⁷ An additional source of funds was generated by the passing of several tax bills; taxing personal property, income and agricultural products.

Before the war George Alfred Trenholm was one of the wealthiest businessmen in the United States. He owned hotels, plantations, cotton presses, wharves and five sailing ships that ran between Charleston and Liverpool, England. Trenholm’s companies operated more blockade-runners than any other private company during the war.¹⁸ In addition to commissioning blockade-runners, he offered the services of his Liverpool Office to help finance the war. In July 1864 Secretary Memminger resigned under the pressure of mounting debt and President Davis appointed Trenholm. He did no better. The Confederacy was destined to live out its short life amassing a huge debt that only the peaceful prosperity after the war would allow the South to repay.¹⁹ A dapper

businessman, and to some, a scoundrel, George Trenholm is considered by many to be the inspiration for Margaret Mitchell’s character, Rhett Butler, in *Gone with the Wind*.

The Confederacy never had more than \$27 million of specie. The national debt ran over \$700 million and the overall inflation rate reached 6,000%.²⁰ It is a miracle that Confederate finances supported the war as long as they did.

ACQUISITION

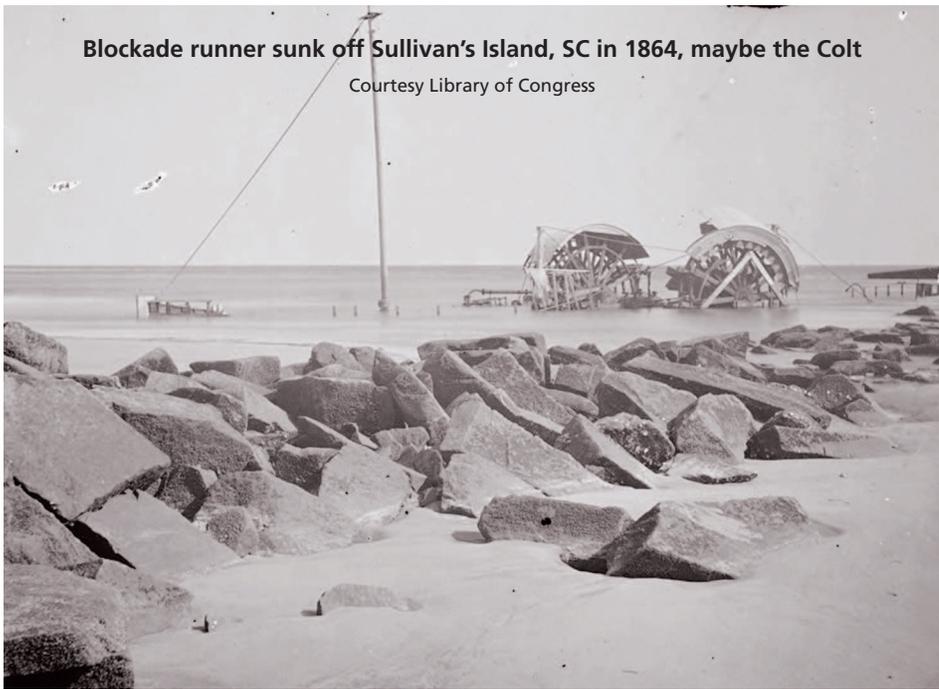
Privately owned businesses in the South, foreign suppliers in Europe, and Confederate Government-owned businesses provided critical equipment and supplies to meet the growing needs of the Confederacy. Privateers and Confederate-owned blockade-runners challenged the U. S. Navy blockade, bringing everything from weapons to toothbrushes into Southern ports. To combat growing shortages, the logistics bureaus developed a wide variety of acquisition sources, including impressments of property and donations, while Union armies attempted to neutralize or destroy them.

