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Lincoln as a Wartime President

By

Sage Margesson

Thesis for

Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in History

Abraham Lincoln is known for many incredible accomplishments. History tells us how honest he was, how he freed the slaves and preserved the union even if it meant going to war. Being that the presidential position is the highest rank in the military Lincoln made a lot of critical choices and decisions to ultimately win the war. Key to that victory was Lincoln's near-constant interactions with his generals on issues pertaining to the war. Not all of his generals were a success, Lincoln ultimately fired five of his generals. Lincoln had a few interests in what he felt was best for the success of the war; troop movement, morale, and the treatment of Confederate prisoners. How Lincoln addressed those issues with his generals will be addressed throughout this project. Specifically, this project looks at Lincoln's growth as a wartime President, how he communicated his intentions to his generals, and how the relationships formed through that communication affected the war on the ground. I conclude this project by arguing that Lincoln's development as a military strategist and a respected Commander-in-Chief played a key role in the ending of the war. Before addressing Lincoln's handling of each of those issues, I will unpack Lincoln's relationship with his generals with a focus on two generals that led the Union army under Lincoln, George B. McClellan, and Ulysses S. Grant.

The Generals

Lincoln worked with several generals over the course of the war and had limited success with the majority of them. Several generals held the position of commander of the Army of the Potomac

for very short periods of time. Generals Scott, Halleck, and Burnside, to name a few, held the post unsuccessfully and left very small marks on the war. Their successes and failures were due in part to their inability to push the war effort to Lincoln's liking. Unlike the Presidents before him, Lincoln took a very active role in the conduct of the army. He oversaw the day-to-day operations of the army and weighed heavily in on strategizing. That level of involvement rubbed several generals the wrong way and created tense relationships with his generals. That is until General Grant took over. In the following section, I will. First, discuss Lincoln's overall leadership strategy when it comes to his generals and, second, focus on two generals, McClellan and Grant that had very different relationships with President Lincoln.

Lincoln's expectations for his generals weren't too far-fetched. It was said by the Historians Wilson and Simon that, "Lincoln recognized this ability when he ordered Grant East to take command of all the armies and to direct the total war strategy. Lincoln needed a general who could fight, but, even more, one who could coordinate." (Wilson and Simon) Lincoln was desperate for a general who would be capable of directing the Union military forces. With Lincoln's persistence to move the troops to attack the Confederacy, it was only a matter of who was the general of his military to get that movement in order. It began with Scott. Lincoln had little to no prior war experience. Not long after the Mexican-American War, the military was very poor and had minimal resources. But it was Lincoln's election into office that initiated the Civil War. Lincoln ran for President on platforms that threatened Confederate beliefs, with his election victory Confederacy declared its secession from the United States and succeeded from the United States. This formation of the Confederate states happened in 1861. Lincoln calls for the stop of the rebellion in 1861 as well. With this Lincoln calls for volunteers to help and thus expanding the military massively. In April of 1861 in the early morning, the Confederacy fired at

Fort Sumter which was considered a sea fort. "Fort Sumter is built in the water, one thousand yards from the land . . . It is just finished and is one of the strongest works in the world; mounted with thirty-two-pound cannon and one hundred rounds of ammunition per gun, . . . two men at one of these could defend it against five hundred." (Perry) The Confederacy outnumbered the Union in soldiers and supplies and with that less than thirty-four hours later, the Union surrendered. This was seen as the start of the Civil War. The Union ultimately enlisted two million men compared to the Confederacy's nine hundred thousand. This troop discrepancy was in part do the Union's railroad system as well as the number of goods that were created and harvested in the Union. The only thing that was to the Confederacy's advantage was their more famous and tactical generals like Robert E Lee. Grant was unlike some of the other generals which Lincoln liked because he was more willing to have casualties to win against the South. This was obvious when Grant battles in Wilderness and Cold Harbor where five thousand of his men died or were injured, about forty-one percent of his army.

Lincoln cared deeply about matters involving troop movement. This starts with General Scott. "The daily reports dealt with routine matters of troop movements and the like, but the important thing Lincoln wanted to know was what general plan Scott had in mind for subduing the Confederacy. The President talked about a tentative scheme of his own- he would hold Fortress Monroe on the eastern flank of Virginia, blockade the Southern ports, make Washington safe, and then go down and attack Charleston." (Perry) This was a part of Lincoln's strategy that he used when talking to General Scott. It was vital that Lincoln was a part of the strategy and moving the troops forward. Ultimately, he wanted victory more than anything. Scott and Lincoln had two different perspectives during combat but nothing too out of the ordinary. Scott's restriction to providing Post Sumter in March 1861 was likely empowered by his companion,

William Seward, the former United States Secretary of State. Continuously yearning and unsuccessful, his organizational thoughts were lacking for the gigantic Armed force buildup of 1861, and Common George McClellan, his ostensible subordinate, circumvented him to Scott's frustration.

