

2018

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Terrence J. Winschel

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### Recommended Citation

Winschel, Terrence J. (2018) "Applicability in the Modern Age: Ulysses S. Grant's Vicksburg Campaign," *Journal of Mississippi History*. Vol. 80: No. 1, Article 5.  
Available at: <https://aquila.usm.edu/jmh/vol80/iss1/5>

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## Applicability in the Modern Age: Ulysses S. Grant's Vicksburg Campaign

*By Terrence J. Winschel*

“. . . the second in splendor if not first in real consequences.”<sup>1</sup>

Ironically, these words written in reference to the Vicksburg campaign were penned by Maj. Gen. George Gordon Meade who commanded the victorious Union army in the battle of Gettysburg. Time has validated his assessment, and so too does the modern Army of the United States.

On July 3, 1863, as the legions clad in butternut and gray commanded by Gen. Robert E. Lee advanced against the center of the Union line along Cemetery Ridge in the climactic action at Gettysburg (known to history as “Pickett’s Charge”), Meade’s fellow Pennsylvanian and boyhood friend, Confederate Lt. Gen. John C. Pemberton, was requesting terms for the surrender of Vicksburg, the southern fortress on the Mississippi River. At the very moment Lee’s men battled their way over the stone wall at “The Angle,” Pemberton was face-to-face with Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant whose troops in Union blue held Vicksburg in a death grip. The following day, as the Army of Northern Virginia prepared to withdraw from Pennsylvania, Grant’s army marched in and took possession of the “Gibraltar of the Confederacy.” A joyful President Abraham Lincoln was able to declare, “The Father of Waters again flows unvexed to the sea.”<sup>2</sup>

In addition to securing unfettered navigation of the Mississippi River, Grant’s victory at Vicksburg cut the Confederacy in two, dividing it along the great river that separated the Cis-Mississippi (the heartland of the Confederacy east of the Mississippi River) from the Trans-Mississippi (that portion of the Confederacy west of the river).

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<sup>1</sup> George G. Meade, *With Meade at Gettysburg* (Philadelphia: J. C. Winston, 1930), 262.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Steele Commager, ed., *The Blue and Gray: The Story of the Civil War as Told by Participants*, 2 vols. (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company Inc., 1950), II, 677.

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TERRENCE J. WINSCHER is the retired chief historian of Vicksburg National Military Park. He is the author of several full-length works, including *Vicksburg: Fall of the Confederate Gibraltar*, and *Triumph & Defeat: The Vicksburg Campaign* as well as almost fifty articles about the Civil War.

From the vast Trans-Mississippi region, which comprised fully one-half the landmass of the Confederacy, came tremendous quantities of Texas beef, lamb, pork, and horses, sugar and salt from Louisiana, lead from Missouri, and molasses and mules from Arkansas. These supplies were funneled through Vicksburg and sent by rail to the armies of Lee and Gen. Braxton Bragg operating farther to the east. Not only were these supplies essential to maintain Confederate armies in the field, but they were also necessary to sustain the southern people who suffered an ever-increasing need of sustenance. Thus, vital Confederate supply and communication lines were severed with the fall of Vicksburg and a major objective of the Anaconda Plan — control of the Mississippi River — ultimately sealed the fate of Richmond, the capital of the Southern republic.

Ever since the twin Union victories in July of 1863, Meade's triumph at Gettysburg has overshadowed the Vicksburg campaign in terms of "splendor" in the vast and ever-growing historiography of the Civil War. Yet Gettysburg pales in comparison to the "real consequences" of Vicksburg. Although Meade's army, in saving the commercial, industrial, and political centers of the North, had inflicted crippling casualties on the Army of Northern Virginia and destroyed its offensive capabilities, it would still have to face this same force again and again in The Wilderness, at Spotsylvania and Cold Harbor, and throughout the long siege of Richmond and Petersburg. Meade's success at Gettysburg was hailed throughout the North, but in the nation's capital, President Lincoln was frustrated that greater results had not been secured. He took pains to express his disappointment in a letter he wrote to Meade. (After venting his frustration, however, the president promptly discarded the letter.). To Grant, on the other hand, he sent a note of heartfelt words in "grateful acknowledgment for the almost inestimable service you have done the country." Lincoln saw that Vicksburg was indeed more important than Gettysburg.<sup>3</sup>

