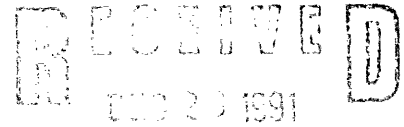


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



**National Register of Historic Places
Multiple Property Documentation Form**

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Type all entries.

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Army of the Potomac Winter Encampment, Culpeper and Fauquier
Counties, 1863-1864

B. Associated Historic Contexts

Civil War Winter Encampments in Culpeper and Fauquier Counties

C. Geographical Data

Culpeper and Fauquier Counties, Virginia

☐ See continuation sheet

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Planning and Evaluation.

Richard C. Miller
Signature of certifying official

Dec 16, 1991
Date

Director, VA Department of Historic Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

I, hereby, certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Patrick Andrews
Signature of the Keeper of the National Register

2/6/92
Date

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E. Statement of Historic Contexts:

The Army of the Potomac Winter Encampment, Culpeper and Fauquier Counties, 1863-1864, multiple property group encompasses those properties or sites in Culpeper County that both contributed significantly to the encampment and maintain their historic integrity. This historic winter encampment, sometimes called the "Union's Valley Forge," constitutes the sole historic context of this multiple property group.

The Culpeper County Winter Encampment

Although traditionally overlooked in the study of Civil War military history, winter encampments played a major role in determining the outcomes of the more heavily studied military campaigns. The winter encampment of the mid-nineteenth century functioned as a cocoon for the army that occupied it; the changes in manpower, leadership, training, equipment, morale, and other factors that took place during those winter months greatly determined the effectiveness of the army that emerged in the spring. Just as historians credited the winters spent at Valley Forge and Morristown for transforming the Continental Army, many Civil War military men on both sides grasped the importance of rebuilding an army's strength during the crucial winter interlude. In the words of one Union lieutenant colonel, "A winter encampment is generally considered by those not familiar with it as a period of idleness and rest. It is rather a time when one kind of work is dropped and another of no small importance is taken up and prosecuted without ceasing."¹

The Army of the Potomac's winter encampment in Culpeper County during the winter of 1863-1864 is significant as a critical and highly influential event in the history of the army. This encampment was perhaps the army's most important winter encampment of the war, for it took place during a time of transition. The

¹ Lieutenant Colonel George A. Bruce, The Twentieth Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1906), p. 324.

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army faced an uncertain future as it entered winter quarters: after two years of combat and four commanders, it was no closer to capturing Richmond than it had been in 1862.

Morale was low, and a majority of its members were veterans whose enlistments were due to expire by the middle of the spring campaign. Moreover, the number of voluntary enlistments fell well short of the desired quotas, so recruiters were forced to rely on conscripts and replacements (many of them foreigners who spoke little or no English) and bounty seekers. Anti-war opinion became more widespread, and some politicians advocated a negotiated cessation of hostilities. In many ways, the Army of the Potomac was poised for disaster.

Paradoxically, this same army was also poised for success. The army that emerged from the Culpeper County encampment was a refurbished, reenergized fighting force that would conduct a more vigorous and extended campaign than any it had previously waged against the Army of Northern Virginia. It was a different Army of the Potomac: the artillery, cavalry, and infantry had all been reorganized. Most of the veterans stayed in the army, and their presence facilitated the successful integration of the new recruits. Similarly, although Major General George G. Meade remained in command of the army, the arrival of Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant as General-in-Chief of the Army had a profoundly revivifying effect upon it. Grant was determined to wage an active campaign of sustained offensive operations, and he and Meade remolded the Army of the Potomac into a hardened, durable force capable of successfully prosecuting such a campaign. The army that broke camp on May 4, 1864, was larger, better-drilled, more purposeful, and more professional than it had been five months earlier, and it was this army, guided by skilled leadership, which would eventually compel the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia.

Prelude

The Army of the Potomac passed the last six months of 1863 in marked contrast to the first six months. Debilitated and deeply scarred by two enormously costly three-day battles, Chancellorsville and Gettysburg, the army spent the rest of the

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summer trying to regain its former strength. Its commander, General Meade, warily parried each thrust that his counterpart, Robert E. Lee, attempted, thus resulting in a great deal of marching but very little fighting. Meade did attempt to outflank the Confederate right at Mine Run in late November (when both armies had ostensibly settled into winter quarters), but the tardiness of some Union commanders combined with the quick Confederate reaction led to a stalemate along the banks of Mine Run. On December 1, Meade, "so much exasperated at the failure of his plans, or of his Corps Commanders, that he was like a Bear with a sore head & no one was willing to approach him,"² reluctantly ordered a retreat to the army's old positions north of the Rapidan. One of Meade's aides, Colonel Theodore Lyman, offered a fitting postscript when he wrote, "And so ends what I think I shall call the Great Seven-days' Flank. If you ask what were the causes of failure, they lie in a nutshell--*Slowness* and want of *Detail*. We have fought for two years and a half, but it takes no wiseacre to see that we yet have much to learn. Were it not for the remarkable intelligence of the men, we could not do even as well as we do."³

The army commenced its retreat on December 2, and over the next few weeks the regiments settled into the positions they would occupy for the next five months. The Culpeper County winter encampment, as the largest winter encampment of the war, covered a large amount of territory in Culpeper County and a small area in Fauquier County. The individual corps were positioned like the spokes of a wheel some sixty miles in circumference. The First Corps occupied the town of Culpeper while the Second Corps took up position around Stevensburg, almost directly to the south of Meade's headquarters at Brandy Station. The Third Corps camped in and around Brandy Station, in the approximate center of the whole

² David S. Sparks, ed., Inside Lincoln's Army: The Diary of Marsena Rudolph Patrick, Provost Marshal General, Army of the Potomac (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1964), p. 318.

³ George R. Agassiz, ed., Meade's Headquarters, 1863-1865: Letters of Colonel Theodore Lyman, from the Wilderness to Appomattox (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1922), p. 59. The italics are Lyman's.

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encampment, and the Sixth Corps was encamped a few miles due north. The Fifth Corps was stationed east of the Rappahannock, at Rappahannock Station, primarily to guard the Orange & Alexandria Railroad.

Camp Construction

Free from the rigors of campaigning and the hazards of combat, the soldiers turned their attention to more immediate matters, such as the construction of orderly camps and comfortable huts. The experience of past winters proved invaluable, as the soldiers knew not only how to build for efficiency and comfort but also how to construct sanitary camps and extensive corduroy road networks. A member of the 19th Maine wrote, "The early months of the winter spent on Cole's Hill [just north of Hansborough Ridge] were in pleasant contrast to the gloomy encampment the preceding winter at Falmouth. Profiting by experience, the men were enabled to build substantial quarters and live more comfortably."⁴ An officer in the nearby 20th Massachusetts echoed these sentiments. "One of the many advantages gained by sending recruits into the old regiments," he wrote, "instead of forming them into new ones, was that they were taught by the example of their veteran comrades just what to do and how to do it, both for health and comfort."⁵

The veterans also benefitted from the presence of agents of the Christian Commission and Sanitary Commission. Sanitary Commission agents inspected camps for cleanliness and proper sanitation and also furnished blankets, foodstuffs, and other comfort items donated by citizens on the home front. The Christian Commission, among other duties, furnished each regiment with a large canvas tent to be used as a roof in the construction of regimental chapels. Both organizations labored tirelessly to improve the physical and spiritual lives of the soldiers in camp.

⁴ John Day Smith, The History of the Nineteenth Regiment of Maine Volunteer Infantry, 1862-1865 (Minneapolis, Minnesota: The Great Western Printing Company, 1909), p. 125.

⁵ Bruce, Twentieth Massachusetts (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1906), p. 324.

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In many respects, the encampment more closely resembled a village than an army camp. The enlisted men's huts were aligned in rows along company roads while the noncommissioned officers and company commanders usually positioned themselves at the end of each row. In addition to aligning the huts in rows, the soldiers constructed corduroy walkways and roads to connect both individual huts and separate camps. This road system facilitated the transport of both troops and supplies, especially during the times when the encampment became a quagmire of mud and snow. Some regiments and brigades, taking advantage of the canvas roofs provided to them by the Christian Commission, constructed chapels for daily religious services. The Second Corps even built a "large frame structure about one hundred feet by fifty feet wide [and] . . . decorated with the Regimental and Headquarters flags"⁶ near Corps headquarters to host its annual Washington's Birthday Ball. Given the relative comforts of the encampment, many soldiers developed a fondness for their camps. A soldier in the 1st Minnesota recalled that "many of the soldiers had become attached to this, their abode for the last four months, and if it did not seem like home, it certainly often presented a homelike appearance."⁷

The construction of orderly, sanitary, and comfortable camp sites, reflecting an increased discipline throughout the army, benefitted the army on two levels. This improved proficiency in building good camps lessened the effects of such perennial problems as disease and discontent. Thus, when Meade and Grant actively began to reshape the army starting in March, it was less distracted by minor problems and more ready to accept these changes. On the most basic level, however, the efficiency of the Brandy Station encampment soothed the soldiers' psyches and allowed them quickly to distance themselves from the previous year's campaigning while also buoying their morale for the coming campaign.

