

The American Civil War

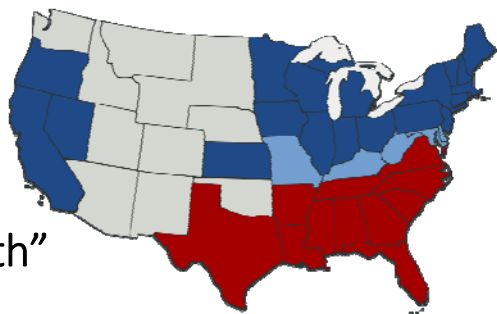


Lessons Not Learned

By John J Morrison, BSc (Hons) PhD Cert Hlth Econ Grad Cert
a presentation to
The American Civil War Round Table (New South Wales Chapter) on March 7, 2016

Civil War Overview

- April 12, 1861 – May 9, 1865
- Fought between the Union
“North” and Confederacy “South”
- Overall -
 - North - 23
 - South - 11
 - Border – 5 (inc. West Virginia)



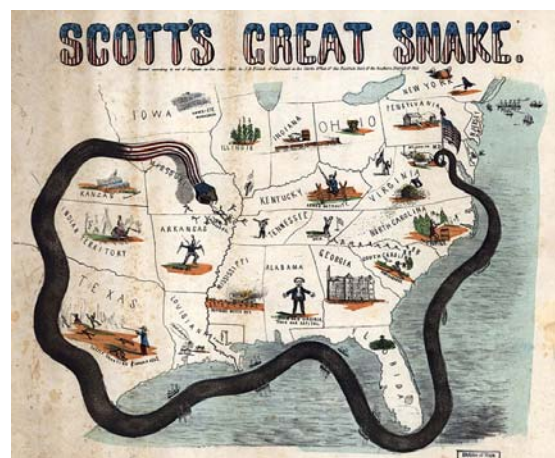
Civil War - Overview

- Broadly “Eastern” and “Western” Theatres
- Issues of slavery, secession, “states rights”
- Major Eastern Battles
 - Manassas, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Wilderness, Petersburg, Appomattox Courthouse
- Major Western Battles
 - Donaldson, Shiloh, Vicksburg, Chattanooga, Atlanta

Civil War - Overview

Northern Strategy

- Blockade southern ports
- Seize Mississippi valley
- Secure Border states
- Destroy Confederate army
- Destroy Confederate industry
- Force capitulation



Civil War - Overview

Southern Strategy

- Inflict losses that would turn public opinion
- Defend territory until the North tired
- Foreign recognition



Civil War – Outcome

- Union (Northern) Victory
- Slavery abolished
- Union preserved – Secession “unconstitutional”
- Supremacy of the Federal Government
- Industrial North dominant economically
- Democratic republic – legitimate and desirable system of government

VICTORY!!

DEATH-BLOW TO TREASON.

REBELLION IN VIRGINIA ENDED.

**SURRENDER OF LEE AND HIS
WHOLE ARMY.**

Civil War - Costs

Dead

Union – 365,000

Confederacy – 260,000

Civilian – 50,000

Wounded

Union – 282,000

Confederacy – 137,000



10 percent of all Northern males 20–45 years old, and 30 percent of all Southern white males aged 18–40 died

1. The Armies of the North and South

- Before the war, small US regular army (<20,000)
- Union army –
 - Regular and “Volunteer”
 - Cadre not extensively used
- Confederate army
 - Incorporated both regular and militia
 - Cadre used (from necessity)

The Armies of the North and South

Unit	Structure	Union (North)	Confederate (South)
Company	-	40-100	40-100
Regiment	10 Companies	250-1000	250-1000
Brigade	3-4 Regiments	1000-3000	1000-3000
Division	2-4 Brigades	6,000	8,000
Corps	2-4 Divisions	10000-20000	20,000
Army	2+ Corps	30000-150000	40,000-100,000

