

MILITARY ADMINISTRATION IN THE CONFEDERACY:

THE ARMY OF TENNESSEE, 1862-1864

by

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ABSTRACT

In 1861 the Confederacy faced a major problem in military administration. She had to develop a system for the organization, training, and direction of her armies. Military and political leaders alike recognized the problem, and drew on the military theory and practice of the old United States Army in repeated attempts to evolve an effective administrative system for the Confederate armies.

The commanders of the Army of Tennessee tried to solve the problem by appointing three principal administrative officers. The chief of staff exercised a general supervision over the several staff departments, and at his commander's discretion also assisted in the direction of line operations; the adjutant general headed a department responsible primarily for the issue of orders; and the inspector general through his department maintained discipline and efficiency. The appointment of chiefs of staff, the co-ordination of administrative work at all command levels through a departmental structure, and the emergence of the inspector general's department were all innovations, unknown in the old Army.

The success of these innovations varied according to the qualifications of each staff officer, the commander's interpretation of the officer's role, and the ability of the two men to work well together. Success also depended on the

willingness of subordinate line commanders and junior staff officers to accept the authority of the headquarters staff. Thus in the Army of Tennessee field administration was conditioned less by rules and regulations than by personal factors.

To reduce the personal element President Jefferson Davis and the War Department wished to establish a centralized system of administration, which would increase the War Department's control over the field commanders, and at the same time make the staff more independent of the line. The commanding generals of the Army of Tennessee successfully opposed this plan, insisting on their authority over their own staff.

The personal equation therefore continued to be the most striking feature of Confederate military administration. At different levels of the military hierarchy it stimulated the traditional rivalry between staff and line, encouraged a significant rejection of the principle of subordination, and contributed to a lack of harmony between command and administration.

As a result the Confederacy failed to develop an efficient administrative system. The failure derived in part from the personal rivalries and jealousies which plagued the Southern armies, and in part from the disputes inherited from the old American army over the nature and distribution of military authority.

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INTRODUCTION

Staff officers are apparently as unpopular with historians as they have always been with soldiers. Few writers in the extensive field of Civil War history have paid more than passing attention to the essential role of the staff in the organization and administration of the Confederate armies.¹ Yet on efficient staff work depended to a large degree the transformation of a mass of raw recruits into a disciplined, effective fighting force, responsive to the will of its commanders. It is therefore time that a detailed study be made of the Confederate staff system.

Under that system there were a number of staff departments, each with its own officers and its own specialist functions. The adjutant and inspector general's department was responsible for army administration; the quartermaster and subsistence departments, for army supply; and the medical and ordnance departments, the artillery and engineer corps, for the provision of special services. Officers of these departments were known collectively as the "staff," to distinguish them from the "line," or rest of the army; they were also sometimes known as the "general staff," in contrast to the aides, who formed the "personal staff" of a commander.² The departmental staff served either at the capital, of Richmond, Virginia, or with one of the Confederate armies in the field.

How the system operated has never been fully explained. Especially neglected has been the administrative work of the field staff. This study will concentrate therefore on the important administrative roles of the adjutant general, inspector general, and chief of staff, as these were developed in the Army of Tennessee, from March 1862 to December 1864. For those thirty-four months the Army of Tennessee was the major Confederate force in the West; it fought across five states, and changed commanders five times. Its varied experience provides valuable evidence about the structure and functions of the principal administrative departments, about their performance, and about the crucial relationship between administration and command.

The conclusions drawn from this detailed examination of a restricted topic may well prove relevant to the whole range of Confederate military administration, and contribute to our understanding of the Southern defeat.

Notes

¹Among the exceptions are Frank Vandiver, Ploughshares into Swords: Josiah Gorgas and Confederate Ordnance (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1952), and Rebel Brass: The Confederate Command System (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1956); James L. Nichols, The Confederate Quartermaster in the Trans-Mississippi (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1964); Arthur Crego, "The Organization and Functions of the Staff of the Confederate Army of Tennessee," (unpublished M. A. thesis, Louisiana State University, 1965); and Richard D. Goff, Confederate Supply (Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1969).

²War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (128 vols.; Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Series I, X, pt. 2, 373; XVII, pt. 2, 648. For a discussion of the evolution of the meaning of "general staff," see Dallas D. Irvine, "The Origin of Capital Staffs," Journal of Modern History, X (1938), 161-179.

CHAPTER I

Origins of the Confederate Staff

1817-1861

Only with the firing of Confederate guns on Fort Sumter, on April 12, 1861, was it finally determined that the Southern states would not be allowed to secede peacefully from the Union. But the leaders of the new Confederate States of America had early been aware of the special dangers they ran, and in February and March had already moved to set up a military organization capable of defending their political independence. In so doing, they leaned heavily on the example and experience of the United States army.

By enactment of the Provisional Congress the Confederate army acquired a basic organization in law. The President became commander-in-chief of all forces in the Confederate service. A War Department was established as his executive instrument in military affairs, with a Secretary of War "under the direction and control of the President" in charge of "all matters and things connected with the Army." A general staff directed army administration and supply, acting through the four departments of the adjutant and inspector general, the quartermaster general, the commissary general, and the surgeon general. Regulations for the new establishment, with the articles of war, were adopted virtually without change from those of the United States Army.¹

Congress had, however, provided only the legal skeleton of a military organization. How the skeleton was to be filled out would depend on the men responsible for directing the military affairs of the Confederacy--on the President and his executive officers; on the general staff; and on the principal field commanders of the Southern armies. The effectiveness of the developed organization would in turn depend on the willingness of soldiers of all ranks to implement it and abide by its rules and methods. It is therefore important to consider the knowledge of military organization available to the Confederacy in 1861.

That knowledge was derived principally from the training and experience offered by the United States military establishment. President Jefferson Davis was himself a graduate of West Point and a Mexican War hero, and had served as Secretary of War from 1853-1857; the chief Confederate staff officer, General Samuel Cooper, had been adjutant-general of the United States Army from 1852 up to the outbreak of the Civil War; and all six of the Confederacy's full generals, fifteen of the nineteen lieutenant generals, and forty-seven of the seventy-seven major generals were former United States officers. The United States Military Academy at West Point contributed 304 professionally trained officers to the Southern cause, and the army 181 of the 464 Confederate general officers.² There was therefore a strong professional nucleus upon whose knowledge the Confederacy could draw in developing its military organization.

The great majority of these officers had originally been trained in military skills at West Point, where, among their other studies, they had been introduced to the strategic and tactical theories of Baron Antoine Henri Jomini.³ On the basis of his campaign experience under Napoleon, Jomini had written a number of books which established him as an important military thinker. Most famous was his Précis de l'Art de la Guerre, which provided the principles and examples in which West Point cadets were instructed. The cadets studied Jominian theory through the lectures and writings of Professor Dennis Hart Mahan, and through two Jomini-based texts, Elements of Military Art and Science by Henry Wager Halleck, and Rifle and Light Infantry Tactics by William Joseph Hardee.

Although Jomini's thought was mainly concerned with the principles of strategy and tactics, the former Napoleonic staff officer was also interested in military organization, and particularly in the role of the staff. That role was especially important, he maintained, as "a good Staff has the merit of being more durable than the genius of any one man."⁴

That assertion demonstrated Jomini's awareness that by the 19th century staff functions involved much more than the solution of narrow logistical problems. Quartering troops and ensuring adequate supplies was as important as ever, but even more significant was the role of the general staff.⁵ Military genius was an erratic quality, and while a Napoleon had no need of a chief of staff, lesser men might well require help in their administrative and command responsibilities.

Where, for example, a general commanded, not by virtue of genius, but by rank or seniority, a good staff was essential to counterbalance his inadequacies. In that all-too-frequent situation it was particularly important to have a talented chief of staff.⁶

Jomini knew well the difficulty of finding such a man. To have "grown gray in the duties of a quartermaster" would not qualify him for the assignment, nor would the personal favor of a commander who might choose an officer whose weaknesses only complemented his own. The good chief of staff must be a man of "undoubted ability," familiar with "all the various branches of the art of war," and capable of working in "perfect harmony" with his general. These requirements could all be met, Jomini argued, if the commander were allowed to select his own chief of staff, but from a carefully prepared list of suitably qualified officers.⁷

A good appointment was essential in view of the developing functions of the chief of staff. Jomini indicated how the development had occurred:

...when war began to be waged without camps, movements became more complicated, and the staff officers had more extended functions [than quartermastering]. The chief of staff began to perform the duty of transmitting the conceptions of the general to the most distant points of the theater of war, and of procuring for him the necessary documents for arranging plans of operations. The chief of staff was called to the assistance of the general in arranging his plans, to give information of them to subordinates in orders and instructions, to explain them and to supervise

their execution both in their ensemble and in their minute details; his duties were, therefore, evidently connected with all the operations of a campaign.⁸

In the theorist's view, these functions were "intimately connected with the most important strategical combinations." Properly carried out, they would allow the general-in-chief to concentrate on the supreme direction of military operations, leaving details of execution to competent staff officers. This system would only be effective, however, if no personal ambitions or rivalries were allowed to interfere with the necessary authority of the chief of staff, and if the chief had full knowledge of all business transacted between the general and the individual staff departments.⁹

Jomini was perfectly explicit about the implications of the role he assigned the chief of staff, intending it to ensure an efficient command system. He explained his theory:

...I think it safe to conclude that the best means of organizing the command of an army, in default of a general approved by experience, is--

1st. To give the command to a man of tried bravery, bold in the fight, and of unshaken firmness in danger.

2nd. To assign, as his chief of staff, a man of high ability, of open and faithful character, between whom and the commander there may be perfect harmony. The victor will gain so much glory that he can spare some to the friend who has contributed to his success.... It is true that this double command is more objectionable than an undivided one...; but when there is no great general to lead the armies it is certainly the preferable system.¹⁰

The chief of staff was thus, where necessary, a full participant in a dual command system.

Jomini did not neglect the peace-time role of the general staff. At a permanent establishment in the nation's capital the staff would accumulate all historical, statistical, geographical, topographical, and strategic data relevant to the military purposes of the country. They would also be charged with preparing contingency plans for war. The staff establishment would develop not only the practical aspects of its work, but should also advance its theoretical understanding of the staff role.¹¹

The theories of the Précis de l'Art de la Guerre were accorded great respect in American military circles during the antebellum period.¹² Perhaps equally worthy of respect, in the American context, were Jomini's reservations about the political factors involved in military affairs. Where the spirit of the country was hostile to military institutions, he warned, politicians would court popularity and power by attacking the army--specifically, by denying it adequate financial support. This tendency would be especially marked in those countries which feared any growth in executive power.¹³ For American officers, accustomed to Congressional strictures about military appropriations, the warnings must have seemed particularly relevant.

Jomini was of course a European, deriving his military principles from a European experience. But through the instruction given at West Point to succeeding generations of

cadets his theories were incorporated into an American tradition, and in 1861 became part of the Confederate military inheritance.

As officers of the United States Army, West Point graduates became familiar with the practice, as well as with the theory, of military administration. From the 1820s, at least, an administrative system existed by which the United States directed its military affairs, and experience under this system naturally conditioned Confederate ideas of staff organization and functions.

As Secretary of War from 1817-1825, John Caldwell Calhoun was concerned to bring simplicity, efficiency, and economy to the previously chaotic affairs of the War Department. In a report to Congress he explained the importance of his proposed reorganization:

...no part of our military organization requires more attention in peace than the general staff. It is in every service invariably the last in attaining perfection; and if neglected in peace, when there is leisure, it will be impossible, in the midst of the hurry and bustle of war, to bring it to perfection. It is in peace that it should receive a perfect organization, and that the officers should be trained to method and punctuality, so that, at the commencement of a war, instead of creating anew, nothing more should be necessary than to give it the necessary enlargement.... With a defective staff, we must carry on our military operations under great disadvantages, and be exposed, particularly at the commencement of a war, to great losses, embarrassments, and disasters. 14

Congress must therefore act to provide the appropriate legislation for a "perfect organization" of the War Department; it would then be the "proper sphere" of the executive arm to apply the laws.¹⁵

According to Calhoun, the perfect organization had three interacting parts. Permanent staff bureaus, located in Washington and headed by the adjutant general's department, would direct military administration; the senior general of the army would exercise military command; and the civilian Secretary of War, acting as the President's executive agent in military affairs, would supervise and co-ordinate administration and command.¹⁶ Emory Upton, an important advocate of staff reform some fifty years later, believed that this system would have provided for the United States Army "all the advantages of the most modern staff organization."¹⁷ Calhoun's plan had, however, some significant defects.

When determining the size and composition of the army, Congress had failed to provide supernumerary officers for temporary secondment to staff duty.¹⁸ The rotation system of line and staff duty which Calhoun had originally intended therefore became impracticable, and officers selected for staff work remained with the department to which they had been assigned. Also it chanced that from 1825-1860 department chiefs enjoyed unusually long tenure of their offices; in those thirty-five years there were, for example, only two chief adjutants, two inspectors, two quartermasters, and one commissary.¹⁹ Each department thus added continuity of personnel to the natural continuity of interest derived from its specialized function. As a result the staff departments acquired considerable influence in the military establishment, and sought to aggrandize their role.

That role was an ambiguous one. Originally established to advise a civilian Secretary of War and to relieve him of the burdensome details of military administration, the Washington staff bureaus looked to the Secretary as their proper superior.²⁰ At the same time the bureau officers held rank in a military hierarchy of which the legitimate head was the commanding general. Associated, therefore, with both administration and command, the staff bureaus became embroiled in the running disputes between the Secretary and the commanding general.

The disputes were to become notorious--an "offensive sore," reported one army authority on command problems; bearing "an intimate relation with disasters and maladministration," judged another.²¹ The basis for the disputes lay in the Secretary's claim to give orders directly to army officers, through the agency of the adjutant general's department, rather than through the commanding general. The general understandably rejected this claim, asserting that no civilian Secretary, without military rank, could issue direct orders to men who stood in a strict military hierarchy of superiority and subordination; orders could only be issued through the regular chain of command, which was headed by the general. Calhoun found a temporary solution to the quarrel, by retaining the Secretary's right to give orders while providing that the commander should always be informed of the instructions issued. It proved impossible,

however, to reach any agreed definition of the authority exercised by each man, and controversy over the control of the army raged till the end of the century between the political and military branches of army command.²²

A natural focus for the political-military rivalries were the two principal agents of military administration, the adjutant general and the inspector general. The adjutant general's department had risen from relatively humble origins as a "department on horseback," "without form and void" of permanent organization, to become

...the right arm of the military establishment, the medium of its orders and commands, the custodian of its records and archives, the guardian of its documentary and best evidence, from the muster of the humblest enlisted man to the commission of the commander-in-chief, and the orders on the field of a pitched battle.²³

The inspectors, by contrast, had very different functions, and were responsible for inspecting the state of army training, discipline, supply, administration, and command. There was some doubt whether they ever developed a departmental organization, and Colonel R. B. Marcy, Union inspector general throughout the Civil War, argued that the inspectors had always been viewed "as individual inspectors, assigned to the headquarters of the army for the Department of War for inspection service, and placed upon a footing similar to that of senior aides-de-camp."²⁴ In spite of these differences the inspectors and the adjutants were usually associated with one another in the military mind. The inspectors, however, played a lesser role in command relationships than did the more highly developed adjutant general's department.

Just as it was never found possible to settle the dispute between the Secretary of War and the commanding general, so did the role of the adjutant general's department remain undetermined. In 1829 the adjutant general, Colonel Roger Jones, tried to clarify his department's position, claiming for it a dual role. He distinguished between its administrative and its strictly military duties; for the first, the department was responsible to the Secretary, and for the second, to the army commander, to whom the adjutant general stood in the relationship of chief of staff. Jones waxed lyrical over "the harmony and rationality of this beautiful system," which, he asserted, the general was trying to subvert by interfering with the department in its administrative capacity. What the adjutant general wanted was to establish the greatest possible degree of independence for his own department, which would deal directly with the Secretary of War, in most cases by-passing the commanding general.²⁵

These claims had serious implications, not only at general headquarters in Washington, but throughout the army. A rivalry developed between staff and line officers, with each acknowledging his own chain of command; there was a general lack of the subordination due the commander-in-chief from the staff; and junior commanders in posts across the country found themselves and their staffs subject to directives from the Washington bureaus.²⁶

Upton, with strong opinions derived from his own military experience, outlined the process of staff aggrandizement:

Instead of acknowledging the general-in-chief, under the President, as the military head of the Army, the chiefs of staff corps have magnified the duties of the Secretary of War and have preferred to look to him, not only as the chief of administration, but as their sole and legitimate military superior. Under his protection, they have to a large degree withdrawn the operations of their departments, from the control and even inspection, of the general-in-chief and other military commanders.

This system, it should be borne in mind, is exclusively our own. The chiefs of staff corps continually issue orders to their subordinates, involving large expenditures of money, which orders may or may not be transmitted through the division or department commanders on whose staff their subordinates are serving. In this manner...the chiefs of staff corps...have, contrary to the practice in foreign armies, appropriated to themselves much of the authority of division and department commanders. 27

Clearly Upton shared the opinion of many officers that the staff departments were using their administrative powers to usurp the authority of the line commanders.

Of especial concern was the possibility that the adjutant general's department would ultimately direct the army. This would occur, argued a Senate Military Affairs Committee in 1828, if the office of commander-in-chief were ever abolished. The army would then fall under the control, in military as in administrative matters, of the Secretary of War; but as most Secretaries lacked military background, control would in fact be exercised by their professional advisors, the chiefs of the permanent staff departments. The adjutant general, as the principal administrative officer, whose work brought him into contact with all branches of the army, would become the chief of staff of the army, and the

effective director of all its affairs. Such a development, though it accorded with Jomini's elevated concept of the chief of staff's role, was not acceptable to American critics of the growing staff power. They believed, with Upton, that the adjutant general's department had never risen above "the drudgery of mere routine," and was ill-equipped by either training or experience for a more responsible role. A commanding general was therefore essential to the army, they concluded, for his presumed military skills, and as a necessary check on an ambitious staff.²⁸

A contentious tradition was thus part of the Confederate military inheritance. Southern leaders who had once served in the American army were familiar with the long quarrels of successive Secretaries of War and army commanders, and with the continuing rivalry between staff and line officers. Inevitably their early experience would influence to some degree the administrative system adopted for the Confederate army, and its effectiveness.

One Southern officer in the antebellum army who showed an early interest in staff work was Braxton Bragg, later a full general of the Confederacy, but in the early 1840s a relatively insignificant lieutenant of artillery.²⁹ Bragg was a naturally troublesome officer, susceptible to insult, and critical of those in authority over him. In 1844-1845, through the columns of the Southern Literary Messenger, he launched a sweeping attack on the administration of the American army,³⁰ which was, he considered, an "imperfect and

almost disorganized military establishment."³¹ At fault, Bragg charged, were the Secretary of War, who had exaggerated his true role as the President's adjutant general into a claim to the military command of the army; the commanding general, Winfield Scott, who used his position to destroy his professional rivals and to advance his political ambitions; and the staff departments, collectively stigmatized as "composed of ignorant and useless officers," "fawning sycophant[s]," and "proficients in the subtle art of pleasing in high places."³² Bragg's only heroes were the junior officers of the line, who were discriminated against in rank, pay, and assignments, to the advantage of the staff. Bitterly he complained that the line of the army had become "only an appendage to the Staff, a sort of preparatory school for Staff officers."³³

In this frame of mind Bragg was little inclined to welcome the suggestion of the quartermaster general, that officers should be given alternating tours of duty, with the line and with the staff. Bragg regarded this proposal as insulting to any professional officer, who, he asserted, had not entered the army to become one of the "corn, coal, or pork merchants" of the quartermaster's department. Moreover, in wartime, he argued, the proper place for experienced officers was with their regiments, which should not be deprived of their best leaders to fill out staff departments already too large; promising officers would only be ruined by assignment to staff duty, and in that case it would be best if they never returned to their regiments.³⁴

Obviously Bragg opposed the existing system of a permanent staff, and also rejected its alternative, the rotation of line and staff duties. It was therefore difficult to see where staff personnel was to come from, but Bragg provided no answer, other than to suggest that most quartermaster and some ordnance duties could be performed by civilians.³⁵ His basic proposal was to reduce substantially the size and expense of the existing staff departments. Thus Bragg offered little that was constructive in his articles on military administration. Their significance lies rather in what they reveal of the traditional rivalry between staff and line, expressed in the hostile comments of a future Confederate commander.