⁶ Joseph R. C. Ward, History of the One Hundred and Sixth Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteers, 2d Brigade, 2d Division, 2d Corps, 1861-1865 (Philadelphia: F. McManus, Jr. & Co., 1906), p. 233.

⁷ Aaron Lee, From the Atlantic to the Pacific (Seattle: Metropolitan Press, 1915), p. 143.

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Morale

The healthy morale of the Army of the Potomac during the winter of 1863-1864 became just as essential to the transformation of the army as increased discipline, for two reasons. First, no leader would be able to reinvigorate and retool the Army of the Potomac if the troops did not ultimately believe in their prospects for success. Second, the terms of enlistment of approximately half of the army's soldiers were due to expire by the beginning of the next campaign, and the morale of the troops would play a key role in determining whether or not they would reenlist. Somehow, the defeatism which permeated some parts of the Army of the Potomac would have to be replaced with a spirit of confidence, if not optimism.

The break from campaigning brought an initial sense of relief and excitement; the soldiers had survived another campaign and looked forward to a period when they could physically and mentally recuperate in camp, if not at home. An officer of the 20th Massachusetts described this feeling when he wrote, "With the long encampment comes a relaxation from that strain upon the nervous system which during an active campaign is always present and bears down upon the physical powers of the men with a force that would break down the strongest constitution but for the changes of scenes and occupation which the frosts of winter are sure to bring about. Without such rest and relief it is doubtful if one in a hundred . . . would be able to survive three successive campaigns like those of 1863 or 1864. Hence it was that the order to go into winter quarters was received with quiet satisfaction."⁸

Furloughs also played an important role in boosting the army's spirits. Furlough recipients welcomed the opportunity to see their friends and families, some for the first time in over two years, and were charged with the task of bringing back news from home to their units in camp. Lieutenant Colonel Bruce of the 20th

⁸Bruce, The Twentieth Massachusetts, p. 332.

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Massachusetts believed that "these simple recitals . . . were . . . on the whole beneficial, for they recalled experiences once enjoyed, which all again hoped to realize."⁹

To the majority of men who remained in camp, however, life was not necessarily dull. Although inclement weather kept them from drilling for much of the winter, camp duties included chopping wood, building roads, going on picket, camp guard, etc. One member of the neighboring Second Division reflected that "chopping fuel and timber for corduroy roads, police duty and camp guard kept us busy and out of mischief the balance of the time."¹⁰ Recreational activities also kept the soldiers out of mischief. The Washington's Birthday Ball, which included Vice-President Hannibal Hamlin and members of Congress as guests, was a much-anticipated social extravaganza, and St. Valentine's Day and St. Patrick's Day were celebrated as well. For those seeking conventional entertainment there were debates, plays, lectures, and concerts while the less sedentary types indulged in snowball fights (One soldier wrote "The whole [Third] Brigade [Third Division] was at it. 125th [NY] and 126th [NY] whipped No. 11th [NY] and 39th [NY]."¹¹), baseball, and football. Despite their lack of success on the battlefield and the forced inactivity of a winter encampment, the men of the Army of the Potomac managed to maintain a generally high state of morale during the winter of 1863-1864.

Thus, the army that encamped in Culpeper County in December 1863 was ready to become a more professional, effective fighting force. It was an army of veterans whose experience had taught it how to construct comfortable winter camps and how to survive the lull of winter without becoming demoralized. Although these veterans had

⁹ Bruce, The Twentieth Massachusetts, p. 337.

¹⁰ Henry Roback, The Veteran Volunteers of Herkimer and Oswego Counties in the War of the Rebellion: Being a History of the 152nd New York Volunteers (Utica, New York: Press of L.C. Childs and Son, 1888), p. 60.

¹¹ John C. Scott, John Scott's War: A Diary of a Union Soldier with the Army of the Potomac (Lecompton, Kansas: Lecompton Historical Society, 1985), p. 15.

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suffered numerous defeats and lost many companions, many still maintained a positive outlook. One officer wrote, "The expectation, which was destined to be disappointed, was that before another summer should be reached the southern Confederacy would be numbered among the shadow of things that were."¹² A colonel in the 12th New Jersey (Second Brigade, Third Division) shared this optimism, writing "I feel very sure I will be at home next winter to stay."¹³ The men of the Army of the Potomac were ready to fight again.

Reenlistment

One major obstacle to the professional transformation of the army loomed large on the horizon, however, as the specter of reenlistment threatened to negate all of the progress which had been accomplished to date. The Army of the Potomac was a veteran army, with a vast majority of the troops as veterans of at least one campaign, but the enlistments of many of these veterans were due to expire by the middle of the summer of 1864. These veteran troops not only comprised the army's most competent and reliable battlefield forces; they also provided a nucleus around which new recruits could be molded into good soldiers. No single problem that confronted the Army of the Potomac during the winter of 1863-1864 threatened such dire consequences as the reenlistment issue.

¹² Bruce, The Twentieth Massachusetts, p. 332.

¹³ Edward G. Longacre, To Gettysburg and Beyond: The Twelfth New Jersey Volunteer Infantry, II Corps, Army of the Potomac, 1862-1865 (Hightstown, New Jersey: Longstreet House, 1988), p. 180. The italics are the author's.

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The reenlistment problem plagued the Union in all theaters, for the enlistments of 455 of the Union's 956 volunteer regiments were due to expire by the middle of the next campaign.¹⁴ Overall, 268,114 three-year and hundred-day volunteers would be eligible to leave the army by October 31, 1864.¹⁵ The Army of the Potomac, as the Union's largest army, stood to lose more than fifty thousand men, or approximately one-half of its strength. Many of these veterans had enlisted for three years in the war's opening months, and in less than six months they would be faced with the choice of returning to a home which most had barely seen in three years or continuing to fight in a war that had dragged on far longer than anyone had predicted. The fortunes of the Union depended to a large extent on their decisions.

The prospect of a large-scale erosion of manpower from the Army of the Potomac threatened to undermine the whole regenerative nature of winter quarters. The Second Corps, for example, suffered some 7,200 battlefield losses in 1863, and it depended upon the period of peace provided by the winter encampment to absorb new recruits into the ranks. Brigadier General Francis A. Walker, the official historian of the Second Corps, marked the winter of 1863-1864 as "[the time] when the shattered regiments regained form and tone; when the new men learned the ways of the old, and caught the spirit of the organization they had entered. [By December 1863, the] time had now come for a fierce and o'er-mastering change in the constituents, and by necessary consequence in some degree, in the

¹⁴ Shelby Foote, The Civil War: A Narrative, vol. III (New York: Random House, 1974), pp. 138-139. According to Foote, 81 batteries of volunteer artillery, "more than half" of the Union's artillery force, were also due to be mustered out by the summer of 1864.

¹⁵ Annual Report of the Secretary of the War, at the Second Session of the Thirty-Eighth Congress (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1865), p. 21. Ultimately, 136,300 veterans reenlisted whereas 131,814 veterans chose to return home. Some of these veterans who did not reenlist returned to the Army at a later date, thus joining with the new recruits to provide the Union with 447,099 volunteers by October 31, 1864.

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character of the Second Corps. Men, more than there were remaining in the original regiments, were, on a single day, to be poured into the corps, and the new body, thus composed, was to be thrown into one of the most furious campaigns of human history."¹⁶ This transformation could not take place without the presence of the veterans.

While the Army of the Potomac confronted the prospect of a large-scale exodus of veteran troops, the Union as a whole struggled to fill its manpower needs. In March 1863 Congress passed the Federal Conscription Act, which divided the Union into districts and assigned a manpower quota to each district. Failure to meet these quotas would result in conscription. The draft, with its allowance for a \$300 commutation fee or the hiring of a substitute in lieu of service, generated enormous controversy, and riots rocked New York and Boston in July.

In order to fill their manpower quotas, most districts offered bounties to attract new volunteers and persuade veterans to reenlist. Towns and states offered bounties of \$300 in addition to the \$400 offered by the federal government. In some areas a new volunteer, through the combination of various bounties, could garner as much as \$1,000 just by enlisting.¹⁷ Corruption arose as a consequence of the competition between various state draft districts as they strove to meet their volunteer quotas, and bounty jumpers (men who enlisted in a regiment but deserted after collecting the bounty) became the scourge of the army.

Differing recruitment strategies added to the Union's manpower woes. States often preferred veterans to form new regiments rather than to reenlist in their old regiments, for this rearrangement of

¹⁶ Brigadier General Francis A. Walker, History of the Second Army Corps (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1891), p. 398.

¹⁷ John Niven, Connecticut for the Union: The Role of the State in the Civil War (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale Press, 1965), p. 91.

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numbers would help them meet their volunteer quotas and, thus, avoid the draft.¹⁸ Federal authorities, on the other hand, focused on the reenlistment of veterans, whose skills and experience would be sorely needed in camp in Culpeper County. They formulated a standard inducement for reenlisting as a unit, which entailed a \$400 bounty and a thirty-day furlough for each soldier who reenlisted, provided at least three-quarters of those who were eligible did so. The reenlistment also had to occur after September 30, 1863, and at a time when the veteran had less than one year remaining in his original enlistment.¹⁹ Military authorities in Washington, D.C., hoped that the combination of inducements and patriotism would convince enough veterans to sign up for another three years, especially if the prospects for ending the war in 1864 looked promising.

