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Demobilization of the Union Army 1865-1866

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DEMOBILIZATION OF THE UNION ARMY 1865-1866

by

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ABSTRACT

Demobilization of the Union Army is an event of the Civil War which most historians and commentators ignore completely. Where mention occurs, it is usually a brief acknowledgment of the process that is limited to reference to the rapidity with which the undertaking was executed. The effort, therefore, to return nearly a million volunteer soldiers to their homes and civilian lifestyles is worthy of study. An extremely effective procedure, it accomplished its goal in a very short period of time. Some 77% of the volunteer forces in the army were mustered out and discharged within a period of seven and a half months. Implementation of demobilization did not wait for cessation of hostilities; it began even before the final phases of combat were ended, and while the early period of reconstruction was getting underway.

The success of redeployment and demobilization depended on the railroads; improvements in equipment and trackage, together with development of techniques for effective utilization, contributed to the overall effort. The experience gained from the strategic use of railroads during the war by both North and South, in moving large numbers of men and equipment over long distances, also proved to be of great benefit.

Although the plan of demobilization was carefully drawn up and executed, reality often fell short of design. Human nature, government bureaucracy, red tape, and restless soldiers anxious to get home sometimes threw the program into disarray, resulting in discrepancies between plan and reality. Nevertheless, thanks to Civil War demobilization, a military method of permanent value was devised, one that would be used again in later conflicts, notably World War II. This thesis describes and evaluates a long neglected and important phase of American military history.

INTRODUCTION

If a single word could be used to characterize the demobilization of Union volunteers following the Civil War, that word would be "immediate." Throughout official correspondence and War Department orders and regulations, the term appears again and again during the period of time required to muster out and discharge almost one million men. In either its adverbial or adjectival form, the word reflects the urgency and pressure of the War Department mission to reduce the army quickly to a peacetime force. In 1865, peacetime military needs included a constabulary force in the defeated Confederacy, a presence along the border with Mexico, and provision of essential security for settlers, prospectors, railroad builders and territorial administration in the West. Mexico particularly seemed to pose a threat to the United States during the brief reign of the Emperor Maximilian and his supporting cast of French troops. In any case, all indications suggest that the government could not process the volunteer soldiers rapidly enough to meet its own goals or to satisfy the volunteers' wishes.

However fast the process was administered, it was still too slow for the individual soldiers; in brief, they wanted to be discharged yesterday! Soldiers and politicians seemed to think that all the volunteers could be discharged simultaneously. Some state politicians and officials even at-

tempted to use pressure tactics to speed up the rather involved process for their own units. Yet even when the nature of the discharge process and ongoing governmental responsibilities were carefully explained, individuals wanted someone else to be patient and await his turn. Such a reaction, however, is hardly surprising. Throughout the annals of military history, volunteer soldiers have wanted the quickest release possible when the emergency for which they served had ended. Uniforms, weapons, tactics and equipment may change, but human nature remains constant.

Besides the interest of the men directly involved, other significant considerations bear upon the demobilization of Union soldiers following the Civil War. First of all, the sheer numbers involved made the entire process unique. On May 1, 1865, just a few weeks after Lee's surrender at Appomattox, there were slightly more than one million men in the army; by the third week of November, 801,000 of that total had been mustered out and discharged. Considering the volume of paperwork and the fact that everything had to be handwritten, demobilization was indeed "an extraordinary exhibit of work, performed chiefly within the three months of June, July and August." Moreover, wrote the Secretary of War in his annual report for 1865, "no similar work of like magnitude regarding its immensity and the small limit of time in which it has been performed, has...any

parallel in the history of armies."¹

When the mustering out/discharge process began, the recruitment of volunteers, except for a few units of colored troops, practically stopped. The halt in recruiting, however, meant that there was still an entire manpower procurement system in place, organized by states, for processing significant numbers of soldiers. In effect, the government simply reversed the flow of men, so that the mustering in/recruiting machinery became the mustering out/discharge program. It was as if someone in Washington put the entire system in neutral and then threw it into reverse. From the perspective of our own time, it seems to have been the only reasonable thing to do.

It should also be noted that there was no precedent or system for handling hundreds of thousands of men in a few short weeks. The mustering in/recruiting program had processed men in relatively small contingents over a period of four years, reaching a total well in excess of 2,600,000, not counting sailors and marines.² Of this number, many thousands were killed or seriously wounded and were, therefore, administratively discharged. Also, thousands of men

¹ Edwin M. Stanton, Report of the Secretary of War 1865, vol.2 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1866), 898.

² United States War Department, The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies 1861-1865. 70 vols. in 128 parts. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Series 3, vol. 4: 1269-1270. (Hereafter cited as O.R.).

had re-enlisted for three years, or for the duration of the conflict, after having served three month or one year enlistments. Thus, these men were processed through the system at least twice. Still, the experience of four years notwithstanding, in 1865 the system was suddenly called upon to process many hundreds of thousands of soldiers within a very short time span. Considering the numbers involved, the process worked remarkably well in that there were few serious incidents of soldier unrest or impatient reactions to the well-known and unavoidable red tape. Anxious as they were to return to civilian status, most of the men were willing to suffer bureaucracy in good humor.

In addition, an essential element of demobilization, the nation's existing transportation system-- especially the railroads-- was seriously strained by the tremendous demand for the movement of thousands of men. Suffice it to mention here that the transportation system was able to handle the demand without serious interruption to the civilian economy. Again, the assembly of huge numbers of people to be moved and a relatively short period of time in which to accomplish the mission suggest the significance of the demobilization process.

Yet, for whatever reasons, authors generally tend to ignore it. If demobilization is mentioned at all, it is usually by way of vague reference to the process, perhaps noting the rapidity with which it was accomplished. Even

though Reconstruction began early in the war, in 1862, most authors tend to locate its origins in the wake of Lee's surrender at Appomattox. Perhaps it seems easier to finish one aspect of the Civil War before treating the sequel to it, but, in fact, and this is a point I intend to demonstrate, there was no such clear-cut division between the two realities. Both the war and Reconstruction began and ended at different and uneven stages. After a twelve-day armistice, during which time an appropriate and acceptable instrument of surrender was drawn up, General Joseph E. Johnston capitulated to General William T. Sherman on April 26, 1865, while a month later, on May 26, General E. Kirby Smith ceased operations in the Trans-Mississippi Department. Still later, General Stand Watie, a Cherokee Indian in the service of the Confederacy, finally surrendered on June 23, 1865, ten weeks after Lee's capitulation. Watie's surrender is generally considered to be the final one.

Yet even before the end of the conflict, demobilization was underway. Both of the major armies in the East, the Army of the Potomac under General George G. Meade, and the Army of the West, commanded by General William T. Sherman, moved toward Washington in preparation for the Grand Review. This two-day display of military might and celebration of victory occurred May 23 and 24, even before the final surrenders. General Philip H. Sheridan, however, one of the Union army's more prominent commanders, did not take part in

the review. Upon receiving orders, Sheridan left immediately for the Southwest due to the urgent need for a strong military presence there.

Three major activities involving troops, therefore, were occurring simultaneously: the Grand Review, initial phases of demobilization, and redeployment of troops. There can be no distinct separation of the events of the last weeks of the war; neatly defined categories simply do not exist. Perhaps it is this set of circumstances that accounts for the skimpy references to demobilization by many authors. Indeed, most contemporary commentators and observers failed to comment on the gigantic task. Perhaps men writing letters and diaries were so anxious to leave volunteer service and/or were so relieved and happy to have arrived home that they blocked out almost any and all thoughts of demobilization. And yet demobilization did occur; it is a fact of history! A final significant reason for the attractiveness of demobilization is that it is an untouched, practically unmentioned topic. In Civil War history today, such a topic is as rare as a gold nugget and as valuable as the "pearl of great price."

Anyone having relatively recent personal experience in military service, who remembers his own enlistment and discharge and reads about the same processes of the Civil War era, is struck by at least one major difference. During the Civil War the various steps taken to increase the size

of the army were initiated through the several states. Quotas, amounting to pro rata shares of the total call for volunteers, were assigned to the several states where officials broke them down into local allotments. Even the draft, which began in 1863, was organized on a state quota system. Thus, army units were organized at the state level and were designated accordingly; for example, the Twenty-second Iowa Volunteer Infantry, and similar designations for other units of the three main branches of service: infantry, artillery and cavalry. Initially, as these organizations suffered losses through battle casualties and disease, they themselves were responsible for obtaining replacements.

Usually, officers of a regiment went to the home area to recruit new men. There was no formal replacement system, as was the case during World War II. As the Civil War continued, entirely new units were organized, and the appointment of officers gave state governors a source of patronage that brought valuable returns on election day! Following passage of the Enrollment Act of 1863, drafted men were sent to existing units as replacements. New units continued to be organized, but they were fewer in number. Nevertheless, governors still retained the prerogative of approving the promotions of officers and the appointment of chaplains and surgeons for their state regiments.³

³ Alice Rains Trulock, In the Hands of Providence: Joshua L. Chamberlain and the American Civil War (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 162, 164.

When the demobilization process began, subsequent to the reversal of the mustering in/recruiting system, the mustering out/discharge program followed a state by state pattern. As will be shown in the section devoted to the mechanics of demobilization, the units were returned to their home states and, where possible, to their original mustering in locations. There were some instances, however, of men serving in regiments other than those of their home states. Nevertheless, the mustering out/discharge process was carried out in the home states of the organizations rather than the home states of the individuals.

The terms "mustering in/out" and "enlistment/discharge" are used in this study in much the same manner as they were employed in the correspondence and orders of the War Department during the war and afterward. The terms "mustering in/out" have the connotation of assembling for the purpose of being recruited or enlisted formally into, or being discharged from, the service of the state militia and then the Federal army. The idea of being summoned or called is included in the term. Just as troops were mustered and then enlisted, perhaps in two different places, so too with the reverse process; troops were mustered out in preparation for discharge. These two actions could occur in different locations, and in fact often did. At times, correspondents, historians, and even sometimes War Department officials appear to use the two terms synonymously, but they actually

referred to two different events. An officer of Company A, Ninety-seventh Illinois Infantry Regiment, Lt. W. R. Edington, recalled in his memoirs that when the unit was in Galveston, Texas, on July 29, 1865, "...we are being mustered out of the U. S. service...We are now out of service, but we have to go to Camp Butler, Illinois, to get our pay and discharge." On August 19, he wrote joyfully: " we are being paid off and get our discharge."⁴

In a July 1952 Department of the Army pamphlet, History of Personnel Demobilization in the United States Army, Major John C. Sparrow wrote that "the Civil War did provide useful experience for future demobilization planning." One can detect Civil War demobilization techniques in the troop transfers and discharge procedures at the end of the European phase of World War II, as will be noted in the conclusion.

⁴ W. R. Edington, Letter of Memoirs, Harrisburg CWRT Collection, USAMHI, Box C-Fo, 53, 55.

CHAPTER I

THE PLAN OF DEMOBILIZATION

In a letter dated May 1, 1865, Colonel Thomas M. Vincent, an aide to the Adjutant-General, presented to the Secretary of War a procedure to be followed in mustering out and discharging from service volunteer soldiers in the several armies of the United States. This proposal, which almost certainly required significant prior planning, was submitted just a few weeks following the surrender at Appomattox Court House and well in advance of other subsequent surrenders. It is entirely possible that the plan was already drawn up in anticipation of the total defeat of the Confederacy, or the rebel states, the terminology used throughout the official correspondence. However, the Secretary of War, Edwin M. Stanton, directed that the plan be submitted to the lieutenant-general commanding the armies for his opinion. If he approved the program, wrote Stanton, proper orders were to be issued. On May 11, 1865, the plan of demobilization was endorsed by Lt. General Ulysses S. Grant.

Stated briefly, the general intent was to maintain the integrity of major units, that is, corps or at least divisions, and move them to locations convenient to the particular armies. These convenient locations were termed field rendezvous points, and it was there that the paperwork began

in earnest. Considering the unfailing tendency of army units to take a casual attitude toward record-keeping during combat, it is understandable that there would now have to be a strict accounting of the unit records. Indeed, the records of individual soldiers would be, in part, based upon information found in the unit records. Thus, "a critical inspection of the regimental and company records was to be made" at the unit rendezvous points. The muster out rolls and the pay rolls were to be prepared there, and this critical work was to be directed by assistant commissaries of musters for the divisions. Their work, in turn, was to be superintended by the commissaries of the various corps. Corps commanders, together with their staff officers, were directed to push the procedure "with energy" so that the paperwork might be accomplished accurately and promptly.

In retrospect, perhaps, it may seem that there was an inordinate amount of attention paid to what might be termed inconsequential detail. Yet it is necessary to bear in mind that, beside the emphasis on accuracy in the final paperwork, two other factors were important. First, the huge number of men to be processed was indeed formidable. Then there was also constant pressure to expedite the process, not only from the top echelon of the War Department, but also from the soldiers, state politicians and families at home.⁵

⁵ O.R., Series 3, vol. 5: 1-3.