The Armies of the North and South

- Raising large volunteer armies
 - Largely raised by states and regions
 - Soldiers in a particular regiment/brigade/division were often from the same location
 - After severe action, no young men left !
 - Severe depletion of resources from certain areas

The Armies of the North and South

- Replacements and Reinforcements
 - South “re-built” veteran regiments with fresh troops
 - “New” soldiers learned from the “old”
 - North usually did not do this, preferring to raise entirely new regiments
 - Veteran regiments bled down – eventually lost establishment

World War I

- Early deployment (and loss) of British Regular Army – loss of experienced leaders
- Kitchener’s Army – the “Pals Battalions”
- Regional Units



2. Weapons vs Tactics

- Weaponry
 - Artillery
 - Rifled Musket
 - Repeating Rifle (breech-loaded)
 - Gatling Gun (machine gun)



Weapons vs Tactics

- Tactics favored the “defense”
 - Skirmishes; 3:1 assault
 - “Pierce and encircle”
 - Fire and movement
- Demise of frontal assault/ fighting in squares



3. Trench Warfare

- Revolution in firepower was not matched by similar advances in mobility
- Result - form of warfare in which the defender held the advantage



Trench Warfare – the alternative ?



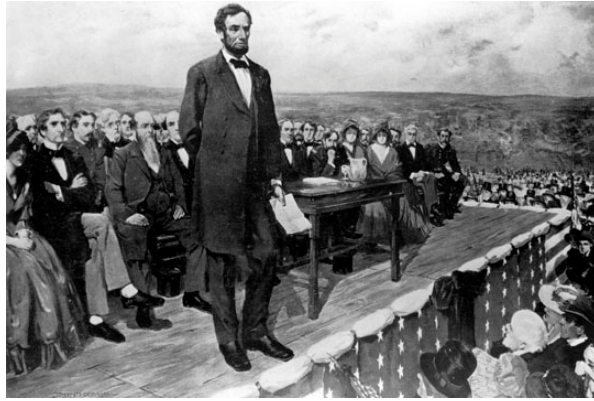
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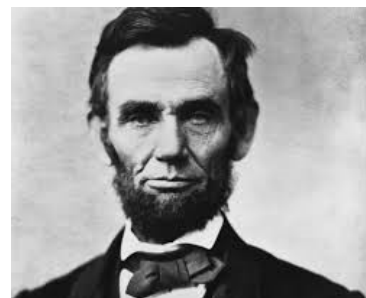
Pickett's Charge

4. Political Leadership in Wartime



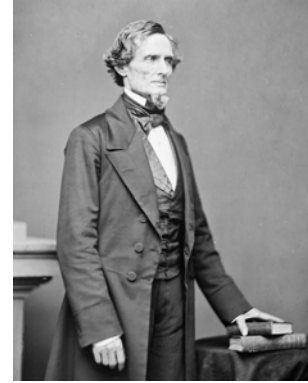
Political Leadership

- Abraham Lincoln
 - Self made
 - Understood strategic requirements necessary to win war
 - Commander in chief – came to resist political interference
 - Constitutional powers – centralized
 - Consummate politician !



Political Leadership

- Jefferson Davis
 - Professional soldier and politician
 - No clear strategy to win war
 - As Commander in chief, interfered with and alienated commanders
 - Constitutional powers – limited by “States Rights”
 - Disdained politics/political deals



Political Leadership in World Wars I and II

- World War I
 - Lloyd-George and Woodrow Wilson
 - Kaiser Wilhelm
- World War II
 - Churchill and Roosevelt
 - Hitler
- Many failures due to unnecessary interference

5. Military Leadership

- Old vs New
- Professional Soldier vs “Amateur”,
- Aristocrat, “Political” appointment and “Purchase”