The question of reenlistment placed the veterans in a difficult situation; many were torn between the desire to return home to their families while they were still alive and the patriotic impulse to continue fighting for the Union. Some felt that they had already fulfilled their duty to their country and that it was time for others to assume this responsibility. Others resented the large bounties that new recruits were receiving. Another group, while not especially patriotic, simply believed that they had to fight until a decision was reached, one way or another. Undoubtedly, many soldiers felt pressured by their peers to

¹⁸ Andrew E. Ford, The Story of the Fifteenth Regiment Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry in the Civil War, 1861-1864 (Clinton, New York: Press of W. J. Coulter, 1898), p. 317; Lieutenant Colonel Charles H. Banes, History of the Philadelphia Brigade (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott and Co., 1876), p. 217. Banes wrote, "The practice of increasing the force of the army by adding entire organizations of new troops . . . was adopted as the policy of several of the States. . . . The new organization system was probably adopted as the easier method to raise men . . . [but] this practice was an unwise one."

¹⁹ Ford, The Fifteenth Massachusetts, p. 318. Although these conditions were general standards, some variations did occur in isolated instances.

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reenlist. Whatever their feelings and motivations were, the veterans of the Army of the Potomac were being called on to make a tremendous sacrifice.

Ultimately, the Army of the Potomac retained enough veterans to be able to continue its transformation into a better trained, more disciplined, and more professional army. Some 27,767 soldiers committed themselves to another three-year term by April 1864; this represented approximately one-half of the total number of veterans whose enlistments were due to expire by the middle of 1864.²⁰ The soldiers' justifications for reenlisting varied widely and represented an profound diversity in their outlooks on the war. A captain in the 10th New York observed that "[t]housands . . . took advantage of the order [which provided furloughs for those who reenlisted]. . . . The promulgation of this order was a wise stroke of policy on the part of the Government, and secured the services of an army of veterans for future campaigns."²¹ A soldier in the 20th Massachusetts agreed that these inducements were a persuasive thing, writing to his wife that "it is very strange that so many of the men in the regiment have reenlisted after enduring so many dangers & hardships but the money will do almost anything but if they will let me come home they may have all the money for I will not knowingly or willingly stay here a single day more than I can help."²²

²⁰ Foote, The Civil War, vol. III, p. 129. A total of 136,000 Union veterans reenlisted for another three years.

²¹ Captain Charles W. Cowtan, Services of the Tenth New York Volunteers (National Zouaves) in the War of the Rebellion (New York: Charles H. Ludwig, 1882), p. 235.

²² Albert A. Manley, "Letters of Albert A. Manley," private collection of William Manley, Washington, D.C.

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Still others claimed that the arrival of Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant in March "was a patent influence on the reenlistments."²³ However, the most common motivations were probably peer pressure and the sense that one must see the war through to its end (whatever and whenever that may be). One soldier from the 19th Massachusetts explained his reenlistment by saying, "Well, if new men won't finish this job, old men must, and as long as Uncle Sam wants a man, here's Ben Falls."²⁴ Another complained that "[t]hey use a man here just as they do a turkey at a shooting match--fire at it all day and if they don't kill it, they raffle it off in the evening; so with us, if they can't kill you in three years, they want you for three more, but I'll stay."²⁵

Regardless of their rationale for reenlisting, these veterans did not enter into this new commitment lightly. They had survived almost three full years of camp life and combat and had witnessed countless horrors along the way. They all had lost friends and acquaintances, and clearly more would perish before the war came to an end. One eyewitness described the reenlistment of the 19th Massachusetts as follows: "Each of the men knew just what war was. He had experienced it, had seen his comrades swept away by shot and shell and foul disease and his regiment dwindle until only a remnant of its former strength remained. These veterans did not have in their second enrollment the inspiration and excitement of war meetings or the novelty of new gold-trimmed uniforms to urge them on, but [possessed] . . . a full knowledge of the duties

²³ Ernest I. Waite, History of the Nineteenth Regiment Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry 1861-1865 (Salem, Massachusetts: The Salem Press, 1906), p. 283.

²⁴ Waite, Nineteenth Massachusetts, p. 282.; Massachusetts Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines in the Civil War, vol. II (Norwood, Massachusetts: Norwood Press, 1931), p. 416. Ironically, Sergeant Falls, who had enlisted on August 28, 1861, and was awarded the Medal of Honor for capturing a Confederate flag at Gettysburg, would die on May 10 from wounds sustained at Spotsylvania.

²⁵ Waite, Nineteenth Massachusetts, p. 282.

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required, the hardships to be endured, and the probability that many would either be killed or wounded before their term expired."²⁶ Nevertheless, these veterans did reenlist, thus providing the Army of the Potomac with a trained core of experienced soldiers around which the new recruits could be molded. The transformation of the army would continue.

The reenlistment of more than twenty-seven thousand veterans guaranteed that the Army of the Potomac would still be able to field a relatively strong and competent force in the spring of 1864, but this did not solve the army's manpower problems completely. The army still needed tens of thousands of new recruits to fill its ranks, and these newcomers needed to be amalgamated quickly and successfully into existing units. This process presented a wide array of problems which had to be overcome in a short amount of time.

New Recruits

The recruits who poured into the Culpeper County encampment during the winter of 1863-1864 differed greatly from the recruits who had preceded them. Whereas most recruits previously had volunteered out of patriotic impulse, a large number of these new recruits were either conscripts, substitutes, or bounty hunters. "The men who were coming into the ranks now," according to historian Bruce Catton, "were for the most part either men who had been made to come or men who had been paid to come."²⁷ The muster rolls for the 14th Connecticut (Third Division, Second Brigade--camped just south of Stevensburg at Stony Mountain) reveal that conscripts and substitutes comprised between one-third and one-half of the

²⁶ Waitt, Nineteenth Massachusetts, p. 284.

²⁷ Bruce Catton, A Stillness at Appomattox, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1953), p. 23.

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complements of each of the companies in the regiment.²⁸ Bounty jumpers--those men who enlisted in order to collect a bounty and then deserted--created a new problem, for they eroded army discipline and sapped the strength of the army. Many veterans viewed these new arrivals with a mixture of envy and contempt. Lieutenant Colonel Bruce of the 20th Massachusetts expressed the thoughts of a number of veterans when he wrote, "The recruits received in 1861 and 1862 had proved worthy associates of the men earlier in the service, but during 1863 a new element had been received, the value of which was far below the old standard."²⁹

The addition of immigrant recruits who spoke little or no English posed an additional problem. The 20th Massachusetts, for example, received 116 German-speaking recruits on April 22, 1864, and the 19th Massachusetts also received an influx of German-speaking recruits. Apparently, these recruits acquitted themselves well, for one officer in the Second Division recalled that "in spite of this disadvantage and the inconvenience resulting from [their] inability to speak our language, they made rapid progress toward efficiency. . . . From the time they reported for duty, the influence and example of their associates gave them lessons of experience and supplemented the instructions of officers."³⁰ A soldier in the 20th, however, felt that it was "getting to be a Dutch regiment & I don't feel contented in it."³¹

Some of the veterans' criticism of the new recruits must be attributed to the skepticism with which veterans naturally regarded newcomers. These new recruits would soon march into battle alongside the veterans, but their ability as soldiers had yet to

²⁸ Record of the Service of Connecticut Men in the Army and Navy of the United States During the War of Rebellion (Hartford: Press of The Case, Lockwood and Brainard Co., 1889), p. 551.

²⁹ Bruce, The Twentieth Massachusetts, p. 328.

³⁰ Lieutenant Colonel Charles H. Banes, History of the Philadelphia Brigade (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott and Co., 1876), p. 218.

³¹ Manley, Manley Letters, private collection.

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be determined. One veteran wrote, "It was known that many new men would be forwarded before the opening of the spring campaign, and what their character would be was a constant subject of speculation, interest, and fear. . . . The few remaining veterans who had stormed up the streets of Fredericksburg and hurled back Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, had an interest in those who were to be on their right and left in the like days that were sure to come, and they eyed the new men as if in some way they thought their own destinies were intimately connected with them."³² Whether or not this skepticism was justified, by 1864 there was a widespread perception among veterans that a majority of the new recruits lacked moral character and patriotism and were suspect as soldiers.

Nevertheless, the Army of the Potomac largely overcame the handicaps imposed by bounty hunters, immigrant recruits, and general inexperience. Through strict discipline and the stabilizing influence of the veterans it was successfully able to integrate the vast majority of these men into its ranks by the beginning of May 1864, gaining renewed strength and energy in the process. During the spring of 1864 it would continue to drill and train and prepare for the upcoming campaign. "The Army of the Potomac," wrote Lieutenant Colonel Bruce, "notwithstanding its heavy losses and many causes for discouragement, notwithstanding that it was being filled up with men of little or no value, was still in its best state, and would soon be ready to put forth the greatest effort it was ever called upon to make."³³ This statement perfectly illustrates the great significance of the Culpeper County encampment.