RUNNING THE BLOCKADE

Profitable blockade-running

Blockade-runners supplied Southern ports such as Norfolk, VA; Wilmington, NC; Charleston, SC; Savannah, GA; Pensacola, FL; Mobile, AL; New Orleans, LA and Galveston, TX. Bermuda and Nassau provided intermediate storage for shipments from Europe. Bermuda was only 674 miles from Wilmington, NC. Nassau was closer to Charleston, SC (515 miles), and Savannah, GA (500 miles). By July 1864 Confederate officials ordered the purchase of fourteen steel steamships, each capable of carrying one thousand bales of cotton. Unfortunately for the South, they were still in construction when Lee surrendered.²¹

To deceive the U. S. Navy, manifests completed in Europe showed Nassau or Bermuda as the final destination of shipments. Union ships manning the blockade knew that all ships bound for southern ports were carrying contraband. At the beginning of the war, the odds were 9:1 that a blockade-runner would get through,



Blockade runner sunk off Sullivan's Island, SC in 1864, maybe the Colt

Courtesy Library of Congress

by 1864 the odds were 3:1, and by the end of the war the odds were 1:1.²²

Arms Imports

During the first two years of the war the South relied on munitions purchased from Europe and transported using blockade-runners. Only 10% of the weapons issued to troops during those two years were made in the Confederacy.²³ During the war 600,000 weapons were delivered from Europe to the Confederacy, Southern states and private citizens.²⁴ Due to the efforts of Gorgas' Bureau, the Confederate army was better armed than their Union counterparts. General Ulysses S. Grant found nearly 60,000 muskets superior to Union weapons when he captured Vicksburg in July 1863. He was so impressed with them that he authorized all of his regimental commanders with inferior rifles to trade them in for captured Confederate ones.²⁵

Major Caleb Huse was Gorgas' representative in England during most of the Civil War. In an interview with author J. S. Rogers, he said the following in the summer of 1903, "...never before was a government at war supplied with arms, munitions, clothing, and medicines, with so little money as was paid by the Confederacy. The shipment from England to The Islands in ordinary tramp steamers, the landing and storage there, and the running of the blockade cost money; but all that was needed came from cotton practically given to the Confederate Government by its owners."²⁶

Major Huse was under investigation during much of his time in England. He normally purchased from commission houses, not directly from manufacturers, incurring large service charges. In addition, Major Huse added his own 2.5% commission to the total price of shipped goods, claiming part was applied to his traveling expenses and the remainder was to purchase a military library, which he intended to donate to the Ordnance Bureau.²⁷ Such a response would not be acceptable in today's audit environment.

By 1863 Huse had spent about \$5 million on supplies, only half backed with cash.²⁸ Despite the charges against him, Secretary of War Benjamin and Gorgas continued to support him and he served in England until the end of the war.

"Bermuda Bacon"

Bacon was the staple meat for the Confederate soldier. Prior to the end of 1862 most of the bacon came from Eastern Tennessee or the upper Mississippi Valley. The loss of Fort Henry on the Tennessee River and Fort Donelson on the Cumberland, and the capture of Nashville, the meatpacking center of the South, ended this valuable source of supply. As a result, "Bermuda bacon" became a favorite commodity of blockade-runners and speculators.

In the North, entrepreneurs offered hog raisers more a pound for pork products than the U. S. Government or private mer-

chants. The pork was salted and shipped from New York or Philadelphia to Bermuda or Nassau. Shippers could quadruple their investment in sales to Confederate agents, who transported the products through the blockade. Eventually, Union agents finally figured out why so much pork was going to Bermuda and Nassau and began to cut supplies at the source.

Luxuries

Privateers and speculators made tremendous profits on the import of luxury items through the blockade. In the midst of deprivation and even starvation, the southern aristocracy still demanded luxury items.