Only when the muster and pay rolls and other final papers of a regiment were complete would the unit be started on the way to its home state. Generally, it was directed to the place where it had been mustered into service. At this point the program came under the control of the state's chief mustering officer, who was responsible for its final phases. The paymasters appeared near the end of the process, for the government wisely determined that no troops be paid until final demobilization, and this was almost always at or near the unit's home site, the state rendezvous points. The object here was to protect the troops from swindlers and confidence men, well-known breeds of camp followers, as well as reduce the commonplace temptations to gambling. Each could consume a soldier's pay, and some men would reach home with empty pockets after years of combat service.

Since the units traveled to their home states with their arms, colors, and other equipment, provision was made for the surrender of same to the appropriate officials. It was possible, however, for the soldiers to keep their weapons. A War Department letter from the Adjutant-General's Office dated June 10, 1865, established a price schedule for arms: muskets, with or without accouterments, \$6; Spencer carbines, \$10; all other carbines, \$8; sabers and swords, with or without belts, \$3. The men could also keep, without

charge, their knapsacks, haversacks and canteens.⁶ The schedule made possible an easily administered disposition of army surplus property, an inventory problem that has invariably beset governments in the aftermath of wars.

Two other important matters also had to be considered, and the War Department addressed both of them. One was the necessity of feeding the men during the period of record processing and preparation for discharge. Another, somewhat more serious consideration, was the matter of discipline. The chief mustering officer, together with the unit officers, was responsible for the maintenance of proper discipline during these impatient days. A military unit without specified duties and activities is a virtual invitation for difficulties, scrapes, and disciplinary infractions. Here the army "Brass" was merely trying to prevent what some would term "unavoidable incidents." Actually, except for a few incidents, the whole process went off remarkably well.

It should be noted that special attention and care were given to the final phase: paying the troops their base pay plus any bonuses due them, less various charges, such as cost of the retained weapons. In many instances, however, the paymaster's system was woefully behind. General Sherman's army and General Thomas's command in the West had not been paid since August, 1864; the Army of the Potomac and other troops in and around Richmond at the end of the

⁶ Ibid., 53, 54.

war were last paid at the end of that year. (Such a situation was never permitted in World War II. Troops were paid monthly, even during combat, literally within range of small-arm's fire). In answer to a May 19 query from Grant's chief-of-staff, the Paymaster-General replied that the Treasury was in the process of paying Sherman and Meade's armies and that approximately 123,000 men would receive some \$50,000,000.⁷

The office of the Adjutant-General of the army was the keystone of the entire recruiting/discharging system. Shortly before the bombardment of Fort Sumter, the Adjutant-General was Colonel Samuel Cooper, a career officer who had spent many years in the position. From his days as Secretary of War in Pierce's cabinet, Jefferson Davis had come to know this man and to appreciate his abilities. When Cooper, although a native of New York state, left federal service to support Virginia, his adopted state, and the newly-organized Confederacy, Davis was quick to offer him the key role of Adjutant-and-Inspector General of the Confederate army. As such, he was the ranking general officer of the Confederacy. In addition to the duties of his office, the adjutant-general acted as chief of staff at the very highest level. This position in both armies was crucial to a smooth operation of military affairs.

Shortly after the beginning of the war, Lorenzo Thomas,

⁷ Ibid., 28.

a colonel who was in charge of the Adjutant-General's office, was appointed Adjutant-General and promoted to the rank of brigadier general. Given the tremendous expansion of the army in a few short months, the Adjutant-General's duties expanded accordingly. Some authors portray Thomas as being slow to respond to the military exigencies of the crisis. Whatever the case may have been, when Edwin M. Stanton took over as Secretary of War in January, 1862, he openly displayed an intense dislike for General Thomas and a low estimate of his ability. One author states that Stanton "detested [Thomas] on sight." In addition, there were rumors of a certain "lukewarmness" on the part of the Adjutant-General toward the war, and Stanton is said to have even had doubts about Thomas's loyalty.

Although there appears to have been no basis for the suspicions, Stanton nonetheless managed to isolate Thomas and thus keep him at a distance from the War Department. The Adjutant-General was sent on frequent field inspection trips and, eventually, to the Mississippi Valley to supervise recruitment of Negro soldiers and enlistment of white officers for the colored regiments. In addition, some writers believe that Thomas was assigned the duty of "watching Grant," even though he was considered by many to be an eccentric person, one who was addicted to strong drink (a strange choice "to watch Grant"), and also a man of limited ability and narrow views. As things turned out, General

Thomas was shunted off in such a way that he took little active part in either the vast expansion of the army or its demobilization.⁸ Who then did control the operations of this crucially important position in the army?

Two officers stood out by virtue of their intense and diligent efforts to undertake the duties of Adjutant-General, Colonel Edward Davis Townsend and Captain Thomas McCurdy Vincent. Colonel Townsend, whose maternal grandfather was Elbridge Gerry, a major figure in American political history, was senior assistant in the Adjutant-General's Department. Possessing a quiet and confident manner, Townsend became a close confidant of President Lincoln and was an efficient administrator. He also had a remarkable knowledge of departmental files and army procedures. In short, Townsend got things done! One of his major accomplishments was the collection of all available war-related papers, thus insuring the creation of that remarkable historical source, The War of the Rebellion: Official Records. These O.R.s, as they are commonly known, represent the most complete record of the war and are, therefore, essential material for every Civil War historian. At the conclusion of the war, Townsend was first brevetted brigadier general and then major general

⁸ Benjamin P. Thomas and Harold M. Hyman, Stanton: The Life and Times of Lincoln's Secretary of War (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), 159, 163, 263, 379, 581; Dumas Malone, ed., Dictionary of American Biography 20 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), 18: 441-442.

for his outstanding services.⁹

Thomas McCurdy Vincent, in June 1861 a first lieutenant and finally a colonel by the end of the war, had seen combat against the Seminole Indians in Florida (1853-1855), and also had taken part in the First Battle of Bull Run (July 21, 1861). He was "in charge of the organization, muster out, and other details of the volunteer troops" during the war. A younger man than Townsend, he remained in service, retiring in 1896 as a colonel in the Regular Army with the brevet rank of brigadier-general in the United States Army.¹⁰ These two officers, Townsend and Vincent, drew up the plans both for the recruiting and demobilizing phases of the army, supervised their execution, and provided skillful and professional expertise to the president and the Secretary of War.

However loose the wartime maintenance of unit and individual documents may have been, the War Department now insisted upon complete and accurate records. For this reason, it was necessary to keep the volunteers in service long enough to verify their records. It was well that such emphasis was placed on personal or individual military data early on, as the information must have been extremely valu-

⁹ Malone, DAB, 18: 615-616.

¹⁰ Mark M. Boatner, The Civil War Dictionary (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1959), 878; George W. Cullum, Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the United States Military Academy from 1802 to 1867. 2 vols. (New York: James Miller, Publisher, 1879), 2: 341-342.

able in later years in connection with applications for pensions and disability allowances. Even so, veterans often had to contact fellow-soldiers from their units in order to substantiate subsequent claims. (The same predicament persisted following wars in the twentieth century; just glance at a current issue of any veterans' magazine for requests of this nature).

This detailed history for each man required the following information:

NAME	RANK	AGE
ENROLLED MUSTERED IN	WHEN WHERE BY WHOM	DATE OF LAST PAY
DISTANCE TRAVELLED	SUBSISTENCE/FORAGE FURNISHED	EQUIPMENT/CLOTHING ISSUED
ABSENCES	SPECIAL DUTY	PROMOTIONS
WOUNDS	ILLNESSES	

After printing and distributing the forms for recording the above data, the processing of volunteers began. Adequate transportation, however, was essential to the entire program, and so rail and water facilities were mobilized to move the volunteer soldiers back to their home states. Ultimately, every railroad and waterway of the North was involved. Men were transported on the Ohio and Mississippi

Rivers, as well as the Great Lakes. In addition, large numbers were moved by steamer on the high seas and even Long Island Sound. Also, due to the large concentrations of troops passing through New York City, Cleveland, and Chicago, temporary barracks were constructed to provide shelter for troops during transfer procedures at those cities.¹¹

With the volunteer soldiers on their way to the field rendezvous points, sufficient mustering out and pay roll forms available, and necessary transportation laid on, the long-awaited demobilization could begin. And begin it did, first with the Grand Review, the initial phase of demobilization for the armies in the East, and then with the actual movement of troops, primarily by rail, toward their common destination of home.

¹¹ Ida M. Tarbell, "How the Union Army Was Disbanded," McClure's Magazine (March, 1901), repr. Civil War Times Illustrated vol. 6, no. 8 (December, 1967), 4-9, 44.

CHAPTER II

THE GRAND REVIEW

Proclaimed "a benediction on the Civil War" and "the noblest pageant the country had ever witnessed," the Grand Review, at least for the armies of Generals George G. Meade and William T. Sherman, was a significant component of demobilization. The distances traveled northward by these two armies, moving some of the troops directly into the pipeline of demobilization, meshed smoothly into the program.

Both armies marched to Washington, Meade's coming from the Richmond area and Sherman's men marching from Raleigh, North Carolina, by way of Richmond. Through rail service did not exist, and there was widespread destruction of railroad facilities in that much-fought-over area of the South. The only practical method of movement, therefore, was the road march, a technique in which veteran volunteers were well experienced. In fact, Sherman's army moved from Raleigh to Richmond, a distance of 156 miles, in five and one-half days. From Richmond the Army of the West marched to Washington in four columns, divided in such fashion so as to minimize confusion en route and to maximize effective use of the road network. In so doing, the army passed through almost every battle site in northern Virginia, of which, to

say the least, there were quite a few.¹²

During the march, a private in the 105th Illinois Infantry Regiment, Robert Hale Strong, described the scene on the Wilderness battlefield: "...We marched for hours over the battlefield. The dead had been buried where they fell, and the burial consisted only of throwing a little dirt over the dead men. Here and there an arm or leg would stick out..."¹³ Such gruesome sights may have been familiar to hardened veterans, but, added to seasonally high temperatures, the charnel atmosphere must not have been pleasant. Even so, to those soldiers for whom eastern battle sites had been only names in newspapers, the march was something of a sight-seeing tour. Indeed, in order to see as much as he could, General Sherman himself rode with the four columns intermittently and thus was a spectator also.¹⁴

Also during the march, the brutality of war was manifest in yet another way. In his letter of May 11, John Brobst of the Twenty-fifth Wisconsin Volunteer Regiment described the marching conditions in "very warm weather." "Many men melted on the march, some fell dead, some died

¹² Ibid., 6-7.

¹³ Robert Hale Strong, A Yankee Private's Civil War, ed. Ashley Halsey (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1961), 204.

¹⁴ In a very real sense, Sherman and his troops made the first visitations to what in later years would become National Military Parks.

soon after, and some are getting well." Strong, the soldier in the 105th Illinois quoted above, offered a possible explanation for the devastating forced marches that occurred en route to Washington. According to the Illinois infantryman, it was rumored that the commanding general of the XX Corps, Major General Joseph A. Mower, and other corps commanders had laid wagers as to which outfit would reach Washington first. The alleged rumor may have been no more than that, but in fact, the march did turn into a destructive race. "[T]he first half of the march was not hard," wrote Private Strong, "but then the race began. The march we were on wore out the best of us...I have seen men dying from exhaustion, lying in fence corners, whose deaths were simply murder...When we left Richmond, some of the hardest marching began."¹⁵ Whether they moved by "hard" road marches or by ship from City Point to Alexandria via Chesapeake Bay, as did the Fifty-seventh Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, not all troops considered "the trek...a happy occasion..." even though the Massachusetts soldiers "all knew now that they were on the first leg of the road

¹⁵ Margaret Brobst Roth, Well Mary: Civil War Letters of a Wisconsin Volunteer (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1960), 137-138; Strong, A Yankee Private's Civil War, 203-204.

home."¹⁶

When the armies finally reached the Washington confines, the scene was described by a New York Times correspondent as "an impressive and exhilarating pageant[.]" "[S]outh of the Potomac [River]," a staff officer in Sheridan's cavalry noted, "the country was for miles a vast camp." Considering that there were approximately 200,000 men in the area, the logistical problems must have been vast. Provision of bare essentials, water, food, sanitary facilities, and even disposal of manure from the thousands of animals, surely tried the ingenuity, skill and zeal of the Quartermaster, Commissary, and Engineers Corps. Logistical problems notwithstanding, the food was said to be good. According to Private Strong of the 105th Illinois: "While in Washington we drew the best of rations, soft bread instead of hard crackers, fresh meat and vegetables."¹⁷

Drills and other "keep-busy" measures were maintained in order to prepare for the Grand Review itself. The commanding officer of the Eighteenth New Hampshire Infantry Regiment, Colonel Thomas L. Livermore, had risen through the ranks from private and thus was an experienced and qualified soldier. He seemed to think not too highly about one part

¹⁶ Warren Wilkinson, Mother, May You Never See the Sights I Have Seen (New York: Harper & Row, 1990), 352-353.