Resupply

In addition to filling the army's depleted ranks, another of the primary goals of the winter encampment was to resupply the army. Long months of campaigning exacted a toll on the equipment and stores of the Army of the Potomac, as food, clothing, weapons, and

³² Bruce, The Twentieth Massachusetts, pp. 328-329.

³³ Bruce, The Twentieth Massachusetts, p. 336.

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ammunition all had to be repaired or replaced. Winter traditionally was the best time to refurbish the army since it offered a long, generally uninterrupted period of time in which to take inventory of what was needed and then to go about filling those needs systematically. The encampment's proximity to the Orange and Alexandria Railroad proved to be the key factor in the successful resupply of the army, for supplies could be easily transported from the capital area southward to the depot at Brandy Station. While the army did have to guard the railroad by posting garrisons at various points along the way, it basically maintained a secure and effective supply line for the entire winter.

Consequently, the depot at Brandy Station became a whirlwind of activity from December to early May. One supply officer described the scene as follows: "It was a very busy place. . . . [Stores] for the ordnance, hospital, and clothing departments were put under cover in temporary buildings, while forage, and unperishable quartermaster and commissary stores, were racked up and covered by tarpaulins along the track and sidings. Some of the piles were immense, and from morning till night trains of army wagons were coming and going, or stood occupying all the open space around the station, waiting for their turn to load."³⁴ In addition to accumulating this prodigious amount of supplies and materiel, the quartermaster's corps somehow had to transport these stores to their final destinations in various regimental, brigade, and divisional camps. This was accomplished by horse- or mule-drawn wagon. By May 1864 the Army of the Potomac possessed 4,300 wagons, 34,981 "artillery, cavalry, and ambulance horses," and 22,528 mules.³⁵ Every day thousands of these wagons plied the corduroy roads which had been constructed to link the camps to each other

³⁴ Morris Schaff, The Battle of the Wilderness (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1910), p. 34.

³⁵ Schaff, The Battle of the Wilderness, p. 37; John Cannon, History of Grant's Campaign for the Capture of Richmond (1864-1865) (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1869), p. 70. Cannon claimed that when the Army of the Potomac marched, its baggage train measured "twenty to thirty miles." While this can not be corroborated, it suffices to say that the baggage train was extremely long and cumbersome.

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and to headquarters at Brandy Station. They hauled the food, ammunition, clothing, and other supplies to the soldiers' camps and returned to the depot to load up for another run. Luckily for the army, supplies were plentiful, and as one contemporary historian wrote, "the profuse accumulation of stores, and the facilities of transport, carried the day."³⁶

The Army of the Potomac, then, clearly benefitted from its proximity to the Orange and Alexandria Railroad and was able to reequip itself successfully during the winter of 1863-1864. This probably contributed to the efficiency of the camp and the favorable light in which it was remembered by the troops who wintered there. Nevertheless, ample supplies and a core of rested veterans did not of themselves make for a successful, professional army. These were two important ingredients, but they needed leadership to assemble all the essential elements and galvanize them into one unit.

Leadership

Leadership arguably constitutes the most important element of any army. Armies, especially volunteer armies, need skilled and able leaders to discipline them, unify them, and command them in an effective tactical and strategic manner. Each piece in the command structure, ranging from non-commissioned officers all the way up to the commander of the army, must fulfill its role responsibly and effectively if the army is to succeed.

The Army of the Potomac, plagued by failure since its inception in 1861, suffered from poor leadership on many levels. First, it experienced the growing pains inherent in the formation of a volunteer army. Many brigadiers and regimental commanders, regardless of military qualifications or experience, received their

³⁶Cannon, Grant's Campaign, p. 69.

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commands solely on the basis of political or recruiting merits.³⁷ (Colonel Edward Baker, a former Congressman from California who lost his life after blundering into military disaster at Balls Bluff, stands as a notable example of this policy.) Similarly, many company commanders, who were elected by their men, lacked the experience if not the ability to become sound military leaders. As the war progressed, however, some officers benefitted from invaluable campaign experience and became good leaders while other, less competent officers either left the army or were forced out. By the winter of 1863-1864, the majority of the regimental- and company-level officers in the army qualified as competent leaders.

At the top level, the Army of the Potomac faltered for different reasons. The corps commanders and commanders of the army were almost without exception Regular Army officers--West Point graduates trained to be good engineers and officers experienced in the ways of army life. Certain generals, including George Meade and his predecessors Joseph Hooker, Ambrose Burnside, and George McClellan, had gained some combat experience through their service in the Mexican War. Nevertheless, a good number of these general officers simply were not effective leaders. Whether they failed because they were overly cautious or obsolescent in their ways, or because they were forced to function at a command level not commensurate with their abilities, they were unable to lead the Army of the Potomac to victory.³⁸

³⁷ Bruce, The Twentieth Massachusetts, p. 331. Bruce complained that "[f]or two years political and personal influence were potent factors at Washington in army appointments, and its baneful effect was always felt, though during the last few years with lessened force."

³⁸ Warren W. Hasler, Jr., Commanders of the Army of the Potomac (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1962), pp. 100-101, p. 129. For example, Major General Darius N. Couch asserted that Burnside "was a brave, loyal man, but. . .[he did not have] the military ability to command the Army of the Potomac." Meade, writing in October 1862 believed that "Hooker [was] a very good soldier and a capital officer to command an army corps, but I should doubt his qualifications to command a large army."

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Repeated failure and combat casualties brought constant change in divisional, corps, and army command, and this unstable command structure adversely affected the Army of the Potomac. One Second Division officer, writing at the beginning of the Culpeper County encampment, remarked that "[i]n a little over two years we had served under four commanders-in-chief [and] had seen over twenty corps commanders come and go, while division chiefs had been so numerous that even their names could hardly be remembered."³⁹

The appointment of Meade to command the Army of the Potomac did not immediately solve the army's leadership crisis. Although he received credit for holding the army together at Gettysburg, his subsequent actions were sharply criticized. Indeed, speculation about whether or not Meade would be replaced as commander of the army and, if so, by whom, persisted throughout the winter of 1863-1864. Colonel Theodore Lyman, one of Meade's aides, noted in a letter dated December 10, 1863, that "I observe the papers continue to discuss the succession of the General. He himself thinks he will be relieved, but I doubt it. If for no other reason, because it is hard to find anyone for the post."⁴⁰ Another soldier, commenting on speculation over Meade's replacement in March 1864 wrote: "But who is to lead the [Army of the Potomac] this time? . . . Perhaps Sedgwick is to be the leader this time . . . he is still in command of the Sixth Corps. On the left . . . is Hancock, with his famous Second Corps. Some say he is to be the leader. But, brave and capable as are both of these men, they have no record like Gettysburg to inspire confidence."⁴¹ Meade's detractors in Washington even compelled him to testify before the Congressional Committee on the Conduct of the War during the first

³⁹ Bruce, The Twentieth Massachusetts, p. 331.

⁴⁰ Agassiz, Meade's Headquarters, p. 60.

⁴¹ E. W. Locke, Three Years in Camp and Hospital (Boston: George D. Russell and Co., 1871), p. 276.

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week in March regarding his alleged call for a retreat after the second day of fighting at Gettysburg.⁴² It was not until the arrival of Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant as General-in-Chief of the armies in late March 1864 and his assurance that Meade would remain in command of the Army of the Potomac, that the speculation over Meade's replacement finally ceased.

Meade's uncertain status as commander of the Army of the Potomac definitely did not contribute to a stable command structure, but other questions also dogged the army's command. John Sedgwick, the commander of the Sixth Corps and a supporter of General George B. McClellan, was the target of suspicion and scorn from many Republican congressmen, and at one point the decision was made (though never implemented) to transfer him to a command in the Shenandoah Valley.⁴³ Major General Winfield Scott Hancock, the popular and able leader of the Second Corps, spent most of the winter at home in Philadelphia recuperating from his nagging Gettysburg wound and recruiting men to fill the ranks of his corps. His temporary replacement, Major General Gouverneur K. Warren, was blamed by many for the army's failure at Mine Run. Rumors about a possible reorganization of the army began to circulate in January 1864, and these rumors carried reports of changes in command at the corps level.⁴⁴ This continued uncertainty and instability in the upper levels of command did not bode well for the upcoming campaign.

⁴² George Meade, ed., The Life and Letters of George Gordon Meade, Major-General United States Army, vol. II (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), p. 169.

⁴³ Major General John Gibbon, Personal Recollections of the Civil War (Dayton, Ohio: reprinted by Morningside Bookshop, 1977), p. 209.

⁴⁴ Allan Nevins, ed., A Diary of Battle: The Personal Journals of Colonel Charles S. Wainwright, 1861-1865 (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc., 1962), pp. 314, 331; Catton, A Stillness at Appomattox, p. 50. Sedgwick wrote of hearing rumors about a shake-up which would "get rid of some obnoxious generals."

