

THE SKIRMISHER

A Civil War Journal For Students

CIVIL WAR TRUST

LEADERSHIP IN THE CIVIL WAR

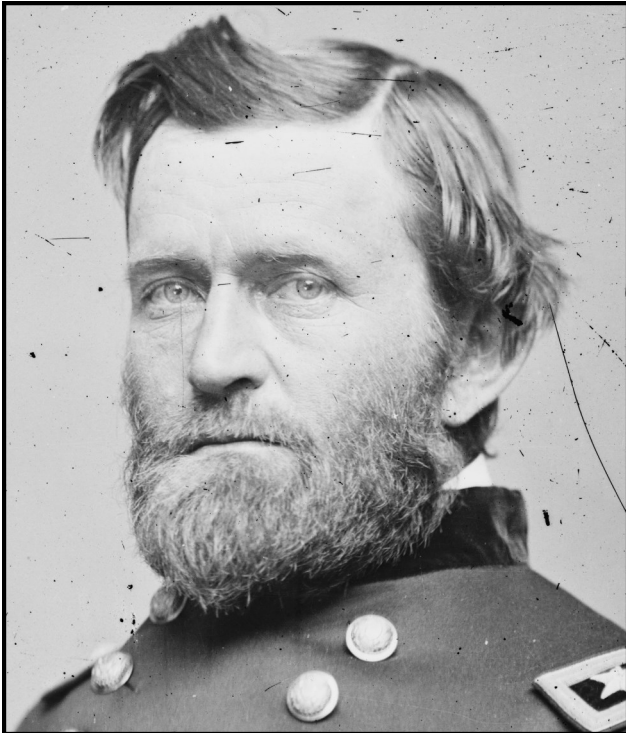
VOLUME 1

VOICES FROM THE STORM:

ULYSSES S. GRANT

Ulysses S. Grant led the Union armies to victory in the last year of the Civil War, commanding 2.4 million soldiers across the country. He began the war, however, as a low-level officer, commanding fewer than 1,000 soldiers. Here, Grant recounts one of his first experiences as a combat leader:

“As we approached the brow of the hill ... my heart kept getting higher and higher until it felt to me as though it was in my throat.



Ulysses S. Grant c. 1862, shortly after capturing 12,000 Confederate soldiers at Fort Donelson, TN, and earning the nickname “Unconditional Surrender” Grant. (Library of Congress)



Ulysses S. Grant writing his memoirs in 1885, weeks before his death. (Library of Congress)

“I would have given anything then to have been back in Illinois, but I had not the moral courage to halt and consider what to do; I kept right on.

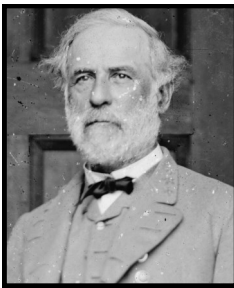
When we reached a point from which the valley below was in full view I halted. The place where [the enemy] had been encamped a few days before was still there, but the troops were gone. My heart resumed its place.

“It occurred to me at once that [the enemy] had been as much afraid of me as I had been of him. This was a view of the question I never forgot afterwards. From that event to the close of the war, I never experienced trepidation upon confronting an enemy. I never forgot that he had as much reason to fear my forces as I had his. The lesson was valuable.”

What lesson does Grant learn?

What does he mean by “moral courage”?

THOUGHTS FROM ROBERT E. LEE



Robert E. Lee was the Confederacy's most beloved and most successful general. A Virginian, he sided with his native state despite being personally opposed to the permanent

continuation of slavery.

On leadership:

"I cannot trust a man to control others who cannot control himself."

On friendship:

"Never do a wrong thing to make a friend or to keep one."

On history:

"The life of humanity is so long, that of the individual so brief, that we often see only the ebb of the advancing wave and are thus discouraged. It is history that teaches us to hope."

On the United States:

"A Union that can only be maintained by swords and bayonets...has no charm for me....If the Union is dissolved and the Government disrupted, I shall return to my native State and share the miseries of my people."

On slavery:

"I am rejoiced that Slavery is abolished....I would have cheerfully lost all that I have lost by the war, and have suffered all that I have suffered, to have this object attained."

On war:

"It is well that war is so terrible—lest we should grow too fond of it."

On education:

"The education of a man is never completed until he dies."



WHICH CIVIL WAR GENERAL ARE YOU?

Civil War Generals made their most important decisions based on a mixture of military theory, personality, and gut instinct. There was no single right answer for any problem they faced.

Answer the questions below and then **flip the page upside down** to see which General's command style most closely resembles your own!

I) Your enemy is preparing to advance through a valley that you are ordered to defend. He probably outnumbers you. Your forces are scattered among several camps throughout the valley. Do you:

- A) Launch an attack of your own first?
- B) Fortify a defensive position in the valley?
- C) Fall back and wait for reinforcements outside of the valley?

II) You are leading your army through dense woods. The soldiers in front report that they have engaged the enemy on a farm just outside of the woods. You probably outnumber your enemy. Do you:

- A) Hurry your men forward and try to capture the farm in force?
- B) Halt the rest of the army and wait for the soldiers in front to capture the farm if they can?
- C) Recall the men in front and form a defensive position in the woods?

III) You have been engaged in battle for two days. Your enemy outnumbers you and your attacks yesterday did not break his main line. Today, you see an opportunity to break through a possible weak spot, but the attack will probably be very risky and costly to your side.

Do you:

- A) Order the attack?
- B) Hold your position and hope that your enemy attacks you instead?
- C) Fall back and attempt to find a more favorable position for fighting?

If you answered mostly A, you are **Robert E. Lee**! Lee's aggressive defense of Virginia kept Union forces at bay for more than four years. If you answered mostly B, you are **George G. Meade**! Meade trusted his subordinates to make capable decisions and was an all-around excellent defensive general. If you answered mostly C, you are **Joe Johnston**! Joe Johnston was respected by his opponents, but his tendency to retreat in the face of adversity sometimes frustrated his fellow generals.

ANSWERS