¹⁷ New York Times, May 9, 1865; Henry Edward Tremain, Last Hours of Sheridan's Cavalry: A Reprint of War Memoranda (New York: Bonnell, Silver & Bowes, 1904), 305; Strong, A Yankee Private's Civil War, 210.

of his regiment's training and drill in preparation for the Grand Review. The division to which his regiment was assigned paraded one evening in a "torch light review...with lighted candles in the muzzles of the rifles." If the purpose of such drill was to keep the troops occupied, almost certainly the plan succeeded, as rifles spotted with wax must have been extremely difficult to clean.¹⁸

The Army of the Potomac and the Army of the West together represented approximately 20% of the total armed forces at the end of the war, but commonality ended there. Entirely different in their experiences, areas of campaigns, style of fighting, and even their manner of marching on parade, these two forces were to pass in review before the president, members of the Supreme Court and Congress, the diplomatic corps, state governors and the general public. The differences between the armies even extended to what General Joshua L. Chamberlain termed "hostile competition, hard feelings, dislike and discord." Originally camped on the south side of the Potomac River, adjacent to each other, the two armies expressed their rivalry by exchanging insults, taunts, and even blows. Sherman's men used such epithets as "feather bed soldiers," "white collars," and

¹⁸ Thomas L. Livermore, Days and Events 1860-1866 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1920), 468. Livermore was later to author a classic book in Civil War literature, Numbers and Losses in the Civil War in America; the data in this book are today considered, in part, unreliable, but it has long been the source of information concerning battle casualties.

"soft breads" to describe the soldiers of the Army of the Potomac. They, in turn, had their choice names for their opposite numbers in the Army of the West: "water fowls" and "Sherman's mules."

The combination of fatigue, short tempers, hot and humid weather, and the known enmities between the two armies virtually insured that violence would erupt, and erupt it did! Gunfire broke out on one occasion, leaving two men dead and several wounded. This "incident" was far more serious than friendly, or even unfriendly, rivalry. The commanders thought likewise, as all ammunition but two rounds per man was withdrawn. Finally, Sherman's army was moved across the Potomac River in the interest of maintaining order in the encampments. So bitter was the feeling between the two armies, according to a Wisconsin volunteer, that the soldiers in Sherman's army got along better with the Confederates than with General Meade's men.¹⁹

When order was finally assured, the Grand Review could be staged, and it was spectacular, impressing all who witnessed it, even the military personnel. Colonel Livermore wrote that the "sight was worth coming from the ends of the world to see...a novel and impressive spectacle." Not

¹⁹ Joshua L. Chamberlain, The Passing of the Armies (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1915) 372-373; Strong, A Yankee Private's Civil War, 208; Ruth L. Silliker, ed., The Rebel Yell & the Yankee Hurrah: The Civil War Journal of a Maine Volunteer (Camden, Maine: Down East Books, 1985), 278; Roth, Well Mary, 5.

everyone, however, was so effusive in praise. Lyman Daniel Ames, a chaplain of the Twenty-ninth Ohio Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Army of the Potomac, assigned to duty as chaplain at the hospital of the Second Division, XX Corps, near Alexandria, Virginia, observed the first day's activities, and commented with restraint: "A fair display of military power, a creditable performance." Most civilians, on the other hand, however well informed about the war and army, had no conception of the magnitude of the forces. When told that the troops of the two-day review were only a relatively small part of the entire army, they could not comprehend the total reality. Warren Wilkinson, a volunteer in the Fifty-seventh Massachusetts Infantry, wrote home that it was "the greatest assemblage of soldiers and equipment the nation had ever known."²⁰ Reviewing stands were erected on Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House, the one on the south side reserved for the main reviewing party, including President Johnson, General Grant and other important guests, such as the diplomatic corps. The stand opposite was for the judiciary, members of Congress, and other ticket holders. In addition, two stands were erected by private citizens to accommodate sick and wounded soldiers.²¹

²⁰ Livermore, Days and Events, 472; Edwin Lyman Ames, Jr., ed., The Civil War Diaries of Lyman Daniel Ames 1861-1865. Unpublished typescript, CWTI Collection, USAMHI, Box Am-Ba, 160; Wilkinson, Mother, May You Never See, 358.

²¹ "The Grand Review," New York Times, May 23, 1865.

Overall, the review took two days, the Army of the Potomac marching past the first day, and the Army of the West, General's Sherman's army, the second day. Each day the review began at 9 o'clock in the morning; the first day's parade took six hours, while Sherman's army required seven hours to pass. Hardly an unbiased reporter, since his regiment, the Twenty-fifth Wisconsin Infantry, was part of the Army of the West, Private John F. Brobst said that "Sherman's vandals did better and made a better appearance than the famed Army of the Potomac." Indeed, however, if Sherman's soldiers did outshine Meade's, it was not for any lack of trying on the part of the Army of the Potomac. The men were sized in order to present a uniform appearance; this meant that the shorter men were kept in camp as guards, according to Private John Haley, one of the shorter men in the Seventeenth Maine Infantry.²² After the units passed the reviewing stands, they were moved out of the area as quickly as possible in order to provide road space for the seemingly endless columns of troops yet to pass in review. In some cases the units went back to their assembly areas, but in other instances they moved to new sites in close proximity to the railhead so that the homeward journeys could begin.

One characteristic of the Grand Review seldom mentioned was the absence of black troops. Considering that Negroes

²² Roth, Well Mary, 145; Silliker, The Rebel Yell, 278.

provided nearly ten per cent of the Union army, their absence might have been deliberate. An article in the New York Times a few days after the Review denied that the exclusion was an attempt "to spare the sensitive feelings of the rebels, which might have been wounded [by inclusion of black troops]." Negro soldiers were no more excluded, the article contended, than were white troops who were not present to participate. Rather, the men who were absent, especially the colored troops, were praised by the Times for their contribution to the war effort and devotion to country. Many soldiers, white and black, according to the newspaper, were needed to garrison critical areas in the South, Southwest, and the West.²³

The review, wrote General Chamberlain, represented "an army...marching to its dissolution."²⁴ Now the actual dissolution process, demobilization, was ready to begin.

²³ James McPherson, The Negro's Civil War: How American Negroes Felt and Acted during the War for the Union (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965), 237; New York Times, May 26, 1865.

²⁴ Chamberlain, The Passing of the Armies, 340.

CHAPTER III

DEMOBILIZATION: HOMEWARD BOUND

Just how did the troops move into the demobilization process? In what order were they chosen, since all volunteer units could not be discharged simultaneously? What was the Civil War era version of the famous point system, used for calculating discharge eligibility in World War II? Were white and black troops treated equally? What about the wounded, still-convalescing soldiers in hospitals? Were volunteer officers of general's rank treated the same as their Regular Army counterparts? To answer these and similar questions one must go to the Official Records, to the voluminous correspondence, orders, circulars, instructions, letters, and even reprimands, to trace the mustering out/discharge activity as it occurred.

An excerpt from a May 18, 1865, War Department letter to chief mustering officers in loyal states provides insight into considerations of timing, scope and selection: "All volunteer organizations of white troops in General Sherman's army and the Army of the Potomac, whose service expires prior to October 1, 1865, have been ordered mustered out." Obviously, white and black soldiers were not treated equally. Note also the inconsistent manner of designating the armies, one by the name of the commanding general and other by its official name. This letter goes on to specify cate-

gories of men to be processed:

"Three-year regiments mustered in July 2, 1862 and
prior to October 1, 1862;

three-year recruits mustered in for old regiments
between the same dates;

one-year recruits mustered in for old and new
units, who entered

service prior to

October 1, 1864."

From these distinctions of length of service, it is clear that both the older (in length of service) soldiers as well as members of older units, whose service was due to expire by the first of October, were to be given priority for discharge.²⁵

And then the gates opened! There was a veritable flood of orders and new regulations that placed more and more men into the system, all heading for discharge, and, best of all, home! Perhaps a directive included in the Adjutant-General's May 20 letter to the governors of the loyal states best expressed the program's overall objective: "Troops about to be discharged should go out of service promptly, should be properly cared for, and their interests fully protected."²⁶ It was the duty of the Adjutant-General's office to carry these aims into effect by executing the policy laid down by the Secretary of War.

²⁵ O.R. Series 3, vol. 5: 25.

²⁶ Ibid., 28-29. 32

In general, the speed of the process was astonishing. When certain units of infantry, artillery or cavalry were selected for discharge from particular armies, it often seemed that the ink was hardly dry on one set of orders when new orders were issued. Indeed, a continuous stream of new orders accelerated the reduction of the volunteer forces. For an example: "All volunteer artillery in the armies of the Potomac, the Tennessee, and Georgia are to be mustered out and discharged immediately." This letter was sent out on May 30, and within days, on June 2, another order was issued for "batteries of volunteer artillery to be reduced at once to the number absolutely required under existing circumstances by the necessities of service."²⁷

Occasionally, orders for discharge of troops in a particular department required certain other units to remain in service for an extended time due to a particular assignment. In General Joseph Hooker's Northern Department, which included Ohio and other Great Lakes states, two regiments of volunteers, the Eighty-eighth and the 128th Ohio Volunteers, were held back because they were on duty at Camp Chase and Johnson's Island, two camps for Confederate prisoners of war.²⁸ Odd as it may seem, the Federal forces were being discharged faster than the Confederate prisoners were being released and repatriated.

²⁷ Ibid., 48-49.

²⁸ Ibid., 51-52.

Soldiers in hospitals, recovering from wounds and diseases, were also subject to mustering out and discharge, their physical condition permitting, as were men on special duty away from their regular units. Private Wilbur Fisk, a member of the Second Vermont Infantry Regiment, had been detailed to special duty as part of the guard force for a large base hospital of VI Corps. As the soldier-patients' health improved, the men were moved into the demobilization system, while the guards remained behind. Fisk wrote that "we are getting dreadfully out of patience at the delay that keeps us here doing nothing. It is impossible for Uncle Sam to discharge everybody at once, and we must wait our turn, but we are decidedly opposed to waiting any longer than that. All are anxious to be discharged at the earliest possible moment." He went on to say that "we must be patient, the Government cannot do everything at once. Some troops must be kept, and somebody must be those troops." Fisk's practical wisdom, so well expressed, must nevertheless have been difficult to accept. The letter was written June 4, 1865, and finally he rejoined his outfit which left Virginia July 16 and arrived at Burlington, Vermont, July 19. July 25 was the date of the final step in the process, payday! Fisk's patience ultimately brought him home.²⁹

Underlying the torrent of orders and telegrams, there

²⁹ Emil & Ruth Rosenblatt, eds., Hard Marching Every Day: The Civil War Letters of Private Wilbur Fisk, 1861-1865 (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1992), 330.

was always a note of urgency. On May 18, a week prior to the Grand Review, a telegram was sent by the Adjutant-General to General Meade and to the commanding generals of the Armies of the Tennessee and of Georgia, all other armies and military departments, except the Departments of the East, the Pacific, New Mexico, and the Northern Department. Its instruction was: "Muster-out rolls should be ready in the shortest time possible." Extra clerks and additional space were to be assigned in order to facilitate the process. Army commanders were directed to use hospital and wall tents so as to provide space necessary for the clerical work to be completed.³⁰

The dates on the various orders reveal clearly that demobilization required sustained efforts. Undoubtedly, the midnight oil burned in the office of the Adjutant-General night after night. And so the process continued: "...be immediately mustered out and discharged;" "be placed en route with least practicable delay;" "...shall be discharged immediately."³¹ At times there seemed to be no end in sight, for hundreds of thousands of volunteer soldiers were involved. Moreover, there were vast areas for which the army was concerned and responsible. Not only were its major responsibilities geographically varied, i.e., the Mexican frontier, the occupied Confederacy, and the West, but move-

³⁰ O.R., Series 3, vol. 5: 56.

³¹ Ibid., 57.

ments of troops were complicated by the great distances within areas. After the War Department nearly exhausted the supply of still-serving volunteer units, the orders became all-inclusive, as if some units had been overlooked. On July 7 telegrams were sent to the commanding generals of the Army of the Tennessee and the Army of the Potomac (now styled the Provisional Corps), ordering them to disband the Tennessee command completely and to muster out all remaining volunteer regiments in the Provisional Corps.³² One way or another, the two armies were to be stripped of their volunteer units and personnel.

Having identified the units and/or personnel to be discharged, what means and routes were used to return this horde of volunteers to their homes and civilian occupations? The Quartermaster-General's Department was active in planning, coordinating, assembling, and directing maximum utilization of the country's transportation resources. These necessarily included what was available in the Confederacy, as large numbers of Union troops in the South had to be transported to their northern or western homes. More specifically, the resources consisted of the civilian railroad network, inland water transportation, both river and lake, and ocean transport. During much of the discharge process there was a significant volume of traffic going in the opposite direction, i.e., from the North to the South.

³² Ibid., 93-94.

Thousands of freed rebel prisoners, refugees, and ex-slaves were returned to the South, using ocean transports and some railroads.³³ With the large number of men to be transported and the constant pressures from all sides for speed, the undertaking presented problems of formidable proportions. Yet the steps taken by the Quartermaster-General's Transportation Branch in solving those problems were nothing less than ingenious.

The field rendezvous points designated by the War Department for mustering out troops were well chosen. Consideration was given to proximity of sites to the troops as well as to the available transportation facilities, in the interest of facilitating movement of volunteers from the field to state rendezvous points and from these to the soldiers' homes. A complete list of field rendezvous points by army department or military division is included in Appendix I, but a few examples here will illustrate the choices:

DEPARTMENT/MILITARY DIVISION

FIELD RENDEZVOUS
POINTS

Middle Military Division

Washington, D.C.,
Harpers Ferry, Va.
(sic),

³³ Ibid., 288-289.