It wasn't surprising that General Scott was unable to oversee War efforts due to his age and being overweight, which made it difficult for him to stand and walk for long periods. This is what ultimately made Scott resign from his position in Lincoln. "I am an old man," he said. "I have served my country faithfully I think, during a long life. I have been in two great wars and fought them through, and now another great war is on and I am nominally at the head of the army, but I don't know how many men are in the field, where they are, how they are armed and equipped or what they are capable of doing or what reasonably ought to be expected of them. Nobody comes to tell me and I am in ignorance about it and can form no opinion respecting it. I think under all the circumstances I had better be relieved from further service to my country." This was good news to Lincoln because of his recent loss in the Battle of Bull Run, in which he admitted and took responsibility for the failure. Thus allowing Lincoln to appoint General McClellan to the new position. Commander in Chief Lincoln was acting up to his title.

As mentioned above, Lincoln worked with several Union generals over the course of the war. Some of those generals led the Army of the Potomac for very short times and others for several years. I am choosing to focus on Generals McClellan and Grant for two reasons. First, both led the army at important times, McClellan during the escalation of the war and Grant at the conclusion. Second, each had a very different response to Lincoln's constant interference in the war, McClellan was hostile and Grant was welcoming. Let's first look at McClellan.

General George B. McClellan (1861-1862)



U.S. Signal Corps/National Archives, Washington, D.C.

McClellan went to West Point and graduated second in his class out of 59 people. Under the command of General Scott, he engineered bridges and roads for the Army in the Mexican-American War. After his contribution to the Mexican-American War, he returned to West Point to help translate French tactics for the use of a bayonet. In 1857, McClellan resigned from the military to work in Illinois for the central railroad. When the Civil War broke out the governor of Ohio enlisted McClellan as major general of Ohio Volunteers. With the support of the Governor, Lincoln was persuaded into making McClellan a general for the Army. During this time, McClellan solidified his ties with Union soldiers. Many politicians and generals resented McClellan, but he was widely respected by his men. After the defeat at Manassas, much of the Army of the Potomac was disorganized, and its new commander went to work to provide his men with proper military training and to instill in them a remarkable spirit of solidarity. However, as McClellan assembled his army, he also became suspicious of the Confederates, fearing that he was facing more troops than he had. McClellan immediately embarked on rebuilding and reorganizing his army when assigned to his new position of power in the war. He

knew he could make a comeback from the Battle of Bull Run, a task he accomplished brilliantly. Morale in the ranks soared and the men were all eager to fight, except for McClellan himself. He repeatedly begged for reinforcements and additional artillery, becoming increasingly disobedient to Lincoln, even making the President wait while he was lying in bed upstairs in Washington. Lincoln tolerated McClellan's rebellious actions, believing that he would crush the rebels and capture Richmond, ending the war. It was difficult because McClellan refused to fight. In a letter to Lincoln McClellan says, "In carrying out any system of policy which you may form you will require a commander-in-chief of the army, one who possesses your confidence, understands your views and who is competent to execute your orders by directing the military forces of the nation to the accomplishment of the objects by you proposed. I do not ask that place for myself. I am willing to serve you in such position as you may assign me, and I will do as faithfully as ever subordinate served superior. I may be on the brink of eternity; and as I hope forgiveness from my Master, I have written this letter with sincerity towards you and from a love of my country." (Lincoln) This letter is about his evacuation from the Peninsula Campaign in 1862. This is significant as it was a Confederate victory in a battle the Union had launched in southeast Virginia. McClellan was overly cautious, and morale began to decline significantly.