When the steamer *Minho* ran aground off South Carolina in October 1862, her cargo was recovered and sold at auction in Charleston. Six-hundred ninety eight barrels and cases of champagne, wines and other spirits; twelve hundred wine glasses; cigars, coffee and tea pots and cooking pans were among the auctioned items.²⁹ Quinine, English books, steel pen nibs and even coffin nails were also in high demand. One enterprising captain delivered a stack of corset stays at an eleven hundred percent profit and toothbrushes at a seven hundred percent profit.³⁰

To stop the waste of valuable cargo space with luxuries, February 1864 laws mandated government control over imports of non-essential items such as liquor and jewelry.³¹

INTERNAL PRODUCTION

Ordnance Production

Josiah Gorgas established a Confederate Ordnance Bureau similar to the U. S. government system. Armories were founded to strictly manufacture arms; arsenals for repairs, production of projectiles and accoutrements; and depots for storage and distribution. In addition, laboratories were founded to manufacture powder and other essential chemicals.³²

As discussed in the first article, the Richmond armory began operations with machinery captured at Harper's Ferry. Afterwards most of the machinery was imported through the blockade. The only factories that produced heavy ordnance in the South were the Etowah Works in Atlanta and the Tredegar Iron Works in Richmond.

Quartermaster Production

Factories with supporting depots locally produced equipment and supplies throughout the South. For example, the Department of Mississippi and East Louisiana established three sources for clothing; depots at Columbus, MS, Jackson, MS, and Enterprise, MS. Quartermaster Major L. Mims reported on February 5, 1863: “Columbus...furnishes about 700 suits of clothing per week; for the present however, we are employing all force there in the making of tents, 250 tents per week are being manufactured. Enterprise...furnishes 25 wagons per month, 400 pairs of shoes and 250 complete sets of clothing. Jackson...furnishes 1,000 suits per week; manufactures 40 blankets per day...Jackson also manufactures 25 tents per day; they are incomplete, however, for the want of rope...”³³

Unfortunately, quality was often terrible. In March 1863 Major Silas T. Grisamore, 18th Louisiana Infantry quartermaster, stated that he could not recall a single effective depot issue to his regiment. Jackets provided were “a good size for 10-year old boys,” provided along with oversized trousers made by Alabama ladies’ relief organizations. In an attempt to control quality, Grisamore obtained British cadet grey kersey material and had a former Parisian tailor make them into uniforms. They were beautiful with black piping and brass buttons, but the sleeves ended at the elbows and the side pockets fell under the armpits.³⁴

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTING

The Confederate Constitution

Crafted at Montgomery, AL in 1861, the Confederate Constitution was based on the principles of the U. S. Constitution. The development of the Confederate Constitution was the first significant review of the U. S. Constitution since 1787.

The 10th clause of Section 9 addressed cost overruns in government contracts. The clause stated, “All bills appropriating money shall specify in federal currency the exact amount of each appropriation and the purposes for which it is made; and Congress shall grant no extra compensation to any public contractor, officer, agent, or servant after such contract shall have been made or such service rendered.”³⁵



Brigadier General Josiah Gorgas, CSA
Courtesy Library of Congress

Contractors doing business with the Confederate Government had to make accurate estimates of expected costs and expenses prior to executing the contract. If they underestimated the cost, contractors would be constitutionally bound to the stated “fixed price” contract terms.

Quartermaster contracts

During much of the war Southern women sewed uniform items in their homes as piecework, using contractor-provided cloth. Output was sporadic, workmanship uneven and sizing inconsistent. Later in the war, the Confederate Government contracted with the Irish firm Peter Tait and Company, which had gained a reputation during the Crimean War for large-scale manufacture of high quality uniforms for the British Army. Peter Tait delivered a large quantity of uniforms through the blockade to Wilmington on Christmas Eve of 1864.³⁶

The H. L. Hunley (a contract ship)

The first submarine in naval history to sink an enemy ship in combat was the 25 foot converted boiler tank, H. L. Hunley. The Hunley was not a Confederate ship, but a contractor-owned ship commissioned by the Confederate Government. James McClintock and Baxter Watson, speculators from New Orleans, accompanied by several

others who provided financial backing, built several submersibles under a contracting vehicle called a “letter of marque” from the Confederate Congress. A letter of marque was “a governmental document to arm a ship and capture the merchant ships and property of an enemy nation.”³⁷ The Confederate Government set up its own submarine program, but had less success.