The Confederate President had also been involved in the antebellum disputes over administration and command in the old United States Army. As Secretary of War, from 1853-1857, Jefferson Davis had engaged in a series of notorious quarrels with the commanding general, Winfield Scott.³⁶ Though open personal antipathies heightened the disagreement, its origins lay in the old claim that the Secretary could issue orders to army officers on his own authority. This claim Davis exercised, through his adjutant general, Samuel Cooper--Cooper was later to be adjutant general of the Confederacy. Davis maintained that any act of the Secretary of War was "in legal contemplation the act of the President, and as such...to be respected and obeyed"; he cited numerous precedents to show that the War Department was accustomed to giving direct orders

to field commanders, "passing over the Commanding General and all others that stood between"; and asserted that his use of the adjutant general was in no way improper or a violation of his authority.³⁷ Davis also turned to his advantage the fact that Scott's army headquarters were located, not in Washington with the War Department and the staff bureaus, but in New York.³⁸ In a letter to President Pierce the Secretary explained that the inevitable delays in communicating with Scott, together with the general's "persistent disobedience," required that "all orders affecting the army generally should be communicated only by the War Department, through the office of the Adjutant General of the army."³⁹

Scott in his turn charged that the Secretary had arrogated to himself all military power, when it should have been shared with the commanding general; that the Secretary was in effect the chief of staff of the President, and so could not issue orders independently, but only on the President's authority; and that the instrument of Davis's usurpation was the adjutant general, who issued commands, not only to staff officers, but to the whole army, on the authority of the Secretary alone. This situation, Scott fulminated, was the equivalent of having a sergeant-major issue orders to his regiment, in the name of its adjutant, and without reference to the commanding officer.⁴⁰

Scott lost his battle with Davis. Supported by Pierce, and by a rather ambiguous pronouncement by the Attorney General,⁴¹ the Secretary was able to assert his authority

over the War Department, the staff, and the line of the army. From 1855 to the outbreak of the Civil War, the commanding general virtually ceased to exercise command of the army. Davis had triumphed in the struggle for supremacy between the political arm of military government and a recalcitrant general.⁴²

While at the War Department the future Confederate President did not confine his attention to the disputes with Scott, but also demonstrated an interest in administrative reform. Davis considered the existing system, of a permanent staff corps with its own officers and its own hierarchy, inefficient both in its immediate staff duties and in its responsibilities to the army as a whole. A permanent corps was weak, he argued, because it restricted the experience of its officers to staff work, making them unfit for the line command to which their rank might entitle them, or occasion require of them; also, a permanent system did not allow for the correction of any errors in the selection of staff officers. These faults would disappear if officers were assigned only temporarily to staff, and returned to the line when the assignment was over. The army would acquire a large body of officers trained in both fields of duty, and competent in all the responsibilities appropriate to their rank; the staff departments would have the widest possible range for selection of their personnel, and, while retaining those with special aptitude for staff work, would be able to return less useful officers to their regiments. What Davis wanted was to

replace the existing separation of staff and line, with its attendant hostilities, by an integration which would remove "all grounds of controversy and objection to the rank and exercise of command by staff officers."⁴³

In 1856, in his official report to the President and Congress, the Secretary returned to his suggestions for administrative reform, re-iterating his concern over the relationship of staff and line:

It is scarcely to be doubted that the phrase "line of the army" meant the army of the confederation, and included all its officers, whether staff or regimental. But subsequent legislation, creating special corps or departments composed of officers whose duties do not involve the command of troops, has given rise to, and perhaps produced, a necessity for a construction of the phrase "line of the army," which places regimental and staff officers in a relation inconsistent with the general principles of subordination, and which must sometimes seriously embarrass, if not defeat, the great purposes of a campaign. Believing that officers of the army should, with as few exceptions as practicable, have rank effective for purposes of command, I have heretofore presented a proposition for reorganization, which, among other things, was designed to secure generally to officers of the staff that knowledge which can only be acquired by the performance of company and regimental duty. To the views heretofore communicated, in relation to the reorganization of the army, I have only to add that additional experience has but confirmed them. ⁴⁴

But in spite of Davis's earnest advocacy, his proposals were not put into effect till the end of the century.⁴⁵

The Secretary had no more success with his other, less sweeping, recommendations. He wished to add three brigadier generals to the army establishment, so that rank and authority could be given the adjutant general and two inspectors general. Since the duties of the adjutant general in the

American army were those which in other armies would be given to the chief of staff, Davis argued, the adjutant should have "as high rank as any other member on the staff with him, and as the department commanders."⁴⁶ Inspectors also, from the special nature of their duties, required high rank, to ensure respect and co-operation, although Davis apparently believed that their functions would wither away in wartime, especially during active campaigns. Partly for that reason, and partly because of their duties, the Secretary opposed the commission of officers permanently and solely for the inspection service.⁴⁷

Thus by 1861 Jefferson Davis could look back on a varied military experience. He knew the army as a professional officer, and as its civilian director. As a result he was familiar with the problems of high command, and had decided opinions on military administration. Inevitably his inside knowledge of the antebellum military establishment of the United States would inform his role as chief executive and commander-in-chief of the Confederacy.

Clearly the Confederate inheritance was a controversial one. But in spite of the disputes over theory and practice there was a continuing tradition by which the old army carried out its routine duties. That tradition was expressed in the United States Articles of War and the Army Regulations, both adopted virtually entire by the Confederacy; and it also appeared in a military dictionary published in 1861. The dictionary was not exactly free of controversy--its author was Colonel Henry Lee Scott, West Point graduate, son-in-law

and long-time aide-de-camp to General Winfield Scott,⁴⁸ and some of his dictionary definitions favored the general's interpretation of disputed matters. Nevertheless Scott's Military Dictionary became one of the standard reference works of the Civil War period, and was quoted at length in a field manual for staff officers.⁴⁹ It provided a valuable key to both military thought and technical achievement in the United States Army at the outbreak of the Civil War.

According to Colonel Scott, the function of administration was to execute the law; military administration in the United States was headed by the Secretary of War, under the orders of the President; the agents of administration were the staff bureaus of the War Department; and administration was distinct from command. The Dictionary was specific on this last point:

Administration is controlled by the head of an executive department of the government, under the orders of the President, by means of legally appointed administrative agents, with or without rank, while Command, or the discipline, military control, and direction of military service of officers and soldiers can be legally exercised only by the military hierarchy, at the head of which is the constitutional commander-in-chief of the army, navy, and militia, followed by the commander of the army, and other military grades created by Congress.

Scott thus emphasized the dual system of military control which Davis had opposed.⁵⁰

Again according to the Dictionary, all army administration was centralized in the War Department, under the direction of the Secretary and the chiefs of the various staff bureaus.⁵¹

The bureaus were simply the Washington headquarters of the staff departments, which also operated with army detachments and at army posts across the country. Scott distinguished three staff groups serving with a field detachment:

1. The General Staff, consisting of adjutants-general and assistant-adjutants-general; aides-de-camp; inspectors-general and assistant-inspectors-general. The functions of these officers consist not merely in distributing the orders of commanding generals, but also in regulating camps, directing the march of columns, and furnishing to the commanding general all necessary details for the exercise of his authority. Their duties embrace the whole range of the service of the troops, and they are hence properly styled general staff-officers.

2. Staff Corps, or staff departments. These are special corps or departments, whose duties are confined to distinct branches of the service. The engineer corps and topographical engineers are such staff corps. The ordnance, quartermasters', subsistence, medical and pay departments are such staff departments.

3. The Regimental Staff embraces regimental officers and non-commissioned officers charged with functions, within their respective regiments, assimilated to the duties of adjutant-generals, quartermasters and commissaries. Each regiment has a regimental adjutant and a regimental quartermaster, appointed by the colonel from the officers of the regiment. 52

Of the three branches, Scott was most concerned with the general staff, which was the administrative arm not only of the Secretary but also of the commanding generals. The general staff officer, he wrote, required a knowledge of horsemanship and swordsmanship; should be familiar with topography, foreign languages, and military administration; must have studied tactics, and be able to judge military positions. Only then could he "in the tumult of battle, or under critical circumstances, second his general by aiding him intelligently

in warlike operations"; and only then, "stimulate and enlighten the troops by his interpretation of the orders he carries, by his intuitive knowledge of their tactical position, by his coup d'oeil, by the propriety of his counsels, and by the vigor of his impulsions." Little wonder, then, that Scott believed it essential that general staff officers have had experience with troops, and that he opposed the permanent staff system which denied its officers that experience. With Davis, therefore, Scott advocated the alternation of staff and line duties.⁵³

The Dictionary defined the duties of the departments making up the general staff. The adjutant general's department had bureau duties, of making out and issuing orders, receiving reports and returns, carrying on correspondence with administrative and line officers, and keeping the records and papers of the army; the department also had active duties, of setting up camps, checking guard-posts, mustering and inspecting troops, forming parades and lines of battle, taking care of deserters and prisoners, making reconnaissances, and carrying out any other tasks that might be assigned. Some of these duties properly belonged to the inspection service, and the assistant adjutants general were also ex-officio assistant inspectors general. The inspection service reported on the discipline, training, equipment, and supplies of the troops; and on the ability and efficiency of all officers. Together the adjutants and the inspectors performed the administrative duties of the general staff.⁵⁴

The Dictionary did include one other class of officer on the general staff. Aides-de-camp were not members of any staff department, but the confidential assistants of their commander, appointed personally by him, and receiving orders from him alone. Scott, however, considered these officers to be ex-officio assistant adjutants general, and listed them among the general staff.⁵⁵

No mention at all was made of the chief of staff, possibly because there was no legal provision in the American army for such an officer. The omission was strange nevertheless, since the term was one familiar to American officers, and appeared in the field manual on staff. The duties of the chief of staff in the French army were included there, the editor explained, as they provided "valuable and interesting" suggestions of what might be added to the American system. The chief of staff transmitted the orders of the general, himself executed specific field assignments, co-ordinated the work of the various staff departments, and provided his commander with all necessary information about troops, posts, marches and other military operations. "Next to the commander," the manual asserted, "the chief of staff is the man of the whole army who can do the most good if he is capable, and the most harm if deficient in ability." As success could only be achieved through the "zealous and methodical co-operation" of the subordinate staff, the chief must give special attention to the proper division of duties among his officers.⁵⁶

Thus there was no shortage in the military information available to the Confederacy. In the theory taught at West Point, in the practice of the antebellum military establishment, and in the regulation texts of the old army, Southerners could find models for their own system of military administration. On the success with which they adapted existing staff concepts, or developed new ones, would depend in large degree the performance of the Confederate armies.

Notes

¹War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (128 vols.; Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Series IV, I, 96, 106, 114-115, 131.

²Ellsworth Eliot, Jr., West Point in the Confederacy (New York: G. A. Baker and Company, Inc., 1941), p. 324; H. C. Corbin and R. P. Thian, compilers, Legislative History of the General Staff of the Army of the United States, 1775-1901 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1901), p. 52; Francis B. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army...1789-1903 (2 vols.; Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965), II, 176-179; Eliot, West Point in the Confederacy, pp. 9-10.

³For a discussion of Jomini's thought, see Crane Brinton, Gordon A. Craig, and Felix Gilbert, "Jomini," Makers of Modern Strategy: Military Thought from Machiavelli to Hitler, Edward Mead Earle, ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941), pp. 77-92; Michael Howard, "Jomini and the Classical Tradition in Military Thought," The Theory and Practice of War: Essays Presented to Captain B. H. Liddell Hart, Michael Howard, ed. (London: Cassell and Company, Ltd., 1965), pp. 5-20. The effect of Jomini's ideas on American military thought has been examined in David Donald, "Refighting the Civil War," Lincoln Reconsidered: Essays on the Civil War Era (2nd edition; New York: Vintage Books, 1956), pp. 82-102; T. Harry Williams, "The Military Leadership of North and South," Why the North Won the Civil War, David Donald, ed. (New York: Collier Books, 1962), pp. 33-54.

⁴Corbin and Thian, Legislative History, pp. 3, 5.

⁵Antoine Henri Jomini, The Art of War, G. H. Mendell and W. P. Craighill, translators (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Company, 1862), pp. 252-257.

⁶Ibid., pp. 55, 57.

⁷Ibid., pp. 56, 57, 253.

⁸Ibid., p. 253.

⁹Ibid., pp. 254, 256.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 59.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 49-50.

¹²Howard, "Jomini and the Classical Tradition in Military Thought," p. 15, claims that "...Jomini's analysis remained valid as a basis for a manual of staff duties" till 1914.

¹³Jomini, The Art of War, pp. 45-47.

¹⁴L. D. Ingersoll, A History of the War Department of the United States (Washington: Francis B. Mohun, 1879), pp. 90, 91.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 93.

¹⁶Russell F. Weigley, History of the United States Army (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), pp. 134-135; Leonard D. White, The Jeffersonians: A Study in Administrative History, 1801-1829 (New York: The Free Press, 1965), pp. 246-249; Samuel P. Huntington, The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations (New York: Vintage Books, 1957), p. 208.

¹⁷Emory Upton, The Military Policy of the United States (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1917), p. 151.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 151-152, 180.

¹⁹Corbin and Thian, Legislative History, pp. 52, 86, 140, 238.

²⁰Ingersoll, War Department, pp. 26, 93, 105, 106; William H. Carter, The American Army (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1915), p. 171.

²¹Carter, American Army, p. 196; Upton, Military Policy, p. 159.

²²Carter, American Army, p. 185; Upton, Military Policy, pp. 145-147, 155-159; William H. Carter, Creation of the American General Staff, Senate Document No. 119, 68th Cong., 1st Sess., 1924, p. 2; Weigley, United States Army, pp. 135-139; White, The Jeffersonians, pp. 239-245; Leonard D. White, The Jacksonians: A Study in Administrative History, 1829-1861 (New York: The Free Press, 1965), pp. 190-196; T. Harry Williams, Americans at War: The Development of the American Military System (New York: Collier Books, 1962), pp. 51-52.

²³Ingersoll, War Department, pp. 139-140.

²⁴Ibid., pp. 144-145, quoting Colonel Marcy.

²⁵Carter, American Army, pp. 188-192, quoting Roger Jones, "Analysis of the theory of the Staff which surrounds the Secretary of War," January 24, 1829. The adjutant general was not alone in his claims for independence. See Ingersoll, War Department, pp. 314-317, quoting S. V. Benet, "Historical Statement of the Rise and Progress of the Ordnance Department," 1876.

²⁶Upton, Military Policy, p. 155; Carter, American Army, p. 193.

²⁷Upton, Military Policy, p. 159.

²⁸Upton, Military Policy, pp. 155-159, 262-264. See also A. Howard Meneely, The War Department, 1861: A Study in Mobilization and Administration (New York: Columbia University Press, 1928), pp. 25-27. Carter, American Army, pp. 185-186, claims that in the post-Civil War period the adjutant general did become the real commander of the army.

²⁹For a discussion of Bragg at this early stage of his career, see Grady McWhiney, Braxton Bragg and Confederate Defeat: Volume I, Field Command (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), pp. 26-51.

³⁰A Subaltern, "Notes on Our Army," Southern Literary Messenger, X (1844), 86-88, 155-157, 246-251, 283-287, 373-377, 750-753; XI (1845), 39-47, 105-109. McWhiney, Braxton Bragg, pp. 35-36, identifies the author as Bragg.

³¹A Subaltern, "Notes on Our Army," X, 86.

³²Ibid., 247, 251.

³³Ibid., 251.

³⁴Ibid., 250-251.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶For correspondence revealing these quarrels, see Dunbar Rowland, ed., Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist. His Letters, Papers, and Speeches (10 vols.; Jackson, Miss.: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1923), II, 472-525. Also, Weigley, United States Army, pp. 192-194; White, The Jacksonians, pp. 194-196.

³⁷Rowland, Davis, II, 475-476, 497.

³⁸Political hostility towards Presidents Taylor and Pierce had caused Scott to move his headquarters to New York. Weigley, United States Army, p. 193; Meneely, War Department, 1861, pp. 29-30.

³⁹Rowland, Davis, II, 510-511.

⁴⁰Ibid., 473, 478, 482, 516.

⁴¹Ibid., 508, 521.

⁴²Carter, American Army, p. 185; Weigley, United States Army, p. 194.

⁴³Rowland, Davis, II, 399-406, quoting from the Report of the Secretary of War, December 4, 1854.

⁴⁴Ibid., III, 77.

⁴⁵Carter, Creation of the American General Staff, pp. 49-50, and passim.

⁴⁶Rowland, Davis, II, 403.

⁴⁷Ibid., 403-404.

⁴⁸"Henry Lee Scott," Appleton's Cyclopedia of American Biography (7 vols.; New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1888-1900), V, 442.

⁴⁹H. L. Scott, Military Dictionary (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968, c. 1861), passim, and W. P. Craighill, The Army Officer's Pocket Companion: principally designed for Staff Officers in the Field (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1863, c. 1861), passim. Craighill recommended that all officers possess, among other works, a copy of the Military Dictionary. See Officer's Companion, p. 298.

⁵⁰Scott, Military Dictionary, pp. 15-17, 233-235. Huntington, The Soldier and the State, pp. 208-211, argues that the system of dual control had become institutionalized by the 1830s, and formed a co-ordinate pattern of military administration "probably unique in the history of American public administration."

⁵¹Scott, Military Dictionary, p. 234.

⁵²Ibid., pp. 570-571. This definition appeared verbatim in Craighill, Officer's Companion, pp. 47-48. Carter, Creation of the American General Staff, p. 32, agrees that in the 19th century American army the adjutant general's department and the inspector general's department together formed the closest approximation to a General Staff; he points out, however, that the term "General Staff" was often mistakenly applied to all branches of the staff.

⁵³Scott, Military Dictionary, p. 572.

⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 14, 369-370; Revised Regulations for the Army of the United States, 1861 (Philadelphia: J. G. L. Brown, 1861), p. 71.

⁵⁵Scott, Military Dictionary, p. 21.

⁵⁶Craighill, Officer's Companion, pp. 3, 16-17.

PART ONE: CHIEFS OF STAFF

CHAPTER II

Under A. S. Johnston, Beauregard, and Bragg

March 1862-December 1863

The Confederate forces in the West, later to be known as the Army of Tennessee,¹ first assembled at Corinth, Mississippi, in March 1862. With them were Albert Sidney Johnston, P. G. T. Beauregard, and Braxton Bragg. In succession these three men commanded the Army of Tennessee, Johnston till his death on the battlefield at Shiloh on April 6, Beauregard till sickness brought his relief from command in June, and Bragg from June 1862 to December 1863.² All three commanders appointed a chief of staff to help them direct the army, but those chosen by Bragg were to prove the most influential, due to the long service of their general.

When General Bragg took over from Beauregard in the summer of 1862, the office of chief of staff did not legally exist. No provision had been made for such an appointment in the acts passed by Congress in 1861 "for the establishment and organization of a general staff for the Army of the Confederate States of America."³ Nevertheless the problems involved in making an undisciplined mass of enthusiastic volunteers into an effective military instrument led in practice to a considerable extension of the staff beyond that defined by Congress. The most obvious extension was the appointment of chiefs of staff by the generals commanding the field armies

of the Confederacy. Because the office did not legally exist, however, it followed naturally that no definition of the role of chief of staff had been established. This situation was corrected in June 1864, when a new staff act provided for the appointment as chief of staff of "a general officer, who shall be charged, under the direction of the general, with the administration of his army."⁴ But in 1862, there was nothing in the Confederate Army regulations either to justify Bragg in appointing a chief of staff, or to help him determine what the role of that officer should be.

In default of such regulations, two sources presumably influenced Bragg in his view of the chief of staff. The first, and probably the most important, was his experience in the United States Army. At West Point he had been exposed to the Jominian theory of the chief of staff, as sharing in the responsibilities of command. Since 1813 a Congressional act had provided for the appointment of a brigadier general who would combine the office of adjutant and inspector general of the principal army with that of its chief of staff.⁵ But this provision was to be applied at the President's discretion, and during the Mexican War no such appointment was made, either in the army of Major General Zachary Taylor, with which Bragg had served, or in that of Major General Winfield Scott.⁶ For Bragg, the office of chief of staff in the old United States Army therefore existed in theory only.