Lincoln believed this plan was superior and was extremely relieved that McClellan reluctantly agreed to move forward with the battle. Thus, began the fall of trust and morale with McClellan. Since Lincoln wanted McClellan to be more aggressive on the battlefield but he refused. The soldiers loved McClellan because of his more antiviolenent stance, allowing the soldiers not to fight and live to see another day. This didn't go well with Lincoln's vision for his victory. Lincoln would send letters to General McClellan that would state, "My dear Sir: You remember my speaking to you of what I called your over-cautiousness. Are you not over-cautious when you

assume that you cannot do what the enemy is constantly doing? Should you not claim to be at least his equal in prowess, and act upon the claim? As I understand, you telegraphed General Halleck that you cannot subsist your army at Winchester unless the railroad from Harper's Ferry to that point be put in working order. But the enemy now subsists his army at Winchester, at a distance nearly twice as great from railroad transportation as you would have to do without the railroad last named”(Lincoln) Lincoln sent this on the thirteenth of October in 1862. This was around the time that General Lee sent his troops away from Washington, therefore making it safe. But that made it so the Confederate army was only two miles apart from McClellan’s army near the Blue Ridge Mountains. McClellan’s biggest error in the Civil War was his overestimation of troops in the Confederacy. His refusal to advance against the confederacy made it incredibly difficult for the war to end.

The clash and odds between McClellan and President Lincoln began as well because Lincoln put a lot of faith into McClellan but he showed signs of resistance and was not as competent as Lincoln thought. McClellan is better at organizing than fighting. He was very smart, but could not lead a successful campaign. He always has an excuse not to engage the enemy: his people are outnumbered (but not); he needs more troops; And it's not the right time, place, or season for a battle. Lincoln had once sent a telegram to the general out of pure frustration that had read, “If General McClellan does not want to use the Army, I would like to borrow it for a time, provided I could see how it could be made to do something.” (PBS) This wasn’t the only instance that Lincoln had written a letter or sent a telegram to McClellan expressing his frustration. He also gave McDowell strategic and tactical instructions. One hour later than he had telegraphed McClellan and Fremont, Lincoln sent McDowell an order to suspend the movement to Peninsula. He informed the General of the plan to catch Jackson and directed him to move to the Valley

with 20,000 troops and told him on what route to move. This showed Lincoln's power and that disobeying him was extremely hard. Irvin McDowell, an American officer was reluctant but said he would attempt what Lincoln said once. Lincoln was thankful and not long after McClellan had been suspended, but this was after a long period of insubordination on McClellan's part. It was a massive struggle for McClellan because he didn't care too much. He often saw flaws in Lincoln's requests to move the troops forward. Lincoln would push McClellan to perform particular tasks in his position and when McClellan would reply, he would receive complete silence from Lincoln and the Secretary of War. But McClellan often would do the same thing, he would ignore Lincoln's requests as well as not share his plans and strategies with Lincoln. One of the biggest clashes that were seen between McClellan and Lincoln was that McClellan was a Democrat and openly anti-emancipation. With Republicans in power and Democrats fighting on the front lines of the war, it was a widespread amount of distrust between people. Soldiers often whispered and talked about how they believed McClellan didn't want to defeat the rebels. He enjoyed a society with slavery, if anything he just wanted the States to be back together. He just wanted to put the pieces back together and go back to the way things were. But this was impossible past a certain point in the war, and this was the complete opposite ideology that Lincoln had. McClellan developed a certain contempt towards Lincoln. He openly told people he believed he was "an idiot," and an "original gorilla." This was obvious in letters that McClellan wrote to his wife very shortly after being appointed in charge of the Army. "...I am here in a terrible place – the enemy has from 3 to 4 times my force – the President is an idiot, the old General in his dotage – they cannot or will not see the true state of affairs. Most of my troops are demoralized by the defeat at Bull Run, some [regiments] even mutinous – I have probably stopped that – but you see my position is not pleasant."(Walter Coffey) Lincoln often looked

pasted these words if McClellan was willing to fight and do his job correctly. But this became inherently apparent when the Secretary of State and Lincoln visited McClellan's estate. They had waited in the sitting room for McClellan to arrive home, and when he did arrive home to find out that the Secretary of State and Lincoln were there, he retired upstairs. McClellan sent his butler downstairs to tell the President he wouldn't come down and talk to them and maybe they should come back another time to talk. "'The President is in the parlor waiting for you, general.' Instead of entering the parlor, McClellan marched upstairs, took off his boots and laid down on his bed. After waiting for McClellan to come back downstairs, the President announced, 'Come, boys, let us go home.' Even naval officer David Dixon Porter was astonished by McClellan's impertinence. When McClellan insisted on keeping President Lincoln waiting while he conferred with Porter, the general said of the President: 'He has no business to know what is going on.'"