The H. L. Hunley was actually the team’s third attempt at building a successful submarine. The boat was first launched in Mobile in July 1863. Early trials were disastrous, causing the death of some of her owners and builders, including the man for whom she was named, financier Horace Lawson Hunley, who was asphyxiated. After a trial where the Hunley remained submerged for two hours and thirty-five minutes, she was deemed ready.³⁸

Transferred to Charleston, SC, the Hunley went on patrol the evening of February 17, 1864. The Union sloop Housatonic was anchored on blockade duty. The Hunley attacked using a “torpedo” attached to a wooden pole protruding from the bow of the sub. The Housatonic sunk within three minutes, but the Hunley also perished with all of its crew aboard. The first submarine attack in naval history was only a limited success.

OTHER SOURCES

Impressments

Congress passed an act to regulate impressments in March 1863. “Subordinate officers” were given the power to impress property from civilians and the government was liable for payment, using rates fixed by local appraisers. Unfortunately appraisers began to inflate prices, driving costs up for both the government and civilian population. Even though market rates were set, no stated penalties for resistance or evasion were ever established, so the program was largely ineffective.³⁹ Students of the Confederacy have both condemned forced procurement for adding to economic problems and defended it as necessary to provide critical equipment and materials.

Donations

During the war, individuals, businesses, communities and churches donated Treasury notes, foodstuffs, and military supplies. Such organizations as Ladies Aid Societies

sponsored concerts and fairs and put on drives to raise money for the Confederate Treasury. In South Carolina, one such drive collected \$30,000, which was donated to help construct the ironclad gunboat, *Palmetto State*.⁴⁰ Women even offered their silver and gold medals, jewelry and silver plate to further the efforts of their armies in the field. The Treasury Department returned such items since it was believed that their sacrifice would not yield sufficient compensation for the government and the Confederacy never minted coins. Private citizens donated an estimated \$2 million to the Confederate Treasury, including \$200,000 by Secretary of the Treasury Trenholm.⁴¹

MOVEMENT AND DISTRIBUTION

The Confederate Quartermaster Bureau developed a distribution system for manufactured goods. Supplies and equipment were distributed to base depots for further shipment to advance depots on major transportation arteries, safe from enemy forces. However during 1863 and 1864, Union forces captured and held railways, rivers and roads in many parts of the Confederacy, capturing supplies not relocated quickly enough. Temporary advance depots were established to support armies on the move and wagons provided transport directly to field units. Distribution was often a bigger problem than supply shortages.

General Robert E. Lee contributed to the distribution problem. His Army of Northern Virginia was often poorly uniformed and supplied, even though it operated near the depots of Richmond, VA. Lee and his staff paid little attention to logistics and his army was frequently the most poorly supplied of all Confederate armies. Northrop's biographer, Jerrold Northrop Moore cites a weakness of General Lee's first identified by Lee biographer Douglas Southall Freeman. According to Freeman, "Admirable as was the training of Lee it was not complete. ... Most of all was he lacking in any detailed knowledge of the service of supply."⁴² Head of the Confederate Bureau of War Robert G. H. Kean supports Freeman's assertion. In his diary on February 15, 1863, Kean recounts, "Colonel Northrop has been in a quarrel also with General Lee for sometime. This grew chiefly out of the treatment Captain Cren-

shaw received when he went in January to General Lee's Headquarters to concert means of getting the wheat of the upper Rappahannock counties to the railroad. Crenshaw's report on this subject, if accurate, was that he was not properly received or treated."⁴³

Distribution and resupply of ordnance equipment and materials were also impacted causing Gorgas to change his movement and distribution plans by March 1863. The change was precipitated by a shortage of materials, transportation problems with railroads and loss of Southern territory. He published a general circular, approved by Secretary of War James Seddon, that "requisitions for ordnance stores will be made on the arsenals and depots nearest to the troops requiring them."⁴⁴

Units had to strictly follow the chain of command and submit requisitions through the chief ordnance officers of their armies, complete with signatures of their commanding generals. To put the plans into effect, he also decentralized his distribution operation and gave more control to regional depot commanders.