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Grant

As the weather began to improve gradually with the coming of spring, the Culpeper County encampment suddenly came alive with activity. While the winter months marked a time of greater non-military activity (i.e., road building, wood cutting, etc.), the events of March and April radically reshaped the Army of the Potomac. In rapid succession Meade reorganized the army, Grant arrived to plan the spring campaign against Lee, the army grew in size, and active drilling was increased. Grant brought with him the idea of a sustained offensive, and he and Meade set out to strengthen the Army of the Potomac by every means possible. The army that had been preserved in relative dormancy for three months would soon emerge from its cocoon as a dynamic new fighting force. One of the driving forces behind this springtime transformation of the Army of the Potomac was the promotion of Ulysses S. Grant to General-in-Chief of the Army. Grant, who would later establish his headquarters with the Army of the Potomac, devised the strategy--sustained offensive operations aimed at destroying the Confederates' armies--which would ultimately lead to Union victory.

Grant also reinforced the army with troops from the rear echelon, ordered extensive drilling to prepare the army for the upcoming campaign, and named Major General Philip H. Sheridan to command the Cavalry Corps. Under Grant's overall supervision, the Army of the Potomac completed its winter-long transformation from an army of amateur soldiers in disarray to a well-provisioned, purposeful, disciplined army of veterans and well-trained recruits.

Congress officially reinstituted the rank of lieutenant general on February 29, 1864, and on March 10, 1864, President Lincoln appointed Grant to succeed Major General Henry W. Halleck in "command of the Armies of the United States."⁴⁵ Grant, hailed as the hero of Vicksburg and Chattanooga, enjoyed widespread support in Washington. Upon appointing Grant as General-in-Chief, Lincoln wrote that "[a]s the country herein trusts you, so, under God, it

⁴⁵ The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Series 1, vol. XXXIII, p. 663. Halleck had resigned as General-in-Chief of the Army on March 9, 1864.

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will sustain you. I scarcely need to add that with what I here speak for the nation goes my own personal hearty concurrence."⁴⁶ Crowds followed Grant's every move in Washington, and a sense of optimism pervaded in many circles in the nation's capital, for Grant enjoyed a widely-held reputation as a fighter and a winner. The question remained, however, whether or not his success in the West would carry over to the war in Virginia.

Grant's appointment as General-in-Chief touched off a flurry of speculation regarding command of the Army of the Potomac. Many observers expected Grant either to assume command of the army himself or to bring with him a general from the West, most probably Major General William T. Sherman. Meade offered to resign as commander of the Army of the Potomac when Grant arrived on an inspection tour on March 10, but Grant refused to accept his resignation. Grant, in fact, did not establish his permanent headquarters with the Army of the Potomac until March 24, 1864. Nevertheless, his presence with the army created a potentially awkward command situation, for while Meade was nominally in command of the army, its movements would be dictated by Grant's strategy.

The successful resolution of this command conflict provided the Army of the Potomac with its most capable leadership of the war. Meade, for his part, admired Grant's "indomitable energy and great tenacity of purpose" and believed that "Grant ha[d] undoubtedly shown very superior abilities."⁴⁷ He repeatedly affirmed his desire to do what was best for the army and believed it was his duty to administer the army in accordance with Grant's orders. Grant, impressed by Meade's original offer to resign in favor of a Grant appointee, wrote that "[t]his incident gave me even a more favorable opinion of Meade than did his great victory at Gettysburg

⁴⁶ John Y. Simon, ed., The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant, Vol. X: January 1-May 31, 1864 (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1982), p. 195.

⁴⁷ Meade, ed., Letters, vol. II, pp. 162-163.

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the July before."⁴⁸ The command structure that thus evolved placed Grant in overall strategic command while Meade continued to control the administration of the army.

On a command level, Grant's decision to set up headquarters in Culpeper, Virginia, with the Army of the Potomac gave the army more stature and prominence than before. Meade's position as commander prior to Grant's arrival had been tenuous, for he did not possess the full confidence of his superiors in Washington. Meade described his "position before" Grant's arrival as having "inadequate means [with] no power myself to increase them."⁴⁹ Grant, on the other hand, was empowered to do whatever was necessary to achieve victory in Virginia. Consequently, Grant was able to strengthen the Army of the Potomac in ways that Meade could not. Meade noted Grant's powers when he wrote on March 27 that, "As yet he has indicated no purpose to interfere with me; on the contrary, [he] acts promptly on all my suggestions, and seems desirous of making his stay here only the means of strengthening and increasing my forces. God knows I shall hail his advent with delight if it results in carrying on operations in the manner I have always desired they should be carried on."⁵⁰ Grant's powers enabled him to adopt a strategy of sustained offensive operations and also allowed him to reshape the army to be able to execute this strategy successfully. The result was a stronger, more potent Army of the Potomac.

Although Grant's promotion to General-in-Chief excited many civilians and government officials, many soldiers in the Army of the Potomac greeted the news with indifference. Grant's arrival at army headquarters in Brandy Station on March 10 drew little fanfare; in fact, one soldier remarked that a "small fight between two [soldiers] would call out twice as many as have come see

⁴⁸ Hasler, Commanders, p. 205.

⁴⁹ Meade, ed., Letters, vol. II, p. 189.

⁵⁰ Meade, ed., Letters, vol. II, pp. 184-185. "Cheerfully will I give him all the credit if he can bring the war to a close," Meade added.

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General Grant make his first appearance in the Army of the Potomac!"⁵¹ The soldiers of the Army of the Potomac had seen many commanders come and go without bringing success on the battlefield, so they were naturally wary of placing too much faith in the abilities of their latest savior. According to one private, "Old soldiers, who had seen many military reputations . . . melt before the battle-fire of the Army of Northern Virginia, and expose the incapacity of our generals, shrugged their shoulders carelessly, and said indifferently; 'Well, let Grant try what he might accomplish. . . . He cannot be worse than his predecessors.' . . . Grant's name aroused no enthusiasm. The Army of the Potomac had passed the enthusiastic stage, and was patiently waiting to be led to victory or final defeat."⁵² Despite this initial lack of enthusiasm, however, many soldiers would eventually approve of Grant's actions and leadership ability.

Reorganization

Grant's arrival coincided with Meade's implementation of the long-awaited reorganization of the Army of the Potomac on March 24, 1864. "[I]n view of the reduced strength of nearly all the regiments serving in this army," Meade wrote in General Order No. 10, the army's five corps were consolidated into three larger corps.⁵³ Three corps commander were relieved in the process. The First Corps, under Major General John Newton, was dissolved, and its divisions were transferred to the Fifth Corps. The Third Corps, commanded by Major General William French, was similarly dissolved, and two of its divisions were transferred to the Second Corps while one went to the Sixth Corps. Both Newton and French

⁵¹ Locke, Camp and Hospital, p. 279. The author clearly exaggerates the indifference with which the army greeted Grant's arrival, but his opinion underscores the jaded character of many veterans of the Army of the Potomac by March 1864.

⁵² Frank Wilkeson, Recollections of a Private Soldier in the Army of the Potomac (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1887), pp. 36-37.

⁵³ Official Records, Series 1, vol. XXXIII, pp. 722-723.

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were relieved of their commands, and Major General George Sykes was replaced as commander of the Fifth Corps by Major General Warren. Major Generals Hancock and Sedgwick retained command of the Second and Sixth Corps, respectively.

Meade's reorganization of the Army of the Potomac posed two major problems. First, the increased size of the three corps threatened to make them cumbersome and unwieldy to maneuver. Whereas the "aggregate present and absent" strengths of the five army corps ranged from approximately 19,000 to 28,000 men each, the three larger corps now numbered between roughly 34,000 and 43,000 men.⁵⁴ Furthermore, the new conglomeration of units in each corps would need time to integrate themselves into one coordinated unit, just as the new divisional and brigade commanders would need time to get acquainted with their new commands and organize their staffs.

On a more common level, the reorganization threatened to erode the morale of the army. Most of the army's soldiers had developed a strong attachment to their units and their unit commanders, and the restructuring of the army would destroy many of these identities. Meade recognized the importance of these corps identities and thus allowed the members of the First and Third Corps to retain their corps badges.⁵⁵ He also wrote of his "hope that the ranks of the army [would] be filled at an early day, so that . . . [the First and Third] corps can again be reorganized."⁵⁶ Nevertheless, many soldiers in the First and Third Corps viewed the disintegration of their corps with great sorrow. Brigadier General Alexander Hays, in command of the Third Division, Second Corps, lamented that "[t]he enemies of our country have, in times past,

⁵⁴ Official Records, Series 1, vol. XXXIII, p. 727.

⁵⁵ Charles W. Cowtan, Services of the Tenth New York Volunteers (National Zouaves) in the War of the Rebellion (New York: Charles H. Ludwig, 1882), p. 240. Cowtan wrote that "the Third Division and a new Fourth Division [of the Second Corps] were organized with the regiments of the Third Corps, which, however, adhered generally thereafter to their own distinctive and memorable 'diamond patch.'"

⁵⁶ Official Records, Series 1, vol. XXXIII, p. 723.