(History Editors) This was a huge disrespect on McClellan's part but Lincoln still tried to look past this behavior in hopes that he would secure victory for the Union. This followed McClellan's lack of moving forward. It was clear that McClellan only wanted to fight the Confederacy enough to convince them to come back to the Union, but he didn't want to obliterate their armies or caused a disruption in civilization, he just wanted things to go back to normal without emancipation. McClellan said blatantly racist things and it really understood his take on the war. Lincoln agreed with the idea of preserving the Union and not pushing the emancipation too far because he could lose the border states and wanted them to stay on his side. Joseph Johnson in the Confederacy was prepared to fight McClellan in Northern Virginia and Lincoln pushed McClellan to go in and fight. This didn't go well with the General, as he kept it a secret about what his initial plan of action was. His plan was to sit and wait, this went well with the troops because they didn't want to fight either. But Lincoln was furious and one of the

biggest things he wanted was a movement of the Army. This resulted in the campaign failing in 1861 with no movement on McClellan's part. This happened in the Fall which was vital to the movement of a campaign because the seasons were important for battle. When winter comes around, the roads become impassable. McClellan's failure to move the campaign and allow it to go through the summer and fall without movement was strategic on his part. This means he wouldn't have to move or fight till the spring of 1862. It was until the Battle of Ball's Bluff that caused more of a strain on the trust between Lincoln and McClellan. It wasn't a majorly important military engagement but it took place on the bluffs in Leesburg, Virginia overlooking the Potomac River. McClellan ordered General Stone to send a division on a reconnaissance across the river to figure out what the Confederacy had planned on their side of Virginia. Stone sent a few people to go on this mission and was quickly ambushed by the Confederacy and pushed back to the bluffs. This effectively caused a thousand casualties at Ball's Bluff as many were shot on their way back down or drowned in the river. Though this was a small war effort, it made its way back up to Congress in order to investigate what went wrong on the Union side to allow this to happen. But more importantly, it caused a larger investigation into Democratic generals such as McClellan. Since Congress was primarily made up of Republicans it really caused Democrats who were put up to trial to be really pushed hard. Rumors went through Congress about Stone's deal with the Confederacy in Virginia. They found that Stone was sending slaves who made it into free land on the Union side to return to their masters. This caused lots of questions to rise and they practically bullied Stone into admitting things he did or didn't do. His only real crime was that he was a Democrat in a Republican-dominated house. Thus, McClellan was at fault for making a poor choice in what he decided to do at Ball's Bluff. It was finally the battle of Antietam that caused Lincoln to fire McClellan. Colonel Ezra Carman

wrote about his survival in Antietam in his detailed tactical study he said, "More errors were committed by the Union commander than in any other battle of the war." (Carman) McClellan hugely overestimated his opponent's soldier count, and this destroyed his reliability and career. On the evening before Antietam McClellan told Washington he believed that the rebel army was outnumbering the Union by at least twenty-five percent with over 120,000 men. This basically meant that McClellan thought for every soldier he had that the rebels had three. Clearly, the Union had more soldiers with about 50,000 men, and the rebels only had around 43,000 men. It wasn't Lee's surrender of the one-day battle that was one of the bloodiest and most brutal that made this battle significant, it was McClellan's lack of pursuit that made this important. By September 18th, Lee was vulnerable and a large portion of his men were dead from the previous day of battle. McClellan was sitting comfortably with more than three times the men Lee had. Lincoln was angry and so was the Chief of Staff Henry Hallack. Lincoln said to McClellan, "You remember my speaking to you of what I called your over-cautiousness. Are you not over-cautious when you assume that you can not do what the enemy is constantly doing? Should you not claim to be at least his equal in prowess, and act upon the claim?" (Lincoln 1862a) For a whole month, McClellan did not move his army at all. After a month of waiting and his overestimation of troops for the Confederacy which then allowed 40,000 additional men in the rebel army to fight in Antietam. In the defense of McClellan those who fought in the war were extremely exhausted and not prepared to fight more, but if they were really pushed they could've. Instead, Lee was able to escape with his army still together. McClellan had the opportunity to destroy the Confederate Army in Virginia and the war continued on. The New York Times wrote an article on Lincoln and his removal. "It is pretty generally understood that [McClellan's removal] is only the culmination of a systematic disregard of orders, of a steady