Whereas two armies, badly bruised and bleeding, marched away from Gettysburg to fight another day, the Union victory at Vicksburg was complete. In addition to taking the city and capturing a garrison of 29,500 officers and men, Grant's Army of the Tennessee seized a huge amount of military stores. Among the public property captured were

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<sup>3</sup> Abraham Lincoln, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953), VI, 326.

172 pieces of artillery, 38,000 artillery projectiles (mostly fixed), 58,000 pounds of black powder, 50,000 shoulder weapons (mostly British Enfield rifle muskets, arguably the finest infantry weapons of the time period), 600,000 rounds of ammunition, and 350,000 percussion caps — resources in men and material the South could ill afford to lose. In addition to this tally were the 7,000 casualties inflicted on Southern forces during the operational phase of the campaign leading up to the Vicksburg siege and 82 cannon captured as Grant's army pushed deep into the interior of Mississippi. In the process, Grant compelled the evacuation of Confederate strongholds at Snyder's Bluff, north of Vicksburg, as well as Warrenton and Grand Gulf, south of the city.<sup>4</sup>

In terms of artillery alone, Federal forces captured 254 cannon during the Vicksburg campaign. (For the sake of comparison not a single Confederate cannon was captured at Gettysburg.) This figure represented more than 11 percent of the total number of cannon cast by the Confederacy from 1861-1865. Even more significant, of this figure 85 were heavy siege guns. In their work on Confederate cannon foundries, Larry Daniel and Riley Gunter state "Even under the best of circumstances it took some 400-500 hours of labor to complete a 10-inch columbiad weighing 19,000 pounds. It took the Tredegar Iron Works [which produced one-half of all cannon cast by the Confederacy] a minimum of one month to cast, finish, and mount such a weapon. For the larger Brooke guns it took the Selma Naval Ordnance Works in the neighborhood of 1,000 hours for completion." At such a rate it would take four years for Southern foundries to replace just the heavy ordnance alone that was lost at Vicksburg. Although Confederate foundries produced field guns at a more rapid rate, it would still take one full year for iron workers at Tredegar, Bellona, and a score of smaller foundries across the South to replace the 169 field guns captured by the Federals during the campaign for Vicksburg. (This does not include the corresponding number of limbers, caissons, forge wagons, implements, harnesses, saddles, bridles, and the myriad of other accouterments associated with artillery that were also lost during the campaign.) Thus, rather than producing weapons to strengthen the armies in the field, Southern foundries were working to replenish

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<sup>4</sup> *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 73 vols., 128 parts. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1889-1901), vol. 24, pt. 2, p. 178, (hereinafter cited as *OR*); *OR*, vol. 24, pt. 1, p. 62; Alexander S. Abrams, *A Full and Detailed History of the Siege of Vicksburg* (Atlanta: Intelligencer Steam Power Presses, 1863), 67.

diminished supply. As events proved in the wake of the disasters of 1863 at Gettysburg, Vicksburg, and Chattanooga, the Confederacy did not have the luxury of time to replenish this tremendous loss.<sup>5</sup>

"We must go back to the campaigns of Napoleon to find equally brilliant results accomplished in the same space of time with such a small loss," wrote Francis V. Greene. The Union effort to take Vicksburg, cost Grant's army only 10,000 casualties. The results of the campaign identified Grant in the mind of Abraham Lincoln as the general who could lead the Union armies to victory. "Grant is my man and I am his the rest of the war," stated the president emphatically. His victory at Vicksburg also established Grant as one of the great captains in history and led to his promotion to lieutenant general and general-in-chief of all Union armies.<sup>6</sup>