The second influence on Bragg's view of the chief of staff was his own brief experience in that office in the

Confederate army, under General Albert Sidney Johnston. On March 29, 1862, Bragg had been appointed chief of staff to Johnston in these terms: "Maj. Gen. Braxton Bragg, in addition to his duties as commander of the Second Army Corps, is announced as chief of staff to the commander of the forces."⁷ This appointment was unusual by any standards. According to Confederate regulations there was no such office as chief of staff; and the practice of the United States Army had bitterly opposed any combination of command and staff duties. Yet here the duties of chief of staff were combined with the command of the largest corps in Johnston's army.⁸

The only explanation of Bragg's appointment which takes into account his double duties in line and staff was given by the adjutant general of the army, Colonel Thomas Jordan.⁹ Jordan was a close friend of General Beauregard, at that time second in command of the army, and in a letter to him after the war wrote:

Major General Bragg was nominally appointed chief of the general staff, a position borrowed from continental European armies, although there was no such office provided by law...in the Confederate military organization, which, however, was not regarded as material at the time, as General Bragg was not to be detached or at all diverted from the command of his corps; and in fact his assignment to the position was in order simply to enable him, at some possible exigent moment on the field, to give orders in the name of General Johnston, a power which both the Commander-in-Chief and yourself desired that General Bragg should have in certain exigencies. ¹⁰

Thus as chief of staff Bragg would assume no staff duties, but retain the command of his corps, and be ready to assume

responsibility for the army as a whole. The chief of staff became in effect third in command of the army.¹¹ The unusual device of using a staff appointment to ensure rank effective for purposes of command was probably made necessary by the fact that Bragg would otherwise be out-ranked by the less experienced Major General Leonidas Polk.¹²

Jordan's explanation of the extraordinary situation in which Bragg was both chief of staff and commander of a corps of 14,000 men is supported by Bragg's record as chief of staff. Throughout March 1862, detachments of men were assembling at Corinth, Mississippi, with the intention of combining under the command of General Johnston. Bragg described these forces as "an heterogeneous mass, in which there was more enthusiasm than discipline, more capacity than knowledge, and more valor than instruction." He estimated their number as 40,000, and wrote of the task of organizing them, especially in regard to providing arms and ammunition, as "simply appalling." In this Bragg was describing the problems facing Johnston as commander in chief.¹³ They did not face Bragg as chief of staff until after his appointment on March 29. Any contribution that he made as chief of staff to the organization of the army at Corinth must therefore have occurred between March 29 and the preliminary movements on April 3 which culminated in the Battle of Shiloh on the 6th and 7th. The chiefs of the various staff departments were required to meet daily with Bragg, but there is little evidence, either in the Official Records or in the

record book kept at army headquarters in Corinth, that Bragg played an active staff role.¹⁴ He did help to organize Johnston's army before it moved against the Federal forces at Shiloh, but he did so, not as chief of staff, but in his capacity as a senior line commander.¹⁵ Further, although Bragg remained nominally chief of staff until May 6, 1862,¹⁶ there is no mention of him in that role in army records. The relative slightness of the evidence for Bragg's performance as chief of staff in an administrative role therefore supports Jordan's contention that the appointment was nominal, ensuring that Bragg ranked next to Johnston and Beauregard, while retaining as his primary responsibility the command of his corps.

Bragg's personal experience as chief of staff was thus highly unusual. It was significant as the first indication that the role of chief of staff might be something more than that of an administrative officer without relation to the responsibilities of command. This idea was to reappear later, both in the Army of Tennessee and in the Congressional Committee on Military Affairs at Richmond.

But Bragg's experience in the spring of 1862 was significant for more than his specific role as chief of staff. He had gone to Corinth with a reputation for organizing ability, and from March 4 worked hard to bring some order into the gathering army.¹⁷ Bragg, at that time a major general with a line command and no staff appointment, was involved in problems of organization and supply which could have been regarded as

the responsibility of a chief of staff. In this work he showed the concern and talent for administrative detail which later characterized him as commander of the Army of Tennessee, and so influenced the development of the staff system in that army. The effect of Bragg's personal interest in staff work was to be most marked in his relations with his chiefs of staff.

On assuming command of the Western Department and its principal army, Bragg reappointed as chief of staff the recently promoted Brigadier General Thomas Jordan, who had served under Beauregard as joint chief of staff and adjutant general.¹⁸ The reason for Jordan's appointment was almost certainly the practical one of preserving staff continuity as far as possible. Also, Beauregard had offered Bragg the use of his staff.¹⁹ The choice of Jordan indicated the qualifications which Bragg considered desirable in a chief of staff.

In all, the general appointed four chiefs of staff in his eighteen months as commander of the Army of Tennessee.²⁰ These were Thomas Jordan, George William Brent, Johnson K. Duncan, and William Whann Mackall. Jordan, Duncan, and Mackall were all graduates of West Point, Mackall in the class of '37, of which Bragg had also been a member. Jordan and Mackall had fought in the Mexican War, and had records which included both line and staff service. Duncan had been too young for the Mexican War, and in his service had experienced only line command. All three were brigadiers when appointed as chief of staff. At the time of their appointment Jordan

was forty-three years old, Duncan thirty-five, and Mackall forty-six. Bragg, himself a professional soldier, obviously preferred West Point training, professional field experience, and general officer rank in his chiefs of staff.²¹

These preferences are confirmed by a brief consideration of two men whom Bragg wished to appoint, without succeeding in so doing. Although they were not West Pointers, both men had some military background, experience, and the necessary rank. Major General Richard Taylor was the son of Zachary Taylor, and had campaigned with his father in Mexico. In August 1862 Bragg requested his assignment to the Army of Tennessee as chief of staff, an ambitious request, in view of Taylor's rank, and one which was not granted.²² His other attempt was to secure the services of Brigadier General James E. Slaughter, who had attended Virginia Military Institute, fought in Mexico, and served as inspector general on the staffs of Bragg and A. S. Johnston in 1861-1862. But in early 1863, when Bragg made his offer, Slaughter was ill and unable to accept the appointment.²³

The only apparent exception in Bragg's choice of acceptable chiefs of staff was Lieutenant Colonel Brent. A lawyer in civil life, with no military background, Brent became a line officer of the 17th Virginia Regiment in 1861, and was later selected for staff work by Beauregard, who obviously thought highly of him. Beauregard made Brent acting chief of staff in May 1862, in Jordan's temporary absence, and considered him "an intelligent, gallant, and meritorious officer."²⁴

Thus Brent had some military experience, but he lacked the other professional qualifications, including general officer's rank. Bragg did use him as chief of staff, but only in a temporary capacity, when the office was vacant. The temporary nature of the assignment indicated that Bragg still held to his customary requirements.

Through their service records Bragg's chiefs of staff revealed both their own interpretation of their role, and the interpretation of their commander. These records make it possible to determine whether there was any clarification or evolution of staff practice.

On July 17, 1862, Brigadier General Thomas Jordan was announced in general orders as chief of staff. Other staff appointments were also made, but, significantly, none of an adjutant general. The duties of that office were carried out by Jordan, who continued to act as he had done under Beauregard in May 1862, when he had been both chief of staff and adjutant general. He had then issued only two orders in the first capacity, compared with eleven in the second. Of the thirty-three communications sent out over Jordan's signature as chief of staff to Bragg, twenty-six fell into the category of general orders, special orders, and circulars, and were properly the responsibility of the adjutant general's department. Of the incoming correspondence, only three messages were addressed to Jordan as chief of staff. It seems clear that in spite of his impressive title Jordan was primarily concerned with the routine administrative duties of an adjutant general.²⁵

It is true that Jordan was discontented under Bragg, but this was not due to any feeling of frustration in his role as chief of staff. He claimed that he had only accepted the appointment with Bragg because he knew that Beauregard would wish it, and because he felt it his duty to the Confederate cause to do so. Jordan maintained that some of his fellow staff officers were incompetent, and feared for their effect on the army's future. He wrote of the chief quartermaster, Lieutenant Colonel L. W. O'Bannon, that he was "a complete obstruction, who might do very well to administer in peace times the duties of a post quartermaster at a two company post on the Texas frontier," and of inspector general J. E. Slaughter that he "means well, but has neither the education nor natural ability for the important place he holds." Jordan represented Bragg's staff changes as a conspiracy to get rid of those officers who had served under Beauregard, and revealed that he was himself involved in the factional disputes. This was hardly the action of a responsible chief of staff, but it provided the key to the basic reason for Jordan's discontent. He wished to serve Beauregard, not Bragg, and as early as July 7, within a week of his unofficial appointment by Bragg, Jordan was writing to his former commander that he would join him as soon as Beauregard was given another assignment. When Jordan did leave the Army of Tennessee, it was to become chief of staff in Beauregard's new South Carolina department. In none of this is there any indication of dissatisfaction on Jordan's part that his role as Bragg's chief of staff was little different from that of an adjutant general.²⁶

Jordan's limited role reflected either Bragg's opinion of the officer, or his interpretation of the office. In either case, the general proposed to leave on his first major campaign without his chief of staff. In late August 1862 the Army of Tennessee was preparing to invade Kentucky, and the orders directing the organization and the movements of the Army also outlined Jordan's duties. The chief of staff was to stay behind at army headquarters in Chattanooga, Tennessee, to supervise the clerks and the records, and to forward any necessary papers.²⁷ Certainly Jordan had complained to Beauregard on August 14 that he was suffering from rheumatism, and on August 17 had been assigned to the duty of the supervision and reorganization of exchanged prisoners of war at Jackson, Mississippi.²⁸ Even so, it was strange that on the 25th Bragg should choose to dispense with the immediate services of his chief of staff. Apparently Bragg regarded Jordan as only one among his several administrative officers, and expected to replace him for campaign purposes with an assistant adjutant general.²⁹

During Jordan's tenure of the office, therefore, from the reorganization of the Army of Tennessee at Tupelo to its departure from Chattanooga on the Kentucky campaign, the role of Bragg's chief of staff can hardly be distinguished from that of an adjutant general.

From late August till October 1, 1862, Bragg conducted his campaign in Kentucky without a chief of staff. He found that he needed assistance, however, and on October 2 appointed Lieutenant Colonel George William Brent as his principal staff

officer. Brent had been serving temporarily with the staff of General E. Kirby Smith, commanding the Army of Kentucky. Brent's new position with Bragg was somewhat ambiguous; special orders announced him as "Chief of the Staff of the Commanding General--in the Dept. of Orders," while Brent in his diary described himself as "chief of orders," an adjutant's title. But as the orders he issued in Bragg's name are signed by Brent as "Chief of Staff and Assistant Adjutant General," he was presumably recognized as Bragg's new chief of staff.³⁰ His appointment continued the close association of the roles of chief of staff and adjutant general.

Brent's experience as a staff officer had been varied. He had served in the departments of adjutant general, inspector general, and judge advocate, and under Beauregard had been acting chief of staff.³¹ Of his appointment by Bragg, however, Brent recorded that he felt "very distrustful of my experience and ability to discharge the duties of the position. Gen. Bragg is said to be difficult to please. He told me, that he was exacting 'but tried to be just.'"³² Uncertain in his new position, Brent was unlikely to see his role as chief of staff and assistant adjutant general as in any way different from the administrative assignment carried out by Jordan.

The detailed diary kept by Brent from October 1862 to December 1863 provides a valuable record of his service on Bragg's staff in the Army of Tennessee. The diary is principally a day-to-day account of the business of the Army, and deals with the receipt of information, the issue of orders,

and the making of official reports and returns. The paperwork was obviously demanding, and at one point Brent described his office as one in which "Court Martial orders and records float about in endless prolixity."³³ At no point is there any indication that Brent was expected to coordinate the work of the various staff departments, or that he was asked to assist in implementing tactical or strategic decisions. The official activities recorded in the diary are those of the adjutant general's department, and Brent seems in no way disappointed with his role. Had he been so, he could probably have returned to the staff of Beauregard, who was asking the War Department for him. Brent first heard of Beauregard's request on November 21, the day after he had been replaced as chief of staff, but Brent's diary makes no mention of any wish for his own transfer.³⁴

Although Bragg considered Brent only a temporary chief of staff, he was fully satisfied with his officer's work in the Army of Tennessee. When Brent left the Army briefly in the summer of 1863, Bragg wrote of his "valuable services," saying that "with great regret the commanding general dissolves his official connection with Colonel Brent, who by his intelligence, diligence, and urbanity, has won the confidence of his superiors and the respect of all."³⁵ In 1864, when Bragg was no longer a field commander but serving as advisor to Jefferson Davis, Brent went to Richmond to act on Bragg's staff.³⁶ All evidence available supports the view that Bragg considered Brent a valuable staff officer, whether he was acting as temporary

chief of staff or as adjutant general. There was no difference in practice between his roles in either position; both fitted the administrative duties of adjutant general, meeting the demands which Bragg made indiscriminately of his chief of staff and of his adjutant general's department.

On November 20, 1862, Brigadier General Johnson K. Duncan was announced as chief of staff in the Army of Tennessee. His duties were defined as "general, extending to all the different departments of the service," and Bragg later described his position as "second only in importance to that of commander-in-chief of an army."³⁷ Duncan's appointment followed a request by President Davis, made in mid-October, that Bragg should nominate a brigadier general as adjutant and inspector general of his army.³⁸ No clear connection can be shown between the request and the appointment, but, as Duncan was the only brigadier assigned to Bragg's staff at that time, the connection does seem probable. In that case Duncan's appointment again reflected the association in Bragg's mind of the chief of staff with the adjutant and/or inspector general. But Bragg apparently intended the duties of the chief of staff to be more extensive than previously, with a supervisory and coordinating character reaching beyond the adjutant and inspector general's department. Bragg also implied a close and important relationship between the commander and his chief of staff, reminiscent of his own experience in that office.

An exceptional feature of Duncan's record prohibits any study of a possible change in Bragg's concept of the chief of

staff. Five days before the chief's appointment, Bragg had been unable to send Duncan to Mobile, where a competent officer was desperately needed, because he was "very ill." That this was no exaggeration became evident on December 18, 1862, when Duncan died "after a painful and protracted illness."³⁹ There is nothing in the Official Records to indicate that he had ever been able to enter upon his staff duties. In selecting Duncan, Bragg might have intended a more extensive role for his chief of staff, but he could hardly have considered that officer an essential element in the effective operation of his army. Such duties as might have been assigned to Duncan were carried out either by Bragg himself or by Brent, then assistant adjutant general. No new chief of staff was appointed until April 1863.

Until the end of 1862, therefore, it appears that neither in the Confederate army regulations nor in the experience of the Army of Tennessee was there any real departure from the old United States Army concept of the chief of staff as an administrative officer who might on occasion be appointed to that position, holding it conjointly with that of adjutant and/or inspector general. This view was apparently shared by Bragg, as commanding general, and by Jordan and Brent, as his two principal staff officers.

By 1863, however, certain changes were beginning to take place in the official concept of staff functions. According to Jordan, Bragg's own experience as chief of staff had been related to command rather than to administrative function,

while Bragg had written of Duncan that he was second in importance only to himself. This idea of the chief of staff as something more than an adjutant general was debated in Richmond in the spring of 1863.

Reorganization of the Confederate staff system had begun to interest the Confederate Congress, and one of its most vociferous proponents was Senator Louis Trezevant Wigfall of Texas. One of Wigfall's ideas, known to be under discussion in 1863, was related to the role of chief of staff, and appeared in a letter he wrote to General Joseph E. Johnston, concerning the possible replacement of Bragg as commander of the Army of Tennessee by Johnston. In considering what might be done to reorganize that Army after the defeat of Murfreesboro, Wigfall wrote: "If you take command of that Army and he [Bragg] remains with it as second in command he will I judge be entrusted with its administration as Chief of Staff, practically if not by name."⁴⁰ The Senator's proposal had important implications, for it associated the second in command of the army with its chief of staff, and defined the duties of the chief of staff as those of the administration of the army as a whole. The chief of staff was thereby elevated from his accepted position within the adjutant general's department, to one in which he stood at the head of administration, outside any one department, providing the link between army organization and army command. In such a position he ceased to be merely a channel for the communication of orders, and became in addition an advisor in reaching decisions and an assistant in carrying them out.

It is impossible to say whether Bragg was aware of these ideas of the role of the chief of staff, as they were being debated in Richmond. Certainly he was interested in staff reform. On January 8, 1863, he tried to establish a stable staff organization in the subordinate commands of the Army of Tennessee, by ordering:

General officers, on being relieved, will direct all general staff officers serving with them to report immediately to their successors. In no case will they remove them from their positions without special authority. The aides of a general are the only exceptions to this rule. ⁴¹

On January 13 he prohibited the use of cadets on the staff of general officers, describing them as "boys and students, to be taught, not teachers of men, their superiors."⁴² He applied for, and on April 2 received, permission to delegate duties of routine to an "intelligent staff officer of rank."⁴³ But these implied changes in staff practice cast no specific light on Bragg's ideas of the functions of chief of staff. Whether there was any change in that respect can only be determined by examining the record of Bragg's last chief of staff, appointed in April 1863.⁴⁴

Brigadier General William Whann Mackall was a very different man from Jordan, to whom service in the Army of Tennessee was only an interlude, and from Brent, whose diary suggested an awareness of his non-professional background. Well thought of by the principal Confederate generals, Mackall was able to write in October 1862 that "every Genl. in the Conf. States, Lee, the two Johnstons, Beauregard and Bragg

have either sought unasked my promotion or my services or both, and each in turn before I had sought or communicated with them."⁴⁵ Mackall's professional advancement had been frustrated in the early years of the Civil War, partly by the antagonism of President Davis,⁴⁶ and partly by a series of unlucky assignments. Instead of going with Albert Sidney Johnston to Corinth and becoming adjutant general of the combined armies, Mackall went to take command in an impossible situation at Madrid Bend, on the Mississippi, and was obliged to surrender his entire force. After his exchange as a prisoner of war, he lost the chance of taking a brigade command in Bragg's army just before the Battle of Murfreesboro, and was sent instead to the relatively unimportant District of the Gulf.⁴⁷ Chance had thus conspired to deprive Mackall of the promotion to which his training, his record, and the estimation of his professional colleagues seemed to entitle him, leaving him available in 1863 for appointment as chief of staff. As a man of considerable professional reputation, who was at the same time a personal friend of Bragg's immediate superior, General J. E. Johnston, and of Bragg himself,⁴⁸ Mackall was much more likely to play an authoritative role as chief of staff in the Army of Tennessee than had been either Jordan or Brent.

Mackall's appointment was announced in general orders on April 17, 1863.⁴⁹ Brent noted in his diary, "I have seen him, and judge him to be a plain straightforward earnest officer."⁵⁰ The diary then broke off, and was not resumed

till August. Brent explained the gap as due first to sickness and then to his transfer to Virginia, which took place on May 8. There is no indication of animosity against Mackall, either then or later. Brent's absence from the Army of Tennessee from May to late July is significant, therefore, not because of any staff dissension it might have indicated, but because a new adjutant general was appointed in Brent's place. The new officer was Lieutenant Colonel Harvey W. Walter, whose principal staff experience had been as judge advocate.⁵¹

For the first time in Bragg's army the offices of chief of staff and adjutant general were actively held by two different men, and for the first time the functions of these offices were clearly separated. Mackall was the channel of communication between Bragg and his immediate subordinates, especially on matters relating to detached commands, reconnaissance, and the execution of orders for troop movements. Walter dealt almost exclusively with the issue of general and special orders.⁵² Thus began a division of the role previously played by a joint chief of staff and adjutant general. Moreover, there was an extension of the role of chief of staff. In becoming the means whereby the commander directed his subordinates, the chief of staff was involved, to a greater degree than ever before, in tactical matters, and possibly also in strategy.

For example, from June 26 to July 7, 1863, the Army of Tennessee was engaged in the movement of its forces from Tullahoma to Chattanooga. A detailed record of the movement

was kept by Lieutenant W. B. Richmond, aide-de-camp to Lieutenant General Leonidas Polk, commander of one of Bragg's army corps.⁵³ Richmond's notes show that Mackall issued ten of the thirteen orders to Polk necessary for the successful execution of the movement; that he attended the conference held on June 29 by Bragg and his two corps commanders, Polk and Lieutenant General William J. Hardee, to determine whether to halt and give battle to the approaching enemy; and that he did not hesitate to reprimand Polk for inefficiency in provisioning his men and for abandoning his guns. Mackall's part in directing and coordinating the movement was obviously considerable.

The new division of the duties of chief of staff and adjutant general may have been intended by Bragg. He was responsible for the two appointments, and it is unlikely that he saw the relatively inexperienced Walter as more than an adjutant general concerned with the routine paperwork of administration. General Johnston, at this time Bragg's immediate superior, believed on the other hand that for any effective organization of the Army of Tennessee Mackall was "absolutely necessary."⁵⁴ Mackall's role was all the more important as Bragg was unwell in the summer of 1863, enfeebled to the point where Hardee considered his commander's condition as endangering the army.⁵⁵ But whether Bragg or Mackall, or both, had been responsible for the change in staff organization, it proved only temporary.

On July 26 Brent was re-assigned to the Army of Tennessee, and was appointed adjutant general, while Walter resumed his position as judge advocate.⁵⁶ Brent was accustomed to Bragg's earlier practice of restricting the duties of a single chief of staff and adjutant general to the administrative functions of the adjutant general's department. Mackall, however, saw his own role differently. "...You have been pleased to put me into a position," he wrote to Bragg, "by which I am brought day by day in observation of your staff, and to a certain extent separating you from them."⁵⁷ Thus Mackall as chief of staff stood outside any one department, acted as intermediary between command and staff, and relieved Bragg of at least some of his administrative responsibilities. Brent and Mackall now had to work together, at a time when increasing strain was being put upon the staff system by the events which culminated in the Battle of Chickamauga on September 19-20.