Distribution problems grew worse as railroad usage became more and more unreliable. In early 1863, Superintendent of Railroads, William Wadley, established a system of sending agents and messengers to expedite shipments. Both Northrop and Myers told the Secretary of War that the system was not working. Northrop suggested that quartermasters at each stop note losses so individual railroad responsibility could be established. Meyers created three new forms and attempted to implement a new system. Impressing trains was the only way to really enforce the new regulations, which Myers opposed. He did the best he could each month, identifying losses and signing quarterly disbursement statements for railroad transportation.⁴⁵

Passengers and private freight continued to be shipped side-by-side with military equipment and supplies. Civilian control of railroads extended up to the railhead and left quartermaster and commissary officials at their mercy. The Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac line was particularly inefficient, frustrating General Lee. The superintendent was a Federal agent.

As the war wore on and "total war" was declared on the South, General Sherman adopted the tactic of heating torn-up rails on

bonfires and wrapping them around trees so they could not be used again. Instructions were specific, "...unless closely watched, soldiers will content themselves with simply bending the rails around trees.... No rail should be regarded as properly treated till it has assumed the shape of a doughnut; it must not only be bent but twisted."⁴⁶

STORAGE & WAREHOUSING

Bermuda businessman, John Tory Bourne was responsible for interim storage of shipments originating in Europe and loaded on blockade-runners in Bermuda destined for North Carolina ports. During the war he provided these services to both the Confederate and North Carolina governments.

Bourne furnished wharfs, stevedores and warehousing, along with supporting services. His records were meticulous, documenting the schedules of blockade-runners and their cargos. Copies of business letters in three tissue-leaved books have provided historians with a wealth of information about the storage and import of goods by the Confederacy.⁴⁷

DISPOSITION

Since practically all equipment and materials under control of the Confederacy or its states was needed desperately, disposition during this period consisted predominantly of scrapping or salvaging equipment for other purposes, destroying equipment to keep it out of Union hands or capture by enemy forces.

For example, the Confederate Government Iron Commission submitted a report of railways recommended for destruction to the Secretary of War in March 1863. The Commission initially identified 173.75 miles immediately available, 263 miles that could be torn up under certain conditions, and 94 miles that would only be removed as a last resort. The Commission could impress the rails, but to avoid conflict, usually paid a small premium over the set rate of \$190 per long ton.⁴⁸ The rails were used to expand or repair railroad lines in other more critical locations and also for plating on ironclad ships.

Some of the destruction in Atlanta in 1864 was not Sherman's doing, but Confed-

it to the Union should have been a high priority. A poorly defended Mississippi gave Union forces a wide-open route into the Deep South. Battles on the River ensued in April 1863 and victories of Union ships opened the Mississippi, so that when the sun rose on the 17th, Confederate Lieutenant General John C. Pemberton telegraphed President Davis. “No more supplies can be gotten from the Trans-Mississippi department.”⁶⁰ This proved to be a logistical catastrophe for the Confederacy.

Confederate general officers, especially those of the Army of Northern Virginia, did not recognize the logistical significance of Vicksburg. Longstreet believed that, “we would be no worse cut off from the West than we are now...”⁶¹ The Western army had a similar attitude. As early as June 1862, General Joseph E. Johnston thought the Mississippi would be lost along with the flow of supplies from west of the river. Unlike his enemies, President Lincoln recognized both the logistical and propaganda value of securing Vicksburg so he assigned his ablest commanders, Grant and Sherman, to attack it.

The Battle of Champion Hill (MS) in May 1863 signaled the beginning of the end for the Army of Vicksburg. The Confederates lost a total of 3,840 men out of 25,000 engaged.⁶² General Pemberton, Commander of the Army of Vicksburg, saw his only option as retreating into the “safety” of the Vicksburg fortress.

In addition, the inability of the Confederates to protect the Southern Railroad line to Vicksburg doomed its supply support. The army had insufficient wagons to make up for the loss of the destroyed rail line.⁶³ Union General Ulysses S. Grant’s successful siege caused Vicksburg to fall within hours of Lee’s defeat at Gettysburg on the Fourth of July, 1863.