Thus Grant, far more so than Meade or any of their contemporaries (Lee being the possible exception), rightly merits study by students of the Civil War and academic scholars. But none stand to benefit more by a study of Grant than do professional soldiers. For the remainder of the nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century, soldiers the world over studied Grant and then applied what they had learned to battlefields in two world wars and scores of smaller conflicts. Among the more famous students of Grant were the "Desert Fox," Erwin Rommel, and "Stormin' Norman" Schwarzkopf. Even now, soldiers around the globe, as they prepare for conflicts on modern multi-domain battlefields of the twenty-first century, study Grant with emphasis on the Vicksburg campaign. The questions must be asked, however, what makes Grant relevant to the modern Army? What lessons from Grant's time at Vicksburg can be applied to the present-day multi-domain battlefield?

Perhaps the most persuasive answer to these questions are found in *FM 100-5*, the Army's "keystone warfighting manual." In its May 1986 edition, the Army highlights the Vicksburg campaign in its treatment of offensive operations. In Chapter 6, titled "Fundamentals of the Offense," the Army recognizes that "The offensive is the decisive form of war." In specific reference to Grant, the manual maintains that he "understood the essence of offensive operations." His actions

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<sup>5</sup> Larry J. Daniel and Riley W. Gunter, *Confederate Cannon Foundries* (Union City: Pioneer Press, 1977), vii.

<sup>6</sup> Francis V. Greene, *The Mississippi (Campaigns of the Civil War)*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1882), 170-171.

south of Vicksburg in the spring of 1863 were “the most brilliant campaign ever fought on American soil.” Then the Army goes on to affirm that “it exemplifies the qualities of a well-conceived, violently executed offensive plan.” Through its critical analysis of the struggle for Vicksburg, the Army considers Grant “a master of maneuver, speed, and the indirect approach” and asserts that “The same speed, surprise, maneuver, and decisive action will be required in the campaigns of the future”<sup>7</sup>

These tenets are indeed at the very core of Army doctrine and basic components of the Nine Principles of War that were codified in 1921: Objective, Offensive, Mass, Economy of Force, Maneuver, Unity of Command, Security, Surprise, and Simplicity. These principles, which are the bedrock of U.S. Army offensive operations, have “withstood the tests of analysis, experimentation, and practice,” attests the Army in *FM 100-5*. Although much broader and more comprehensive than the static and simplistic Jominian theory taught by Dennis Hart Mahan at West Point and drilled into the minds of cadets throughout the antebellum period, Union and Confederate generals understood and applied these same principles during the Civil War. But few combined as many of these principles in a single campaign as did Grant in his operations against Vicksburg. Nor did anyone apply these principles as consistently as did Grant throughout the war.<sup>8</sup>

Certainly no one, including that plebe who entered the academy on May 29, 1839, could have expected--or even imagined that in time he, Grant, would become the military icon we know today. By his own admission, “I did not take hold of my studies with avidity,” wrote Grant in his *Memoirs* of his days at West Point, “in fact I rarely ever read over a lesson the second time during my entire cadetship.” Instead, the young cadet filled his time reading novels, of which he was proud to boast that they were “not those of a trashy sort.” (How ironic that the mediocre student of one generation has become the teacher of subsequent generations of soldiers!)<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> *FM 100-5 Operations* (Washington: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1986), i, 91, 94.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 173. Antoine-Henri Jomini, later Baron de Jomini, was a French-speaking Swiss national (1779-1869), whose most famous work is *Summary of the Art of War*. Jomini advised Czar Nicholas during the Crimean War and Napoleon III during his Italian campaigns.

<sup>9</sup> Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant The Complete Annotated Edition*, eds. John F. Marszalek, David S. Nolen, and Louie P. Gallo (Cambridge: Belknap, Harvard University Press, 2017), 21.