and obstinate tardiness in the conduct of the campaign against the rebels, and of a consequent inefficiency in command, which would long ago have secured his dismissal under any Administration less timid than that which has now possession of power. The fifteen months during which he has had virtual control of the war have been utterly barren of results to the cause he has professed to serve. Few commanders in history have had such splendid opportunities, and fewer still have so ostentatiously thrown them away . . . [H]e has accomplished absolutely nothing but successful retreats from inferior forces, and the defense of the Capital at Washington, which he should have left no foe capable of menacing. The rebel armies have grown up in his presence and by his toleration.” (“The Removal of Gen. McClellan 1862). This was nothing less of a criticism of McClellan’s work in the military. It was not long after Lincoln’s reelection that he made an order to remove McClellan from his position. The order read, “November 5, 1862.—ORDER RELIEVING GENERAL G. B. MCCLELLAN AND MAKING OTHER CHANGES. EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON, November 5, 1862. By direction of the President, it is ordered that Major-General McClellan be relieved from the command of the Army of the Potomac and that Major-General Burnside take command of that army and that Major-General Hunter takes command of the corps in said army which is now commanded by General Burnside. That Major-General Fitz-John Porter be relieved from command of the corps he now commands in said army, and that Major-General Hooker take command of said corps. The general-in-chief is authorized, in [his] discretion, to issue an order substantially as the above, forthwith, or so soon as he may deem proper. A. LINCOLN.” (Lincoln) Thus the end of McClellan’s military career.

There is no denying that McClellan had little respect for Lincoln as a military strategist. McClellan was of the opinion that the Army of the Potomac was his to command and Lincoln

had nothing to offer in terms of the day-to-day operations of the army. Not only did he frequently ignore Lincoln's directives he had little respect for Lincoln as a person and President, "To his wife, McClellan wrote that Lincoln was 'nothing more than a well-meaning baboon,' and Secretary of State William Seward was an 'incompetent little puppy.'" (History.com Editors, 2020). McClellan's disdain for Lincoln often clouded his judgment when interacting with the President when discussing the war. Because of this, McClellan is often characterized as the 'bad guy' in their relationship; this is not entirely fair. "Nonetheless, Lincoln would encounter considerable difficulty in his management of general officers. Many of the problems that Lincoln and the Union war effort had in the East have, with no little justification, been blamed on George McClellan" (Rafuse, 2017) Lincoln faced the extreme challenge of becoming a wartime President at the very beginning of his first term. Obviously, he had no experience to draw from and was forced to learn on the job. As a result, many of his early attempts to participate in war planning were met with derision. "Lincoln arrived in Washington in February 1861 with little administrative or executive experience, certainly none that would adequately prepare him for the great task of running what would become a massive Union war machine. Lincoln's shortcomings had severe consequences for the Union war effort during McClellan's tenure in command" (Rafuse, 2017). One example of Lincoln's unpreparedness is seen in his handling of the army when McClellan was ill with typhoid fever. As McClellan lay ill, Lincoln decided to take military matters into his own hands. Lincoln met with two of McClellan's division commanders over a three-day period to discuss military operations and timelines. At no point prior to or during the meetings did Lincoln notify McClellan that the meetings were happening. McClellan eventually learned of the meetings from a third party. McClellan saw the meetings as a slap in the face and a violation of the military chain of command. One can assume that Lincoln had to

have known how McClellan would respond but chose to have the meeting anyway. This caused a significant rift in the relationship between Lincoln and McClellan. From that moment on, McClellan believed that Lincoln was sabotaging the war effort and could not be trusted.

In another instance, Lincoln undermined McClellan's strategy to drive Confederate forces from Manassas. McClellan provided Lincoln with a strategy that would put pressure on the Confederate army while keeping Washington DC safe from potential invasion. Instead of agreeing with McClellan, Lincoln put the plan to a vote of division commanders who ended up supporting the decision. McClellan was pleased to have won the debate but that pleasure was short-lived. To do his plan McClellan requested certain division commanders be put in place but Lincoln decided on division commanders that McClellan had not requested. What specifically angered McClellan was that several of the division commanders Lincoln appointed were those who expressed opposition to the plan during the vote. "In Fact, from the beginning of the war, Lincoln conducted his duties in ways that all but guaranteed the sort of dissension within the high command that he rather disingenuously deprecated." (Rafuse, 2017) These examples show some of Lincoln's initial weaknesses as a wartime President at the beginning of the Civil War. Lincoln was put in a very difficult situation and tried to adapt the best he could. His lack of understanding of how the military operated and his disrespect for the chain of command severely damaged his relationship with McClellan. As a result, McClellan basically ignored advice from Lincoln and ran things his way. Unfortunately, McClellan's way was ineffective and prolonged a war that the Union should have won decisively and quickly.