The capture of Vicksburg was a strategic victory for the Union that confirmed the South’s lack of success in the western theater. Equipment and material losses were extraordinary. The surrender of Vicksburg and Port Hudson and defeats at Gettysburg and Lookout-Mountain-Missionary Ridge cost 75,000 small arms, large quantities of field artillery, and huge quantities of ammunition.⁶⁴ An immediate effect of the Vicksburg defeat was the devaluation of bonds

held in Europe. The rate of return dropped rapidly from .80 on the dollar to an unprecedented low of .36.⁶⁵

Commenting on the losses at Vicksburg, Port Hudson and Gettysburg, Ordnance Chief Gorgas lamented, “Yesterday we rode on the pinnacle of success – today absolute ruin seems to be our portion. The Confederacy totters to its destruction.”⁶⁶ Gorgas particularly recognized the significance of Vicksburg’s loss. At the end of July he wrote, “One brief month ago we were apparently at the point of success. Lee was in Pennsylvania ...Vicksburgh [sic] seemed to laugh all Grant’s efforts to scorn...Now the picture is just as somber as it was bright then...”⁶⁷

TOTAL WAR AND FULL MOBILIZATION

TOTAL WAR

On April 24, 1863, the U. S. Government issued The Lieber Code of 1863 - General Order No. 100, authorized by

Atlanta, GA: Ruins of the Enginehouse in 1864

Courtesy The National Archives



President Lincoln. It provided instructions for the government of the United States armies in the field. Section 1, part 15 states as follows:

“...it allows of all destruction of property, and obstruction of the ways and channels of traffic, travel, or communication, and of all withholding of sustenance or means of life from the enemy; of the appropriation of whatever an enemy's country affords necessary for the subsistence and safety of the army, and of such deception as does not involve the breaking of good faith either positively pledged, regarding agreements entered into during the war, or supposed by the modern law of war to exist.”⁶⁸

This policy of “total war” led to destruction of Confederate depots, armories, and arsenals in addition to homes, businesses, farms and crops during such campaigns as Sherman's march to the sea from Atlanta in late 1864 and Sheridan's Shenandoah Campaign. The ability of the South to import raw materials, produce equipment and distribute it to the field was severely impacted by the Union's “Total War” policy.

FULL MOBILIZATION

Nations throughout history have had to ration equipment and supplies and the distribution of them during wartime. At the beginning of the war, Southern patriotism was high and a quick victory expected. By 1863 the war had depleted the limited resources of the South, reality had set in, and significantly increased production was required.

To remedy the food shortages of Lee's army described earlier, in March 1863 Secretary of War James Seddon directed Subsistence Bureau agents to take over flourmills and warehouses in the Richmond area and ordered enforced sale of food at Government-fixed prices. Local farmers protested and threatened to bring no more food to market. The Governor of Virginia and hundreds of citizens signed a petition condemning the Subsistence Bureau's action.⁶⁹ The controversy had one benefit. Lee finally recognized the difficulty Commissary General Northrop had feeding his troops the previous winter.

In December 1863, selected Quartermaster General Lawton determined that he must establish control over production of needed equipment and supplies. He mobilized the remaining manufacturing resources of the Confederacy to increase production. Production was standardized

under his bureau, to include standard patterns for bureau-acquired shoes and clothing. Efficient cutting and sewing reduced consumption of scarce cloth and leather.

Production facilities, depots and contractors were periodically inspected to ensure compliance. These inspections were met with more than the usual skepticism reserved for such audits. The Confederacy was virtually bankrupt and many contractors had not been paid.⁷⁰

By mid-1864 Quartermaster General Lawton's actions had the Confederacy approaching full mobilization. Josiah Gorgas wrote in 1864, “In such a war as this – a war for national existence – the whole mass of the nation must be engaged. It must be divided into those who go into the field and fight, and those who stay at home and support.”⁷¹ Unlike his predecessor Meyers, Lawton understood the potential for Southern self-sufficiency. He wrote Lee in February 1864, “our main reliance must be our home resources.”⁷²

TRANSITION, THE RE-ELECTION OF PRESIDENT ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Two significant campaigns affecting Confederate logistics support occurred in 1864 prior to the United States presidential election, the Atlanta Campaign and the Shenandoah Campaign. More importantly, these two Union successes helped guarantee the re-election of President Lincoln.