Perhaps, not being as rooted in or wedded to Jominian theory explains in part how Grant was able to rise above other generals of his time and evolve faster and to a higher level than any of his contemporaries on both sides of the battle lines. In fact, Grant proved himself to be an independent strategist and his operations at Vicksburg reveal more of a Clausewitzian approach to war — even though at that time few in America (and clearly not Grant) were familiar with the Prussian military theorist. Brig. Gen (ret.) Parker Hills, the founder of Battle Focus, which educates and develops effective and ethical leaders, both military and corporate, through battle studies, staff rides, and training seminars, compares the Union general to Clausewitz. Both men, he points out, understood that “Destruction of the enemy forces is the overriding principle of war.” General-in-chief Grant emphasized this point to his subordinates, such as when he told Meade in 1864, “Wherever Lee goes, there you will go also.” Destruction of Lee’s army and not the capture of Richmond was the objective.<sup>10</sup>

A military axiom is that the primary goal of offensive operations is to defeat enemy forces, and in *FM 100-5* the Army stresses that “defeat of an enemy force at any level will sooner or later require shifting to the offensive.” Most generals during the Civil War—even the poor ones, launched an offensive during their tenure in command. But even those who were successful often seemed hesitant to assume risk, or they spent an inordinate amount of time planning for possible contingencies, to include their own avenues of retreat.<sup>11</sup>

Grant, on the other hand, came to embrace fully the offense, which set him apart from other Civil War commanders. He was willing to accept risk — great risk at times, and excelled in offensive operations. Col. (ret.) Doug Douds, an instructor in the Advanced Strategic Art Program at the U. S. Army War College credits this characteristic in part to Grant’s experience early in the war during his first offensive at Belmont, Missouri, where he realized that the “enemy was as afraid of me as I was of him.” Indeed, Grant’s experience at Belmont enabled him to grasp the psychological impact of offensive operations on the enemy. As stated succinctly in *FM 100-5*, the offensive is “the commander’s ultimate means of imposing his will upon the enemy.” This realization emboldened Grant who conducted offensive operations the frequency

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<sup>10</sup> Parker Hills, e-mail message to author, September 12, 2017, Grant, *Memoirs*, 483.

<sup>11</sup> *FM 100-5*, p. 91.

of which was matched by no other general during the war. He proved to be a bold, energetic, and aggressive warrior, and his embrace of the offense led to victories at Fort Donelson, Vicksburg, and Chattanooga. Ultimately this strategy led to Appomattox.<sup>12</sup>

The present-day Army of the United States promotes this same spirit of the offense and the central aspect of its Multi-Domain Battle doctrine is “its focus on the seizure and retention of the initiative . . . to create temporary windows of superiority across multiple domains and throughout the depth of the battlefield in order to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative; defeat enemies; and achieve military objectives.” The Army articulates the doctrine that, by seizing and maintaining the initiative, offensive operations can result in defeat of enemy forces, the command of key or decisive terrain, destruction of enemy resources, confusion to the enemy, holding him in position, and even disrupting an enemy attack. “Whatever their purpose,” underscores the manual, “all successful offensive operations are characterized by surprise, concentration, speed, flexibility, and audacity.” This is the very manner in which Grant conducted his operations against Vicksburg, the relevance of which was clearly demonstrated by Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf, whose offensive in Iraq was based largely on Grant’s thinking. Thus, Grant’s proven relevance in the modern age and the potential for the decisive application of his strategy on the multi-domain battlefields of the twenty-first century is undeniable.<sup>13</sup>

Grant’s campaign for Vicksburg was composed of several attempts to seize the Confederate fortress beginning in November 1862, when he launched what is known as the Central Mississippi campaign. This campaign extended through the various Bayou Expeditions conducted during the winter of 1862-1863, to his final and successful effort that culminated in a forty-seven-day siege resulting in surrender of the city on July 4, 1863. Throughout the campaign, Grant demonstrated a firmness of purpose, perseverance, and dogged determination that was later best expressed at Spotsylvania in his famous statement, “I intend to fight it out on this line if it takes all summer.” As Dr. William Pierce, director, Advanced Strategic Art Program, U.S. Army War College, writes, “he never took his eye off the prize – Vicksburg.” His

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<sup>12</sup> Doug Douds, email message to author, November 8, 2017; *FM 100-5*, p. 91.