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assailed it [the division] in vain, and now it dissolves by the actions of our own friends."⁵⁷ Similarly, some soldiers in the surviving corps did not want their unity disturbed by transfers from other corps. General Sedgwick, writing just before the reorganization, testified that the Sixth Corps "is entirely harmonious, and there is a great deal of esprit de corps in it. . . . I do not believe that there is a regiment in it that would leave willingly. . . . Since its organization, there has never been a regiment added or detached; this is not the case with the other corps."⁵⁸

The effectiveness of the reorganization of the Army of the Potomac's infantry branch is debatable. Colonel Lyman of Meade's staff applauded the "marvelous changes" that had been carried out, and a captain in the 10th New York believed that the reorganization "added materially to the efficiency of the army."⁵⁹ The three corps that emerged from the reorganization sacrificed maneuverability for sheer power, but this fit well with Grant's plan for a campaign of sustained offensive warfare. As for the morale of the troops, Meade wrote on April 16, 1864, that "[t]he reorganization, now that it is over, meets with universal approbation, and I believe I have gained great credit for the manner in which so disagreeable an operation was made acceptable to those concerned."⁶⁰ Meade's bias is obvious, however, and Francis Walker, the historian of the Second Corps, offered a more balanced opinion when he wrote, "Whether this consolidation was, in the result, advantageous;

⁵⁷ Alexander Hays, Life and Letters of Alexander Hays, Brevet Colonel United States Army Brigadier General and Brevet Major General United States Volunteers George T. Fleming, ed., (Pittsburgh, 1919), p. 562.

⁵⁸ Major General John Sedgwick, Correspondence of John Sedgwick, Major-General (New York: De Vinne Press, 1903), p. 168.

⁵⁹ Agassiz, Meade's Headquarters, p. 80; Cowtan, Tenth New York, p. 239.

⁶⁰ Meade, ed., Letters, vol. II, p. 190.

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whether, for practical or for equitable reasons, the corps to be retained were wisely or rightly selected, we need not here inquire. Suffice it to say that the two corps organizations . . . [were] sacrificed for what was sincerely believed to be the public good."⁶¹

Another major change took place on March 24 when Grant relieved Major General Alfred Pleasonton of his command of the Cavalry Corps. Although the Union cavalry had improved under Pleasonton's command, Grant wanted a more dynamic leader, so he summoned Major General Philip Sheridan from the West to assume command. Grant also named Brigadier General James H. Wilson, then Chief of the Cavalry Bureau in Washington, D.C., to replace Brigadier General Judson Kilpatrick as commander of the Third Division of cavalry (which was encamped around Stevensburg just south of the Second Corps). Although only a month remained until the opening of the spring campaign, both generals instituted significant changes which dramatically improved the readiness and fighting ability of the Army of the Potomac's cavalry.

At the time of Sheridan's arrival, the cavalry was used mainly for picket duty. Cavalry detachments formed a sixty-mile ring that surrounded the Culpeper County encampment, and they patrolled the outer perimeter of the encampment throughout the winter. Wilson wrote that "[t]he greater portion of . . . [his] available force was stretched in one unbroken picket line covering the army's left wing and in sight of it, for twenty-eight miles," and he complained that his division was "badly run down."⁶² He further noted that although the Third Division mustered 3,436 troopers present for duty, "serviceable mounts" for these troopers numbered only 2,692.⁶³ Sheridan did not approve of using cavalry for picket duty, for he believed that the Union cavalry's main duty was to fight the Confederate cavalry. Consequently, he persuaded Meade to withdraw the cavalry detachments from the picket lines and replace them with infantry units.

⁶¹ Walker, Second Corps, p. 398.

⁶² James H. Wilson, Under the Old Flag, vol. I (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1912), pp. 372-373.

⁶³ Wilson, Old Flag, vol. I, p. 373.

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Sheridan and Wilson used the remaining time to refurbish the cavalry and prepare it for its role as a scouting force in the upcoming campaign. Wilson ordered new mounts and Spencer repeating carbines from the Cavalry Bureau, and the entire Cavalry Corps was drilled extensively. According to Wilson, "Drills were instituted, reviews were held, inspections were made, instruction given, and a system of daily administration was instituted, so that by the first of May a visitor to the army would have been impressed by the apparent readiness of the cavalry."⁶⁴ Spared from the rigors of picket duty and thoroughly drilled, the Army of the Potomac's Cavalry Corps would play an increasingly important role in the upcoming campaign. The Artillery Corps was also reorganized, although the changes were far less dramatic than those in the cavalry and infantry branches of the army. Still, this action reinforced the notion that Grant was reshaping the Army of the Potomac into an unstoppable offensive force--one that was capable of sustained and ultimate victory.

The reorganization of the infantry and artillery and the refurbishment of the cavalry were actions undertaken by Grant's subordinates, but the results conformed to the strategy which Grant had devised for the Army of the Potomac. Grant's overall plan for the spring campaigns of 1864 called for "co-operative action of all the Armies in the field as far as this object can be accomplished."⁶⁵ This coordinated advance was to occur on May 1, 1864. As for the Army of the Potomac, Grant wrote to Meade on April 9, 1864, that "Lee's army will be your objective point.

⁶⁴ Wilson, Under the Old Flag, vol. I, pp. 374-375.

⁶⁵ Simon, ed., Grant Papers, Vol. X, p. 245; General Horace Porter, Campaigning with Grant (New York: Century Press, 1897), p. 36. According to Porter, "Grant felt, as he afterward expressed it in his official report, that our armies had acted heretofore too independently of one another--without concert, like a balky team, no two ever pulling together."

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Wherever Lee goes there you will go also. The only point upon which I am now in doubt is whether it will be better to cross the Rapidan above or below him."⁶⁶

Strategy and Preparation

Grant's strategy dictated that the Union Army concentrate its strength in two massive armies which would then focus on destroying their Confederate counterparts. These armies would necessarily be large and powerful in order to be able to wear down the Confederate armies without significantly weakening themselves in the process. Grant's strategy emphasized the destruction of his opponent's armies rather than the seizure of Confederate territory, and his military tactics stressed "continuous hammering" rather than maneuvering for the decisive battle.⁶⁷ Accordingly, he wrote that "I want all commanders to feel that hostile armies, and not cities, are to be their objective points."⁶⁸

The Army of the Potomac's ability to win a campaign of sustained offensive warfare hinged on two key factors. First, the army needed to possess a significant numerical advantage over Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, so that it could better afford to wage a campaign of attrition. Second, the army needed to control its losses in relation to those in Lee's army, so that it could maintain its numerical superiority. Theoretically, if the Army of the Potomac started the campaign with a two-to-one advantage in troops and sustained roughly the same number of casualties as Lee's army, it should be able to destroy the Confederate army while preserving itself as an army of considerable strength. Consequently, the changes which the army underwent in March and April significantly increased the size of the army and made it a more powerful and effective combat force.

⁶⁶ Simon, ed., Grant Papers, Vol. X, p. 274.

⁶⁷ Banes, Philadelphia Brigade, p. 216.

⁶⁸ Porter, Campaigning with Grant, p. 37.

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One of Grant's primary goals in the spring of 1864 was the enlargement of the Army of the Potomac, and in less than two months he succeeded in doing so. During the last two months of the encampment the army experienced increases both in the total number of soldiers on its rolls and in the number of troops present in camp. While only 85,296 of the 148,454 men on the army's roster were present on January 31, 1864, some 110,824 of the army's 158,539 men were in camp exactly two months later. On April 31, one month later, the army numbered 165,757 men, of whom 127,471 were present for duty.⁶⁹ Three factors contributed to this expansion. First, many of the veterans and veteran regiments that had been home on furlough returned to camp by the middle of April. Second, new recruits and regiments continued to join the army. One private remarked that "[w]ith Grant came stricter discipline and recruits by the thousand."⁷⁰ Lieutenant Colonel Banes of the Philadelphia Brigade noted, "The additions that were made to the effective strength of the army consisted principally of entire organizations. New regiments that had recently been formed, and others which had been guarding depots of supply, or performing garrison duty in the forts about Washington, were ordered to the front, and distributed to the different corps."⁷¹

Third, Grant called up heavy artillery regiments from the Washington defenses and troops from other rear echelon duties to serve as infantry units in the Army of the Potomac. On March 24, 1864, he wired Halleck that "3 regiments of Heavy Artillery . . . could be advantageously used with the Army of the Potomac . . . if practicable to spare them from their present stations."⁷² Similarly, Grant ordered the transfer of two regiments of

⁶⁹ Official Records, Series 1, vol. XXXIII, pp. 462, 777, 1036. The number of actual effectives, or those deemed "present for duty, equipped," was somewhat lower than the number of troops simply "present for duty."

⁷⁰ Wilkeson, Recollections, p. 38.

⁷¹ Banes, Philadelphia Brigade, pp. 216-217.

⁷² Simon, ed., Grant Papers: Vol. X, p. 218.

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Pennsylvania Reserve infantry from Alexandria, Virginia, to the army encamped around Brandy Station.⁷³ Grant's decision to strip soldiers from garrison and depot duty and send them to the Army of the Potomac was consistent with his strategy to concentrate all of the Union's military resources in a coordinated campaign to destroy the Confederate armies.