Throughout the war years General Gorgas read Federal newspapers in addition to those of the Confederacy. Lincoln's re-election left little doubt in his mind that “the war must go on until the Northern hope of ‘our subjugation’ is crushed out and replaced by desire for peace at any cost.”⁷³

THE ATLANTA CAMPAIGN

According to the 1860 census, Atlanta was only the 99th largest city in the U. S. with a population of 9,954.⁷⁴ However, it was served by four major railroads connecting it with all major cities in the South. By 1864 Union forces' conquest of Tennessee and Mississippi had displaced many civilians and the estimated population of

Atlanta had grown to well over 20,000.

The city provided significant storage facilities for commissary, quartermaster and ordnance equipment and materials. Machinery from munitions works in Tennessee had been relocated to Atlanta and it had become part of Gorgas' Georgia ordnance industrial base. The Atlanta Rolling Mill produced cannon and armorplate for ships such as the Tennessee. Such factories as Winthrop's Foundry, the Atlanta Machine Works, the Spiller and Burr Revolver Factory, and others made artillery, small arms, railroad rails and numerous other items.⁷⁵ By 1863, the arsenal at the racetrack outside the city limits employed nearly 5,500 men and women. The Quartermaster Bureau employed three thousand women producing uniform items, and a Government shoe factory made 500 pairs of shoes per day. Bakeries and meatpacking plants made it a major army commissary supplier.⁷⁶

Before Sherman's army captured the city, General Johnston, Commander of the Army of Tennessee, evacuated arsenal machinery to Macon and Augusta. President Davis replaced Johnston with General John B. Hood on July 17th. Prior to the capture of the city, Hood directed the evacuation of clothing and shoe-making machinery but he destroyed his own supply and ordnance train, rather than letting it be captured. A court of inquiry censured Colonel M. B. McMicken, Hood's Quartermaster, for not supervising removals of material more carefully.⁷⁷

Editorials in Richmond and Atlanta newspapers, which were reprinted throughout the Union, emphasized the significance of the assault on Atlanta. The Atlanta Register suggested that Democrats in the North and Hood's army in the South should use the ballot box and the cartridge box, respectively, to defeat President Lincoln.⁷⁸ Neither event occurred, so the Confederacy moved inevitably closer to defeat.

THE SHENANDOAH CAMPAIGN

By the summer of 1864, Grant's Army of the Potomac and Lee's Army of Northern Virginia were locked in a stalemate outside Petersburg, VA. Although Lee's army was battered from over two years of constant combat, it was still dangerous and supplied

by the Richmond Depot with ordnance and general supplies, and by the Shenandoah Valley with food.

To divert Grant's attention and hopefully split his forces, Lee sent part of his army under Lieutenant General Jubal A. Early to the Shenandoah Valley. Early defeated Union troops there in several engagements and even briefly threatened Washington, DC.