<sup>13</sup> Multi-Domain White Paper: [http://www.tradoc.army.mil/multidomainbattle/docs/MDB\\_White-Paper.pdf](http://www.tradoc.army.mil/multidomainbattle/docs/MDB_White-Paper.pdf); *FM 100-5*, pp. ii; 94-95.



“persistence” was a key factor in his success, states Pierce, and no one respected and appreciated his persistence more than did President Lincoln. In the aftermath of the failed Bayou Expeditions, when even members of his own Cabinet demanded that the general be removed from command, Lincoln responded to those critical of Grant by saying, “I can’t spare this man, he fights.”<sup>14</sup>

And fight Grant did, combining surprise, concentration, speed, flexibility, and audacity to claim victory. Following months of frustration and failure in his efforts to capture Vicksburg, Grant boldly launched his army on a march south through Louisiana from its base camps at Milliken’s Bend and Young’s Point, Louisiana (opposite and upstream from Vicksburg), to search for a favorable crossing point of the great river somewhere below Vicksburg. The audacity of this move is highlighted by the fact that his two most trusted subordinates, Maj. Gens. William T. Sherman and James B. McPherson, voiced their opposition to the move. In fact, both men put their objections in writing and requested that their letters be forwarded to the secretary of war. Despite such misgivings, Grant knew he could rely on these men to do their duty and reciprocated his trust in them.

Thus, Grant was able to maintain unity of command unlike his opponent Pemberton, whose subordinates openly feuded with him. Most notable of the intransigent officers in gray was the irascible division commander, Maj. Gen. William W. Loring, whose feud with Pemberton came to a head on May 16, 1863, at the battle of Champion Hill — much to the detriment of Confederate forces. In this action, which proved to be the largest, bloodiest, and most decisive action of the campaign, Pemberton and his subordinates had no cohesive plan and the Southern army was routed and driven from the field. In the panic and confusion that followed, Loring’s division was cut off from the main force and barely managed to escape. His division eventually reached Jackson, but it was effectively out of the campaign.

Consistently Grant used deception to distract Pemberton by launching a series of cavalry raids aimed at Confederate supply and communication lines. The most famous of these raids was led by Col. Benjamin Grierson, whose horse-soldiers rode from La Grange, Tennessee, the length of Mississippi, and reached safety behind Union

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<sup>14</sup> Grant, *Memoirs*, 544; E-mail, William Pierce to author, November 3, 2017; John Fiske, *The Mississippi Valley in the Civil War* (New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1900), 225.

lines in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, (April 17-May 2, 1863). Along the way they severed the Southern Railroad of Mississippi, Pemberton's main supply line, and tore up the tracks of the New Orleans, Jackson, and Great Northern Railroad knocking that line out of commission for the duration of the war. In response to the raids, Pemberton stripped his river defenses and scattered his infantry in a futile effort to capture the raiders. Thus, in the opening and crucial phase of the campaign when he should have been concentrating his forces, Pemberton was dispersing his available manpower, thus enabling Grant to achieve numerical superiority in each of the battles during the operational phase of the campaign on Mississippi soil.

Grant used further deception as his forces pushing south through Louisiana neared their desired crossing point. The Union commander sent a portion of Sherman's corps up the Yazoo River, north of Vicksburg, to launch a demonstration at Snyder's Bluff. The objective was to divert Pemberton's attention away from the main Union effort and hold Confederate forces in position north of the city, while his own army crossed the Mississippi River below Vicksburg.