General Henry Halleck (1862-1864)



Library of Congress

Upon the removal of McClellan, General Henry Halleck was promoted to General-in-Chief of the Army of the Potomac. He finished third in his class at West Point and upon his graduation was sent to California to participate in the Mexican-American War. Halleck was considered one of the leading military scholars of his time. He wrote several books and treatises on military tactics and translated numerous European military texts. His intelligence concerning military strategy earned him the nickname 'Old Brains.' It was not a complementary nickname as it implied that he was more of a thinker than an actor. After the war, Halleck remained in California where he amassed significant wealth as a businessman and land owner.

As a Democrat, Halleck was sympathetic to the Confederate cause but believed strongly in maintaining the Union so he chose to fight for the North. Halleck was a successful general in the Western theater of operations and received great praise from people in Lincoln's inner circle. Those that served under Halleck respected his military intelligence but often complained that he was not an active participant on the battlefield. Much like McClellan, Halleck was also criticized for his over-planning and reluctance to engage the enemy until he felt everything was just right. Still, Halleck's reputation in the military was strong and upon the removal of McClellan chose Halleck to lead the Union army.

Almost immediately, Lincoln ran into the same troubles he had with McClellan. Halleck was a meticulous planner but was often slow to act. Unlike McClellan, Halleck was also not genuinely liked by his commanders and his troops. He had a gruff personality that rubbed people the wrong way which cost him a lot of the support necessary to succeed. On a number of occasions, Halleck was slow to respond to requests from his commanders costing the Union army the opportunity to score decisive victories. This frustrated Lincoln who still continued to push to get the army moving and attacking. After Halleck was slow to respond to a request from General Burnside, Lincoln had had enough. In a telegram sent to Halleck, Lincoln stated, "Gen. Burnside wishes to cross the Rappahannock with his army, but his Grand Division commanders all oppose the movement. If in such a difficulty as this you do not help, you fail me precisely in the point for which I sought your assistance. You know what Gen. Burnside's plan is; and it is my wish that you go with him to the ground, examine it as far as practicable, confer with the officers, getting their judgment, and ascertaining their temper, in a word, gather all the elements for forming a judgment of your own; and then tell Gen. Burnside that you do approve, or that you do not approve his plan. Your military skill is useless to me, if you will not do this. Yours very truly A LINCOLN" (Marszalek, 2004). Halleck was deeply insulted by Lincoln's letter and immediately turned in his resignation; Lincoln refused to accept it. According to Marszalek, "Halleck had exhibited the belief that precise military preparation was more critical to victory than rapid forward progress, yet Lincoln was still calling him to Washington to produce quick military success."(Marszalek) It made sense, of course; no other general had a better record in the field. Lincoln did not know yet that, beneath the facade of decisive success, was a demanding administrator who made precise preparations but shunned hard military decisions. Once again, Lincoln was stuck with a general that was unwilling to move at the pace he wanted. As with

McClellan, Lincoln continued to actively engage in military strategizing. Unlike McClellan though, Halleck was less hostile to Lincoln's participation. In a letter Halleck wrote to General Sherman he said, "I am simply a military advisor of the Secretary of War and the President, and must obey and carry out what they decide upon, whether I concur in their decisions or not. As a good soldier, I obey the orders of my superiors. If I disagree with them I say so, but when they decide, is my duty faithfully to carry out their decision. (Marszalek, 2004)" Though he was willing to work with Lincoln, Halleck was eventually removed from his position due to his unwillingness to push the army in the ways Lincoln would have preferred.

During Halleck's term as General-in-Chief, we still see Lincoln playing a very active role in strategizing and demanding action from his generals. By this point, the war had been raging for several years and Lincoln had had enough. It was clear that no matter how hard he pushed an uninspired general he would not get the results he needed. Lincoln needed a general who would take the fight to the Confederates; that general was Ulysses S. Grant.

General Ulysses S. Grant (1864-1868)



Library of Congress

Born initially as Hiram Ulysses S. Grant, but changed to Ulysses due to an error with the clerk in West Point. General Grant could have been more successful in his career at West Point. He graduated twenty-first out of only thirty-nine cadets in 1843. Although he wasn't successful in the academy, he did well as a captain in the Mexican-American War. He won multiple citations during his time in this war. Though incredibly successful he had his faults in his role during the Civil War. Ulysses S. Grant achieved many successes during his military career as a General. Here are some of his most notable achievements:

Victories in the Western Theater: Early in the war, Grant secured important victories in the Western Theater, including the capture of Forts Henry and Donelson, which gave the Union control of the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers. He also won the Battle of Shiloh, which helped to secure Union control of western Tennessee.