There is no suggestion of any personal conflict between the two men. When Mackall resigned his position Brent noted in his diary, "I part with him with great regret--an invaluable and faithful officer, a courteous soldier, an affable gentleman and a true friend."⁵⁸ Mackall for his part reported of Brent: "He was a most excellent and intelligent officer and we had served without anything unpleasant ever occurring."⁵⁹ The trouble, as far as Mackall was concerned, lay with Bragg.

The distinction between the duties of chief of staff and adjutant general, so clearly reflected in the staff correspondence of May, June, and July, disappeared after

Brent's return. Virtually all the outgoing communications from Bragg's headquarters, of whatever nature, were sent by the adjutant general.⁶⁰ This change in work distribution was already apparent in August, and was accentuated during the Chickamauga campaign. There was little time to spare for paper work, and it was not unreasonable that in these circumstances the burden of office administration should fall heavily on Brent. But the increasing weight of the adjutant general's work probably resulted less from any conscious re-allocation of staff duties than from Bragg's empiric use of whatever staff agency was at hand to carry out his orders. Mackall saw this as part of "Bragg's insane desire to do patchwork"⁶¹ --to involve himself in administrative details which were properly beneath the attention of a commanding general and should have been delegated to one of his staff. The earlier division of administrative responsibilities had given way to a situation in which certain duties might be carried out by the commander, the chief of staff, or the adjutant general, as the needs of the moment appeared to dictate.

To Mackall's dissatisfaction with this situation was added a growing distrust of Bragg as a commander. The chief of staff found his general obstinate, irrational, and without good judgment. To his wife Mackall confided his opinions of Bragg:

Between ourselves he has more than once issued orders for the movement of the Army--would scarce listen to my objections and yet I have gone to bed perfectly satisfied that the movement would never be made and had the orders revoked before morning.

If he don't want news to be true, he will listen to nothing--'It can't be so is his reasoning' and if it prove true he is not prepared to meet it.... I tell you frankly I am afraid of his Generalship and would think the cause of our country far better placed in other hands... he has not genius...he will fail in our hour of need.

His mind is not fertile, nor is his judgement good.⁶²

Mackall doubted his ability to exert any consistent influence on such a person. He thus felt frustrated both as an administrative chief and as an assistant on policy or tactics. On October 10 he concluded: "I am satisfied that Bragg cannot usefully command this army and that I can do no good for if Mr. D[avis] sustains him he will be too elated to listen to reason." Finally, convinced that as chief of staff to Bragg he had no useful role to play, Mackall asked to be relieved of his assignment.⁶³

The order relieving Mackall was issued on October 16, 1863. In it Bragg was generous with his praise of the chief of staff:

With a grateful sense of the distinguished services rendered by this accomplished officer in the high position he has filled, the commanding general tenders him his cordial thanks and wishes him all success and happiness in his future career.

The general and the army will long feel the sacrifice made in sparing the services of one so distinguished for capacity, professional acquirements, and urbanity.⁶⁴

By contrast, when the possibility arose in July 1864 that Mackall might once more find himself chief of staff to Bragg, he refused ever to serve Bragg again, preferring instead to give up his staff position.⁶⁵

The relations between Bragg and the man who was to be his last chief of staff thus underwent a significant change between April and October 1863. The division of staff duties made in the earlier months indicated a clarification and extension of the role of chief of staff which apparently satisfied both Bragg and Mackall. The later pressures of the Chickamauga campaign not only upset this division, but also raised in Mackall's mind the more serious question of Bragg's fitness for command. The combination of these factors caused Mackall's resignation.

Insofar as the final clash between the two men was over staff matters, it resulted from their differing interpretations of the role of chief of staff. Mackall's was the more precise. To him, the chief of staff should direct the administration of the army, relieve the commander in chief of detail, and assist in the planning and execution of field operations. To Bragg, however, the chief of staff remained only one of a group of staff officers, among whom administrative duties would be divided as the commander at any particular time saw fit. The two interpretations indicated that by October 1863 there was still no agreed definition of the role of the chief of staff. No appointment was made in Mackall's place, and Bragg reverted to his former practice, using Brent in the double role of chief of staff and adjutant general up until Bragg's own removal from command in December 1863.

In practice, then, the lack of any formal Confederate provision for a chief of staff meant that the appointment and the role of that officer depended completely on his commanding general. In the spring of 1862, under Generals A. S. Johnston and Beauregard, the chief of staff was part of the structure of army command, a role according with Jominian theory and European experience. Under General Bragg, however, from June 1862 to December 1863, the chief of staff was usually associated with the administrative office and functions of the adjutant general, following the ideas, though not the formal practice, of the old United States Army. Whatever Bragg's intentions, he proved unwilling to share the routine responsibilities of command with his senior staff officer, and was even reluctant to delegate the details of administration. The general preferred, in short, to act as his own chief staff officer,⁶⁶ retaining control of the army in his own hands as far as possible. Till late 1863, therefore, the role of chief of staff in the Army of Tennessee remained essentially undeveloped.

Notes

¹War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (128 vols.; Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Series I, XX, pt. 2, 411 (cited hereafter as OR, with all references to Series I, unless otherwise indicated). For the sake of simplicity the Western army will be called the Army of Tennessee throughout, even though that title was not formally adopted till November 20, 1862.

²The military background of this staff study can be followed in Stanley F. Horn, The Army of Tennessee (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953). For a brief outline, see Appendix.

³OR, Series IV, I, 114-115, 163-164.

⁴Ibid., III, 498.

⁵H. C. Corbin and R. P. Thian, compilers, Legislative History of the General Staff of the Army of the United States, 1775-1901 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1901), p. 72.

⁶The highest ranking staff officers were colonels, serving as inspectors. See the Mexican War Reports of Generals Taylor and Scott, Senate Executive Document No. I, 30th Cong., 1st Sess., 1847, pp. 132ff.; and Justin H. Smith, The War with Mexico (2 vols.; Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1963), II, 366.

⁷OR, X, pt. 2, 371.

⁸Ibid., 382.

⁹Cf. J. Stoddard Johnston, in William Preston Johnston, The Life of General Albert Sidney Johnston (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1879), p. 546; and David Urquhart to P. G. T. Beauregard, August 14, 1878, Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard Papers, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

¹⁰Thomas Jordan, "Recollections of General Beauregard's Service in West Tennessee in the Spring of 1862," Southern Historical Society Papers, VIII (1880), 409. The same explanation appears in almost identical wording in Alfred Roman, Military Operations of General Beauregard (2 vols.; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1883), I, 268-269. The explanation was thus presumably confirmed by Beauregard, who was the real author of Roman's work. See T. Harry Williams, P. G. T. Beauregard: Napoleon in Gray (New York: Collier Books, 1962), pp. 369-386.

¹¹The term, "third in command," was used by a former staff captain to describe Bragg's position. J. B. Cumming, "War Recollections," (typescript in the Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill), p. 6.

¹²Polk had graduated from West Point in 1827, but resigned from the Army almost immediately afterwards. He took orders and became an Episcopal bishop, remaining in the Church till 1861. He was then commissioned in the Confederate service with the rank of major general. His practical military experience was thus much inferior to that of Bragg. Ezra J. Warner, Generals in Gray (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1959), pp. 242-243.

¹³Braxton Bragg, quoted in Johnston, Albert Sidney Johnston, pp. 548-549.

¹⁴OR, X, pt. 2, 373, 379, 387; Bragg-Beauregard Headquarters Book, Civil War Papers, Louisiana Historical Association Collection, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, New Orleans; Circular, Corinth, Miss., March 31, 1862, ibid.

¹⁵Charles P. Roland, Albert Sidney Johnston: Soldier of Three Republics (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1964), pp. 314-315; Grady McWhiney, Braxton Bragg and Confederate Defeat: Volume I, Field Command (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), pp. 212-216.

¹⁶OR, X, pt. 2, 500.

¹⁷Ibid., VII, 258, 920-921; X, pt. 2, 297-298, 301. See also McWhiney, Braxton Bragg, pp. 202-218.

¹⁸OR, XVII, pt. 2, 648; X, pt. 2, 500.

¹⁹Ibid., XVII, pt. 2, 640.

²⁰Ibid., 648; XX, pt. 2, 411; XXIII, pt. 2, 777; George William Brent, Compiled Service Records of Confederate General and Staff Officers and Nonregimental Enlisted Men, Record Group 109, War Department Collection of Confederate Records, National Archives, Washington, D. C. (cited hereafter as CSR).

²¹Biographical information about staff officers is usually difficult to obtain, and must be pieced together from many sources. Useful, and readily obtainable, are: Mark M. Boatner, III, Civil War Dictionary (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1959); Ellsworth Eliot, Jr., West Point in the Confederacy (New York: G. A. Baker and Company, Inc., 1941); Ezra J. Warner, Generals in Gray. The official List of Staff Officers of the Confederate States Army, 1861-1865 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1891) provides a valuable record of the assignments of each staff officer, but these records are not always complete.

²²Richard Taylor, Destruction and Reconstruction: Personal Experiences of the Late War (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1900), p. 99.

²³OR, VII, 920-921; X, pt. 2, 373; A. J. Foard to Bragg, Mobile, Ala., January 31, 1863, Braxton Bragg Papers, William P. Palmer Collection, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio.

²⁴Although Brent had no professional military qualifications for high rank in the army, his civilian career showed evidence of ability and distinction. He graduated from the University of Virginia in 1842, practised law, was a member of the Virginia Senate, a representative in the state constitutional convention of 1860-1861, and a signatory of the ordinance of secession. When the Civil War broke out he was forty years old. George Brown Goode, Virginia Cousins (Richmond, Va.: J. W. Randolph and English, 1887), pp. 239-240; George William Brent, S. Bassett French Biographical Sketches, Virginia State Library, Richmond. See also OR, X, pt. 2, 531, 601-602.

²⁵Ibid., XVII, pt. 2, 648; X, pt. 2, 497-531; XVI, pt. 2, 742-763; XVII, pt. 2, 635-703. General orders, special orders, and circulars are addressed to the army as a whole, or to units or individuals within the army. As official orders, following a prescribed form, they were usually issued by the adjutant general's department. They were not personal communications between the general and his subordinates.

²⁶Jordan's opinions are to be found in three letters written by him to Beauregard, on July 7, August 7, and August 14, 1862; OR, XVII, pt. 2, 640-642, 669-671, 679-680. His new assignment appears in XIV, 609.

²⁷Ibid., XVI, pt. 2, 780.

²⁸Ibid., 762-763.

²⁹The organization of staff for the Kentucky campaign in fact included three assistant adjutants general. Ibid., 780.

³⁰Special Orders No. 8, Lexington[Ky.] , October 2, 1862, Brent, CSR; George William Brent Diary, October 2, 1862, Bragg Papers [the diary's author is identified in June I. Gow, "The Johnston and Brent Diaries: A Problem of Authorship," Civil War History, XIV (1968), 46-50] ; OR, XVI, pt. 2, 874-875, 906-907.

³¹Ibid., X, pt. 2, 601-602; XVII, pt. 2, 658; XVI, pt. 2, 758.

³²Brent Diary, October 2, 1862.

³³Ibid., December 24, 1862.

³⁴Ibid., November 20, November 21, December 14, 1862.

³⁵OR, XXIII, pt. 2, 824-825.

³⁶W. W. Mackall to Mrs. Mackall, Dalton [Ga.], March 4, 1864, William Whann Mackall Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

³⁷OR, XX, pt. 2, 411, 457.

³⁸Ibid., XVI, pt. 2, 952, 958.

³⁹Ibid., XX, pt. 2, 403, 411. Boatner suggests that Duncan died of typhoid fever; Civil War Dictionary, p. 251.

⁴⁰Louis T. Wigfall to J. E. Johnston, Richmond [Va.] , February 28, 1863, Joseph Eggleston Johnston Papers, Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

⁴¹OR, XX, pt. 2, 490.

⁴²Ibid., 496.

⁴³Samuel Cooper to Bragg, Richmond [Va.] , April 2, 1863, Johnston Papers.

⁴⁴OR, XXIII, pt. 2, 777.

⁴⁵Mackall to Mrs. Mackall, Richmond [Va.], October, 1862], Mackall Papers.

⁴⁶Ibid.; G. Moxley Sorrell, Recollections of a Confederate Staff Officer (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1905), p. 202.

⁴⁷Roman, Beauregard, I, 269n.; OR, VIII, 804; XVI, pt. 2, 967-968; XX, pt. 2, 405.

⁴⁸Mackall had helped to defend Bragg from charges of incompetence following the Battle of Murfreesboro. See Bragg to Mackall, Tullahoma [Tenn.] , February 14, 1863, Mackall Papers.

⁴⁹OR, XXIII, pt. 2, 777.

⁵⁰Brent Diary, April 17, 1863.

⁵¹OR, XXIII, pt. 2, 825.

⁵²These conclusions were reached by analysis of the communications recorded in the Official Records as issued and received by Mackall and Walter during the period that they were working together. OR, XXIII, pt. 2, 825-933.

⁵³Ibid., pt. 1, 618-627.

⁵⁴Johnston to Mackall, Canton [Miss.], June 7, 1863, Mackall Papers.

⁵⁵OR, XXIII, pt. 1, 623.

⁵⁶Ibid., pt. 2, 933.

⁵⁷Endorsement by Mackall on letter from Brent, [Chattanooga, Tenn.] August 23, 1863, Kinloch Falconer, CSR.

⁵⁸Brent Diary, October 16, 1863.

⁵⁹Mackall to Mrs. Mackall, Dalton [Ga.], March 4, 1864, Mackall Papers.

⁶⁰OR, XXIII, pt. 2, and XXX, pt. 4. In the Confederate correspondence of this period, seventy-six out of eighty-two communications were issued by Brent. Only thirty-five belonged to the category of general and special orders, and circulars.

⁶¹Mackall to Mrs. Mackall, Mission Ridge [Tenn.] ,
October 3, 1863, Mackall Papers.

⁶²Mackall to Mrs. Mackall, Mission Ridge [Tenn.] ,
September 29, 1863, ibid.

⁶³Mackall to Mrs. Mackall, Mission Ridge [Tenn.] ,
October 10, October 12, 1863, ibid.

⁶⁴OR, XXX, pt. 4, 756-757.

⁶⁵Mackall to Mrs. Mackall, July 13, 1864, Mackall Papers.

⁶⁶Robert E. Lee also preferred to act as his own chief
of staff. Douglas Southall Freeman, R. E. Lee (4 vols.;
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934-1935), III, 228-230.
This does not indicate, however, that Lee saw the role of
the chief of staff in the same way as Bragg.

CHAPTER III

Under J. E. Johnston

January-July, 1864

Through most of 1863, while Braxton Bragg had been the field commander of the Army of Tennessee, General Joseph E. Johnston had held the overall command of the Western Department of the Confederacy. Early in 1864 there occurred a curious reversal of their roles. Johnston became the field commander, while Bragg, as military advisor to President Davis, exercised a general though undefined supervision over the Army's affairs. Both men reported on the Army of Tennessee's performance in the opening months of the Atlanta campaign, from May to July 1864. Considering the controversy caused in Confederate military circles by Johnston's withdrawal before the Union armies of General William T. Sherman, from Dalton to the outskirts of Atlanta, it was hardly to be expected that the reports of Johnston and Bragg would coincide. On the subject of the staff work in Johnston's Army of Tennessee, they were flatly contradictory.¹

According to Johnston, "the administrative departments had been admirably conducted," for which the commander gave credit to his chief of staff. Bragg, on the other hand, wrote of the "sad condition" of the Army, blaming it on the administrative failure of the chief of staff.² Significantly, the chief of staff in question was Brigadier General William

Whann Mackall, who had served under both commanders. The dispute over Mackall's 1864 performance as chief of staff reflected the acrimony of the debate over Johnston's strategy in Georgia³ and the growing antagonism between Bragg and Mackall; it also provided an accurate mirror for the whole staff controversy of 1864.

The dispute was over two old army problems which had re-appeared to plague the Confederacy. Political and military spokesmen argued about the degree of independence from the War Department which a line commander could properly exercise, and about the merits of a permanent staff corps. The immediate issue concerned the appointment of staff officers; should officers serving with field staff be personally selected by the commanding general, or be assigned from a permanent corps trained and experienced in the special duties of staff work. President Jefferson Davis, who was also commander-in-chief of the Confederate armies, described the conflict as one between "a staff for generals" and "a general staff."⁴

The Confederate dispute was not new in 1864. On March 21, 1863, General Robert E. Lee had written to Davis of the need for an organized corps of staff officers "to teach others their duty, see to the observance of orders, and to the regularity and precision of all movement." Lee wished the staff to function as a self-contained organization, with detachable staff units which could be moved about from one army command to another. He deprecated the dependence of

staff on individual commanders, and deplored the tendency to appoint to staff positions "the relatives and social friends of the commanders, who, however agreeable their company, are not always the most useful officers...."⁵

Lee's attack on the absence of a staff corps, and the resulting nepotism in staff appointments, was later renewed by an impressive array of critics. In November 1863 a War Department report by Major Samuel W. Melton, assistant adjutant general, claimed that the staff system then practised was "the most indifferent feature" of the Confederate Army. He charged that "staff officers are as a rule men too young in years, given to levity of mind and conduct, and absorbed in attention to their personal concerns." Although individually brave, they failed to inspire respect and confidence. Their appointments and promotions were too much influenced by "personal partialities and considerations of policy and too often of nepotism," while the uncertainty of promotion in the staff caused the best men to prefer line commands. To improve the standard of staff personnel, eliminate nepotism, and provide opportunities for advancement based on merit, Melton recommended the organization of a permanent staff corps controlled by the War Department. Respect for the staff among the troops, he insisted, was more important than perfect harmony with the commanding general.⁶

In the spring of 1864 Bragg joined the discussion. He criticized the concept of field staff as the personal assistants of the general, and charged that the result of such a

system was favoritism, nepotism, and inefficiency. These radical defects could only be cured by "time, experience in service, and high military education," but the existing staff system could be much improved by freeing its officers from dependence upon the changing fortunes of their commanders.⁷

The opinions and proposals of Lee, Melton, and Bragg represented the official views of the War Department. On April 28, 1864, Secretary of War James A. Seddon reported to the President:

From unavoidable circumstances, probably, the staff has been too much the object of favoritism through the recommendations on behalf of personal friends, or the refuge of supernumeraries or those by non-election or otherwise thrown out of the line of regular service. They have come to be considered in some measure as attachés to the persons and fortunes of their respective generals, rather than as officers selected for peculiar qualifications and assigned to special duties. In consequence of this kind of estimation, probably, they have not been allowed rank consistent with their importance or regulated appropriately by the standard of merit. These evils it is most desirable to remove, and it is respectfully suggested that the remedy may be found in organizing the respective departments of the staff into separate corps, with proper gradations in rank, and in affording the incentive of advance on the exhibition of qualifications or superior merit. 8

Davis accepted Seddon's report, repeating its main points in a message to the Confederate Congress on May 28. The President then advocated "a general staff, permanent in its character, trained in its duties, aspiring to promotion in its own corps, and responsible to the head of the department."⁹ This proposal reversed his earlier recommendation,

as United States Secretary of War, when he had opposed a permanent staff corps, advising instead an alternation of staff and line duties. Davis explained the change. In the special circumstances of the Confederacy, forced to raise large armies in the fight for political survival, there were not enough trained and experienced officers for assignment to staff duties; experimental appointments had to be made; and the only way by which these untrained officers could be made efficient was by organizing them into a staff corps. The corps director would make all staff assignments, independently of the line commanders, and could thus train the staff in a range of duties, under different commanders. Organized in this way, the staff corps could solve, so Davis believed, the special problems of Confederate military administration.¹⁰

Official opinion in Richmond was thus in favor of a permanent staff corps, organized by departments, and directed by the central authority of the War Department. Under this system, the staff would function as an impersonal agency, as part of a military machine.

But official opinion did not go unchallenged. Strongly opposed to a staff corps controlled by the War Department was Senator Louis Trezevant Wigfall of Texas. The Senator had little but contempt for staff officers appointed in Richmond, and firmly believed that the staff should be selected by the generals in the field, who had the best opportunity of judging an officer's character and ability, in the military context in which he was to serve.¹¹ As a member of the Senate Committee

on Military Affairs, Wigfall was able to influence the Congressional staff bill, of February 12, 1864. That bill provided for the appointment by the commander of a field army of a chief of staff, to be "charged with the general administration" of his army; and of an inspector general, a chief quartermaster, a chief commissary, and a chief of ordnance.¹² If accepted, these provisions would have given control over field staff to the line commanders. Congress passed the bill, but Davis refused to sign it, claiming that it infringed his executive prerogative of appointment.¹³

In its proposals for staff reform Congress had the support of General P. G. T. Beauregard. The former commander of the Army of Tennessee believed it essential that a general "be invested with an unrestricted, unembarrassed selection of Staff Officers, and thoroughly emancipated from the least subordination to the views and control of the heads of the Bureaux at Richmond."¹⁴ Wigfall also consulted General J. E. Johnston, for whom he was said to be "virtually the political chief of staff."¹⁵ Johnston had reservations about the suggested reforms, however. He was unwilling to assign line officers to staff duties, as Wigfall had proposed, or to conform to any Congressional definition of what his staff should be. But Johnston did agree that he should select his own staff officers, showing particular interest in the appointment of a chief of staff.¹⁶

In a letter to Johnston in April 1864, Wigfall explained the Congressional provision for a chief of staff:

The right to select a Chief of Staff from the general officers was given to the General to relieve him from the embarrassment of having a "Second in Command" of which Davis is always talking foisted on him and to enable him to select from his generals of even the highest rank an officer to relieve him from details. 17

In this proposal, that the chief of staff would act as a second in command, Wigfall was repeating the suggestion made earlier to Johnston at the time of the possible relief of Bragg after the Battle of Murfreesboro.