Department of the South

Cumberland, Md.

Charleston, S.C.,

Savannah, Ga.

Department of the Cumberland

Nashville, Knox-

ville,

Memphis, Tenn.

The state rendezvous points are listed in Appendix II.

Transportation of troops was not without its dangers, and following the terrible Mississippi River disaster of April 27, 1865, involving the steamer Sultana, such hazards were very much in the minds of the demobilization managers. The steamer was overloaded, possibly more than six times its legal capacity, carrying at least 2,108 soldiers, although the exact number of passengers will never be known. Most of these men were ex-prisoners who had suffered greatly in the prison camps of Andersonville, Georgia, and Cahaba, Alabama. Instead of arriving at Camp Chase near Columbus, Ohio, to be mustered out, seven or eight miles north of Memphis more than 1,800 men were killed in what was considered to be "the worst maritime disaster in American history."³⁴

Soon afterward, the Quartermaster-General called for the "strictest attention" to details so that only perfectly safe transports were employed, and these should not be

³⁴ Jerry Potter, "The Sultana Disaster: Conspiracy of Greed," Blue & Gray Magazine vol. 7, no. 6 (August 1990), 8, 17.

"overloaded." "Extreme caution" was to be used at all times. This warning about safety on the rivers was not misplaced, as two subsequent newspaper accounts will show. On June 9, a steamer on the Red River, loaded with 1,200 paroled "rebel" prisoners, sank in three minutes after hitting a snag below Shreveport, Louisiana. As initially reported, approximately two hundred lives were lost; an eyewitness account a few days later reported that "the loss of life has been greatly exaggerated, that only fifteen or twenty whites and perhaps fifty Negroes were lost, instead of two hundred, as [originally] reported." In another accident, a steamer loaded with troops collided with a monitor near Cairo, Illinois, on June 19. This steamer also sank, but fortunately the loss was confined to "a number of horses and much government freight."³⁵

Thus was the entire demobilization program placed into action: completion of required paperwork, initial mustering out at a relatively close field rendezvous point, movement by a combination of means to state rendezvous points, final pay off, and official discharge. It is noteworthy that the program proceeded at a rapid pace. Between the first of May and mid-November, 801,000 officers and men were mustered out and discharged. The bulk of the processing occurred in the period May 1 - August 7, when 641,000 men were put through

³⁵ O.R. Series 3, vol. 5: 3; New York Times, June 21, 25, 1865.

the pipeline. Major General Sherman's command (the Army of the West) and General Meade's Army of the Potomac were the first units to complete the mustering out of volunteers. On August 1 the last regiment of the Army of the West was mustered out, while the last regiment of the Army of the Potomac started for home on July 19. These two armies accounted for 279,000 of the total processed.³⁶

Yet, while the planning and directives governing demobilization were one thing, the actual realities of the program were often quite another. In other words, there were considerable discrepancies between the blueprint for demobilization and the actual experiences of units and men. Before investigating the hard facts of demobilization, as reflected in personal accounts and unit histories, the next chapter outlines the development of American railroads, their use during the war, and their importance in demobilization.

³⁶ O.R., Series III, vol. 5, 135-136.

CHAPTER IV

DEMOBILIZATION AND RAILROADS

Of all the means of transport used in demobilization, railroads were by far the most important. No matter how remote the location of the military unit or how great the distance to the state rendezvous point, the longest portion of the journey home was made by rail. Be it slow or fast, by box-car, coal-car or passenger coach, with or without potable water, rail movement of troops was an integral part of demobilization.

Historically, American railroads were local in nature; they were feeders for specific population centers rather than connections among cities. There had been no intent originally of through service; railroads fulfilled much the same function as local canals. It took the war to expand the concept of railroads as the framework of a national transportation system. Actually, there was limited railroad expansion during the war, somewhere around 19%.³⁷ There were, however, big changes and improvements in the operations of the railroads, using existing facilities. Given their local nature, a variety of track gauges had prolonged toleration; i.e., since there was no intent of moving trains over long distances, the potpourri of gauges made little or

³⁷ Thomas Weber, The Northern Railroads in the Civil War 1861-1865 (New York: Columbia University-King's Crown Press, 1952), 13-15.

no difference. It was the requirements of war that finally brought about standardization of gauge.

From the viewpoint of the Union, the Civil War occurred at a peak moment in the development of railroads in this country. In 1840 there were but 2,800 miles of railroad track, while at the end of that decade, the mileage had increased to 9,000 miles. Had the war broken out ten years earlier, the country's railroads would never have been able to handle the wartime increases in the transportation of men, materiel and foodstuffs. Merely "a broken skein" of railroads in 1850, by 1860 the mileage was more than three times the 1850 figure. These 30,000 miles of railroad track represented the beginning of "a national network."³⁸ The expansion during those ten years was crucial to the war and its outcome, as well as to the demobilization process.

Just prior to the war, in 1860, there were no North-South through connections by rail in the country. The only way such passage could be achieved was by steamboat on the Ohio River, or a ferry across the Potomac River between Washington and Alexandria, Virginia. Washington, despite being the capital of an expanding nation, was one of the most isolated points for rail transit in the East. Only one connection led to and from the city, the Washington Branch of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. The mainline of the

³⁸ Eric Foner & John A. Garraty, eds., The Reader's Companion to American History (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1991), 907.

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railroad started in Baltimore, went south toward Washington to a junction known as Relay House (sometimes shown on maps as Washington Junction), and then swung west through Harpers Ferry and Cumberland, Maryland, to West Virginia and a connection with the Ohio River at Parkersburg, West Virginia, or Bellaire, Ohio. As shown in Appendix III, there has been some confusion in certain maps and correspondence about the location of Relay House. Definitely, there was a crucially important railroad junction, Relay House or Washington Junction, northeast of Washington and southwest of Baltimore.

In addition, however, there was another interchange on the same line that ran approximately forty miles from Washington to Baltimore, the Annapolis Junction. This, too, was a critical facility. For a three-week period in the early days of the war, riots in Baltimore and the destruction of key bridges on the railroad effectively isolated Washington from the rest of country. Troops were sent from the North to Annapolis by ship, then transported by rail to Annapolis Junction, thus placing the soldiers south of Baltimore on the branch line to Washington.³⁹ In retrospect, it seems odd that the Confederates did not attempt to destroy or at least sabotage these highly vulnerable facilities, especially Relay House. Even temporary damage to it would have been a serious blow to the northern war effort.

³⁹ Weber, The Northern Railroads, 27-28.

During the early years of railroad growth ferry service was essential at the Susquehanna, Delaware and Hudson Rivers in order to provide "through" service from Washington to New York City. Such interruptions of travel meant changing cars, always a time-consuming hindrance. In November 1861 ferries which accommodated railroad cars entered service at the Susquehanna River, eliminating car change at this point.

Beneficial to the North was the predominant east-west orientation of the major railroads. These railroads, which later became true rail systems, concentrated on east to west service, rather than north to south. The military value of such a trend became obvious during the war as troops, food and manufactured supplies, and equipment were moved in support of the North's military might. This orientation of the principal rail lines was invaluable at the time of demobilization also.

Throughout the war significant improvements were made in the utilization of existing tracks and equipment. There was better and tighter scheduling of trains, expansion to double track in many places, the Susquehanna and Delaware Rivers were finally bridged, and the design and material of the rails themselves were improved. In addition, specialized rolling equipment was designed and put into operation for the transportation of iron ore, oil and grain. Railway post office cars, hospital cars and trains, as well as

armored cars, also entered into use during the war.⁴⁰

During the war railroads came into their own in a military sense. Strategically and even tactically, railroads became factors in planning and executing campaigns and battles. The Confederates made the first critical use of railroads in an American war at the First Battle of Bull Run (July, 1861), in Virginia. Major General Joseph E. Johnston moved approximately 10,000 men, most of his command, from Harpers Ferry to Manassas Junction in support of Major General Pierre G. T. Beauregard's force. Johnston accomplished this troop movement partly by road marches and partly by the single track of the Manassas Gap Railroad. Military and railroad history converged that July day.⁴¹

The next historically important movement of troops occurred the following year, again on the Confederate side. General Thomas J. Jackson's command was transported from the Shenandoah Valley to the Richmond front, to take part in the Seven Days' Battles, the Confederate response to the Peninsular Campaign of General George B. McClellan. Nine railroads with two different gauges were used to move Jackson's men to the Richmond area. Ultimately, McClellan retreated across the James River, and thus we see that "...a rail-based power, operating upon interior lines, had forced

⁴⁰ Weber, The Northern Railroads, 15, 120, 125-126, 225.

⁴¹ John Hennessy, The First Battle of Manassas: An End to Innocence July 18-21, 1861; The Virginia Civil War Battles and Leaders Series (Lynchburg: H.E. Howard, Inc., 1989), 2.

retreat of a superior opponent supplied by water." Later, "in the summer of 1862 occurred the largest single Confederate troop movement by rail," (that is, up to that time.) The Army of the Mississippi, 25,000 strong, was transported from Tupelo, Mississippi, via Mobile, Alabama, and Atlanta, Georgia, to Chattanooga, Tennessee, a roundabout route which required six railroads. It was a long and tiring trip; the men were given seven days' cooked rations to avoid lengthy stops. This troop transfer is said to have convinced General Braxton Bragg of the military importance, as well as the flexibility, adaptability and advantages of railroads.⁴²

The shift of General James Longstreet's I Corps from northern Virginia to Chickamauga, Tennessee, in September, 1863, is considered to be the "longest and most famous Confederate troop movement by rail." Approximately twelve thousand men were moved, utilizing sixteen different railroads. Some units reached Atlanta via Charleston, South Carolina, and Savannah, Georgia, while others went to the Georgian capital by a more direct route through Charlotte, North Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina, and Augusta, Georgia.⁴³ Considering the poor condition of southern railroads during the war, as well as the limited rail facilities in the South at the beginning of the war, that the South was able to make such effective military use of rail-

⁴² Robert C. Black, The Railroads of the Confederacy (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1952), 180-181.

roads is indeed a remarkable fact. Military and railroad history may have converged initially on a hot July day in 1861, but the two realities were to join again and again and would remain entwined for many generations.

The greatest railroad troop movement of the Civil War, however, was undertaken in September 1863 by the Union forces to move men and equipment to Chattanooga, Tennessee, to resist the southern forces which General Bragg had assembled in the Chickamauga area. To reinforce Major General William S. Rosecrans' army at Chattanooga, Tennessee, the Secretary of War, Edwin M. Stanton, ordered the XI and XII Corps, under the overall command of Major General Joseph Hooker, to proceed from northern Virginia to Chattanooga. This decision resulted in an historic event, as "never before had so many troops been moved over such a long distance in so short a time." In detail, this troop movement resulted in "nearly 20,000 men, 3,000 horses, ten artillery batteries, all with baggage and equipment, moving twelve hundred miles, using the facilities of seven railroads." Not only was the rolling stock varied, i.e., passenger, freight and livestock cars, but also ferries, river steamers and short road marches were utilized in this troop transfer. Add to these elements the concept of secrecy, as it was necessary to shield such a maneuver from the prying eyes of the Confederates, and the historic nature of this mass movement stands forth. Just prior to the arrival at Chatta-

⁴³ Ibid., 191.

nooga of these two corps, another 20,000 soldiers arrived from Major General W. T. Sherman's army in Mississippi; these men moved by rail also.

In summary, therefore, Secretary Stanton's "bold railroad strategy" involved the transportation of essentially 40,000 men over long distances in a manner never before anticipated. As one author states, this strategy "became a model for military planners for decades to come."⁴⁴ The experience, problems and logistical fine-tuning involved in executing these two Union troop operations must have been extremely valuable when the time came to plan the transportation phases of the demobilization program, some nineteen months later.

Effective use of the existing rail systems was extremely important. Troops that were destined for the southern parts of the Middle States, for the western States, and for Tennessee and Kentucky were loaded on railroad cars in Washington and sent north toward Baltimore to Relay House. From here they traveled via the Baltimore & Ohio mainline to Parkersburg or Bellaire. At this point, they detrained and embarked on river steamers bound for Cincinnati, Louisville, the camps in southern Ohio and Indiana, and St. Louis.

Troops heading for the northern or northeastern states, however, were marched to Baltimore to avoid congestion at

⁴⁴ George Skoch, "Miracle of the Rails," Civil War History Illustrated, vol. 31, no. 4 (September/October 1992), 24, 59.

Relay House. The Washington Branch, even though double-tracked by the end of 1864, just could not handle the extra volume. Once at Baltimore, the troops could proceed either to Philadelphia (via the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad and on to New York City), or to Harrisburg (via the Northern Central Railroad connecting with the Pennsylvania Railroad). If the soldiers were destined for the northern parts of Ohio, Indiana, or Illinois, they went from Harrisburg to Pittsburgh, some going on to Chicago by rail and others going to Cleveland to board lake steamers for travel to various lake ports that would put them close to their state rendezvous points.