Siege of Vicksburg: In 1863, Grant laid siege to Vicksburg, Mississippi, a Confederate stronghold on the Mississippi River. The siege lasted 47 days and ultimately ended with the surrender of the Confederate army, giving the Union control of the Mississippi River and effectively splitting the Confederacy in half.

Overland Campaign: In 1864, Grant launched a campaign against Confederate General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. Despite heavy losses on both sides, Grant was able to wear down Lee's army and force their eventual surrender.

Appomattox Court House: In April 1865, Grant accepted Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House, effectively ending the Civil War.

Military Strategy: Grant was known for his innovative military strategies, such as the concept of "total war," which sought to destroy the enemy's ability to fight by targeting not just military targets but also civilian infrastructure and morale. He was also known for his ability to adapt to changing circumstances on the battlefield and to make quick decisions under pressure. Overall, Grant's military successes played a key role in securing the Union's victory over the Confederacy and helped to shape the course of American history. But

along with his success, his faults are what made him notable during his time in the Civil War and his presidency.

While Ulysses S. Grant is often regarded as one of the greatest military leaders in American history, he did have some failures during his military career, including early career struggles. Prior to the Civil War, Grant struggled to find success in both his military and civilian careers. He was forced to resign from the army due to alcohol-related issues and struggled to make a living as a farmer and real estate agent. High casualties: During his campaigns, Grant's armies suffered significant casualties. The Overland Campaign in particular, which began in May 1864 and ended with the siege of Petersburg in June 1864, was marked by heavy losses on both sides. Cold Harbor: Grant's attack on Cold Harbor in June 1864 has been criticized as one of his most significant tactical mistakes. The attack resulted in massive casualties for the Union and was widely regarded as a failure.

Political Scandals: During his presidency, Grant was embroiled in several political scandals, including the Whiskey Ring scandal, in which officials were accused of defrauding the government of taxes on whiskey. Treatment of Native Americans: As president, Grant implemented policies that forcibly removed Native Americans from their ancestral lands and relocated them to reservations. These policies were widely criticized for their brutality and disregard for Native American rights. Despite these failures, Grant's overall military and political accomplishments were significant, and he is often remembered as a successful leader who played a key role in shaping American history. Abraham Lincoln had a high opinion of Ulysses S. Grant. Lincoln recognized Grant's military skill and determination, and he believed that Grant was one of the most effective generals in the Union Army. One famous quote attributed to Lincoln about Grant is, "I can't spare this man; he fights." This is said to have been made in

response to criticism of Grant by political opponents who were urging Lincoln to remove him from command. Lincoln's statement reflects his belief that Grant was a vital asset to the Union Army and that his fighting spirit was essential to the Union's success. This quote is said to have been made in response to criticism of Grant by political opponents who were urging Lincoln to remove him from command. Lincoln's statement reflects his belief that Grant was a vital asset to the Union Army and that his fighting spirit was essential to the Union's success. In another famous quote, Lincoln reportedly said of Grant, "He's a general who will fight." This quote reflects Lincoln's recognition of Grant's willingness to take bold military action and his ability to lead his troops into battle. Overall, Lincoln had a high degree of respect for Grant and viewed him as a key figure in the Union's efforts to defeat the Confederacy during the Civil War.

In 1854, Grant left the service before getting kicked out because once the fighting had ended. When the Civil War began, he was very quick to volunteer. He moved up in the ranks in less than a year, from colonel to command of the District of Southeast Missouri. He received the nickname "Unconditional surrenderer," because of his massive victory in Fort Henry and Fort Donelson, in Confederate territory. He was making a name for himself as a successful victor in the war. It was until the Battle of Shiloh, which was ultimately a Union victory over the two-day battle, it was one of the bloodiest and had one of the greatest numbers of casualties in the war. Lincoln received numerous complaints against Grant and blamed him for the number of deaths. Lincoln refused to remove Grant from his position. Grant redeemed himself as a mastermind of strategy in war during May in the battle of Vicksburg. The year 1863 was the most successful area of his work as a general. The battle of Port Gibson allowed the Union to cross the Mississippi River. Grant had an important view of trying to cut the supply chain of the Confederacy in Vicksburg, while the Confederacy was distracted by the capture of Jackson under General William Sherman.