By rejecting the February staff bill Davis refused to concede the general's right to select his own chief of staff, and by implication denied that the chief of staff might act as a second in command. The amended bill, passed in June 1864, retained the right of appointment in the President's hands, and described the duties of the general officer appointed as chief of staff as those of administration. It also established a general staff corps, to which all staff officers would be attached, and within which they would be promoted.¹⁸

The significance of the long debate over the Confederate staff system lay not in the legislative reforms, however, since war conditions made it impossible to put these into effect,¹⁹ but in the expression and clarification of ideas about staff personnel and functions. On the one hand, Davis and the War Department, supported by Lee and Bragg, wished the creation of a general staff corps, to be closely controlled by the central executive authority; within this system the chief of staff of a field army would be appointed by the War

Department, and would act as the administrative assistant of the commander. On the other hand, the Senate Committee on Military Affairs, dominated by Wigfall and supported by Beauregard and Johnston, proposed a system by which field commanders would select officers for staff duty; and for them the administrative duties of the chief of staff would be so broadly interpreted as to make a second in command unnecessary.

These conflicting interpretations were reflected in the record of the Army of Tennessee under Johnston's command, from January to July, 1864. The official viewpoint was expressed by Bragg, as the agent of the President and the War Department; and the opposing one by Johnston, as the commander in the field. The chief of staff over whom the differences of opinion became apparent was Mackall.

After leaving Bragg's staff in October 1863, Brigadier General Mackall had returned to line duty, and when Johnston was assigned to the Army of Tennessee in December 1863 Mackall was a brigade commander at Enterprise, Mississippi. There he was restless and dissatisfied, convinced that the command of a brigade little larger than a regiment would advance neither his own career nor the Confederate cause. Yet he hesitated when Johnston asked him to return to the Army of Tennessee as chief of staff. The same question which all officers assigned to staff duty had to consider--whether promotion in the staff was not slower than in the line--was faced by Mackall, and finally discounted by him. Staff service with his old friend Johnston would be more congenial than a line command in which

his superiors in rank were his juniors in years and experience.²⁰ Mackall accepted Johnston's offer, and on January 26, 1864, was announced in general orders as chief of staff of the Army of Tennessee.²¹ Mackall's appointment was the result of personal staff selection by his commander.

The personal element in the new chief's appointment can be seen clearly in his relations with Johnston.²² The two men were close friends, and the pressure of their military roles did not upset that relationship, as it had done for Mackall and Bragg in 1863. By contrast, Johnston and Mackall worked in apparent harmony, and this had its effect on the role played by the chief of staff.

General Johnston had expressed his belief early in the Civil War that a commander in chief should avoid military drudgery, and concentrate "upon grand operations alone."²³ To do so, he would need a chief of staff to relieve him of routine duties, and Johnston drew an analogy between a general officer who would be "not A[djutant] G[eneral] but real Chief of Staff" and Napoleon's chief of staff, who held the second rank in the French Imperial Army.²⁴ Johnston was unable, however, to find an officer acceptable both to himself and to President Davis, who refused to approve the appointment of Colonel Benjamin Stoddert Ewell as chief of staff, on the grounds that he did not have the necessary rank.²⁵ Mackall was therefore Johnston's first official chief of staff.

The general's intentions for his chief of staff were indicated by the order announcing his appointment. This provided that "all communications to chiefs of departments will be addressed to them as heretofore."²⁶ Correspondence would thus not be directed through Mackall. The reorganization of the staff departments of the Army of Tennessee, which had begun before the chief of staff rejoined the Army, would be continued under the department heads. Obviously Johnston intended Mackall for something more than the narrow supervision of the staff departments of the army, as the head of an administrative hierarchy. Indeed this would not have been possible even had Johnston wished it, for the subsistence department at Richmond claimed immediate and direct authority over the departments of supply, even of an army in the field.²⁷ Mackall's staff responsibilities were to be much more extensive. His record of service under Johnston shows that the chief of staff's work was associated, not only with administration, but also with command.

Analysis of the correspondence of the Army of Tennessee, as preserved in the Official Records,²⁸ provides evidence of Mackall's role. During the six months of his appointment, 107 communications were sent out over Mackall's signature as chief of staff. Of these, only thirteen were issued in the period January 26 to April 30, when the army was encamped at Dalton. The remaining ninety-four belong to the campaign months of May, June, and July. There is thus little sign of Mackall's participation in the paperwork involved in the

reorganization of the Army of Tennessee while at Dalton. The Records show that this was carried out principally through the agency of the adjutant general's department, and within each separate staff department. Mackall's work was heaviest, not in camp, but on campaign, when he directed the administration of the army on the march and in battle. His relationship was primarily with command, rather than with staff.

This conclusion is supported by the type of orders issued by Mackall. They do not indicate any direct or close supervision over the staff departments of the army. Indeed it was on the lack of such supervision that Bragg later based his criticism of Mackall's performance as chief of staff. Mackall's orders were addressed, not to staff, but to the subordinate commanders of the Army of Tennessee. The orders provided information on army movements, both Confederate and Federal, directed the disposition of the Confederate forces, controlled their withdrawal, and organized such reinforcements as were available. In this task of coordinating the military effort of the Army of Tennessee Mackall was more than just the instrument of his commander's will. More than one third of Mackall's written orders were issued on his own authority, without any mention of Johnston. Evidently the general regarded his chief of staff as a trusted and responsible assistant, and was content to leave authority in matters of routine and detail to him. The subordinate commanders usually addressed their communications to headquarters through Mackall, and received their answers from him, indicating that

they recognized and accepted the chief of staff's eminent position. Under Johnston that position was much more personal assistant to the commanding general, than head of the staff.

Certainly this is the role reflected in the journal kept by Mackall's aide, Lieutenant T. B. Mackall.²⁹ According to the journal, which runs from May 14 to June 4, the chief of staff frequently accompanied Johnston in the field, attended and took part in conferences with the subordinate generals, and was responsible for the communication of the decisions reached.

Mackall took obvious satisfaction in his responsible role. His duties brought him into close association with Johnston and the other commanders, and as chief of staff his work was important. Johnston later recollected that he and Mackall had always shared the same room or tent, and that Mackall had been present at all the meetings of the generals, in his capacity as chief of staff.³⁰ Mackall described one of the meetings to his wife. "There was a great plerpexity [sic] the other day," he wrote, "and after everybody had bothered themselves--I told Joe [Johnston] that he had better put his army--thus and so--he adopted the idea--told me that it was the happiest thought on this campaign and had given him the greatest relief."³¹ Good personal relations between the chief of staff and his general, and mutual professional respect, had put Mackall in a position where he might advise in the making of command decisions.

At the same time Mackall did exert a nominal control over the staff. As brigadier general he was the ranking staff officer, a point on which Johnston insisted, so that the chief of staff could where necessary give orders to any member of the staff.³² But the routine administration of the Army of Tennessee was usually carried out by the adjutants and the inspectors of the general staff departments.

Mackall's experience in 1864 was therefore very different from what it had been under Bragg. Where with Bragg the chief of staff had in the final analysis been only one of several administrative officers, with Johnston he retained a position of special responsibility. Where Bragg had been erratic in his delegation of authority, Johnston was willing to delegate routine matters of administration and command. Where strained relations with Bragg had brought Mackall's resignation in 1863, good relations with Johnston contributed to valuable work in 1864. The difference in Mackall's experience with Bragg and with Johnston was thus due in part to personal factors, and in part to differing interpretations of the role of chief of staff.

As Johnston's military chief of staff, Mackall carried out in the field the role which the general's political chief of staff was busily advocating in Richmond. There Wigfall proposed legislative provision for a chief staff officer, selected personally by the field commander to assist him in administration, in preference to a second in command imposed on him by the War Department. The amendments to the staff

bill prevented the institutionalization of the extended staff role, however, and it remained the chance product of the co-operation of Johnston and Mackall.

With or without official sanction, Johnston continued to use his chief of staff as his principal administrative assistant. As this represented a considerable departure from the practice of Bragg in 1863, it is not surprising that the two commanders could write contradictory reports on Mackall's work during the Atlanta campaign. They simply reported in the light of different interpretations of the role of the chief of staff, so that Johnston could conscientiously write of Mackall's "excellent administration,"³³ while Bragg could be equally convinced in his criticism.

In a detailed report to the President on the condition of the Army of Tennessee when Johnston was relieved of its command on July 17, 1864, Bragg wrote:

For want of administration the army was in sad condition. The return of the 10th of July will show 50,000 men for duty and over 10,000 on extra duty, all able-bodied, and as a general rule the best men in the army.... Nearly every command in the army has a large excess of staff officers.... Lieutenant Colonel Cole, chief of transportation, who is here, informs me that he finds more than 1,000 wagons and 5,000 mules in excess of the number allowed by General Johnston's orders.... The most of these evils resulted from want of administration, due to the late chief of staff. General Hood has relieved him.... 34

Bragg's criticisms were directed against a failure to observe the regulations relating to the number of men on extra duty, the number of staff officers, and the amount of transportation

available. Responsible for ensuring obedience to the regulations was the inspector general.

Colonel Edwin James Harvie, chief inspector of the Army of Tennessee, later explained why the required monthly inspections had not been carried out during the Atlanta campaign. The Army had been involved in a difficult campaign, and had been constantly in motion; commanders and assistant inspectors had alike urged the impossibility of carrying out inspections under these conditions; consequently, none had been made.³⁵

Bragg rejected the special circumstances of the Atlanta campaign, however, and laid the full responsibility for the irregular conditions upon Mackall. That he did so illustrated Bragg's continuing belief that the role of the chief of staff was administrative in character, consisting primarily of the supervision of the details of army organization.

Johnston, on the other hand, took a broader view of the role of his principal staff officer, associating administration with command, and judging both in the context of an active campaign. Where Bragg's conclusions were critical, Johnston's were favorable.³⁶

The reports of the two generals on Mackall's work thus need not be as contradictory as they at first appear. The reports reflected different conceptions of the role of chief of staff, repeating in the field the earlier controversy at Richmond, between Davis and the War Department, on the one

hand, and, on the other, Wigfall and the Senate Military Affairs Committee.

But another explanation of the differing reports is suggested by the personal antagonisms within the Confederate military system.

General Johnston was relieved of command in the midst of a campaign, to be replaced by one of his junior commanders, Lieutenant General John Bell Hood, whose competency, according to Johnston, resided in his "confident language."³⁷ Precisely who recommended Johnston's removal is still a matter for dispute, but at the time Bragg was widely suspected, particularly by Johnston's friends. "The chief actor in all this foul drama," a former staff officer informed Johnston, "...is your quondam friend Braxton Bragg--he whose reputation you shielded--he for whom...you had alienated friends, if not made enemies."³⁸ Mackall did not agree that Bragg was responsible, claiming that Bragg's post as military advisor to Jefferson Davis was only an empty title. Bragg was, Mackall confided to his wife, "humbled by the Prest." and in "honorable exile."³⁹ Whatever the truth of the matter, the circumstances of Johnston's relief from command encouraged partisan feuds within the Confederate army.

Mackall's sympathies lay with Johnston. Moreover, Mackall would resign his position as chief of staff should Bragg prove to be Johnston's replacement.⁴⁰ Clearly personal issues affected the relationship of the three men, and it is

probable that they also affected the military reports of Johnston and Bragg on Mackall's work as chief of staff. Johnston's praise of Mackall and Bragg's criticism reflected more than military judgement.

When Johnston was replaced, not by Bragg, but by Hood, Mackall maintained his resolution to leave the Army of Tennessee with his commander. He was relieved as chief of staff on July 24, 1864, at his own request, and not, as Bragg later implied, on Hood's initiative.⁴¹

That Mackall would not stay on under Johnston's successor emphasized the personal element in his position as chief of staff. The personal relationship between Johnston and Mackall had determined the role of the chief of staff, and had made it a responsible one. Mackall's refusal, out of loyalty to Johnston, to serve under Hood weakened the administration of the Army at a crucial moment. Hood had no experience of army command, and the Atlanta campaign was still undecided. Yet Mackall chose to leave. The responsible role of the chief of staff in the Army of Tennessee was destroyed by the same personal factors which had created it.

Mackall's experience as Johnston's chief staff officer demonstrated that the role of the chief of staff depended, not on the definition of some administrative principle, but on the interaction of personal factors at the military and political levels of army administration.

Notes

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Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Series I, XXXVIII,
pt. 3, 618 (cited hereafter as OR, with all references to
Series I, unless otherwise indicated); ibid., LII, pt. 2, 713.

²Ibid., LII, pt. 2, 713.

³For the debate over Johnston's strategy, see Johnston,
Narrative of Military Operations, pp. 348-349, 355-370,
588-602; John Bell Hood, Advance and Retreat (New Orleans:
Hood Orphan Memorial Fund, 1880), pp. 317-320. Also,
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1941), pp. 97-115; Thomas Robson Hay, "The Davis-Hood-
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Review, XI (1924), 54-84.

⁴OR, Series IV, III, 453.

⁵Ibid., II, 448. See also Douglas Southall Freeman, R. E. Lee (4 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934-1935), II, 490.

⁶OR, Series IV, II, 950-951.

⁷Ibid., III, 316.

⁸Ibid., 327.

⁹Ibid., 450.

¹⁰Ibid., 450-451.

¹¹Louis T. Wigfall to J. E. Johnston, Virginia [April 1864], Joseph Eggleston Johnston Papers, Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

¹²"Proceedings of the First Confederate Congress, 4th Session, 7 December 1863-18 February 1864," Southern Historical Society Papers, I (1953), 420-421.

¹³OR, Series IV, III, 452.

¹⁴P. G. T. Beauregard to Pierre Soulé, Charleston, S. C., December 8, 1863 (copy), Johnston Papers.

¹⁵Hood, Advance and Retreat, p. 73.

¹⁶Johnston to Wigfall, Dalton [Ga], March 6, April 23, April [23], April 30, 1864, Louis Trezevant Wigfall Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

¹⁷Wigfall to Johnston, Virginia [April 1864], Johnston Papers.

¹⁸OR, Series IV, III, 452, 497-498.

¹⁹Ibid., 836-837.

²⁰Ibid., XXXI, pt. 3, 631; W. W. Mackall to Mrs. Mackall, Enterprise [Miss] , December 18, 1863, January 7, January 9, January 11, January 13, 1864, William Whann Mackall Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

²¹OR, XXXII, pt. 2, 616.

²²See Mackall's letters to his wife, January-July, 1864, Mackall Papers.

²³Johnston to Jefferson Davis, Manassas [Va] , September 3, 1861, Jefferson Davis Papers, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

²⁴Johnston to [Mansfield Lovell] , Fairfax, Va., September 26, 1861, Mansfield Lovell Papers, Huntington Library.

²⁵Johnston to B. S. Ewell, Harrison's [Va.], May 28, 1862, Richard Stoddert Ewell Papers, microfilm at the Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

²⁶OR, XXXII, pt. 2, 616.

²⁷Ibid., pt. 3, 715-716.

²⁸Ibid., pt. 2, 616-833; pt. 3, 574-879; XXXVIII, pt. 4, 654-807; pt. 5, 858-907.

²⁹Ibid., pt. 3, 978-991.

³⁰Johnston to Mackall, Savannah [Ga.], June 11, July 20, 1874, Mackall Papers.

³¹Mackall to Mrs. Mackall, June 18, 1864, ibid.

³²Endorsement by Johnston, on Archer Anderson to J. B. Hood, Dalton, Ga., February 29, 1864, Archer Anderson, Compiled Service Records of Confederate General and Staff Officers and Nonregimental Enlisted Men, War Department Collection of Confederate Records, Record Group 109, National Archives, Washington, D. C.

³³OR, XXXVIII, pt. 3, 618.

³⁴Ibid., LII, pt. 2, 713.

³⁵Ibid., XXXVIII, pt. 5, 956-957.

³⁶Ibid., pt. 3, 618; Johnston, Narrative of Military Operations, p. 351.

³⁷OR, XXXVIII, pt. 5, 891, 892.

³⁸A. D. Banks to [Johnston], Montgomery [Ala.], August 21, 1864, Johnston Papers. An interesting if slightly ambiguous telegram sent by Bragg two days before Johnston's relief suggests that Banks was right. Bragg to Davis (copy), Atlanta [Ga.], July 15, 1864, Civil War Papers, Louisiana Historical Association Collection, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, New Orleans.

³⁹Mackall to Mrs. Mackall, July, July 15, 1864, Mackall Papers.

⁴⁰Mackall to Mrs. Mackall, July 13, 1864, ibid.

⁴¹OR, XXXVIII, pt. 5, 907.

CHAPTER IV

Under J. B. Hood

July-December, 1864

John Bell Hood's appointment to command of the Army of Tennessee was based on his reputation as a fighting general. He was not known to share the concern of his predecessors, Bragg and Johnston, for efficient organization and administration. Robert E. Lee, under whom Hood had served in the Army of Northern Virginia, doubted whether Hood had all the qualities necessary for high command, and suggested that he lacked experience in army management.¹ Time was to bear out Lee's judgement as failures in administration contributed to the mounting disasters which made one staff officer describe Hood's Atlanta and Tennessee campaigns as "an Iliad of woes."²

For Hood, as for his army, the Iliad began when he assumed command on July 17, 1864. Reaction against his appointment was strong, especially among those officers of the general staff who had been most closely associated with Johnston. Within two weeks Hood lost three of Johnston's most important and most experienced men--Brigadier General W. W. Mackall, chief of staff, Colonel B. S. Ewell, adjutant general, and Colonel Hypolite Oladowski, chief of ordnance. To replace these men was difficult. Since the centralized

staff corps advocated by Davis, Bragg, Lee, and the War Department had never come into being, Hood had to find new officers where he could. Ewell's work was carried on by his former assistants in the adjutant general's department, and Oladowski was replaced by Lieutenant Colonel J. M. Kennard, ordnance officer in Polk's old District of Alabama, Mississippi, and East Louisiana.³ More difficult of solution was the problem of finding a new chief of staff.

Even when allowance is made for Hood's limited choice among the officers available, his final selection for the position of chief of staff remains in many respects an extraordinary one. Brigadier General Francis Asbury Shoup was a Northerner, from Indiana, who was living in Florida when the Civil War began, and joined the Confederacy. A West Point graduate, he served as chief of artillery to Hardee at Shiloh, and later as a brigade commander in the trans-Mississippi, at Vicksburg, and at Mobile. In the spring of 1864 Shoup was assigned to the Army of Tennessee as chief of artillery, and it was from this position that he moved to become chief of staff on July 24, 1864.⁴

At thirty Shoup was the youngest by more than ten years of the effective chiefs of staff of the Army of Tennessee.⁵ As a West Point man and as a brigadier general he had both the professional training and the rank considered appropriate to his new appointment. But Shoup's previous staff duties, as chief of artillery, had been limited to the instruction,

drill, and administration of his batteries, and their command on the battlefield.⁶ He had no experience of the much wider administrative responsibilities of the chief of staff.

Not only was Shoup relatively inexperienced in staff work, but he also had no particular inclination for it. His record reveals a decided preference for line command, and a reluctance to accept assignments which were not agreeable to him. There are indications that he was not well-liked-- Davis referred to him as "that much abused officer," and the War Department, growing impatient at Shoup's attempts to be transferred to permanent line command, finally issued a reminder that he had been commissioned as an artillery, not as a line, officer. It was as an artillery officer that he was assigned to the Army of Tennessee in 1864, over the recommendations of other officers made by Johnston, Bragg, and Brigadier General W. N. Pendleton, chief of artillery in the Army of Northern Virginia. The appointment was presumably made at the instance of Davis, who had been impressed by a report on the casting of cannon written by Shoup in 1862. But when Shoup joined Johnston's army at Dalton in 1864, he came as a virtual stranger, without reputation.⁷

Shoup's appointment as chief of artillery could nevertheless be justified by Bragg as that of "an educated and disciplined soldier." To explain the appointment as chief of staff was more difficult. "This may strike you as inexpedient," Bragg wrote to Davis, "but it is evidently for the

best. He [Shoup] is decidedly fond of this kind of work and is very efficient at it, whilst he was not satisfied with his position at the head of the artillery and had on my former visit desired a transfer to an infantry command."⁸ Qualified by training and experience for artillery work, by experience and preference for line command, Shoup was selected by Hood as his new chief of staff. The deciding element justifying an otherwise inexpedient choice was almost certainly Shoup's availability.