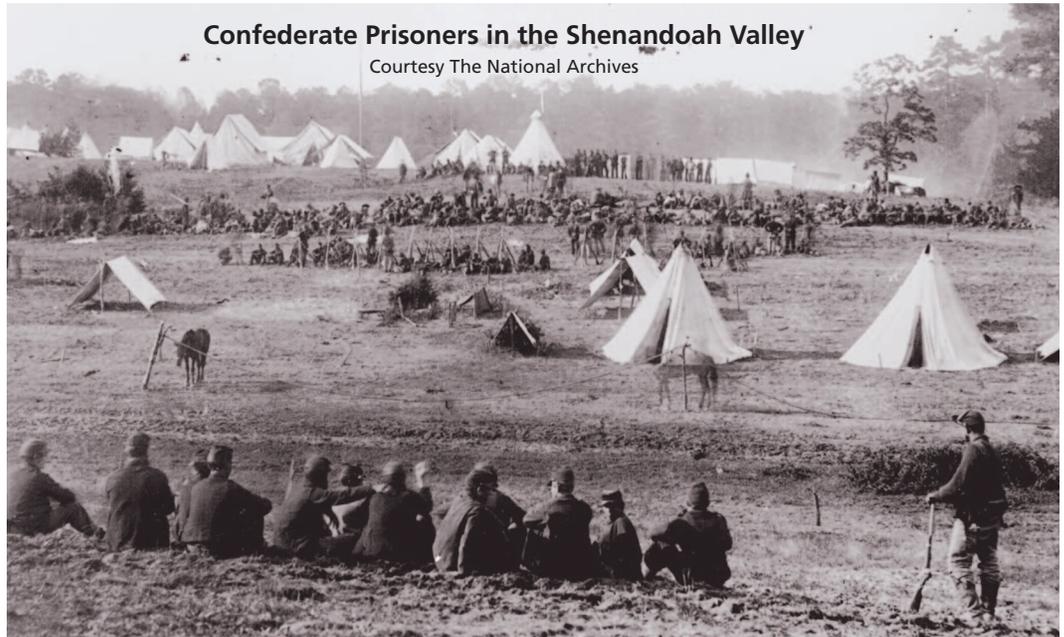
From these defeats, Grant devised a plan. If he had to commit troops to hold the Valley, he might as well give them a mission. Their mission became part of the Union's policy of "Total War," the destruction of the Shenandoah's capability to feed Lee's army. Accomplished cavalry commander, Major General Philip H. Sheridan, was assigned the task. Under Sheridan's leadership, a cavalry force of 10,000 men methodically burned the Shenandoah Valley, destroying its farms, livestock, and means to sustain Lee's Army of Northern Virginia in the field.⁷⁹

Michael Mahon in his book *The Shenandoah Valley* gives a very different view of the significance of Sheridan's campaign. He contends that by the fall of 1862, the Valley was so depleted of resources that it could barely feed the residents and Confederate army defending it. He states that as colorful and dramatic as Sheridan's destruction of the Valley in 1864 is portrayed, it did little to deprive the Confederacy of subsistence or hasten the end of the war.⁸⁰ Head of the Confederate Bureau of War, Robert Garlick Hill Kean, had a different viewpoint. He cited the impact of the Shenandoah Campaign on shortages and inflation. In his diary he reported that Sheridan's raid had caused Richmond to be approaching a state of famine. He wrote that bacon was \$20 a pound, flour \$1200 a barrel, butter \$25 a pound and beef \$10 to \$12 a pound, and the supplies meager.⁸¹

The psychological effect of the Shenandoah campaign was significant. Grant confessed in his Memoirs that he was "much relieved" after Sheridan's victory. He knew, "the administration was a little afraid to have a decisive battle fought at that time,

Confederate Prisoners in the Shenandoah Valley

Courtesy The National Archives



for fear it might go against us and have a bad effect on the November elections."⁸²

Two Union strikes, one at the industrial base in Atlanta and the other at the "breadbasket" of the Confederacy, deprived the South of critical equipment, materials, and foodstuffs, bolstering Northern resolve and leading to the re-election of Abraham Lincoln.

LINCOLN'S RE-ELECTION

The Democratic Party Platform of 1864 called for immediate cessation of hostilities with the South, a position that even its nominee, George McClellan, former commander of the Army of the Potomac could not fully support.

Southerners looked anxiously to the Union presidential election. The Charleston Mercury proclaimed that McClellan's election, "must lead to peace and our independence . . . (provided) that for the next two months we hold our own and prevent military success by our foes."⁸³

Lincoln received an estimated 75% - 80% support from the soldiers in the field, many of whom traveled home by train to vote, and the Nation repudiated the Democrat's message, which could be viewed as a "peace at all costs" approach. Soldiers who voted in the field supported Lincoln, 119,754 to 34,291 over McClellan. Without the soldiers' vote, Lincoln could have lost New York, Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana Maryland, and Pennsylvania.⁸⁴

More than any other event, Lincoln's re-election sealed the fate of the Confederacy.

The war would drag on for an additional five months with incredible bloodshed, but never again did the South have a reasonable chance for a military or political victory. □

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