After 46 days of preparation for battle, the Confederacy under John Pemberton and his 30,000 men army surrendered. The capture of Vicksburg was a massive turning point in the war and Grant's career. During the same time, the Union secured victory in Gettysburg. Grant kept his reputation as an effective leader with his victory the same year in the Battle of Missionary Ridge in Chattanooga. In March of 1864, Lincoln reevaluate Grant's position in the war and moved him from lieutenant general to General in Chief. This caused Grant to have a rush of adrenaline to destroy General Lee. From Cold Harbor, Wilderness, Spotsylvania, and Petersburg the Union had numerous victories and caused Richmond to fall. This ultimately resulted in General Robert E. Lee surrendering at the Appomattox Court House in Virginia. Although Grant's army had casualties that ultimately cut the army in half, it was Lee who surrendered in 1865. Only six days after Lee surrendered, Lincoln was assassinated and his vice president Andrew Johnson was named president. Johnson named Grant the Secretary of War and in 1868 Grant ran for president against Johnson and won. Therefore, naming Grant the eighteenth president of the United States. The presidency of Grant was filled with scandal and corruption. After Grant's time in office, he decided to tour the world in 1884, but he lost all of his money and life savings to a corrupt bank. To make back some of the money he had lost he wrote about his war experience as well as wrote an autobiography. Soon after finishing two volumes of his autobiography, he died of cancer at the age of sixty-three.

Crucial to Grant's success was his relationship with Lincoln. Unlike McClellan and Halleck, Lincoln had full faith in Grant. Although Lincoln was still actively engaged in military strategy, his faith in Grant allowed him to change his approach as Commander-in-chief. According to Grant on Lincoln, "My personal relations with him were as close and intimate as the nature of our respective duties would permit," "To know him personally was to love and respect him for

his great qualities of heart and mutual respect shown by each man finally allowed the war machine the Union created to be unleashed.

In Grant, Lincoln saw a general that was not afraid to fight and was quick to react to the Confederate troop movement. He was, in Lincoln's mind, the opposite of McClellan and Halleck. In a letter, Lincoln stated, "I rather like the man," he was supposed to have said. "I think I'll try him a little longer."¹⁵ On July 5, before the news of the fall of Vicksburg had arrived in Washington, Lincoln told one officer why he liked Grant: "He doesn't worry and bother me. He isn't shrieking for reinforcements all the time. He takes what troops we can safely give him ... and does the best he can with what he has got...." If Grant took Vicksburg, said Lincoln, "why Grant is my man and I am his the rest of the war. (Williams, 1952)." Also according to Williams, "He defended Grant against every criticism. To Burnside who complained that Grant had not returned some troops he had borrowed and had not said when he would, Lincoln replied: 'General Grant is a copious worker and fighter, but a very meager writer or telegrapher.' Undoubtedly Grant had meant to return the troops but had changed his purpose for some sufficient reason, said Lincoln, and had forgotten to tell Burnside. (Williams,)" And to quote Lincoln when there were calls to remove Grant after a defeat at Shiloh, "I can't spare this man; he fights."

With Grant in control of the Army of the Potomac, Lincoln was still very focused on the day-to-day operations but his trust in Grant changed his approach to managing his general. In a letter to Grant, Lincoln stated, "The particulars of your plan I neither know nor seek to know. You are vigilant and self-reliant; and, pleased with this, I wish not to obtrude any restraints or constraints upon you." (Chenrow, 2017) With full faith in Grant, Lincoln was able to restrain his desire to meddle in military affairs and use his power to support his general. Unlike McClellan

and Halleck who visited Washington several times to meet with Lincoln, Grant and the President had very few face-to-face meetings. Lincoln felt no need to call Grant to Washington as long as Grant was successfully managing the war. Finally, Lincoln was allowed to assume the role of a wartime President without looking over the shoulder of the man he put in charge of controlling his troops.

Ultimately, in this paper, I am arguing the importance of Lincoln's shift in his relationships with his generals and how well he did as a wartime president. There were many up and downs during his presidency. But I think he ended up being successful and is the blueprint of what a wartime president should be. During the time of war, Lincoln established a remarkable precedent for leadership. He rallied the nation's resources, handpicked key figures to ensure victory, devised a comprehensive strategy, took necessary measures to curtail those who sympathized with disunionists, and delivered inspiring rhetoric that galvanized the people.

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