Some soldiers going to New England went by rail to Harrisburg, then northward via Elmira, New York, and so on to their destinations. Others heading in the same direction went by rail from Baltimore to Philadelphia, then to New York City and on to New England. Some men traveled by steamship on Long Island Sound or on the open sea to ports on the New England coast.⁴⁵

All of this involved arduous travel, as well as an enormous amount of coordination and planning to accomplish the troop movements. The combinations of road marches, train travel, river ferries, lake or ocean steamers, and finally train yet again must have been a numbing experience. No doubt the men were willing to put up with the inconve-

⁴⁵ O.R. Series 3, vol. 5: 303-305.

nience and discomfort, realizing that their war experiences had been far more grueling, and besides, this trip was a one-way journey taking them home. The Quartermaster-General, however, had envisioned the physical side of large troop movements. On May 19, 1865, he wrote to the Director of the Military Railroads, the officer who coordinated travel on private railroads, to take "every possible precaution to insure the safety and comfort of the men..." The cars were "to be carefully fitted up and provided with water and other necessary conveniences." In addition, appropriate stops were to be made for meals, and trains were also to be halted "at proper points to enable the soldiers to attend to the calls of nature." Altogether, the entire troop movement was to be laid on "with the least inconvenience, fatigue, suffering and danger."

Even so, according to an item in the New York Times, sufficient potable water on the troop trains was a problem that constantly plagued both the government and railroad officials. The Quartermaster-General, Montgomery C. Meigs, clipped the newspaper article and sent it to the editor, along with a letter and extracts from his May 19, 1865, directive quoted above. General Meigs went on to say: "Possibly, if [the order is] published in your paper, it would enable the officers of the troops to know their rights, and report any neglect of the railroad officials." The original news item reported that the soldiers "are often

nearly famished, and actually drink the muddy water along the road when the cars stop." As the official correspondence shows, proper water supplies were required; how well railroad personnel followed the directives was a different matter.⁴⁶

Personal narratives and unit histories bring out the importance and indeed the essential nature of railroads to demobilization. The following chapter is devoted to these accounts.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 302; New York Times, June 23, 1865.

CHAPTER V

DEMOBILIZATION: THE REALITY

Letters, diaries, and other first-hand accounts, as well as unit histories, are the best sources to use for verification. Military material available includes histories of corps, divisions, brigades, and regiments; more regimental histories exist than any other category. Unit histories and other accounts represent a cross-section of the branches of service, as well as areas of the country. The use of letters, diaries, and unpublished memoirs is based on a random sampling of various collections maintained at the United States Army Military History Institute (USAMHI) at Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, Pennsylvania. The two principal sources used were the Harrisburg Civil War Round Table (CWRT) and the Civil War Times Illustrated (CWTI) Collections. Although uncataloged, they constitute an extensive and valuable body of information and data. Finally, the emphasis here is on volunteer units, since these units contained the majority of men enlisted during the war. Volunteer soldiers were the focus of the entire demobilization program. The materials show these soldiers to have been candidly outspoken on the subject of demobilization: its timing, the records required, transportation facilities and traveling conditions, the pay, and morale in

general.

Just how smoothly and quickly did the "immediate" demobilization actually occur? In some instances, the process worked well. The Fifteenth New Jersey Infantry Regiment left Washington June 23 by train for Trenton, arriving the next day. After a reception of many speeches, a meal and a review, the regiment went into camp just east of Trenton. The regimental historian concluded his account tersely: "The following week we were paid off, and ~~disband-~~ed." Similarly, Battery B, First New Jersey Artillery departed from the nation's capital June 2 for Trenton, "where the muster out and pay rolls were made out." Two weeks later, June 16, the battery was mustered out.⁴⁷ Units in and around Washington apparently were processed easily and readily.

What about regiments that ended the war far removed from Washington? The famous artillery battery, a part of the Eighteenth Indiana Light Artillery, commanded by Eli Lilly, who later founded the well-known pharmaceutical company, was deep in Georgia at the end of the war. Road marches brought the unit to Atlanta and then Chattanooga. There, the Eighteenth Indiana, with all its equipment and animals, was loaded on railroad cars for the trip to Nash-

⁴⁷ Alanson A. Haines, History of the Fifteenth Regiment, New Jersey Volunteers (New York: Jenkins & Thomas, 1883), 316-317; Michael Hanifen, History of Battery B, First New Jersey Artillery (Ottawa, Illinois: n.p., 1905; repr., Hightstown, New Jersey: Longstreet House, 1991), 149.

ville. Here, the horses and equipment were turned in, and the men left two weeks later, arriving in Indianapolis June 25. Five days later, the regiment was paid off and discharged. Bentley Kutz, a member of the 195th Pennsylvania Infantry Regiment, was at Summits Point, West Virginia, about twenty miles from Harpers Ferry, waiting for discharge. April and May went by, and finally, June 21, the unit was mustered out of service. Two days later the regiment was paid off. As Kutz wrote in his diary, "...So that ends this book." Nothing was mentioned about his trip back to Reading, Pennsylvania; apparently, it was anti-climatic.⁴⁸

Members of the Fifty-ninth Illinois Infantry Regiment were not so fortunate. They too were in Georgia at war's end, at Warm Springs, where the most popular rumor had everyone going home soon. Instead, the regiment was sent to Texas via New Orleans. The route taken by the Illinois unit was inordinately circuitous: they went down (essentially north) the Tennessee River to the Ohio River, then to Cairo, Illinois, and then down the Mississippi River to New Orleans, and so on to Texas by ocean transport. To be so close to home at Cairo must not have been easy. Temporarily stationed in Texas as "a sort of occupation force," the

⁴⁸ John W. Rowell, Yankee Artilleryman: Through the Civil War with Eli Lilly's Indiana Battery (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1975), 256-260; Bentley Kutz, Unpublished Diary, Harrisburg CWRT Collection, USAMHI, Box Fle-L.

regiment finally departed Christmas Eve for Illinois. First by ship to Vicksburg, Mississippi and then by steamer to Cairo, Illinois, the regiment then transferred to the railroad. Surviving a train engine explosion, the men finally arrived at Camp Butler early in January, 1866. So much for the Warm Springs rumors of early discharge! The account of activities while in Texas must have been galling to read in later years. There the men spent most of their time hunting small game, but also alligator and deer, putting on entertainments, and practicing signals, along with some drill and guard duty. In their imaginations the men must have compared civilian life at home with these occupation "duties," and found army life a poor second. At long last, January 9, they signed the rolls, and four days later the regiment was paid off.⁴⁹

Army life in Texas was not all recreation and minor military duties, as the men of the Forty-eighth Ohio Infantry Battalion, a provisional unit constituted from three veteran regiments, could attest. So irate did they become over the perceived inefficiency of the mustering-out program, that a mutiny resulted. The War Department's plan was to replace volunteer units with regular soldiers as they became available, but there were inevitable delays in the latter's arrival. In addition, there was a conflict between

⁴⁹ Arnold Gates, ed., The Rough Side of War: The Civil War Journal of Chesley A. Mosman (Garden City: The Basin Publishing Co., 1987), x, 367, 406.

the civilian government of the state and military authority. Aware of the need for security, the governor of Texas felt that demobilization was proceeding too quickly. General Philip Sheridan, however, as commanding officer of the district, wanted to alleviate unrest among the volunteer soldiers by discharging them as quickly as possible.

When a black cavalry brigade of the XXV Corps received orders to go to the Gulf area, they also mutinied. The Fourth Cavalry Regiment, a Regular Army unit, was sent to San Antonio to replace volunteers in General Wesley Merritt's command. The first task of the Fourth Cavalry was to suppress the mutiny by insurgent volunteers demanding to be discharged. In another area of Texas, Galveston, the citizens much preferred Negro troops to the Seventeenth Regular Infantry Regiment. The soldiers of this unit were known for drunkenness, disorderly conduct, fighting among themselves, and even fomenting a small race riot. Partly because of these incidents of unrest and impatience, volunteer troops remained on duty in Texas longer than did their counterparts in the rest of the South. Of the seventy-three volunteer regiments of all branches of service that were mustered out in Texas by the end of 1865, more than half, forty, were processed between the first of November and year-end. Obviously, the demobilization process proceeded

at a slower pace in Texas.⁵⁰

Coinciding with demobilization, yet another military activity, redeployment of regular as well as volunteer troops, was a constant occurrence. A major transfer involving 25,000 soldiers took place in May; the XXV Corps was transported from the James River in Virginia to the Rio Grande River area of Texas, as part of the protection required by the situation in Mexico. Simultaneously, 7,000 men were sent to Savannah, Georgia, from the Potomac River area. The latter movement was part of the overall plan for maintaining a military force in the territory of the late Confederacy. The volume and magnitude of such moves, relatively no less than those of the demobilization program, is obvious when it is realized that fifty-seven ocean steamers were necessary for the twelve-day voyage of the XXV Corps from City Point, Virginia, to Texas. Chartered steamers were more economical than railroads and obviously quicker than road marches.

Not all troop transfers were accomplished with the advantages of a sea voyage. A significant force of cavalry was transferred from the Potomac to the Arkansas and western plains. While some short segments of the journey utilized river boats, most of the trip was made by rail. These and other redeployments were carried out while demobilization

⁵⁰ William L. Richter, The Army in Texas during Reconstruction 1865-1870 (College Station, Texas: Texas A & M University Press, 1987), 25-30.

was going on.⁵¹

Not all of the redeployment involved long, tiring traveling. The Fifty-seventh Massachusetts Volunteers, after taking part in the Grand Review, remained on guard duty for three months in Tennallytown, near the Chain Bridge over the Potomac River. Tennallytown, today a part of Washington itself, was only a few miles from the center of the capital. Men from this regiment performed provost duty in and around Washington, patrolling the streets, as well as bars, theaters, amusement places, and even "brothels and bawdy houses." When not on provost duty, they had their normal camp routine in a setting that was "almost idyllic," but it included drill and dress parades in full dress uniforms, despite the warm weather! The camp had plentiful water, so that the soldiers could wash and shave daily, an unaccustomed luxury. Even though the men were outfitted with new uniforms, they received few passes to Washington, so the troops were not able often to display their new finery in public. After the excitement and pageantry of the Grand Review, however, things military quickly lost their appeal. The troops, like volunteers in every age, felt they had completed the mission for which they had volunteered. They just wanted out; they just wanted to go home!⁵²

In pre-war times, no doubt any one of the troop trans-

⁵¹ O.R., Series 3, vol. 5: 217.

⁵² Wilkinson, Mother, May You Never See, 353.

fers would have required the best thinking and planning of all available personnel; now, with the experiences of war as a guide and pattern, many such troop movements were executed simultaneously, and in widely separated parts of the country, with relative ease and a minimum of confusion.

One soldier in the First Pennsylvania Cavalry Regiment pursued an especially arduous path toward discharge. Aaron E. Bachman had been captured by the Confederates, but escaped just prior to the end of hostilities, making his way to a Federal outpost and eventually to Nashville. Although Bachman's enlistment expired ten months earlier, while a prisoner of war, he still had to go through the pipeline. After receiving a new uniform, he was sent on to Louisville, Kentucky, crossing the river at Jeffersonville, Indiana, where he began a lengthy train trip. Traveling by way of Indianapolis to Pittsburgh, he finally arrived in Harrisburg after a grueling trip; the journey from Pittsburgh to Harrisburg alone required twenty-four hours! Since he had been mustered in at Reading, however, it was necessary for him to go to Philadelphia for final processing. Back on the train, Bachman made his way through his home territory, so close and yet so far, to learn that he could not be processed without "description lists," which would have to come from Washington. (Red-tape in the army is definitely not a twentieth century phenomenon). Bachman spent the next week in a transient camp outside of Philadelphia, but to

everyone's surprise and his delight, the necessary papers came through quickly, and he was finally discharged and paid.⁵³

Bachman was by no means the only soldier to become entangled in army red-tape; members of the Seventy-third Illinois Infantry Regiment had comparable experiences. During almost two months in Nashville, Tennessee, unit paperwork was both the main objective and obstacle. "It was found difficult to make out the history of each man, as required." Early in June, with the agonizing prospect that the work might have to be redone, some muster-out rolls were submitted to higher authorities so that they could be checked against the requirements. "Eight rolls [forms] were required for each company, and eight rolls for each officer." On June 7 the rolls were completed, and the unit was ready to be mustered out. Four days later the regiment was on its way to Chicago, arriving at Camp Butler, Illinois on June 15. The rolls were found to be correct; the men signed both muster and pay rolls, but it was not until June 24 that the Seventy-third Infantry Regiment was finally paid off.⁵⁴

Part of the paperwork problem was due to unavailability of experienced and skilled clerks necessary to complete the

⁵³ Aaron E. Bachman, Unpublished memoirs, Harrisburg CWRT Collection, USAMHI, Box A-Fil.

⁵⁴ W. H. Newlin. A History of the Seventy-third Regiment of Illinois Infantry Volunteers (n.p.: Regimental Reunion Association of Survivors, 1890), 527-529.

necessary rolls and other records. On May 28, Robert Tilney, chief clerk in the Fifth Corps' Adjutant-General's section, noted that "Clerks are getting very scarce here now; so many have gone home...clerks are decidedly at a premium." When Tilney's own discharge came due, at the request of the colonel in charge of the section he consented to remain on duty. By June 21, only ten regiments remained in the entire corps. Tilney stayed at headquarters until the middle of August when he rejoined his regiment at Hart's Island, outside of New York City, where he was mustered out August 21.⁵⁵

As mentioned above, the Quartermaster-General gave specific instructions concerning the safety and comfort of the men traveling by railroad. The instructions were precise; what was the reality?