Combined with these highly successful deceptions, Grant integrated and synchronized the capabilities of the Army-Navy team that enabled his troops to storm ashore unopposed at Bruinsburg on April 30, 1863. Pemberton was caught by surprise and became unhinged when news of the Federal landing reached his headquarters. Reeling in shock, the commander of the Department of Mississippi and East Louisiana embraced a defensive posture and relinquished the offensive to a dangerous adversary. Michael B. Ballard, biographer of the general in gray, asserts that "when Grant crossed the Mississippi, he pushed Pemberton across his personal Rubicon." Confused, uncertain, and with his confidence shattered, Pemberton stumbled through the unfolding crisis with predictable indecision.<sup>15</sup>

Having secured his beachhead on Mississippi soil and thereby compelling the Confederate evacuation of Grand Gulf through his victory in the battle of Port Gibson on May 1, Grant sought to concentrate his command and ordered Sherman to make haste and join him below Vicksburg. While awaiting Sherman's corps, Grant prepared his men for the hard fighting that surely lay ahead in which he would

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<sup>15</sup> Multi-Domain Battle White Paper; Michael Ballard, *Pemberton: A Biography* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1991), 140.

drive his army as a stake into the heart of his enemy.

Rather than drive directly north on Vicksburg, which Pemberton moved to counter, Grant launched his army in a northeasterly direction in order to sever Pemberton's supply line when Sherman's forces arrived on May 7. Although the Southern Railroad of Mississippi had been cut by Grierson's Federal cavalry, repairs had been quickly made and the road placed back in operation. Grant's objective was to sever Pemberton's line of supply and isolate his opponent in Vicksburg, where Confederate forces could be destroyed. (Almost 150 years later, in virtually identical fashion and with equally decisive results, Gen. Colin Powell hurled coalition forces against Saddam Hussein's line of supply — and possible route of retreat in order to, as the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff put it, "cut him off and kill him.")

Grant's move inland is often referred to as the "blitzkrieg" of the Vicksburg campaign. Over a seventeen-day period, his army marched 200 miles during which it met and defeated Confederate forces in five separate actions: Port Gibson, Raymond, Jackson, Champion Hill, and Big Black River Bridge. Throughout this period, Grant maintained the initiative "imposing his will" on the enemy. The speed of his movements kept Pemberton off balance and in a reactionary mode. Union victories shattered Southern morale and the soldiers' confidence in John Pemberton. As one Confederate wrote in the aftermath of Champion Hill, "Pemberton is either a traitor or the most incompetent general in the Confederacy. Indecision. Indecision. Indecision."<sup>16</sup>

During the operational phase of the campaign, Grant also demonstrated what was perhaps his greatest strength as a battle captain — flexibility. The Union commander was ever-adaptive to the fluid nature of war and kept his options open. This is best illustrated in the aftermath of the battle of Raymond that was fought on May 12. Based on an exaggerated report by James McPherson, Grant was led to believe that there were more Confederate soldiers in Jackson than he initially thought there were. This report, coupled with the intelligence that Gen. Joseph E. Johnston was en route to Jackson to assume command of Confederate forces in Mississippi's capital city, led Grant to change the operational direction of his army. He turned it ninety degrees east. In doing so, he turned his back on Pemberton's forces at Edwards Station and left a numerically smaller force to protect

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<sup>16</sup> Diary of John A. Leavy, Letters and Diaries Files, Vicksburg National Military Park.

the rear of his army. This move resulted in the capture of Jackson and the scattering of Johnston's forces. In the process, Grant achieved force security. Thus, when The Army of the Tennessee wheeled west, toward its objective — Vicksburg, Johnston's forces posed no threat. And, throughout the remainder of the campaign, Grant's army was firmly established as a wedge between Pemberton in Vicksburg and Johnston in Jackson. This situation prevented the two Confederates from cooperating with one another and coordinating their movements to destroy the Union army. To further enhance the security of his force, Grant requested reinforcements that arrived by the tens of thousands. These troops established what became known as the Exterior Line that was located north and east of Vicksburg to prevent Johnston from lifting the siege. That line was never tested.