The conversion of these heavy artillery regiments into infantry units elicited a favorable response from the Army of the Potomac's infantry, for many veterans disdained the relatively safe and sheltered existence that the artillerymen had enjoyed for most of the war. Colonel Lyman expressed this sentiment when he wrote on March 30: "The latest joke is the heavy sell that has been practised on some regiments of 'Heavy Artillery,' which had re-enlisted and had been sent home to recruit. Now these gentry, having always been in fortifications, took it for granted they should there continue; consequently the patriotic rush of recruits (getting a big bounty) was most gratifying. . . . Then they returned to the forts round Washington, with the slight difference that the cars kept on, till they got to Brandy Station; and now these mammoth legions are enjoying the best of air under shelter tents."⁷⁴ The infantry veterans welcomed their new colleagues from the heavy artillery to share the sufferings of active campaigning. Still, the new regiments added appreciably to the strength of the army, and one colonel later wrote that "[t]hese troops . . . their

⁷³ Simon, ed., Grant Papers: Vol. X, p. 225.

⁷⁴ Agassiz, Meade's Headquarters, p. 81.

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full ranks contain[ing] as many men as some of the depleted brigades of the veterans . . . presented a fine appearance, and proved of great service in the campaign."⁷⁵

Another of Grant's objectives during his time in Culpeper was the complete and thorough preparation of the army for the upcoming campaign. Harsh winter weather and the large number of troops absent on furlough necessarily prevented more than the occasional drill or review, but drier ground and warmer weather permitted the army to resume regular drilling, inspections, and other training techniques.⁷⁶ A soldier in the Third Brigade's 126th New York wrote that "[d]rills, reviews, and picket duty occupied the men through March and April," while a colleague in the 125th New York remembered that "repeated 'reviews' occurred in April."⁷⁷ This daily routine of military exercise was intended to get the army in fighting shape. Lieutenant Colonel Bruce wrote, "The duty of putting the army in the best possible condition for the coming campaign was an ever present responsibility recognized by every commander from General Meade himself to even the sergeants in command of companies. . . . Every day there were drills of some kind when the weather was favorable, and inspections and reviews were so common that visitors seldom went away without having seen some part of the army displayed before them in its best dress."⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Banes, Philadelphia Brigade, p. 217.

⁷⁶ Waite, Nineteenth Massachusetts, p. 298. Waite wrote, "The weather changed very quickly and the ground was soon in condition for drills, which were at once begun by Major Rice."

⁷⁷ Arabella M. Willson, Disaster, Struggle Triumph: The Adventures of 1000 "Boys in Blue," from August, 1862, to June, 1865 (Albany, New York: The Argus Company, 1870), p. 239; Chaplain Ezra D. Simons, The One Hundred and Twenty-Fifth New York State Volunteers: A Regimental History (New York: Ezra D. Simons, 1888), p. 195.

⁷⁸ Banes, Philadelphia Brigade, p. 217.

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On April 22, Grant reviewed the Second Corps, and one general called it "the finest corps review [he had] ever seen in the army."⁷⁹

This intensive drilling and extensive parading not only sharpened the skills of the veterans, it also helped to integrate the new recruits into the ranks of the army. Referring to the Philadelphia Brigade, Lieutenant Colonel Banes wrote that "[each] of the regiments had a small increase of numbers by the addition of substitutions and conscripts, and every effort was made by General Owen to promote efficiency, by constant drills and inspection."⁸⁰ The new arrivals still lacked the crucial experience which only combat exposure could provide, but at least they learned the rudiments of army formation and maneuver. In the words of one officer from the Second Division, "[t]he parts of the army had now become knitted and welded together, making it a more solid and compact machine which obscured every minor division in the immensity of the great whole."⁸¹

Wary of past emphasis on parades and grand reviews, Meade made sure the men of the Army of the Potomac were also drilled in skills other than marching. Many regiments engaged in bayonet and skirmish drill, and in April Meade authorized ten rounds of ammunition per man for target practice. "It is believed there are men in the army who have been in numerous actions without firing their muskets," a Massachusetts officer wrote of the need for such practice, "and it is known that muskets taken on the field of

⁷⁹ Walker, Second Corps, p. 405; Waitt, The Nineteenth Massachusetts, p. 301. According to Waitt, "Lieut. Gen. Grant, and General Meade . . . expressed much satisfaction with the admirable discipline and perfect construction of both [the Nineteenth and Twentieth Massachusetts] regiments. . . . General Meade said that in all the years of his service in the regular army he had never seen the proficiency of the Nineteenth Massachusetts regiment in the manual of arms equalled."

⁸⁰ Banes, Philadelphia Brigade, p. 215.

⁸¹ Bruce, The Twentieth Massachusetts, p. 335.

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battle have been found filled nearly to the muzzle with cartridges."⁸² Meade, unlike McClellan and Hooker before him, realized that fancy marching and a smart appearance did not necessarily add up to victory on the battlefield.

The thorough preparation of the Army of the Potomac for the approaching campaign also required the adoption of stricter discipline, for the army could not function effectively if its soldiers did not obey orders. Consequently, the officers of the army devoted significant amounts of time and effort to the reinforcement of army discipline. A captain in the 10th New York observed that "[a] rigid system of drill and discipline was put into place [in his regiment] . . . [the officers] labored to insure [good] discipline and all soldierly attainments."⁸³ Similarly, a member of the 19th Massachusetts wrote that "[t]he month of April was spent in perfecting the discipline of the regiment and preparing it for the sterner duties of the campaign. . . . The stern duties of war were vividly exemplified on April 14th when a member of the Nineteenth Massachusetts . . . was hanged for an assault upon an aged woman while he was drunk."⁸⁴ Severe punishment, such as hanging, was intended to deter soldiers from violating army rules and regulations.

The instilling of stricter discipline also served to indoctrinate the new arrivals in the ways of army life. Before learning anything else these new recruits and conscripts needed to learn the importance of obeying orders. One private asserted that the imposition of severe discipline was necessary "to check the insolent tongues and to curb the insubordinate spirits" of the bounty-jumpers who had lately entered the army. He further believed that "[t]he discipline throughout the Army of the Potomac during the winter of 1863-1864 was necessarily severe. . . . The whole army was rapidly assuming the character and bearing of regular troops. . . . Breaches of discipline were promptly and severely punished. . . . [T]he volunteers . . . realized the

⁸² Ford, The Fifteenth Massachusetts, p. 320.

⁸³ Cowtan, Tenth New York, p. 242.

⁸⁴ Waitt, The Nineteenth Massachusetts, p. 300.

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necessity of obedience [but the bounty jumpers] . . . had to be heartlessly moulded into soldiers."⁸⁵ The adoption of stricter discipline aided the Army of the Potomac in its transformation into a more skilled, professional fighting force.

Breaking Camp

By May 3, 1864, both Grant and Meade judged the Army of the Potomac to be at its peak of readiness. On that day "orders were promulgated throughout the Army . . . directing each corps to prepare to march," according to Captain Cowtan of the 10th New York. "Most of the extra baggage, &c., had before this been sent to the depots for removal, and the wagon trains reduced to the lowest minimum."⁸⁶ The men received five days' rations in their knapsacks and ten days' rations to be carried in mule teams. Each soldier also received between forty and sixty rounds of ammunition.⁸⁷ Colonel Lyman wrote that "General Grant is much pleased [with the] discipline and organization [of the army]," and Meade wrote on May 3 that "[i]f hard fighting will do it, I am sure I can rely on my men. They are in fine condition and in the most excellent spirits, and will do all that men can do to accomplish the object."⁸⁸ The lead units of the army broke camp on the night of May 3, and the following morning the remainder of the army followed. The long-awaited spring campaign of 1864 had begun.

The Overland Campaign would severely test the Army of the Potomac's ability to wage a war of attrition, but the army would ultimately survive that test and emerge victorious in April 1865. This success was due in large part to the transformation which had occurred in the Culpeper County encampment during the winter of

⁸⁵ Wilkeson, Recollections, p. 31.

⁸⁶ Cowtan, Tenth New York, p. 244.

⁸⁷ Waite, The Nineteenth Massachusetts, p. 301; Lee, Atlantic to the Pacific, p. 143.

⁸⁸ Agassiz, Meade's Headquarters, p. 84; Meade, ed., Letters, p. 193.

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1863-1864. For one thing, the army that broke camp in May 1864 was larger than at any other time in its history. This gains added significance when viewed in light of the manpower shortage and reenlistment crisis which had threatened to deplete its ranks only months earlier. Secondly, the army emerged from the encampment in a high state of combat readiness as a result of almost two months of intensive and effective drilling. Veterans sharpened their skills during this period while newcomers were quickly integrated into their units.

The Army of the Potomac of 1864 thus more closely resembled a well-drilled professional army than ever before. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the army now had decisive, capable leadership. Grant provided the army with a strategy of sustained offensive operations, and he and Meade retooled the army to prepare it to execute that strategy. The combined leadership of Grant and Meade gave the Army of the Potomac a sense of direction, and this translated to a greater sense of purpose on the part of the soldiers. In sum, the experience of five months of winter encampment around in Culpeper County resulted in a larger, better-drilled, and more purposeful fighting force, which, with the aid of skilled leadership, would eventually defeat Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia and preserve the sanctity of the Union.

Research Topics

Civil War winter encampments in general, while overlooked by generations of scholars and historians, offer numerous opportunities for research topics and groundbreaking study. This is somewhat ironic, for while the camp life of soldiers in actively-campaigning armies has been rather extensively studied, the camp life of soldiers in winter encampments inexplicably has been ignored. Certainly, there is much to be learned in all areas by studying these four- to five-month interludes.