When the Seventy-third Illinois Infantry Regiment traveled from Nashville, Tennessee to Chicago, the soldiers rode on bare wooden seats. Such annoying discomfort would have seemed negligible to the men of the Eleventh New Jersey Infantry Regiment, as they boarded box-cars for their trip from Washington to home. Since the box-cars were "stifling,...all who could climbed on top." That scene must have struck horror in the minds of officers who rigidly followed standard procedures. No doubt the soldiers of the

⁵⁵ Robert Tilney, My Life in the Army: Three Years and a Half with the Fifth Army Corps, Army of the Potomac, 1862-1865 (Philadelphia: Ferris & Leach, 1912), 241-245.

Second Minnesota Infantry Regiment would have been more than happy to trade places with either the Illinois or New Jersey regiments. They were loaded on open coal-cars, with rough board benches for seats. Completely exposed to the rain which fell upon them in torrents, the men quickly learned that the coal-cars were watertight. William Bircher, a drummer boy in the regiment, wrote that "this was one of the rare cases where we traveled by land and water at the same time." The cars had sides about two feet high, and soon each car contained about six inches of dirty, black water. As the train ascended a grade, the water sloshed back with a rush and out over the end of the car. On the descent, the water reversed its course, providing each man's feet with continuous immersion. By the time the train reached Cumberland, Maryland, the men had enough. They "procured axes and knocked out a few boards from the bottom of the cars; after which [they] had a little more comfort."⁵⁶

After having been mustered out in Mobile, Alabama (the author calls it discharged), the Fourteenth Wisconsin Infantry Regiment traveled by a variety of means to reach Madison, the state rendezvous point. First, from Dauphin Island, a side-wheeler took the men via Mississippi Sound,

⁵⁶ Newlin, A History of the Seventy-third, 529; Thomas D. Marbaker, History of the Eleventh New Jersey Volunteers from Its Organization to Appomattox (Trenton: MacCrellish & Quigley, 1898), 313; William Bircher, A Drummer-Boy's Diary: Comprising Four Years of Service with the Second Regiment Minnesota Veteran Volunteers, 1861 to 1865 (St. Paul: St. Paul Book and Stationery Company, 1898), 193.

through the Rigolets and across Lake Pontchartrain, and then a paddle-wheel steamer brought them up the Mississippi River. At Cairo, Illinois, they were loaded into "box and cattle cars that hadn't been very well cleaned out and had no straw or hay for bedding." The cars were so crowded that "all had to lay [sic] on the same side..." Despite these conditions, the men displayed veteran acceptance of a bad situation; as Private Elisha Stockwell put it, "there was but little fault found for we were going home." Arriving at Freeport, Illinois, after spending two days and nights on a side track without an engine, the 375-mile trip from Cairo was finally over. From Beloit, Wisconsin, the Fourteenth Wisconsin went on in "clean new box-cars" and reached Madison, where "in a few days we were paid off and given our discharge."⁵⁷

As noted before, all directives and instructions for the entire demobilization procedure emphasized speed; the word "immediate" appears again and again. Just how fast was the program executed? The War Department may have been interested in speed, but it appears that this concern dissipated before it reached the railroad officials and engineers responsible for routing trains. If Theodore Gerrish, a private in the Twentieth Maine Infantry Regiment, knew of the War Department's concern, he certainly would have

⁵⁷ Byron R. Abernathy, ed., Private Elisha Stockwell, Jr. Sees the Civil War (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), 190-193.

laughed, since the train trip from Washington to Philadelphia required eighteen hours! Worse yet, the soldiers of this regiment were plagued by vexations other than the slow ride to Philadelphia. After passing through New York and Boston, the regiment reached Portland on June 8, late in the afternoon. The weary soldiers consumed a feast in the city hall, and then they moved into some old barracks. Adding insult to injury, members of the Invalid Corps guarded the fenced camp. No passes were given out and the diet was a familiar one, field rations of coffee and hard-tack. Seething with anger, the men of this brave, battle-hardened regiment took matters into their own hands. After pelting the camp commander with hard-tack and overpowering the guards, they broke up the gates and burned them. Unfortunately, a familiar outcome in the armed forces, the government won in the end, and the regiment's discharge was delayed. It was "several weeks before we received pay and took our departure." Nevertheless, it is likely that the soldiers of the Twentieth Maine thought their response to such unwarranted treatment was worth the delay.⁵⁸

Almost twenty years after the war, Colonel Townsend, the Assistant Adjutant-General, ingenuously summed up the demobilization procedure in his memoirs. The soldiers, he wrote, were "transported to fifty depots near their homes;

⁵⁸ Theodore Gerrish, Army Life: A Private's Reminiscences of the Civil War (Portland, Maine: Hoyt, Fogg & Donham, 1882), 304-308.

they were mustered out of service ...before they left the field; final muster rolls were boxed and transported with them. At the depots paymasters awaited them; and having been transported and subsisted up to the last moment, they were paid in full, and discharged almost at their very homes." The historian of the Second Minnesota Infantry Regiment tells it a bit differently. There were no paymasters waiting for this regiment as they unloaded from the train. Actually, these soldiers "were obliged to wait several days for our final payment." In fact, the author was a bit generous in his statement: the regiment arrived at Fort Snelling June 15, and final payment was not made until July 20. Five weeks would be more accurate than "several days." The troops of the Seventy-third Illinois Infantry Regiment were more fortunate, for they arrived at Camp Butler, Illinois, June 15 and were paid June 24.⁵⁹

Sometimes soldiers did more than just wait impatiently for their final pay. When the Eleventh New Jersey Regiment arrived in camp near Trenton, the state rendezvous point, they hoped and expected to be paid promptly, in accord with Colonel Townsend's blithe description. After a week, which the anxious and irritable men termed "a long delay," the

⁵⁹ Edward Davis Townsend, Anecdotes of the Civil War in the United States (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1884), 247-248; Judson W. Bishop, The Story of a Regiment: Being a Narrative of the Service of the Second Regiment Minnesota Veteran Volunteer Infantry in the Civil War of 1861-1865 (St. Paul: St. Paul Book and Stationery Company, 1890), 191; Newlin, A History of the Seventy-third Regiment, 529.

soldiers were finally paid off. The day before, however, "nearly two hundred men of the Eleventh and Twelfth New Jersey Infantry Regiments formed in line and marched to the State House to ascertain just when they were to be paid. Being assured that it would not be later than the next afternoon, they quietly marched back to camp." Peaceful demonstrations in the presence of state officials seemed to achieve results even in 1865. To be sure, the "delay" was only a week, a much shorter time than many units waited, but the charged-up enthusiasm and exuberance involved in the entire demobilization process were so pervasive that, in its final stages, any delay, even a week, seemed intolerable.⁶⁰

Enlisted men, however, were not the only soldiers to wait for their pay. All the letters of Major George Shuman, Ninth Pennsylvania Cavalry Regiment, written after Appomattox, have common threads, one of which was his pay. Two weeks after the surrender he wrote from Durham Station, North Carolina, that he had "near eight months pay due which will amount to over \$1,000. I suppose we will be paid some soon." Late in May Shuman informed his wife that "our living is pretty poor now since hostilities have ceased. We have no money, consequently we must live on government rations and that goes pretty hard after the way we had been living." A letter of June 12 sounded even more desperate: "I think it is a shame that we are not paid as some men's

⁶⁰ Marbaker, History of the Eleventh New Jersey, 315.

families have to go to the Poor House for the want of the necessaries of life." Writing home a few days later, the major complained that "The Government now owes me near \$1400 and I would like to have some and I suppose you need some." A June 17 letter to his wife echoed a forlorn note: "No pay master yet and I guess poor prospects of any for a while." But two weeks later his Fourth of July letter contained the good news that "the pay master is reported to be here tomorrow." That was the last reference to his back pay, so it is fair to assume that the regiment was indeed paid off July 5.⁶¹

The complaint of Major Shuman was repeated in a letter, quite probably by an officer, to the editor of the New York Times. Sent from Norfolk, Virginia, and dated June 20, the writer stated that "the troops here have not been paid since March 1 [1865]...[and] then only up to January 1." He further stated that the soldiers' "families are absolutely suffering for the very necessaries of life." The letter writer asked the editor to speak out on behalf of the troops, urging that "one word from you will accomplish more than a dozen communications through the slow and tortuous official channels." In reporting the arrival of the 150th New York Infantry Regiment, a unit from Dutchess County, the New York Times noted the fact that "the paymaster, who has

⁶¹ Letters of Major George Shuman to his Wife, Harrisburg CWRT Collection, USAMHI, Box S-Z.

not seen them for seventeen months, will...make his welcome and final visit in Poughkeepsie."⁶²

One of the most significant factors in the effectiveness of any army unit, whether it be a squad or corps, is the morale of the individuals who make up that unit. This intangible factor is so important that armies throughout history have always been aware of its crucial value. Morale is not something that lends itself to empirical measurement; often its worth is recognized and appreciated only when it is missing, or at least noticeably reduced. Moreover, the morale or esprit de corps of a unit may be evaluated in garrison as well as in combat, and so it is possible to gauge the morale of units and soldiers during demobilization. Perhaps post-combat experience presents the very best of opportunities to measure a unit's morale, since the dangers of warfare have passed, and the units are awaiting separation from service.

In his history of the First Brigade of New Jersey Volunteers, originally General Philip Kearny's brigade, later assigned to the First Division, VI Corps, Camille Baquet accurately sums up the emotional condition of the men awaiting mustering out and discharge with the phrase "restlessness and discontent," a description by no means unique to this unit. A member of Company G, Ninety-fifth Pennsylvania Infantry Regiment, Daniel Faust wrote home from Burke-

⁶² New York Times, June 12, 23, 1865.

ville Junction, Virginia, in the middle of May: "I scarcely know what to write for I expect to get home soon... We have been expecting to go to Washington long before this but it takes them a long time to get us started. We are the last troops out here in the field. We always have had to do all the dirty work and I think they mean to keep us doing it to the last end." Under such circumstances, keeping soldiers busy and occupied with parades, reviews, inspections, and other military activities was the order of the day. Men of the 195th Pennsylvania Infantry Regiment, wrote Bentley Kutz in a letter to home on May 4, 1865, were "on parade with white gloves which looks very well, only I think it is too much of the good thing for soldiers in the field." ⁶³

Unfortunately, an element of racism lowered the morale of the Forty-seventh Pennsylvania Infantry Regiment stationed in Charleston, South Carolina. After spending six weeks in Alexandria and two months on garrison duty in Savannah and Charleston, the author of the regimental history stated that the men were "discontented and unhealthy; unpleasantly situated and harder worked than...ever....There are none but colored troops around us, colored officers among them." This observation confirms the fact that as

⁶³ Camille Baquet, History of the First Brigade, New Jersey Volunteers from 1861 to 1865 (Trenton: MacCrellish & Quigley, 1910, repr., Gaithersburg, Maryland: Ron R. Van Sickle Military Books, 1988), 193; Letters of Daniel Faust to his Wife, Harrisburg CWRT Collection, USAMHI, Box A-Fil; Letters of Bentley Kutz to his Wife, Harrisburg CWRT Collection, USAMHI, Box Fle-L.

northern white volunteers were mustered out, the percentage of black soldiers on duty in the South increased.⁶⁴

Major George Shuman of the Ninth Pennsylvania Cavalry Regiment, who complained so bitterly over his back pay, also commented on the demobilization program in general and, particularly, as it affected him and his unit. In a letter of May 24, 1865, Shuman wrote: "I think the war is over and we have as good a right to be mustered out as the rest of his [Sherman's] army, though I don't think we will be kept here after the civil law is restored again." On June 1 he expanded on this line of thought:

As the government requires the services of soldiers for sometime yet, they have concluded to keep veterans. We have mustered out all our one-year men whose time would expire before October." [He went on to say that] "I do not think we are used fair after being with [Major General William T.] Sherman so long and to be left behind now and kept in service is not fair, but I suppose the Government knows what it is doing. I hope they won't keep us much longer. I think the odium against Sherman is wearing off as I don't see half so much fuss in the papers against him as there was sometime ago."⁶⁵

Five days later Shuman again struck the same note of dissat-

⁶⁴ Lewis G. Schmidt, A Civil War History of the 47th Regiment of Pennsylvania Veteran Volunteers (Allentown: by author, 1986), 741.

⁶⁵ Shuman, Letters to his Wife. Here, Shuman refers to the aborted agreement which was initially accepted by Sherman when General Joseph E. Johnston surrendered earlier in April. When the agreement was submitted to the authorities in Washington, it was rejected and a modified, less political version was substituted. Consequently, there was ill feeling between Sherman and his superiors, especially Secretary of War Stanton.

isfaction: "I cannot tell you anything about when we will be relieved and sent home. It is hardly fair that we that have been in so long should be kept till the last."⁶⁶ Such sentiments had been expressed by soldiers long before, and they have also been seen and heard ever since.