Military Leadership

- Grant vs Lee
 - Old vs New
 - Self-made Professional vs Aristocrat



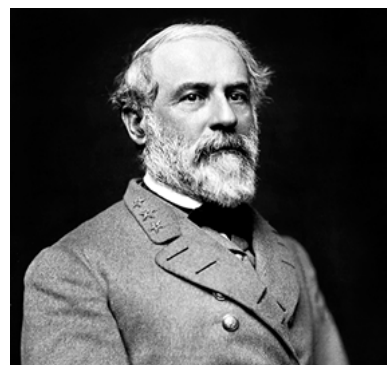
Military Leadership

- Ulysses S Grant
 - Self made
 - Understood both tactical and strategic requirements
 - Operations as Commander largely free of political interference
 - Professional – methodical



Military Leadership

- Robert E Lee
 - Virginia “aristocrat”, son of a Revolutionary war hero
 - Great “old” soldier
 - Wealthy slave-holder
 - Political interference
 - Respected and honourable
 - Focus on tactics rather than strategy



Military Leadership

Grant

- Setbacks, but learned
- “Stolid and unglamorous”
- Strategic insight – Vicksburg vs Gettysburg
- Overall casualty rate – 20%

Lee

- Tactically successful (whole war)
- Flamboyant commander
- Misunderstood grand strategy
- Overall casualty rate – 30%

Military Leadership – World Wars I and II

- World War I
 - “Purchase” and political patronage persisted (but were declining)
 - Flamboyance vs professionalism
- World War II
 - Many military leaders focused on tactical rather than strategic
 - Failure to nurture new leaders – “elite” units

6. Disease and Medical Issues

- Sanitation
- Nutrition
- Communicable disease
- Casualty clearance and treatment

Disease and Medical Issues

- Communicable disease
 - Close proximity of men with little previous exposure/resistance to disease
 - chicken pox, mumps, whooping cough, and, especially, measles.
 - Operations in the South meant a dangerous and new disease environment - diarrhoea, dysentery, typhoid fever, and malaria.

Disease and Medical Issues

- Nutrition
 - Poor diet
 - Lack of fruit and vegetables/vitamin C led to scurvy
 - Intestinal disorders



Disease and Medical Issues

- Casualty Clearance and Treatment
 - Casualty evacuation
 - Dedicated medical corps and medical staff
 - Dedicated facilities



Disease and Medical Issues

- Hospitals and rehabilitation
- Modern Medical Services
- “Veterans Affairs”



Later Wars

- Casualty clearance and medical planning
- Lesson that was learned (albeit slowly)



7. Recovery and Reconstruction

- Reconstruction
- Population Reconstruction and Recovery



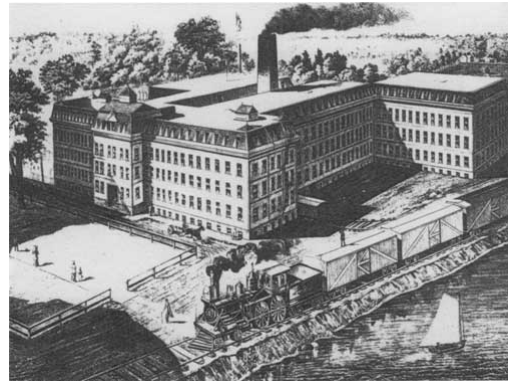
Recovery and Reconstruction

- Reconstruction
 - Respect vs “victor’s vengeance”
 - Lincoln’s original intention – “let them down lightly”



Recovery and Reconstruction

- Population Reconstruction
 - Largely through mass immigration
 - US became more multi-racial/multi-ethnic
 - Basis of a great industrial power



Aftermath of World Wars I and II

- Population Reconstruction (France and Britain) – Not as extensive; never really recovered
- “Victors Vengeance” – Versailles!
 - Led to World War II
- Marshall Plan World War II – Lesson learned (slowly)



The Final Lesson

- Democracy vs Autocracy
 - Not perfect, but preferable
 - Desire for freedom will win out in the end



Conclusion

“It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth”

Abraham Lincoln, Nov 1863