The social milieu of winter encampments provides probably the richest lode of material. In addition to bringing together tens of thousands of soldiers in close quarters for months on end, encampments encompassed officers' wives, servants, sutlers, civilian agents from the Sanitary and Christian Committees, reporters and photographers, local civilians, etc. Many of these

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encampments resembled large towns. The study of the interaction between these groups--how they passed their time, both professionally and recreationally--makes for good social history.

Winter encampments also provide research topics from an architectural/organizational angle. From the corps level down to the company level, there was a definite organization to the camps (i.e., the separation of officers, noncommissioned officers, and enlisted men) and there was also a reason(s) for the location of these camps (drainage, shelter, availability of wood and water, etc.). Similarly, these camps featured a wide variety of structures, from ordinary troop huts to elaborately designed and constructed concert halls and churches.

Winter encampments especially lend themselves to the study of logistics, as one of the primary purposes of the encampments was the resupply and refurbishment of the armies. The success or failure in obtaining and transporting men and materiel profoundly influenced each encampment. Logistical considerations affected such things as encampment location and troop morale. Furthermore, the need to transport supplies resulted in the construction of extensive corduroy road networks--one of the primary tasks of the soldiers in camp.

Individually, the Culpeper County winter encampment provides the aforementioned document-based research topics, but it also promises to yield much more detailed and precise information because of its archaeological remains. There are a number of sites (camp sites, signal station sites, etc.) throughout Culpeper County which contain substantial archaeological remains, such as fire pits, chimney foundations, and trenches. These sites have the potential to yield invaluable information on a wide range of topics, including the medical, social, logistical, military, economic, technological, and religious aspects of the winter encampment.

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F. Associated Property Types

I. Name of Property Types: Winter Encampment Sites

II. Description:

This property type consists of historic properties that are associated with the Army of the Potomac's winter encampment in and around Brandy Station, Virginia, during the winter of 1863-1864. This historic winter encampment was the largest winter encampment of the war and marked a crucial time for the Army of the Potomac. Reenlistment was an issue which threatened to emasculate the army, as did the quality of new draftees and their substitutes. Similarly, commanding general George G. Meade's ability to lead the army to victory was constantly questioned, and the arrival of Ulysses S. Grant in March further clouded the leadership issue. Still, despite all these and other obstacles, the army which broke camp in May 1864 was stronger, more professional, and better-led than in any of its previous incarnations.

Historic properties in this property type will have been constructed and/or used from December 1863 to May 3, 1864. In some instances, the Union troops occupied huts that they had built prior to the Mine Run Campaign of November 25-December 2 or that the Confederates had built earlier in November. Nevertheless, the actual camps almost certainly date from December 1863 and the use of such camps definitely falls within the aforementioned range.

A prime example of this property type is the winter encampment site of elements of the Second and Third Divisions, Second Corps, located on Hansborough Ridge in Stevensburg, Virginia. This district contains numerous surface features that appear to be hut sites, trash pits, and fire pits. Many of these features are aligned in an orderly fashion, suggesting that these are the remains of huts which were constructed along company streets. There are also stone piles (which could be part of a signal station), a trench line in the central part of the ridge, and unidentified surface depressions. In many areas, fragments of glass, brick, and metal artifacts are visible on the surface.

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The integrity of the northern Hansborough Ridge site is exceptional. The presence of surface artifacts and the large number of pristine surface features suggests that the majority of the ridge has not been disturbed by relic hunters. However, there are twelve probable hut sites on the southern base of the ridge that have been disturbed. There is also a power line and a hundred-yard-wide right-of-way which bisects the ridge in an east-west direction.

III. Significance

The significance of winter encampment sites lies in the experiences of the men who occupied them for four and five months at a time. The winter encampment was supposed to have a regenerative effect on armies, as they were freed from the rigors of campaigning and given a respite to resupply and regain their strength. While the temporary cessation of hostilities did prove somewhat of a tonic on its own, a successful winter encampment still required adequate shelter, sanitation, and recreation to maintain the troops' morale and health. The later months of a winter encampment entailed drilling and other exercises to get the army ready for the upcoming spring campaign, but first the troops had to survive the early winter months with health and morale intact.

The winter encampment site played a crucial role in the total encampment experience of the Civil War soldiers. First, a camp had to be sanitary to protect the health of the army. Camps also needed to be orderly and comfortable, for reasons of discipline and morale. Reenlistment was a major issue, and the morale of the troops certainly played a part in their decisions about whether to reenlist. Similarly, the arrival of Grant in March 1864 signaled the need for a larger, more powerful Army of the Potomac. In order to effect the necessary changes, the army would need to have maintained its health, morale, and discipline through the harsh winter months.

The Hansborough Ridge winter encampment district illustrates the importance of these camps. Sanitation was a primary consideration, as the camps were established on top of the ridge with drainage

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ditches running downhill. (General Hancock ordered the units encamped on the low, swampy ground just west of the ridge to move to higher ground on the ridge itself.) Comfort also took precedence, as account after account speaks of the way in which each regiment laid out orderly camps and built sturdy, weatherproof huts.¹ Some even papered the insides of their huts with pictures from the illustrated weeklies of the day. Recreation and leisure also constituted a large part of camp life.

The quality of life which the soldiers enjoyed during their months on Hansborough Ridge and elsewhere played a significant role in the overall transformation of the army. Although the Army of the Potomac had suffered enormous casualties and endured rigorous campaigning in 1863, the Culpeper County winter encampment allowed the army to reequip itself mentally and physically for the monumental and arduous campaign which awaited them in May. "Looking back upon the whole term of our service," wrote an officer from the 148th Pennsylvania, "I cannot recall a time when we more nearly approached my ideal of what a volunteer regiment ought to be than during the period in which we were camped near Stevensburg in the winter of 1863-1864."²

¹ John Day Smith, The History of the Nineteenth Regiment of Maine Volunteer Infantry, 1862-1865 (Minneapolis, Minnesota: The Great Western Printing Company, 1909), p. 125. "The early months of the winter spent on Cole's Hill [just north of Hansborough Ridge] were in pleasant contrast to the gloomy encampment the preceding winter at Falmouth"; George A. Bruce, The Twentieth Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1906), p. 324. "One of the many advantages gained by sending new recruits into the old regiments . . . was that they were taught by the example of their veteran comrades just what to do and how to do it, both for health and comfort."

² Adj. J. W. Muffly, The Story of Our Regiment: A History of the 148th Pennsylvania (Des Moines, Iowa: The Kenyon Printing & Manufacturing Co., 1904), p. 112.

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IV. Registration Requirements

In order for a historic property to be a member of this property type, it may qualify under Criterion A, B, D, or any combination of the three.

Criterion A Requirements

- a) The property must be directly associated with the Army of the Potomac's Culpeper County winter encampment of 1863-1864.
- b) The property must have been constructed or used during the period of the encampment (December 1863 - May 1864).
- c) The property must possess surface features with sufficient integrity to convey the property's function in and association with the Culpeper County winter encampment.

Criterion B Requirements

- a) The property must be directly associated with the Army of the Potomac's Culpeper County winter encampment of 1863-1864.
- b) The property must have been constructed or used during the period of the encampment (December 1863 - May 1864).
- c) The property must possess surface features with sufficient integrity to convey the property's association with the specified significant person or persons.

Criterion D Requirements

- a) The property must be directly associated with the Army of the Potomac's Culpeper County winter encampment of 1863-1864.

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- b) The property must have been constructed or used during the period of the encampment (December 1863 - May 1864).
- c) The property must have surface or subsurface cultural or archaeological deposits that, if studied, are likely to yield information important to understanding and interpreting the winter encampment.
- d) The archaeological remains of the property must have a degree of integrity that is sufficient to address the specified research topics.

There are other property types which almost certainly merit inclusion in the multiple property listing. These include headquarters houses (such as National Register-listed Farley, headquarters for Sixth Corps commander Major General John Sedgwick, and National Register-listed Salubria, headquarters for Third Cavalry Division commander Brigadier General James H. Wilson) and sites, fords, roads, signal stations, hospital sites, mill sites, etc. However, the information available on these properties is not as extensive as that on encampment sites, so at this point the nomination will include only winter encampment sites as Associated Property Types. Other property types may be added later.

G. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.

The Army of the Potomac Winter Encampment, Culpeper and Fauquier Counties, 1863-1864 Multiple Property Documentation Form is based on extensive archival research (comprising published and unpublished primary written accounts and period photographs and maps) conducted since mid-1988. This was augmented by numerous field surveys and consultations with various parties knowledgeable about specific winter encampment sites in Culpeper and Fauquier Counties. Excavation was not conducted.

From this information, a preliminary list of property types was drawn up based on their function in and association with the winter encampment. Specific examples of these property types were then analyzed for their integrity and significance, and the Hansborough Ridge district was chosen as the best example of a winter encampment site. While only winter encampment sites have been included in this documentation form as property types and only Hansborough Ridge has been included as a winter encampment site, there may be more property types and examples added in the near future.

☐ See continuation sheet

H. Major Bibliographical References

☒ See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional documentation:

- ☐ State historic preservation office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency

- ☐ Local government
☐ University
☒ Other

Specify repository: Library of Congress, 1st & Independence Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20540

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