Truly then, Grant was a master of the offense, and this fact by itself justifies a modern study of him. But there is more to Grant that can benefit those in the modern Army. *FM 100-5* asserts that "Wars are fought and won by men [and now too, women], not by machines. The human dimension of war will be decisive in the campaigns and battles of the future just as it has been in the past." The manual further states that superior performance in combat depends: "First and foremost . . . on superb soldiers and leaders with character and determination who will win because they simply will not accept losing." This is a perfect description of Grant, who refused to accept defeat or even take a backward step. He instilled confidence in his subordinates and soldiers, and they gave him superior combat performance in reply. More than just the manner in which he conducted the Vicksburg campaign, it is the character of the man himself that draws soldiers to study Grant. Colonel Douds of the Army War College avows that "It is the sum of the man that merits our study and perhaps gives us insights of our own strengths and weaknesses in the end." Grant was a man who, through the hard lessons of failure and poverty in his personal life prior to the war, came to know his strengths and weaknesses and became the commander who never took counsel with his fears. Rather, he always acted from his strengths. This is a valuable lesson for all soldiers throughout the ages to learn.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> *FM 100-5*, p. 5; Doug Douds, e-mail message to author, November 8, 2017.

After years of combat in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Army has revised the capstone manual on operations to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century and has replaced *FM 100-5* with *FM 3-0* that focuses on the principle of Mission Command. Simply stated, Mission Command is the “exercise of authority and direction by the commander using mission orders to enable disciplined initiative within the commander’s intent to empower agile and adaptive leaders in the conduct of unified land operations.” Mission command calls for the **empowerment** (author’s emphasis) of subordinates and the individual soldier—those whose boots are on the ground, rather than micromanagement by commanders. The intent is to provide those in the field with the flexibility they need based on the exigencies of the situation to determine how best to achieve the objective.<sup>18</sup>

Mission Command requires building cohesive teams through mutual trust, creating a shared understanding, providing a clear commander’s intent, and exercising disciplined initiative-- precisely the hallmarks of Grant’s Vicksburg campaign. To achieve these principles, mission orders must be clear and concise, and simplicity is key. “[Grant] could write,” notes Colonel Douds. “While not a notable verbal communicator, his orders were masters of simplicity, succinctness, and understanding.” Dr. Pierce, who for the past two decades, has conducted staff rides for officers and civilian officials selected to participate in the Advanced Strategic Art Program at the Army War College, agrees, writing, “Grant appeared to give mission type orders and let his subordinates (and Porter) determine how to accomplish the mission without micromanaging their efforts.” Pierce’s colleagues at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC) at Ft. Leavenworth concur. Lt. Col. (ret.) Edwin Kennedy, assistant professor in the Department of Command and Leadership, cites Grant’s 1864 Overland campaign as an “example of current ‘mission command’ doctrine,” and claims that it was “not replicated again for decades in the US Army.” In a recent staff ride focusing on the Vicksburg campaign, Lt. Col. (ret.) Michael “Tom” Chychota, assistant professor in the Department of Tactics at the CGSC, repeatedly discussed this point and stressed “even before the concept of Mission Command was codified, Grant and Porter used the philosophy of mission command and unified operations

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<sup>18</sup> Michael Chychota, e-mail message to author, December 6, 2017.

to defeat Pemberton's Army and capture Vicksburg."<sup>19</sup>

The Civil War has often been referred to as the "last of the old wars and the first of the modern wars." As such, the case can convincingly be made that Grant was the first modern American warrior. During the conflict that tore the nation asunder from 1861-1865, Grant demonstrated an uncommon grasp of offensive operation and, through his application of principles that are now codified as part of Army doctrine, remains a subject of study by professional soldiers the world over. The lessons he offers remain relevant in the present age and can readily be applied on the multi-domain battlefields of the twenty-first century and beyond.

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<sup>19</sup> Doug Douds, e-mail message to author, November 8, 2017; William Pierce, e-mail message to author, November 3, 2017; Edwin Kennedy e-mail message to author, October 14, 2017; Michael Chychota, e-mail message to author, December 6, 2017. Reference is made to Rear Admiral David Dixon Porter, who commanded the Mississippi Squadron that cooperated with Grant's army throughout the Vicksburg campaign.