Even the chaplains were not immune to feelings of pessimism and frustration. Chaplain to the Eighty-sixth New York Infantry Regiment, Henry Rinker was an experienced soldier, having previously served as a private in the Eleventh New Jersey Infantry Regiment. "How long we shall be retained in service, he wrote home on June 17, 1865, "of course, we cannot tell. There is no prospect now of a very speedy discharge....It seems to be the impression that this regiment will not be discharged till fall, and perhaps not then." It could not have been easy for this man to bolster the morale of others when his own was so low. The hospital chaplain, Lyman Daniel Ames, quoted above in connection with the Grand Review, made some penetrating observations concerning the morale of troops. While at Louisville, Kentucky, waiting for the final rolls to be prepared so that Ohio troops could return to their homes, Ames confided to his diary that "Men [are] demoralized...suspense is becoming painful. Affects the moral tone of the men...The mood of

⁶⁶ Ibid.

the men is not good. They feel sour from disappointment."⁶⁷

A member of the Seventeenth Pennsylvania Cavalry Regiment, Peter Boyer, wrote to his father from Camp Remount, near Pleasant Valley, Maryland, in the middle of May:

I am very much disappointed [sic] about staying out hear [sic] so long. If there were any fighting, I wouldn't think of going home, but now the battles are fought and the victorys [sic] won, and now they keep us still out hear [sic], just for nothing and make us drill every day...We have always done our duty, and every fight we was [sic] in we done [sic] our share and never was [sic] at home once...Now they don't care for the poor soldier when he gets home or if he gets home at all...I don't know when they will do us that favor to muster us out and pay us off, but I heard last night that we wouldn't be discharged until October.⁶⁸

Feelings ran high among the troops, in response to delays. Another Pennsylvania soldier, William H. Martin, a member of Co. A, Eighteenth Pennsylvania Cavalry Regiment, wrote his wife on June 25, 1865, that "...We have been very badly treated and worse than all, neglected by our officers. Ever since our arrival at this camp [Cumberland, Maryland], we were fed on half rations till the men's [sic] patience were [sic] entirely exhausted." Much to his relief, two weeks later he was able to write: "I am coming home!"

⁶⁷ Henry Rinker, Letters Home, Harrisburg CWRT Collection, USAMHI, Box M-Z; Ames, The Civil War Diaries of Lyman Daniel Ames, 164-165.

⁶⁸ Peter Boyer Letters, Harrisburg CWRT, USAMHI, Boyer Family File.

In contrast to Martin's experiences at Cumberland, George B. Jennys, a clerk for the brigade surgeon at Camp Stoneman near Washington, D.C., sent word to his parents that "We get plenty of vegetables and any quantity of fruit, and with good rations, we live first-rate." Six weeks later, he wrote from Camp Chase outside of Columbus, Ohio: "We have in every respect better than I ever got before in the army, and if we only had a little excitement occasionally, I would be perfectly satisfied, but everything is getting distasteful to us in camp." No doubt combat veterans had some trenchant comments to make about the availability of fine rations for medical personnel. Similarly, the same veterans would probably have felt more than satisfied with the quantity and quality of "excitement" they had experienced. After what they had seen and gone through, additional excitement was very likely the last thing they wanted.⁶⁹

In a June 4, 1865, editorial the New York Times praised the voluntary efforts of the northern civilians, even attributing to them "the great achievements of this war..."⁷⁰ Actually, the editor was alluding primarily to the volunteer soldiers who fought during the war, but the sentiment could well have been applied to many civilians on the home front

⁶⁹ William H. Martin Papers, Harrisburg CWRT Collection, USAMHI; George B. Jennys' Letters in William Mangold Collection, Harrisburg CWRT Collection, USAMHI.

⁷⁰ Editorial, The New York Times, June 4, 1865.

also. The civilian efforts in behalf of demobilization were extensive, reaching to nearly every city and hamlet. One manifestation of this contribution was in the form of "bounteous repasts," "substantial dinners," and "bountiful collations," which were served to the troops as they made their way homeward.⁷¹ Such attention paid to local troops upon arrival in their home areas is readily understandable, but such entertainment-feasts were not so restricted.

Both Philadelphia and New York City were generous in their reception and treatment of transient troops, and most homeward-bound soldiers received heroes' welcomes in all major cities and at train junctions. When the Twentieth Maine reached Philadelphia after its long ride mentioned above, the men were enthusiastically received and handsomely treated. They were given "a fine dinner" in preparation for the remainder of the journey to New York. There, after a brief respite at the Battery, they marched down Broadway toward the steamer that would take them to Boston. "We were never received anywhere with greater enthusiasm than in the city of New York," said one soldier. The city of Philadelphia lived up to its name, according to the historian of the Eleventh New Jersey Infantry Regiment. Upon arriving there at two o'clock in the morning, the troops were provided a

⁷¹ Ibid, June 10, 15, 23, 1865.

breakfast by local civilians. "No city in the Union did more-if as much- for the soldier than did the City of Brotherly Love."⁷²

But not every unit was as fortunate. The coffee, pork, and beans eaten by the men of the Second Minnesota Infantry Regiment in Cumberland, Maryland, while not in the category of repast or feast, still must have been quite acceptable, especially in view of the inclement weather. The troops of five regiments bound for New England, the Seventh Rhode Island, the Thirty-fifth and Thirty-third Massachusetts, and the Ninth and Eighteenth New Hampshire, had to be satisfied with more familiar fare since they "were provided with rations at the Battery Barracks and took cooked rations with them." There was not much danger of overeating for these men.⁷³

As might be expected, there were exceptions that proved the rule. When the men of the 105th Illinois Infantry Regiment passed through the country on their way from Washington to Chicago, they were well-treated all along the route, until they reached Chicago. Not only was there no repast or feast waiting for them, but there was no housing either. Without supper upon arrival or breakfast the next morning, the hungry soldiers were marched across the city to

⁷² Gerrish, Army Life, 304-305; Marbaker, History of the Eleventh New Jersey, 313.

⁷³ Bircher, A Drummer-Boy's Diary, 192; New York Times, June 13, 1865.

a temporary camp site where they found "some rations." But the crackers, probably hardtack, were "alive with worms and the meat was so maggotty [sic] that we could not eat it," wrote Robert Hale Strong. Regimental officers eased the situation somewhat by buying dinner for the troops, but their anger was aroused. Indeed, the men threatened to hang the quartermaster if he did not come up with some "full, clean rations." Meanwhile, the existing potential for violence was augmented by alcohol when soldiers of the 105th, together with men from other regiments, began drinking in a "Dutch [almost certainly Strong meant German] beer garden." The combination of beer, empty stomachs, homesickness, anger over being so mistreated in their native state, and impatience for quick demobilization led to a "two-hour battle, using fists, chairs, and clubs." During the melee the soldiers took the clubs from the overpowered police who had been sent to quash the disturbance. Although the police themselves were quelled, order was finally restored, and the unit was discharged at Chicago on June 13, 1865.

In a less violent atmosphere, the men of the Twenty-second Iowa Regiment found their reception at Davenport, their state rendezvous point, something less than enthusiastic. All along the way they had been hailed as conquering heroes, as they traveled from Savannah, Georgia, by ship to Baltimore, then by train across the country. But when they arrived at Davenport, according to one soldier, they were

"very coldly treated." The cause of citizen indifference, or aloofness, is not mentioned. The date was July 31; it is unlikely that the local population could have been jaded and bored at this early date by so many troops passing through. After all, these were Iowans who were being processed at Davenport. Whatever the case may have been, there definitely were some negative aspects to an otherwise successful and publicly supported demobilization.⁷⁴

A particularly striking example of civilian support and assistance in demobilization, especially in facilitating the transportation of troops through town was the Strawberry Fund of New York City. Colonel Vincent Colyer, of the Soldiers' Rest (sometimes identified as the State Depot), distributed fresh meat, ice, vegetables and fruit, especially strawberries, to the troops. Although the program began in a modest way, it grew to be quite a large operation. On one occasion, Colonel Colyer distributed "about 500 baskets of the delicious fruit [strawberries]"; and another afternoon "three thousand baskets of strawberries were sent...to the troops on Hart's Island," one of the rendezvous points. On June 19, in addition to fruit, "2,000 heads of salad, 1,000 heads of cabbages, and five crates of turnips" were also furnished to the soldiers on Hart's Island. These treats were consumed eagerly and enthusiastically by hungry

⁷⁴ Strong, A Yankee Private's Civil War, 214-218; Samuel Calvin Jones, Reminiscences of the Twenty-second Iowa Volunteer Infantry (Iowa City: S. C. Jones, 1907), 115-117.

troops, weary of army food. As the word spread, market men and produce dealers donated fruit and vegetables, and interested and generous civilians contributed funds. The benevolent work went on as long as troops made their way through the city. Colonel Colyer went out to troopships lying in harbor, distributing the tasty foodstuffs, as well as to the various rendezvous camps near the city. No doubt many grateful veterans remembered the colonel and New York City's Strawberry Fund to the end of their days.⁷⁵

That there were differences between the demobilization plan and its execution is plain to see and even easy to understand; what is more difficult to explain is the fact that, considering the volume and speed of the process, there were not more discrepancies between the program and the hard facts of its fulfillment.

⁷⁵ New York Times, June 19, 20, 22, 25, 1865.

CONCLUSION

Five factors in this program seem particularly significant: 1) the number of men processed; 2) the speed of the process itself; 3) the timing of demobilization simultaneously with the final phases of combat and troop redeployment; 4) the role of the railroads; and 5) the provision of a model for demobilization following subsequent wars.

Demobilization was a well-organized and rapidly executed means of returning to civilian life just over a million volunteer soldiers, an impressive number, even to twentieth century minds long accustomed to statistics in the multimillion. Total figures have been mentioned earlier, but they bear repeating here. As of May 1, 1865, just three weeks after the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox Court House, 1,034,064 volunteer soldiers, both white and black, were in the Union army and were slated for mustering out and final discharge. By November 1, 1866, a year and a half later, that number was reduced to 11,043 (1%) men. Well over a million volunteers had been processed during those eighteen months, with the bulk of them, approximately 801,000 (77.5%), processed by the middle of November, 1865, six and half months after the demobilization program was drawn up and approved for implementation.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ O.R., Series 3, vol. 5: 1012-1029; 1031-1045.

Appendix IV traces the final disposition of the 11,043 volunteers who remained in service on November 1, 1866.

The magnitude of the demobilization operation is impressive, but equally impressive is the timing of the program. To initiate such an ambitious process even before the close of hostilities was enterprising to say the least. Not only was the war not yet won, but a significant amount of redeployment of troops, as described above, was necessary to accomplish the required garrisoning of areas of the South already conquered. To attempt such a simultaneous combination of military activities, final phases of combat, demobilization, and redeployment, was indeed a major accomplishment.

Railroad transportation was absolutely required to accomplish demobilization. Without it, demobilization as we have traced it would not have occurred. The entire process would have been excruciatingly long; it would have taken many months to complete. The logistical requirements of a non-railroad demobilization would have been greater than those necessary to maintain armies in the field. Without the experience and "know-how" gained during the war, together with the improvements in technique mentioned above, the railroads would not have been able to handle the thousands of veterans.

Mentioned above, the tremendous volume of troops involved in demobilization, while it strained the capacity

of the railroads, did not seriously interfere with the civilian economy. At first reading, this statement may appear inconsistent. One aspect of the program that enabled large numbers to be transported was the utilization of all available rolling stock. Reference has been made to various units moving by means of coal-cars, box-cars and other non-passenger equipment. Except for competition for space on the tracks proper, use of such resources to transport soldiers represented no serious threat to civilian use of railroads.

Valuable knowledge and experience in moving large numbers of men to and from and within war zones, and then in post-war demobilization, were extremely valuable in establishing a pattern or blueprint that would be used to good advantage in this country's later wars, especially World War II. Certainly, the number of men in service during the Indian and Spanish-American Wars did not approach the Civil War statistics. Approximately 4,000,000 soldiers served in the army in World War I, but almost three times that number were in army khaki in World War II. Without the background of Civil War demobilization, processing that vast number would have been even more formidable.

In addition to the wholesale transfers of soldiers in major units, throughout the South there was constant redeployment of smaller units to accommodate the needs of the occupation. This type of relocation was a constant

occurrence throughout Reconstruction. In effect, this phenomenon of Reconstruction days set a pattern that was to be repeated on a large scale following World War II.

In occupied Germany of 1945-46 there was constant redeployment of troops and units. As time passed, men advanced on the scale of points necessary for discharge and were sent home. Troops were transferred to fill the gaps caused by the releases. At the same time, units were disbanded and areas of responsibility and control were enlarged. These changes brought a steady shifting of both units and troops, always resulting in fewer personnel assuming control of larger geographical areas.

Another pattern can be traced back to the Civil War days in general and demobilization in particular. Just as some of the World War II soldiers went overseas as members of organized units and others followed in provisional organizations via the replacement system, so too the same distinctions held true in the days following the conflict. The integrity of some units was retained, and they provided a means of conveying thousands of soldiers to the continental United States. High-point men who had been with the divisions for a long time, as well as high-point men from other units designated to remain in occupation or to be disbanded, went home with the divisions. While the entire process might have seemed to many some sort of administrative mumbo-jumbo, it was a practical method to return home large num-

bers of men with a minimum of confusion, just as in 1865-1866. Low-point men in the receiving divisions were transferred out to make room for the incoming high-point men. After all units except those which were to remain as occupation forces had returned home, additional soldiers slated for discharge were sent back to the United States by utilizing provisional detachments. Just as in the earlier transfers overseas, these were paper organizations set up for the purpose of maintaining control of men and their records during the trip home.