Hood's intentions for his new chief of staff remain unclear. Perhaps he had none, other than that of replacing Mackall. Certainly in his autobiography, Advance and Retreat, Hood reveals no appreciation of the importance of the staff role in army command and management; and when Shoup resigned after seven weeks as chief of staff, Hood made no formal appointment to replace him.⁹ These indications that Hood was unaware of the potential value of a chief of staff are confirmed by Shoup's record.

Shoup served as chief of staff from July 24 to September 14, 1864, a total of fifty-two days of rigorous campaigning around Atlanta. In that time, according to the Official Records, Shoup despatched 227 communications.¹⁰ These were similar in type to Mackall's, and consisted of letters giving orders or information to the subordinate commanders of the army. The proportion sent out without reference to Hood's authority was lower than Mackall's--28% as against 34%--but still considerable. At first sight it

appears that Shoup's role was an important one, but closer analysis weakens this first impression.

In a comparable campaign period, from May 1 to July 24, 1864, Mackall had issued ninety-four orders over eighty-five days. His letters to his wife indicated that the work involved, in informing himself of the army's movements and needs, in consultation, and in reconnaissance constituted a long and heavy day. Yet Shoup sent out more than twice the number of communications in a third less time. This suggests that he was not really informed about what he was doing, but was instead acting merely as a secretary for Hood, writing out orders and sending them off. Support for this interpretation of Shoup's role is provided by the extraordinary number of orders which he sent unsigned, 199 out of 227. The impression is one of notes scribbled hurriedly, in the confusion of battle, at the commander's direction, and then hastily dispatched by an assistant adjutant general or aide-de-camp. An unsigned note, carried by an officer of the general's staff, might command obedience on the field; the same note, known only to come from the chief of staff, almost certainly would not. Both the volume and the form of Shoup's correspondence suggest that his principal role was not as a responsible administrator assisting in the execution of command decisions, but as a constant attendant on his commanding general as amanuensis. In the sense in which the role had been developed by Mackall under Johnston, Shoup was no chief of staff, but rather a junior member of the adjutant general's department.¹¹

Shoup did try to exert some control over the various staff departments, but it was in this, the most responsible aspect of the duties assigned him, that his greatest failure occurred. In the evacuation of Atlanta on September 1 and 2, 1864, considerable war material belonging to the Army of Tennessee had to be destroyed to prevent it falling into the hands of the enemy. Included in the loss were twenty-eight carloads of ordnance, eighty-one cars, and five engines. Involved in the circumstances of the loss were Shoup, who as chief of staff gave the orders which should have resulted in the safe removal of the stores, Lieutenant Colonel M. B. McMicken, who as chief quartermaster was responsible for their timely transportation, and Lieutenant Colonel J. M. Kennard, to whom as chief of ordnance most of the stores belonged. Hood attributed the loss to the "wanton neglect" of a chief quartermaster "too much addicted to drink of late to attend to his duties," and maintained that Shoup was "in no manner to blame." Shoup, McMicken, and Kennard requested a court of inquiry, and orders to set up the court were issued on September 5. The inquiry was held at the headquarters of the Army of Tennessee, presumably shortly after the 5th, and by the 23rd Hood was able to report that the findings had been sent to General Bragg. The court exonerated Kennard, declared McMicken "highly culpable," and found of Shoup that "he, not having displayed sufficient energy, or used all the means in his possession to see that there was a compliance with his instructions, is censurable." Hood added a rider to the report, saying that he disagreed with the criticism of Shoup.

There the matter officially rested, till the Secretary of War accepted the court's findings and published them in March, 1865.¹²

Reaction in the Army of Tennessee to the administrative failure at Atlanta was more immediate. On September 4 Hood requested a replacement for McMicken, and by the 23rd had appointed as chief quartermaster Major W. F. Ayer. Shoup, despite Hood's support for him in face of the court's decision, ceased to issue orders on September 7, and on September 14 was relieved at his own request from his position as chief of staff. He was not replaced. The disaster at Atlanta had cost Hood not only valuable equipment and supplies, but also his chief of staff.¹³

From September 7 onwards Shoup's duties were assumed by Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Pendleton Mason. Mason had served in the adjutant general's department since 1862, first under Johnston and Lee in Virginia, and then again under Johnston, in the West. He owed his staff commission to Johnston's personal request of the War Department, and not to any previous military background. Although Mason was not a professional soldier, his continued service in the same branch of staff work made him an experienced assistant adjutant general. Johnston considered him a valuable officer, and Hood commended the "zeal and strict fidelity" with which Mason discharged his duties. He was among the officers of Johnston's general staff who stayed on when Hood took over command of the Army of Tennessee.¹⁴

Mason was never appointed to Shoup's position, but as assistant adjutant general he fulfilled the same role that Shoup had done as chief of staff. Between September 14, 1864, and January 23, 1865, when Hood was relieved of his command, the adjutant general's department sent out a total of 207 communications. Of these, 90% were issued by Mason, and 10% by other members of the department; 84% of Mason's letters went to field commanders, while the remainder fell into the category of general and special orders; only 5% of the total correspondence made no specific mention of Hood's direction or authority. Thus Mason carried out duties similar to those of Shoup, but at the same time shared some of the burden of the work with other assistant adjutants, and retained his own role as the senior member of the adjutant general's department.¹⁵

Why Hood did not make formal appointment of Mason as chief of staff can only be conjectured. The commander was still supporting Shoup against the censure of the court of inquiry, and Mason lacked both the customary professional background and the necessary rank. But Hood's relations with Shoup and Mason reveal his limited concept of the role of the chief of staff in a Civil War army. To Hood, the chief of staff was not a responsible administrative assistant, and his duties were not distinguished in any significant way from those of an assistant adjutant general.

In these two respects Hood's attitude towards his chief of staff was not unlike that practised by Bragg in the Army

of Tennessee, in 1862 and 1863. But Bragg had restricted the roles of Jordan, Brent, and Mackall principally because he wished to provide the administrative direction of the army himself. His sense of the importance of administration made him unwilling to delegate responsibility for it. Hood did not have this sense, and consequently the Army of Tennessee under his command received co-ordinated administrative control neither from its general nor from his principal staff officer. The result was chaos.

The chaos was not restricted to any one department. The new quartermaster was involved in a dispute with his transportation officer, and the chief commissary was unable to provide adequate food supplies. The chief engineer was not with the army, but busy elsewhere in the Military Division of the West. The chief of artillery was considered a troublesome officer, addicted to the bottle. There was no official chief of staff, although Mason was apparently recognized as acting chief. But most serious of all, and most directly attributable to faulty administration, was the failure of Hood and Mason to ensure the efficient operation of the adjutant general's department.¹⁶

"Orders," reported Colonel E. J. Harvie to Hood on November 3, "are daily issued by the Adjutant-General of the Army, and it is impossible to tell whether they find their way even as far as corps headquarters."¹⁷ Harvie, inspector general of the Army of Tennessee, was seriously concerned

about the inability of his department to carry out the routine inspections required to ensure the efficient administration of the army. Without these inspections, impossible under the existing staff system,¹⁸ the adjutant general's department had already ceased to be a reliable line of communication between the general commanding and his subordinates. Harvie implied that without reforms in staff organization Hood would find it increasingly difficult to direct and control the movements of his men.

These warnings came from an officer whose experience of staff work dated from before the Civil War, and also included Confederate service under Lee and Joe Johnston.¹⁹ They came at a time when the Army was held up in the invasion of its home state of Tennessee, partly by heavy rains, but also in large part by problems in the staff departments of supply.²⁰ There is, however, no indication that Hood paid any attention to the criticisms directed by Harvie against the staff system as it then operated. The campaign into Tennessee probably seemed to Hood of more immediate importance than a staff reorganization. Yet within a month the Army of Tennessee was to suffer badly from the very staff failures that Harvie had warned against.

By November 28 Hood's men had entered Tennessee, and were confronting the Federal forces under Major General John M. Schofield at Columbia, on the south bank of the Duck river. The road from Columbia led north, through Spring Hill and Franklin, to the main Federal base at Nashville. Hood

proposed to place the main part of his army across the road at Spring Hill, thus cutting off Schofield's line of withdrawal from Columbia to Nashville. The retreating Federal forces would be attacked, routed, and captured. In this movement to the enemy's rear Hood hoped to emulate his hero Stonewall Jackson, and to make certain of the success of the plan decided to lead the movement in person.²¹

Early on November 29 Hood moved two of his three army corps in a flanking march, crossing the Duck river three miles to the east and upstream from Columbia. Two divisions of Lieutenant General Stephen D. Lee's corps were left in front of Columbia to engage Schofield's attention, while Hood's force marched towards Spring Hill by a road which ran east of the main pike. The advance corps of Major General Benjamin Franklin Cheatham arrived at Spring Hill early in the afternoon, finding a detachment of Forrest's cavalry already there and waiting for further orders. The supporting corps under Lieutenant General Alexander P. Stewart came up shortly afterwards. At that time the only Union force present was the small garrison in Spring Hill, although Schofield's men were beginning to move on the Columbia-Franklin road. The stage seemed set for a striking Confederate victory in the West.

That victory was never achieved. Hood's men, in spite of their numerical strength, did not take Spring Hill, did not occupy the Columbia pike south of the town, and did not close the Franklin road to the north. In what remained of daylight they failed to place themselves squarely across the

path of Schofield's retreating army. Further, during the night they failed to deliver any serious attack against the disorganized Federal forces as they moved along the pike within a quarter of a mile of the Confederate encampment. No advantage was taken of the favorable position gained by Hood's flanking movement. Instead the Union army was allowed to escape to the entrenchments and fortifications of Franklin and Nashville, before which the Army of Tennessee was virtually destroyed on November 30 and December 15.

The failure to establish the tactical supremacy implicit in Hood's move to Spring Hill thus not only lost the Army a great victory, but also involved it in two disastrous defeats. The opportunity lost at Spring Hill marked the end of Confederate hopes in the West. The significance of the failure has meant that ever since the morning of November 30, 1864, when the Union army was discovered to have escaped in the night, soldiers and scholars have tried to analyze what went wrong at Spring Hill, and to assign responsibility for the lost opportunity.²²

Perhaps inevitably, the greatest interest lay in discovering which of the commanding generals of the Army of Tennessee was responsible for the repeated failures to attack. Consensus has it that ultimately the responsibility was Hood's. As commander in chief he was present on the field, and supposedly capable of directing the forces under his authority. Hood did not agree that he was to blame, and charged one of his corps commanders, Major General Cheatham, with failure to

obey orders to attack. Cheatham denied the charge, and in his turn blamed his division commanders, Major Generals Patrick R. Cleburne, William B. Bate, and John C. Brown, for confusion over the orders to capture Spring Hill and to hold the road south of the town. Lieutenant General Stewart justified his failure to close the road to the north by claiming that he had received orders to withdraw his force from one of Hood's staff officers. From these charges and counter-charges has come a mass of conflicting evidence which no-one has been able to reconcile. As a result it has never been possible to fix specific responsibility for the lost opportunity on any one person.²³

No simple explanation of the Spring Hill failure has been found, but the conflicting evidence provides one obvious conclusion. There was a complete lack of co-ordination among the Confederate commanders, and the confusion resulting on the field was due in large measure to the weakness of Hood's administrative system. Army headquarters were set up two miles distant from, and out of sight of, the main objective, the Columbia pike. Orders issued followed the informal pattern allowed to develop under Shoup, and were mostly verbal in form.²⁴ No record was kept at headquarters of orders sent, and communications to field commanders were neglected. As a direct result of this haphazard and inefficient administration, the chance to seize the Columbia-Franklin pike at Spring Hill was lost. In the late afternoon of November 29, Hood had

ordered Bate's division of Cheatham's corps to move onto the pike south of Spring Hill and to sweep down it towards Columbia. Cheatham was not informed of this movement, and unknowingly issued orders of his own which had the effect of recalling Bate just as he was about to seize the road. And it was another contradiction in orders, between one given personally by Hood and another borne by one of Hood's staff, that caused Stewart to stop short of the Franklin pike to the north.

The fog of war had descended on the Army of Tennessee at Spring Hill. Uninformed about what was happening in the field, unable to direct or co-ordinate the movements of his men, Hood was the victim of his own neglect of the staff system. The lack of organization and the inefficiency which Harvie had warned against early in November, with especial reference to the adjutant general's department of orders, were in large part responsible for the confusion on the 29th. The lost opportunity at Spring Hill, long attributed to a failure in leadership on the part of Hood and his subordinate commanders, was also to a significant degree due to a failure in administration. For this Hood as commander and Mason as acting chief of staff must bear the formal responsibility.

The night of November 29-30 was to provide further evidence of administrative inefficiency. On that night the Federal army was moving through Spring Hill on its way to Franklin. Confederate forces, although encamped close to the main pike, made no serious attempt to halt the enemy's movement. By the following morning Schofield's men had

escaped Hood's trap and were well on their way to Franklin. The chance of a striking Confederate victory had been irretrievably lost. Three men were involved in this final failure--Hood, Mason, and Cheatham.

In his official report to the War Department, Hood wrote that he had received word during the night of the Federal movement. He claimed that he had then sent instructions to Cheatham to advance against the enemy and impede his march, and that these instructions were not obeyed. Hood thus blamed Cheatham for the failure, and later repeated his charges in his book.²⁵

Witness to the events at Hood's headquarters on that same night was Governor Isham G. Harris of Tennessee, voluntary aide to the commanding general. Harris shared a room with Hood and Mason, and later gave a version of the night's events substantially different from that of Hood.²⁶ According to Harris, Hood directed Mason to send Cheatham the order to attack. Hood and Harris remained in bed, and presumably went back to sleep.²⁷ The next day Mason confessed to Harris that he too had gone back to sleep, without sending off the order. Mason then reported what had happened to Hood, who was furiously blaming Cheatham for the failure to attack. Hood later told Harris that he no longer held Cheatham responsible, and that he had sent him a letter saying so. By this account of a crucial order which Mason failed to issue, Harris placed the responsibility for the final Federal escape on the chief of staff.

Cheatham took no written part, at least, in this debate till after the appearance of Hood's book. He then published in 1881 a point-by-point rebuttal of Hood's charges.²⁸ Cheatham wrote that he had been at his headquarters with his chief of staff, Major James D. Porter, and another officer, when the order from Mason was delivered. The order was acted upon, but no Federal troops were found on the pike. To complete his exoneration, Cheatham quoted Harris, with especial reference to Hood's written assurance that he did not blame Cheatham for the failure at Spring Hill. Cheatham was apparently unaware that by introducing the Harris narrative as authoritative evidence in his favor he was at the same time contradicting his own account of having received the order from Mason.

Of the three versions of the events of November 29-30, neither the account by Hood nor that by Cheatham can be relied on. Hood was trying to justify himself at Cheatham's expense, while Cheatham in his eagerness to defend himself contradicted his own argument. The explanation offered by Harris, of Mason's dereliction from duty, is much more convincing.

The first recorded reference to the Harris story appeared in a manuscript written about 1867,²⁹ so that it was obviously known at a date relatively close to the event. No evidence has been found of any denial of the story, either by Mason, or on his behalf. In 1877 Harris repeated his account in a

letter, subsequently published, to Governor James D. Porter of Tennessee. This was the letter which Cheatham tried to use in his defense, and Governor Porter was the same man who, as chief of staff, had been claimed by Cheatham as a witness to the arrival of Mason's order. When Porter produced his own version of the Spring Hill affair in 1899, he quoted at length from Cheatham's article of 1881. But when he reached the point in Cheatham's narrative at which the order from Mason was brought by courier to Cheatham's headquarters, Porter broke off. At this point he replaced Cheatham's account by the Harris letter.³⁰ Porter thus rejected Cheatham's description of the events of the night of November 29-30, to which Porter had supposedly been a witness, preferring Harris's explanation that no order had ever been sent.

The evidence against Mason, if not conclusive, is very strong. Harris, aide at Hood's headquarters, claimed that no order to attack Federal troops on the pike was issued--and this on Mason's confession, of which no denial can be found. Porter, chief of staff at Cheatham's headquarters, implied that no such order was ever received. There is no reason to question the honesty either of Harris or of Porter.³¹ On their evidence it was Mason, acting chief of staff to General Hood, who was immediately responsible for the Confederate failure to make a night attack at Spring Hill. Thus its principal staff officer lost the Army of Tennessee the last reasonable chance of a significant victory in the West.³²

But in any final analysis the responsibility for the Spring Hill failure must rest upon the commanding general. Hood was present on the field, but was unable to direct and co-ordinate the movements of his men in such a way as to bring on an engagement and ensure the surrender of Schofield's army. That he could not do so was due in part to a lack of understanding between the commander and his subordinates, and in part to disruptions inevitable on the field of action. It was also due to Hood's neglect of the staff system of his army.

Under Hood the Army of Tennessee lacked what it had so conspicuously had under Bragg and Johnston--organized direction. Bragg had provided administrative control principally through his own efforts. Johnston had done so through his use of the staff, and especially of the chief of staff. Hood failed to provide direction by either method. Under him army administration developed an informality perhaps appropriate in a small command, but disastrous in a large force. Orders were sent unsigned; many were given only verbally; and it was frequently impossible to tell whether they had been received, understood, and executed. The result was the collapse of the administrative system of the Army of Tennessee.

Part of the collapse was due to the immense problems facing the Confederacy as a whole by the fall of 1864. But shortages in the departments of supply, and difficulties with staff recruitment, could not by themselves explain the administrative failure of the general staff in Hood's army. The responsibility lay with the commander. Hood's lack of

experience in army management, noted earlier and feared by General Lee, left the Army of Tennessee's commander unaware of the importance of the staff role in providing for the efficient organization and administration of his army. Whether Shoup or Mason had any high order of administrative ability is open to question; but certainly in the Iliad of woes experienced by Hood's army there was no indication that the general realized the potential use or importance of his chiefs of staff.

* * * * *

From 1862-1864, in the Army of Tennessee, the chiefs of staff were personally selected by the commanding generals. The generals' right to do so, and the efficiency of the resulting system, had been seriously challenged in the Richmond debates over staff organization. But wartime conditions in the Confederacy made it impossible for the proponents of a centralized staff corps to put their ideas into practice. The supply of experienced officers had always been so unequal to the need for them that to insist on special qualifications and training for staff service would have been completely unrealistic. In these circumstances field commanders were largely left to find their own general staff officers.

Every commanding general of the Army of Tennessee decided on the appointment of a chief of staff to assist in the administrative duties of command. Four of the officers chosen

were professional soldiers--Jordan, Duncan, Mackall, and Shoup--while two, Brent and Mason, were qualified not by formal military training, but by their experience in the Confederate general staff. Mason was the only officer not formally appointed. As chief of staff, or as acting chief, Jordan served for four months, Brent for nine, Mackall for twelve, Shoup for two, and Mason for three. There was thus a considerable turnover in chiefs of staff. On the basis of length of service, the two most likely to have affected the administrative system were Brent and Mackall. Brent served longest under one commander, and Mackall for a longer overall period, under two commanders.

The role of the chief of staff was determined only in part by the training, experience, and length of service of the officer holding the position. More significant was the attitude of the general towards his chief of staff, both as an individual and as a member of an administrative system. Bragg thought highly of Brent, but preferred to use him as an assistant adjutant, retaining direction and control in his own hands. The general's early welcome for Mackall was strained by the pressures of campaign, diminishing the chief of staff's role. By contrast, Johnston's continuing confidence in Mackall ensured him a responsible role in administration and command. Whatever Hood's relations to Shoup and Mason, however--and in his autobiography he was loyal to both--the general's blindness to the importance of

the staff role meant that he failed to make any significant use of either officer.

The attitudes of the commander were in short the most important single element in determining the role of the chief of staff in the Army of Tennessee. As a result there was neither continuity of service nor of function. In thirty months there were six chiefs of staff; under Bragg the duties were those of an assistant adjutant general, under Johnston those of an authoritative director of administration, and under Hood those of a secretary or aide-de-camp. At the level of its principal staff officer, the Army of Tennessee lacked a continuous administrative tradition, and in its last major campaign betrayed no evidence that its administrative directors had learned anything from the Army's two and a half years of field experience.

Notes

¹R. E. Lee to Jefferson Davis, July 12, 1864, quoted in John P. Dyer, The Gallant Hood (Indianapolis and New York: The Boobs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1950), p. 244. Dyer, Hood's most recent biographer, found him careless as an administrator, and judged that the Atlanta campaign was marked by poor staff work. Ibid., pp. 144, 270, 288.

²Irving Ashby Buck, Cleburne and His Command, Thomas Robson Hay, ed. (Jackson, Miss.: McCowat-Mercer Press, Inc., 1959), p. 229.

³War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (128 vols.; Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Series I, XXXVIII, pt. 5, 887 (cited hereafter as OR, with all references to Series I, unless otherwise indicated); ibid., 907, 943.

⁴Ezra J. Warner, Generals in Gray (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1959), pp. 275-276; OR, X, pt. 1, 571; XIII, 883; XXIV, pt. 1, 271; XXVI, pt. 2, 402; XXXII, pt. 3, 742; XXXVIII, pt. 5, 907.

⁵Jordan was forty-three, Brent forty-one, and Mackall forty-six when first acting as chief of staff. Duncan was only thirty-five, but did not live to carry out any of his staff duties.

⁶OR, XXXII, pt. 3, 742.

⁷Ibid., XXXI, pt. 3, 851-852; LIII, 880; XXXI, pt. 3, 832; XXXII, pt. 2, 697; pt. 3, 592, 671, 686.

⁸Ibid., 671; LII, pt. 2, 713.

⁹Ibid., XXXIX, pt. 2, 836.

¹⁰Ibid., XXXVIII, pt. 5, 907-1031; XXXIX, pt. 2, 825-836.

¹¹The journal kept by Shoup, of the operations of the Army of Tennessee while he was chief of staff, provides a record of the campaign, but no indication of his own role. Ibid., XXXVIII, pt. 3, 688-696; XXXIX, pt. 1, 803-804.

¹²Ibid., XXXVIII, pt. 3, 991-992; pt. 5, 1018; XXXIX, pt. 2, 865.

¹³No new appointment was made for Shoup till February 21, 1865, when he became chief of artillery to Hardee. What happened to him between September and February is unknown. Shoup's army journal was "continued at headquarters" after his relief, but the Official Records does not make it clear whether it was still kept by Shoup, or by someone else. Hood used this journal in writing his book, and identified it as Shoup's, even after the date of that officer's relief. If Shoup did remain with the army, as Hood suggests, it could hardly have contributed to an orderly administrative system. More probably, Hood was simply mistaken in his recollections. Ibid., XXXIX, pt. 1, 804; XLVII, pt. 2, 1239; John Bell Hood, Advance and Retreat (New Orleans: Hood Orphan Memorial Fund, 1880), pp. 257, 298-299.

¹⁴Arthur Pendleton Mason, S. Bassett French Biographical Sketches, Virginia State Library, Richmond; Hood, Advance and Retreat, p. 311.

¹⁵This analysis is based on an examination of the Army of Tennessee correspondence in OR, XXXIX, pt. 2, 836-889; pt. 3, 778-918; XLV, pt. 1, 1206-1262; pt. 2, 628-806.

¹⁶Ibid., XXXIX, pt. 2, 874-876; pt. 3, 797-798; XLV, pt. 1, 1212, 1227; Dyer, The Gallant Hood, p. 168.

¹⁷OR, XXXIX, pt. 3, 880-881.

¹⁸Harvie complained that the assistant inspectors general at the corps, division, and brigade levels were under the immediate control of their respective commanders, with the result that there was no organized department responsible, under Harvie's direction as inspector general, for inspection in the army. Ibid.

¹⁹Francis B. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army...1789-1903 (2 vols.; Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965), I, 508; Edwin James Harvie, Compiled Service Records of Confederate General and Staff Officers and Nonregimental Enlisted Men, War Department Collection of Confederate Records, Record Group 109, National Archives, Washington, D. C.

²⁰OR, XXXIX, pt. 1, 808, 809; XLV, pt. 1, 662.

²¹Hood, Advance and Retreat, pp. 282-283. For Hood's reports on the movements of November 28-30, see OR, XLV, pt. 1, 652-658.

²²Explanations offered by Confederates present at Spring Hill are to be found in George Campbell Brown, "Military Reminiscences from 1861-1865," Manuscript Division, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee; Edwin L. Drake, ed., Annals of the Army of Tennessee (Nashville; n. p., 1878); Hood, Advance and Retreat; W. O. Dodd, "Reminiscences of Hood's Tennessee Campaign," Southern Historical Society Papers, IX (1881), 518-524; B. F. Cheatham, "The Lost Opportunity at Spring Hill, Tennessee," ibid., 524-541; Buck, Cleburne and His Command; James D. Porter, Confederate Military History: VIII, Tennessee, Clement A. Evans, ed. (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1962 [original edition 1899]); A. P. Stewart, "Controversy upon Hood's Campaign," Confederate Veteran, XV (1907), 425; John P. Young, "Hood's Failure at Spring Hill," ibid., XVI (1908), 25-41.

Federal accounts are Henry Stone, "Repelling Hood's Invasion of Tennessee," Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, Robert U. Johnson and Clarence C. Buel, eds. (4 vols.; New York: The Century Company, 1887-1888), IV, 440-464; J. D. Remington, "Cause of Hood's Failure at Spring Hill," Confederate Veteran, XXI (1913), 569-571; John K. Shellenberger, "The Fighting at Spring Hill, Tennessee," ibid., XXXVI (1928), 100-103, 140-143, 188.

Among the secondary works which deal with Spring Hill are Thomas Robson Hay, Hood's Tennessee Campaign (New York: Walter Neale, 1929); Stanley F. Horn, The Army of Tennessee (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953); and The Decisive Battle of Nashville (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1956); Dyer, The Gallant Hood; William Travis Crawford, "The Mystery of Spring Hill," Civil War History, I (1955), 101-126; Sims Crownover, "The Battle of Franklin," Tennessee Historical Quarterly, XIV (1955), 291-322.

Of these works the most informative are the articles by Young and Crawford.

²³Remington, "Cause of Hood's Failure at Spring Hill," claims that he caused the confusion among the Confederate commanders. A Union spy, masquerading as a Confederate staff officer, he carried imaginary messages and false orders among the high command of the Army of Tennessee, none of whom knew him, but all of whom accepted him. Remington's account is unsupported by any evidence, and remains unconvincing.

²⁴OR, XIV, pt. 1, Confederate Correspondence, contains no written orders for the Spring Hill affair. It is true that these orders might have been lost, but Hood's other campaign correspondence for November-December 1864 is not missing. Further, the impression of a movement directed principally by verbal orders is supported by the contemporary reports and subsequent accounts of Spring Hill given by the various generals involved.

²⁵Ibid., 653; Hood, Advance and Retreat, p. 287.

²⁶Harris's account of the events of the night of November 29-30 was first recorded in 1867-1868, in Brown, "Military Reminiscences from 1861-1865"; it was developed in greater detail in an 1877 letter from Harris to Governor James D. Porter. This letter was published in Drake, ed., Annals of the Army of Tennessee, pp. 49-50, and in Porter, Confederate Military History: VIII, Tennessee, 148-149.

²⁷That Hood should remain quietly at his headquarters after hearing that the Federal army was escaping him seems extraordinary. Possibly he did not fully realize what was happening. Horn, The Army of Tennessee, p. 392, records a strong local tradition that Hood was drunk that night. Dyer, The Gallant Hood, p. 288, attributes Hood's inactivity to physical exhaustion and pain from the stump of his amputated leg. His mental reactions may have been affected by some opiate, such as laudanum.

²⁸Cheatham, "The Lost Opportunity at Spring Hill," 524-533.

²⁹Brown, "Military Reminiscences from 1861-1865." It must be admitted that Major Brown was a witness unfriendly to Mason. Both men had served on the staff of Joe Johnston, and Brown considered Mason "a selfish dog" who had compounded his offenses by betraying Johnston for Hood.

³⁰Porter, Confederate Military History: VIII, Tennessee, 146-149.

³¹Harris and Porter were both distinguished Tennessee politicians, serving as Democratic Governors of the State. They were also national figures, Harris as U. S. Senator, and Porter as Ambassador. It is unlikely that either would risk his political reputation by producing a falsified version of an old Civil War incident. National Cyclopedia of American Biography (51 vols.; New York: James T. White and Company, 1898-1969), II, 209; VII, 211-212.

³²This argument assumes that the Union forces were still within range of attack by Cheatham's corps sometime between midnight and 3 a.m. on November 30. If this was not so, Mason's failure to issue Hood's order becomes less serious in its consequences, but retains its importance as an indication of administrative weakness.

PART TWO: ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENTS

CHAPTER V

Genesis

March-June, 1862

The commanding generals, assisted to some degree by their chiefs of staff, provided leadership and direction in the Army of Tennessee, but its administrative efficiency depended on the general staff departments which carried out the commanders' orders. Primarily responsible for the administration of the army was the adjutant and inspector general's department.

In the spring of 1861 the Confederate Congress set up a single adjutant and inspector general's department. In it were combined the different functions of the adjutant general and the inspector general, and it was expected that one man would head the joint department. This combination of duties at the highest level of the administrative staff continued to the lowest, where an assistant adjutant general was expected to carry out any tasks assigned to him, including those of inspection. The system of a single department was later subjected to severe criticism, on the grounds that it did not recognize the importance of inspection in establishing and maintaining an army as an efficient fighting machine.¹

The duties of the adjutant and inspector general's department were set out in the Regulations for the Army of

the Confederate States, which in most cases followed word for word the regulations of the old United States Army. The department was responsible for the keeping of records and files, the conduct of correspondence, and the issuing of orders, for all matters relating to appointments, promotions and leaves, and for the organization of the army, from company level to corps. To secure the adequate performance of these duties the Bureau of War in 1864 divided them among the reception office, the office of orders, the appointment office, and the office of organization. The detailed division and allocation of responsibilities, made at administration headquarters in Richmond, was not duplicated in the Army of Tennessee. There the adjutant's duties were carried out by individual assignment to officers of the department.²

These field duties consisted in the main of carrying on the paperwork necessary in any large organization with a hierarchy of rank and the delegation of authority. The adjutant was therefore primarily a desk officer, a bureaucrat facing administrative problems. His closest contact with the special demands made of the military administrator probably lay in his responsibility for orders and correspondence. The adjutant was the regular channel of communication between the commander and his subordinates, and issued all orders relating to the army, or whatever unit of it he served. These orders might be given informally, but they were usually required to follow a standard form, and to be published as General Orders, or Special Orders. Regulations defined the

subject matter appropriate to each type of order:

General orders announce the time and place of issues and payments, hours for roll-calls and duties; the number and kind of orderlies, and the time when they shall be relieved; police regulations, and the prohibitions required by circumstances and localities; returns to be made and their forms; laws and regulations for the army; promotions and appointments; eulogies or censures to corps or individuals, and generally, whatever it may be important to make known to the whole command.

Special orders are such as do not concern the troops generally, and need not be published to the whole command; such as relate to the march of some particular corps, the establishment of some post, the detaching of individuals, the granting requests, etc.

All general orders, and important special orders, had to be read and approved by the line commander giving them before they could be issued by the staff officer.³

With this reservation, that the order in its final form must be approved by the commander, orders were the responsibility of the adjutant. He drew them up, and co-ordinated them, so that they did not clash but combined to fulfill his general's intent. The adjutant was therefore no mere clerk, but the administrative assistant of his commander. The mechanical duties of his department, such as copying orders or reports, were carried out by non-commissioned soldiers, specially detailed as clerks.

The duties of the adjutant required that he spend long hours at headquarters, usually engaged in desk work. Relief might come at the height of a campaign or in the heat of battle, when he was often pressed into service as a courier in attendance on the commander. Usually, however, he was

confined to the headquarters office of the adjutant-general's department.

The role of the inspector was quite different, and it was this difference that led some critics to argue that the adjutant and inspector general's department should be divided into two specialized departments, each with its own staff. The inspector's duties required him to be active in the field at all times, in constant supervision of all aspects of army life. Without such supervision it could not be assumed that orders would be carried out, regulations observed, or efficiency maintained. As the report of a Congressional Committee of Inquiry asserted in 1862, these duties were all the more important as so much of the Confederate Army consisted of "raw recruits and uninstructed officers." The Committee was concerned that inspectors not only report deficiencies, but also see that they be corrected. The wide powers of the inspector were not confined to the lower ranks, but could also be applied to all officers.⁴

Confederate Regulations required detailed inspections and reports:

Inspection reports will show the discipline of the troops; their instruction in all military exercises and duties; the state of their arms, clothing, equipments, and accoutrements of all kinds; of their kitchens and messes; of the barracks and quarters at the post; of the guard-house, prisons, hospital, bakehouse, magazine, storehouses, and stores of every description; of the stables and horses; the condition of the post-school; the management and application of the post and company books, papers, and files; the zeal and ability of the officers in command of troops; the capacity of the officers

conducting the administrative and staff services, the fidelity and economy of their disbursements, the condition of all public property, and the amount of money in the hands of each disbursing officer; the regularity of issues and payments; the mode of enforcing discipline by courts martial, and by the authority of the officers; the propriety and legality of all punishments inflicted; and any information whatsoever concerning the service in any matter or particular that may merit notice or aid to correct defects or introduce improvements.

Inspectors are required particularly to report if any officer is of intemperate habits, or unfit for active service by infirmity or any other cause. 5

The range of supervisory duty implied by these reports was very great. The inspector therefore had more need of previous military experience, in a wide variety of roles, than did the adjutant. This was especially true of the inspector's responsibility to judge the capability and the performance of his fellow officers. Indeed Colonel R. H. Chilton, adjutant and inspector general of the Army of Northern Virginia, reported to the War Department that "the army inspectors [are], where efficient, the most important officers we have."⁶

The superior demands made of the inspector were the cause of the movement to divide the adjutant and inspector general's department. Senator Wigfall was a heated supporter of this proposal, and wrote to General Joseph E. Johnston in its favor:

Nothing is so wanting in this Army [Northern Virginia] as inspection. ...an inspector should not only be a man of great integrity and firmness but a most accomplished soldier. He should have learned the duties of a soldier by having performed them. What good can you expect from the inspection of your Artillery by one of the batch of Adj[utan]t Gen[era]ls appointed at Richmond not one out of ten of whom knows a gun from a howitzer?

Wigfall was convinced that he could force a bill through Congress to establish a separate inspector general's department, but in this he was mistaken, underestimating the opposition of President Davis.⁷

In his message to Congress of May 28, 1864, Davis made his position on the staff bill quite clear. He asserted certain "general principles" which should govern staff legislation, and among these was the need to maintain a united adjutant and inspector general's department. The President was emphatic on this point, and supported his argument at some length. He did not believe that European armies provided examples of a divided department, for the duties of inspection were so closely connected with other general staff duties that they could not be separated from them. Davis opposed an independent department of inspection for three reasons--there was not sufficient employment for a specialized corps of inspectors; inspectors understood their duties better if they also served as adjutants; and inspectors could not maintain good relations with the rest of the army if they only served as detective and informing officers.⁸ The Confederate President was here elaborating the same views that he had earlier held as United States Secretary of War. His argument proved successful, and the staff bill of June 14, 1864, made no reference to any division of the adjutant and inspector general's department.⁹

For General Samuel Cooper, adjutant and inspector general of the Confederate States Army throughout the war, the united

department imposed no hardship. He set up special offices within the department, and apportioned the duties among them. Six offices were assigned the adjutant's work, one the inspector's, and one the judge advocate's. This division of labor, formally announced in February 1864, perhaps helped to relieve the pressure reported by Cooper to Secretary of War James A. Seddon two months earlier. Cooper had then described a distressing situation. "The clerical force in this office is barely sufficient for its current business," he wrote. "Within the past two years one officer and six clerks in this Bureau have died while on duty. Twelve others have broken down and been forced to resign."¹⁰ But in spite of this strain on the resources of the adjutant and inspector general's department, Cooper was still able to make special assignment of specific duties, to organize his department on efficient bureaucratic lines.

Such an organization was not feasible, however, at the lower levels of military administration, where the number of staff officers was naturally limited by the availability of suitable candidates, and legally restricted by army regulations. General Orders No. 44, issued at Richmond in the spring of 1864, permitted only six administrative officers on army staff, four on corps, and two on division. These officers were uniformly described as assistant adjutant and inspector generals, and the rank to which they were entitled ranged from major to colonel.¹¹ Commanders in the field did not necessarily observe these regulation restrictions, but

made appointments as they were required. Even so, the division of duties possible at Richmond could not be repeated in a field army. There, as General Orders No. 44 specifically instructed, officers of the adjutant and inspector general's department had to be ready to act both as adjutant and as inspector.

The degree to which official regulations were carried out in the field depended in an immediate sense on the officer heading the adjutant and inspector general's department. In the Army of Tennessee that officer was variously known, sometimes as chief of staff, sometimes as adjutant general, sometimes as a combination of the two. But, whatever the title, as head of the department he was responsible for the administration of the army.

The first administrative director of the Army of Tennessee was Colonel, later Brigadier General, Thomas Jordan. He had served in Virginia as the leading adjutant general on the staff of General Beauregard, and had won high praise from his commander for "his able assistance in the organization under my [Beauregard's] command, and for the intelligence and promptness" with which he had carried out his duties. Jordan went with Beauregard to the West, and there served from March to August, 1862, as adjutant general of the Army of Tennessee, under the successive commands of Albert Sidney Johnston, Beauregard, and Braxton Bragg. Jordan therefore played an important role in setting up the administrative system of the Western army.¹²

Jordan had served as an army officer from his West Point graduation in 1840 to the outbreak of the Civil War, at which point he joined the Confederate States Army. As a professional soldier he had clear and positive views on the functions of the adjutant and inspector general's department. He believed that all orders should be concise and specific, and maintained that under Beauregard he had always sought "to make orders explicit and such as will meet the ends in view--orders that will not be mere verbiage." This concern over orders, however, was not merely in the interests of a spartan efficiency and simplicity. Jordan had a certain amount of literary conceit, and liked to polish his writing, on one occasion to make it suitable for publication in England, on another to fit it to a Napoleonic model. Jordan's conceit was a weakness which made him a difficult subordinate, except where his personal loyalty was engaged, as it was towards Beauregard. But it was not a weakness which necessarily interfered with his efficient organization of the adjutant general's department.¹³

The department was directed by a small group of officers headed by the adjutant general. Under these men the work of the department, virtually all paperwork, was carried out by clerks--non-commissioned soldiers assigned to staff duty. Among Jordan's clerks were two able young men from Front Royal, Virginia, Irving Ashby Buck and Thomas Benton Roy, who later received staff commissions; Buck became assistant adjutant general to Major General Patrick R. Cleburne, and

Roy chief of staff to Lieutenant General William J. Hardee. The successful record of these men suggests that Jordan had a good eye in selecting his subordinates. They, in their turn, were impressed by the adjutant general.¹⁴

While serving with Jordan in Virginia, early in 1862, Buck described his duties as clerk in a letter to his sister, and revealed incidentally the way in which Jordan organized the work of the adjutant general's department. One clerk, known for his fine writing, was responsible for recording all the letters, general and special orders, and circulars, which left the department; a group of three clerks made copies of all orders and correspondence; Buck himself dealt with all incoming letters, on matters of leaves, resignations, transfers, discharges, and applications of all kinds; and Roy had the most responsible and demanding duty of all, that of the general endorsement and handling of all papers entering or leaving the department. "Every paper that passes through this office has to be recorded, and accounted for," Buck noted without enthusiasm, later adding "...I console myself with the knowledge that there is but twenty four hours in a day and night...and the law allows a man to sleep six of them."¹⁵

Obviously Jordan's clerks were hard worked, and, if found temporarily inactive, as Buck once was, were liable to be given the task of making additional copies of one of Beauregard's battle reports,¹⁶ presumably for distribution among the general's political friends. But it is apparent that

Jordan had methodically defined the duties of the adjutant general's department, arranged them in classified groups, and then assigned them to designated members of the department. Such a careful division of labor gave hope of an efficient administration; it is to Jordan's credit that the most responsible duties were given to the two men, Buck and Roy, whose later records indicate that they were the best fitted to carry them out. When Jordan was ordered to the Western theater of operations, he saw to it that the clerks of his department went with him.¹⁷

Thus Beauregard was able to join General A. S. Johnston with the nucleus of an administrative staff. He brought from Virginia Colonel Jordan as adjutant general, five officers commissioned on staff, and the departmental clerks. The five officers were Captain Francis H. Jordan, lawyer brother of the adjutant general; Major George W. Brent, also a lawyer; Lieutenant John M. Otey, recent graduate of the Virginia Military Institute; Captain Clifton H. Smith; and Lieutenant Colonel Camille Armand Jules Marie, Prince de Polignac, professional officer of the French Army, known less impressively in the Confederate forces as "Polecat."¹⁸ These men served in the administrative department of the Western army from early spring to late summer, 1862. The two most influential were Jordan and Brent.