As the first divisions made their way out of the conquered territories, they were sent to temporary encampments or seaside resorts on the French coast, close to major ports. The resorts were used because of the available hotels. These were the famous "cigarette camps," each named for a popular brand of cigarette. The cigarette camps resembled in purpose and location the field rendezvous points of the Civil War. Here, records were checked, uniforms and equipment replaced as necessary, preliminary physical examinations were carried out, preventive shots were up-dated, and men were prepared for the trip home. Following lengthy sea voyages, upon arrival in the continental United States, divisions were sent for final processing and discharge to various army camps and posts throughout the country. For example, National Guard units, originally organized from particular states, were returned to camps in

or near those states for the last phases of demobilization.

With the passage of time, men who were retained in Europe as occupation personnel became eligible for discharge. These soldiers were prepared for discharge in their units. As soon as necessary paperwork was completed, the men were sent as individuals to ports of embarkation. (By this time the number of men to be discharged was dramatically reduced from the early days immediately after the war; the reduced numbers allowed soldiers to be processed as individuals or in small groups). Transportation was coordinated so that the returning soldiers arrived at ports and went directly aboard ships, without any delay. When the ships reached home, the men to be discharged were sent directly to camps near their homes.

The discharge camps of 1945-46, located throughout the country, generally in relatively close proximity to the areas of dense population, paralleled the state rendezvous camps of the post-Civil War days.

As the Union veterans returned home by various routes and modes of travel, they returned to a home front vastly changed from the one they had left in 1861. A nation that had been deeply divided politically, socially, morally, racially, and even by gender, began to see a pathway which ultimately would lead to the unity for which soldiers had fought and died in four long years of combat. Men who might otherwise have lived their entire lives within a closely

limited geographical area, due to the war, had traveled the width and breadth of the country. Westerners became acquainted with men from the Northeast, while easterners learned about people and life styles in the South. Such contacts expanded the veterans' knowledge and appreciation of the United States and its people. Thus, the outlook of most Americans began to center on the concept "United" rather than "States."

Though some wounds of the conflict remained highly visible during the early post-war years, these would heal with the passage of time. Even before the healing process took hold, however, it was evident that the returning veteran volunteer was not the same civilian who had so confidently left home four years earlier to preserve the Union. Army service transformed volunteers so that the men themselves became as uniform as the clothing they wore. Stuart McConnell, in his recent monograph of the Grand Army of the Republic, designates this change as "the standardization and homogenization of the Union army experience." Where there had been disorder in 1861, the returning veteran had become accustomed to order. Once a proud advocate of localism, by 1865 the volunteers had gained a national outlook. Men who had prided themselves on their self-expression and independence had participated in discipline and had learned to appreciate its worth. The country had definitely changed

and so had the veterans.⁷⁷

One possible way to evaluate the formality and mechanics of demobilization of the Union forces is to relate it to the corresponding demobilization of the Confederate army. Actually, this comparison is extremely one-sided. The Confederates, who had lost everything on the fields of battle, returned home to nothing. Just as they had lost everything in combat, so too there was no formal demobilization program for them. The many thousands of surviving soldiers, perhaps with the formality of parole and perhaps not, simply disappeared into their ruined homeland. "Thousands [of Confederate soldiers] straggled across country afoot, often for hundreds of miles, trusting to the hospitality of the people for food."⁷⁸ Without any semblance of military organization, the soldiers just moved out as individuals and effectively disappeared.

In contrast, the Union veteran, for the most part well-fed, often wearing a new uniform, still in an organized military unit, with official transportation provided to camps set up at field rendezvous points, entered into the demobilization pipeline with every expectation of a relatively smooth transition from the life of a soldier to that

⁷⁷ Stuart McConnell, Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1900 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 14.

⁷⁸ Ida M. Tarbell, "Disbanding the Confederate Army," McClure's Magazine (April 1901), repr. Civil War Times Illustrated, vol. 6, no. 9 (January 1968), 14.

of a civilian. The loyal veteran knew he would be paid, although perhaps not as quickly as he desired, but his patience and endurance would at long last return him to a growing economy, a rapidly expanding transportation system, his home undamaged, his family waiting, his former place on the farm or in the shop probably available, and, in addition, great and challenging prospects open to him in the expanding West.

Imperfect as the Union demobilization program may have been because of human failings, it was still a program that was extraordinarily effective. For the Confederate soldiers, there was no program at all; they simply made their way home as best they could.

When Civil War demobilization was underway, certainly the men who were processed gave little thought to the ongoing final phases of war or the redeployment of troops. If any of the soldiers did think of these simultaneous efforts of the army, no doubt the thought was one of gratitude at not being part of either activity. Likewise, the use of railroads was by 1865 the expected, ordinary way of traveling long distances; for the soldier there was no other way of getting home. That the relative ease and efficiency of his transportation were due, in large measure, to wartime experience and development probably never entered his head.

Perhaps Allan Nevins, one of the Civil War's most

talented and articulate spokesmen, best summed up demobilization, the final phase of the war.

The demobilization of men and material was accomplished without severe disruption, and the world viewed with mixed emotions the return of war-weary veterans to peacetime civilian life.

...Silent and nameless in their devotion, they [the veterans] fittingly melted away into the throngs of patriotic citizens returning to their habitual labors and duties. But the nation would never forget them or their priceless services - never cease to reverence their memory.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Allan Nevins, The War for the Union: The Organized War to Victory 1864-1865 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), 368-369.

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APPENDIX I

Union Army Mustering Out Field Rendezvous Points

War Department, Adjutant-General's Office

General Orders 94, May 15, 1865⁸⁰

ARMY DIVISION/DEPARTMENT	FIELD RENDEZVOUS POINT
Middle Military Division	Defenses of Washington, Harpers Ferry, Va. [<u>sic</u>], Cumberland, Md.
Military Division of the James	Richmond, Old Point Comfort, Va.
Department of North Carolina	New Bern, Wilmington, N.C.
Department of the South	Charleston, S.C., Savan- nah, Ga.
Military Division of West Mississippi	Mobile, Ala., New Or- leans, La., Vicksburg, Miss.
Military Division of the Missouri	Little Rock, Ark., St. Louis, Mo., Ft. Leavenworth, Kans.
Department of the Cumber- land	Nashville, Knoxville, Memphis, Tenn.

⁸⁰ O.R., Series 3, vol. 5: 20-23.

Department of Kentucky

Louisville, Ky.

Middle Department

Baltimore, Md

APPENDIX II

Rendezvous Points for the Northern and Border States

War Department, Adjutant-General's Office

Circular No. 19, May 16, 1865⁸¹

STATE	STATE RENDEZVOUS POINTS
Maine	Augusta, Portland, Bangor
New Hampshire	Concord, Manchester
Vermont	Montpelier, Brattleborough, Burlington
Massachusetts	Boston (Readville and Gallupe's Island)
Rhode Island	Providence
Connecticut	Hartford, New Haven
New York	New York City (Hart's Island), Albany, Elmira, Buffalo, Rochester, Syra- cuse, Sackett's Harbor, Plattsburg, Ogdensburg.
New Jersey	Trenton
Pennsylvania	Philadelphia, Harrisburg,

⁸¹ Ibid., 24-25.

	Pittsburgh
Delaware	Wilmington
Maryland	Baltimore, Frederick
West Virginia	Wheeling
Ohio	Cincinnati, Cleveland and Columbus
Indiana	Indianapolis
Illinois	Springfield, Chicago
Michigan	Detroit, Jackson
Wisconsin	Madison, Milwaukee
Minnesota	Fort Snelling
Iowa	Davenport, Clinton
Kansas	Lawrence, Leavenworth
Missouri	St. Louis
Kentucky	Louisville, Lexington, Covington

APPENDIX III

Location of Relay House

In order to understand the precarious isolation of the city of Washington during the Civil War, it is essential to establish the exact location of Relay House, the designation of the junction of the Washington Branch of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad with the mainline of that railroad (sometimes shown as Washington Junction).

Except for this Washington Branch, which was single-track during much of the war, Washington was cut off from all rail contact with the rest of the country. A few miles farther south of Baltimore, another set of tracks connected the Washington Branch with the town of Annapolis, Maryland, and thus with the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean. This route was the only link to navigable water, as the Potomac River was considered too close to enemy activity for practical use. Relay House, therefore, was a crucial junction. The question remains: just where was Relay House in relation to the cities of Baltimore and Washington?

Reference to a series of maps, some contemporary Civil War and some present-day, shows discrepancies in the location of Relay House. The overwhelming evidence, however, of maps, War Department references, and certain monographs locates Relay House southwest of Baltimore, some eight or

nine miles from the city itself. This junction is northeast of Washington by thirty-two miles. Oddly enough, a map in the Atlas which accompanies the Official Records indicates that Relay House is north of Baltimore. This same map is reproduced in part on the end papers of Hard Marching Every Day. Moreover, a map included with the monograph, The Northern Railroads in the Civil War, also erroneously shows Relay House north of Baltimore. In a work devoted to such a limited topic, one which specifically treats Washington's isolation, the mistake is particularly misleading.⁸²

On another map in the Atlas, however, Relay House is properly shown as southwest of Baltimore. Margaret Leech's classic treatment of Washington during the Civil War, Reveille in Washington, correctly pinpoints Relay House. An undated contemporary map from the New York Times, shown in Benjamin Franklin Cooling's monograph on the defenses of wartime Washington, also is correct. In addition, recent road maps (1972 and 1991) place Relay House in the proper position.⁸³

⁸² U.S. War Department, Atlas to Accompany the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1891-1895, 3 vols.: repr. Hong Kong: Fairfax Press, 1978, 1 vol.), Map CXXXVI; Emil & Ruth Rosenblatt, Hard Marching Every Day, endpapers; Weber, The Northern Railroads, map in envelope, back cover.

⁸³ Atlas, Map XXVII; Margaret Leech, Reveille in Washington 1860-1865 (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1941), 55-56; Benjamin Franklin Cooling, Symbol, Sword, and Shield: Defending Washington during the Civil War (Shippensburg, Pa.: White Mane Publishing Company, Inc., 1975; 2nd rev. edition, 1991), 30; ADC, The Map People, ADC's State Road Map of

The 1865 Annual Report of the Quartermaster-General, which refers to Relay House as the junction of the Washington Branch and the mainline of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, is an excellent witness. Despite the conflicting maps in the Official Records, it would be indeed strange if the official in charge of the railroads did not know the accurate location of such a strategic point on the railroad network, especially since it is located just a few miles from Washington. The best proof of all comes from a history of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad; Relay House is definitely southwest of Baltimore and northeast of Washington.⁸⁴

Maryland and Delaware (Alexandria, Va.: Langscheidt Publishing Group, 1991); Map of Baltimore, Washington, D.C. and Vicinity (n.p.: Rand, McNally & Co., 1972).

⁸⁴ O.R., Series 3, vol. 5: 232; John F. Stover, History of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 1987), 40.

APPENDIX IV

DEMOBILIZATION OF VOLUNTEERS

AFTER NOVEMBER 1, 1866

The traditional army tendency for precise records permits tracing the 11,043 volunteers still in service as of November 1, 1866. By October, 1867, this volunteer force had been reduced to a mere two hundred and three officers and enlisted men. Of this total, all were white except twelve commissioned officers still on duty in the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands.

The last white volunteer unit, a company of the First New Mexico Battalion, was mustered out November 18, 1867, while the last colored volunteer organization, the 125th U.S. Colored Infantry, was mustered out a month later, December 20, 1867. The very last commissioned officer of the volunteer forces was mustered out July 1, 1869. He was also the very last volunteer still in service, as the last enlisted volunteer, a soldier on duty as a War Department messenger, had been discharged the previous October.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ O.R., Series 3, vol. 5: 1047.

VITA

Born in Hackensack, New Jersey on August 31, 1921, Father William B. Holberton attended local schools, graduating from Hackensack High School, June 1939. He entered Lehigh University in September 1939 and enrolled in the College of Business Administration. A member of Delta Sigma Phi social fraternity and Alpha Kappa Psi, an honorary business fraternity, he graduated with honors in May, 1943.

After three-plus years service in the Army, he accepted employment at Corning Glass Works, Corning, New York as an internal auditor. During the next nine years he was also a plant accountant and an administrative assistant to the Director of Engineering. In 1955 he left Corning Glass Works to enter the seminary to prepare for ordination as a Catholic priest.

Ordained in May, 1961, Father Holberton was assigned to a parish in the city of Rochester, New York, for two years. Then he was transferred to the University of Rochester Medical Center as Catholic Chaplain. For the following eighteen years he worked with patients, staff, medical and nursing students, as well as patients' families. He was on leave for two years in order to take care of his aged and ailing parents. Then after a one year assignment as

chaplain to a motherhouse of Sisters, he was transferred to a local Catholic high school as chaplain to the Brothers and Sisters who staffed the school; he served in this capacity for six and a half years.

In 1987 Father Holberton received the Master of Divinity degree from St. Bernard's Institute, Rochester, New York.

After retiring in November, 1990, he moved to Bethlehem and began his graduate studies in history at Lehigh.

END

OF

TITLE