Beauregard arrived in the Western Department in February, 1862. Bragg followed a month later, with reinforcements from his troops at Pensacola and Mobile. Both generals had been

sent to the aid of Johnston, who was being driven from Kentucky and Tennessee by Federal armies. But it was not till late March that the three generals united their commands at Corinth, Mississippi, and worked to build the force known in the spring of 1862 as the Army of the Mississippi, and later as the Army of Tennessee. Johnston was commander-in-chief, Beauregard second-in-command, and Bragg chief of staff. A soldier wrote home describing this gathering of high-ranking officers--"We have here now a magnificent power of Military Chieftains.... A Brig[adier] has become quite a commonplace individual, a Colonel is a pigmy, a Lieutenant a non-entity."¹⁹

Much debate has taken place over the division of command responsibilities between Johnston and Beauregard;²⁰ it is clear, however, that the administration of the united army was to follow the pattern set by Beauregard and Jordan earlier in the year, at Beauregard's headquarters in Jackson, Tennessee. Johnston confirmed for the whole army the general orders which Beauregard had issued at Jackson "touching matters of organization, discipline and conduct of the troops," and Jordan became adjutant general of the army.²¹ Writing after the war, a staff officer recollected that "General Johnston... had insisted that General Beauregard must undertake the work of organization; also...he should issue all orders without the formula of being submitted and approved by General Johnston, except, of course, such an order as that of directing the offensive."²²

The administrative work, begun under Beauregard and later continued by Bragg, reflected the inexperience and the disorderly condition of the Confederate forces. Only Bragg's men from Mobile and Pensacola were considered well-disciplined and adequately trained. Among the others there was enthusiastic noise, frequent drinking, indiscriminate firing of guns, and a fine disregard for military regulations and civilian property rights. The army was close to being "an armed Mob, unreliable in action and inefficient." To convert the potential mob into "a perfect yet simple machine, calm and steady amid the greatest dangers and easily wielded by its commanders," Beauregard had to enforce discipline, insist on implicit obedience to orders, and provide instruction for his men.²³ These needs applied at all military levels, from general officer to private, and the agency through which Beauregard tried to supply them was Jordan's adjutant general's department.

But the assistant adjutant generals themselves required organization and instruction. All officers not attached to specific commands were ordered to report to Beauregard's headquarters, to clarify their assignments; regulation form was prescribed for orders, endorsements, and all official correspondence; and all communication with the War Department, the Adjutant and Inspector General, and the general commanding was required to move in the ascending line of command. Once the basic form of military administration had been established the assistants were instructed in their duties. Under Jordan's direction they issued all orders from headquarters to the army, made inspections and reconnaissances, and acted on

occasion as messengers for the commander. Thus in the spring of 1862 the officers of the adjutant general's department had many tasks to learn, and in spite of Jordan's careful organization the department was simply not ready for the strains put upon it by the Battle of Shiloh. The orders for the battle have been much criticized, and Beauregard complained that the topographical sketches of the battlefield were "very imperfect"--failures due, in both cases, to the adjutant general's department. At this early stage in the war the range of duties required of inexperienced staff officers was too great for their efficient performance.²⁴

Inefficiency due to inexperience was compounded by uncertainty over the relation of staff to line. Especially in the first year of the war line commanders selected their own staff officers, and then applied to the War Department for confirmation of the appointment. Under this ad hoc system, the relations of any staff group were with the commander and the military unit it served. The group was not an integral part of any unified staff system, subject in the field to the headquarters staff of the army, and in the Confederacy as a whole to the Bureaus of the War Department at Richmond. There was no such unified staff system, and in the Army of Tennessee it was highly uncertain how much authority Jordan, as adjutant general of the army, could exercise over the assistant adjutants general of corps, division, and brigade. Any extension of his authority over the staff of subordinate commands was liable to be resented by the generals of the line, as

interference with their control of their own officers. Thus what might be gained in efficiency by a closely integrated staff structure would be lost in dissension among officers jealous for their independent authority. Throughout the history of the Western army its commanders had to try to reconcile the competing claims of administrative efficiency and harmonious relations with their subordinates. Unfortunately their efforts to balance the interests of staff and line met with only limited success.

Although Jordan was an officious man, ready on occasion to exaggerate the importance of his position, there is no evidence that he tried to establish any form of tight control over the subordinate officers of the adjutant general's department. Nevertheless he did insist that all correspondence with the commanding general should pass through his office. Bragg, however, tried to establish a greater degree of control over staff activities. As corps commander, he ordered on March 21 that division and brigade staffs report directly to the chiefs of their respective departments at his corps headquarters; as chief of staff, he required that the heads of staff departments report to him daily.²⁵ The general thus showed an early interest in the direction and control of the staff departments, an interest he would pursue later as army commander. But in the spring of 1862 Bragg and Jordan, in their different capacities, were less concerned with staff matters than with the necessary organization of the army.

Under Jordan the adjutant general's department dealt with a wide range of activities--command and staff assignments, conscription details, camp discipline, passes and leave, rations, musters, and supplies of all kinds. These matters were all part of the routine of military administration. Two areas received markedly heavy attention, revealing that the Confederate army at Corinth was far from being the "perfect yet simple machine" that Beauregard wanted. Courts martial were frequent, especially during the reorganization of the army which followed the Battle of Shiloh; and lengthy general orders had to be issued, giving detailed instructions on the elementary duties of a soldier. Regulations were published for the men in camp, on picket duty, in contact with the enemy; officers were instructed in the leadership of men, in simple battle tactics, in the complexities of organization and supply; and the duties of staff departments were meticulously listed, especially those of the medical department which must provide for casualties on the field and behind the lines.²⁶ It is impossible to say with whom these orders originated, but as they were issued between March and August, 1862, responsibility for them must be shared by Beauregard and Bragg. Whatever their source, the orders passed through Jordan's department, and owed something of their formulation to him. The Battle of Shiloh was to reveal the degree to which the early organization of the army had been effective.

The battle was fought on April 6 and 7, 1862, two days later than had originally been planned.²⁷ This delay allowed time for reinforcements to reach the Union army, and so contributed to the failure of the Confederate attack. Certainly the delay has usually been considered important in determining the battle's outcome.²⁸

In a general sense the delay was caused by the difficulties inherent in moving a large inexperienced mass of men over roughly twenty miles of country roads into position for battle. This was Bragg's opinion, and in his official report he described some of the problems:

But few regiments of my command had ever made a day's march. A very large proportion of the rank and file had never performed a day's labor. Our organization had been most hasty, with great deficiency in commanders, and was therefore very imperfect. The equipment was lamentably defective for field service, and our transportation, hastily impressed..., was deficient in quantity and very inferior in quality. 29

Recognition of these general difficulties did not however preclude the inevitable attempt to assign specific responsibility for the army's failure to move according to schedule. Johnston, Beauregard, Polk, and Hardee have all had their critics, and their champions.³⁰ Some of the generals' responsibility must be shared by Colonel Thomas Jordan, adjutant general of the army.

Once the decision had been taken on the night of April 2/3 to attack the Federal forces at Pittsburg Landing, Jordan became in effect the chief staff officer of the Army of Tennessee. Bragg, although nominally chief of staff, had to turn to the duties of his corps command.³¹ The direction of

the staff work of the army thus fell increasingly on Jordan, who was not unwilling to see this extension of his power and influence; and as adjutant general Jordan was also responsible for the formulation and issue of the orders to advance against the enemy. Yet in spite of his West Point background and his professional experience, Jordan was curiously remiss in carrying out these duties.

There is a still unresolved dispute over whether it was Johnston or Beauregard who took the initiative in ordering the advance. But a generally accepted outline of events can be given. Late in the evening of April 2 Polk sent word to Beauregard that Federal troops were at Pittsburg; Beauregard sent Jordan as his spokesman to Johnston; Johnston took Jordan with him to Bragg's quarters, where the three men discussed the news and agreed on an attack; preliminary orders to be ready to march at 6 a.m. on the 3rd were sent by Jordan to the corps commanders; during the night plans for the march over the two available roads were worked out by Beauregard, and given to Jordan for elaboration and formulation into written orders for the army; about 10 a.m. verbal orders were given for the advance, with instructions that it should begin at 12 a.m.; the army did not move till late in the afternoon, however, and it was dark before the Confederate forces cleared Corinth. Confusion over orders contributed to the delay which allowed troops under Union General Don Carlos Buell to reinforce Ulysses S. Grant at Shiloh, and possibly cost the Confederates the battle.

Jordan's part in the delay concerned the written orders for the march which should have been issued by the adjutant general's department. Known as Special Orders No. 8, and dated at Corinth, Mississippi, on April 3, 1862,³² these instructions had not been sent out by 12 a.m., nor yet by 3 p.m., when the troops finally began to move on a verbal command. The army was still too inexperienced to follow without explicit written direction the complicated schedule of march announced at 10 a.m. and only later published as Special Orders No. 8.³³ Jordan later admitted this delay in issuing the orders, and tried to excuse himself. He had warned, he wrote, that "the preparation of the order, with all the necessary copies for the Generals and the proper staff officers would take some hours," and being "constantly interrupted by other more urgent office duties" he was unable to have the order copied and distributed; relying on the verbal instructions given to Bragg, Polk, and Hardee, he believed that the order was "not at all urgent."³⁴ It is difficult to imagine what could be more urgent on the eve of a battle than the marching orders and troop dispositions which were to bring on the engagement. Certainly it was not Jordan's need to consult Napoleon's order for the battle of Waterloo (an unfortunate parallel, at best), nor was it the announcement of staff assignments and the general organization of the commissary department--activities which did occupy him on April 3.³⁵ If on that day the adjutant general's department was too busy to give priority to march and battle orders, then the department

was either poorly organized, or insufficiently flexible, or inadequately staffed. Whatever the reason, it failed to meet the extra pressures put on it by the impending battle.

Even when issued, Special Orders No. 8 did not meet with approval. Bragg later described the detailed plans for advance as "simply execrable," and blamed them on either Beauregard or Jordan. A recent military critic has considered them too elaborate for clarity, and unnecessarily embellished with reminders about the range of rifled artillery and the need to use the bayonet.³⁶ Such general information and advice had no normal place in a battle order, but their presence there reflected both Jordan's disposition to lecture and the field officers' need for basic instruction.

In spite of delays and confusion the Army of Tennessee finally moved out of Corinth late on April 3, came within reach of the Federal forces on the 5th, and joined battle on the 6th and 7th. General Johnston was killed on the first day; Beauregard succeeded to the command, and continued to direct the battle from his headquarters, behind the lines; Bragg was heavily involved on the field. Initial successes on the 6th could not be maintained, and after costly and inconclusive fighting on the 7th the Confederate army withdrew to its Corinth base. Fortunately there was no immediate pursuit.

During the battle the adjutant general's department had to fulfill two functions. One was to carry on its usual desk duties, of the receipt of information and the issue of orders,

and this was done by the headquarters staff under the supervision of assistant adjutant general Francis H. Jordan. The other function was to assume whatever active duties might be assigned on the field. Colonel Jordan, Captain Clifton H. Smith, Lieutenant John M. Otey, and Major George W. Brent made reconnaissances, carried orders, assisted in the direction of troops, and re-organized stragglers. The department, at headquarters and in the field, was the means by which the commander maintained contact with his generals and tried to co-ordinate the Confederate attack. In his official report on the Battle of Shiloh Beauregard praised the administrative staff, making special mention of those who had spent both days under enemy fire.³⁷

Colonel Jordan gave his own account of his part in the two day battle, probably with some exaggeration, but also with a certain basic credibility. Beauregard had granted his request for service in the field, Jordan wrote; there the adjutant general assumed "the authority of his position," giving orders to advance and to attack, directing the placing of batteries, and communicating with the principal field commanders through their chiefs of staff; on both days he helped direct the battle, and during the withdrawal on the 7th was responsible for organizing and posting the rearguard; much of this work he did on his own initiative, although any orders were given in the name of the commanding general.³⁸

If this account is reasonably accurate, then Jordan had not assumed but exceeded his authority as adjutant general.

According to American military theory of the day, administration and command were distinct,³⁹ but at Shiloh Jordan had come close to combining the two. Acceptance of his orders was probably guaranteed less by his role as adjutant general than by the knowledge of Beauregard's confidence in him. Staff work at this early stage in the Civil War was not part of a clearly defined administrative system, but was still dependent on personality, influence, and the needs of the moment.

The Army of Tennessee, consisting largely of untrained and inexperienced men, had fought a major battle within a week of its formal organization under Sidney Johnston. Not surprisingly, that battle had revealed serious weaknesses. Bragg described the state of the army on the retreat to Corinth -- "Our condition is horrible. Troops utterly disorganized and demoralized. Road almost impassable. No provisions and no forage; consequently everything is feeble.... It is most lamentable to see the state of affairs, but I am powerless and almost exhausted."⁴⁰ If the army was to recover the work of organization begun in March 1862 must be resumed, both for the men and for the administration. This re-organization was carried out, first at Corinth and then at Tupelo, from April to mid-July, with such effect that the army could be transferred via Mobile, Alabama, to Chattanooga, Tennessee, in readiness for an invasion of Tennessee and Kentucky. The transformation was achieved under the general direction of Beauregard and Bragg, assisted by Jordan and Brent.

A barrage of orders was issued from the adjutant general's department, concerning battle reports, inspection reports, leaves, courts martial, ordnance supplies, medical care, rations, election of officers, censorship of news.⁴¹

Necessary as all these regulations were from the standpoint of military administration, they made the department the target of irreverent soldierly humor. "What is the first duty of an Adjutant General?" asked a camp newspaper, and replied, "To become so buffish that everyone will dislike to do business with him." The second duty was "to fill his office with young squirts, as clerks and assistants, to look fiercely at visitors," and the third "to perpetually intrigue for a higher position in the line, provided it is not attended with personal danger."⁴² These were standard complaints against administrative officers, but their very existence probably indicated the increasing effectiveness of the orders published by the adjutant general's department.

The new effectiveness was due to a development in administration formally instituted on May 6, 1862, when Brigadier General James E. Slaughter was announced as chief of the inspector general's department. The appointment of an inspector general was not new. Slaughter had served under Bragg in that capacity, in 1861-1862, and Brent had been made acting inspector general by Beauregard on April 3, 1862, although that appointment had never been confirmed by Richmond. What was new was the institution of an inspector general's department, separate from the adjutant general's, and with

its own officers to carry out the routine duties of inspection previously fulfilled by assistant adjutants.⁴³ Although its very existence contravened official regulations, the new department became and remained an important part of the administrative system of the Army of Tennessee.

Slaughter was one of Bragg's men from Pensacola, and in the first year of the war had risen rapidly in rank, from lieutenant to brigadier general. Great-nephew of President Madison, graduate of the Virginia Military Institute, Mexican War veteran, Slaughter seemed set for a distinguished Civil War career. Yet he did not fulfill this promise, spending the last years of the war in the relative obscurity of the Trans-Mississippi Department. Jordan, whose judgements were admittedly not always objective, was not impressed by Slaughter's performance as inspector general with the Army of Tennessee. "He means well," Jordan wrote, "but has neither the education nor the natural ability for the important place he holds." Possibly Slaughter had deserved Bragg's favor less as an able staff officer, capable of independent action, than as a good subordinate.⁴⁴

The new inspector general's department was much needed. Reports in April showed that the supply system of the commissary and ordnance departments was thoroughly disorganized, and there was doubt whether general orders issued from army headquarters were being duly published and enforced.⁴⁵ To deal with these and similar problems regulations were drawn up for the new department, defining its organization and

duties. These regulations appeared on June 5, 1862, in the name of commanding general Beauregard, and over the signature of acting chief of staff Brent.⁴⁶ That Brent had earlier been acting inspector general to Beauregard suggests that he, rather than Slaughter, had been instrumental in drawing up the regulations. Inspectors were to meet daily for instructions from the chiefs of their departments; inspections were then to be made, checking army lines, pickets, the firing of guns, and the observance of military rules; and reports were to be submitted, in the first instance to the general staff of the army, and then to the headquarters of the Western Department. The orders are not entirely clear about the organization of the inspector general's department--no mention is made, for example, of the relation of an inspector to his immediate line commander, nor is it certain whether an inspector of artillery was to report to the chief inspector, or to the chief of artillery. But the orders do imply an attempt to create an integrated and effective system of inspection.

The work done at Corinth and Tupelo by the new inspector general's department was highly praised by Colonel William Preston Johnston, aide to President Davis and sent by him to investigate the condition of Beauregard's army. Before reaching the camp at Tupelo, Johnston received a letter from his uncle, Brigadier General William Preston, warning him of difficulties there. "The army is not in good condition," Preston wrote. "Bragg is a stern and imperious soldier and

is endeavoring by excessive severity to establish discipline, but the men are indignant, and I fear trouble. Both he and General Beauregard are secluded and inaccessible, and the transition from the laxity of the volunteer system is too sudden." Bragg, he concluded, was "not a skilful angler, who throws his fish with a sudden flourish over his shoulder."⁴⁷ But in spite of this warning, Johnston was impressed by what he found.

The Army of Tennessee, Johnston reported, was in an excellent state of discipline, with good morale, and a soldierly appearance; there was a daily training schedule; and respect was shown for civilian property. Credit for the great improvement in these matters was "due in some measure to the better and more rigid system of inspection that has been inaugurated. Further improvement in this direction might be expected if the law authorized the appointment of brigade inspectors and if more thorough instruction in their duties was given this branch of the staff."⁴⁸ Johnston thus commended the work of the inspector general's department, and made suggestions for its future expansion through an extended organization and a more specialized training. From his observation in the field, he came to the same conclusion as Davis's opponents in Richmond, that army administration would be better served by a division of the adjutant and inspector general's department.

After the Battle of Shiloh, therefore, a concerted effort was made to complete the organization of the Confederate forces

in the Western Department. The two commanders most concerned in the improvements noted by Colonel Johnston were Beauregard and his second-in-command, Bragg. The staff agencies involved were the adjutant general's department, under Jordan, and the new inspector general's department, nominally directed by Slaughter, but probably strongly influenced by Brent. These staff departments were themselves acquiring a rudimentary organization. Appointments were still made largely through nomination by the line commanders, but attempts were being made to establish a hierarchy of authority and responsibility within each staff department, and to develop in the officers of the administrative staff competence in their special duties. The basis of a staff system, as distinct from staff improvisation, thus existed in the Army of Tennessee when Bragg formally replaced Beauregard as commander of the Western Department, on July 2, 1862.

Notes

¹War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (128 vols.; Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Series IV, I, 114, 163, 890-891 (hereafter cited as OR, with all references to Series I, unless otherwise indicated); ibid., III, 352; Louis T. Wigfall to [Joseph E. Johnston], Virginia [April, 1864], Joseph E. Johnston Papers, Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

²Regulations for the Army of the Confederate States, and for the Quartermaster's and Pay Departments. The Uniform and Dress of the Army. The Articles of War (revised edition; New Orleans: Bloomfield and Steel, 1861), and Revised Regulations for the Army of the United States, 1861 (Philadelphia: J. G. L. Brown, 1861)--cf. Confederate Regulations, pp. 63-64, 71, and U. S. Regulations, pp. 66, 68, 71; OR, Series IV, III, 170.

³Confederate Regulations, pp. 63-64.

⁴OR, Series IV, I, 890-891.

⁵Ibid., 890; Confederate Regulations, p. 71; OR, Series IV, III, 43-45, 297, 466-471.

⁶Ibid., 44.

⁷Wigfall to [Johnston], Virginia [April, 1864], Johnston Papers.

⁸OR, Series IV, III, 451-452. See also II, 944-946.

⁹Ibid., III, 497-498.

¹⁰Ibid., 169-172; II, 1059.

¹¹Ibid., III, 352-353.

¹²Alfred Roman, Military Operations of General Beauregard (2 vols.; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1883), I, 439, 466; List of Staff Officers of the Confederate States Army, 1861-1865 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1891), p. 89.

¹³Ellsworth Eliot, Jr., West Point in the Confederacy (New York: G. A. Baker and Co., Inc., 1941), p. 369; Thomas Jordan to P. G. T. Beauregard, [near Centreville, Virginia, January, 1862] Thomas Jordan Papers, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina; Irving Ashby Buck to Dear Lucie, [Virginia] January 19, 1862, Irving Ashby Buck Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; Thomas Jordan, "Notes of a Confederate Staff Officer at Shiloh," Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, Robert U. Johnson and Clarence C. Buel, eds. (4 vols.; New York: The Century Company, 1887-1888), I, 595, n.

¹⁴List of Staff Officers, pp. 23, 143; Irving Ashby Buck to Dear Ma, Corinth, Mississippi, May 15, 1862, Buck Papers.

¹⁵Irving Ashby Buck to Dear Lucie, [Virginia] January 19, 1862, ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Irving Ashby Buck to Dear Lucie, [Virginia] January 25, 1862, ibid.

¹⁸For information relating to these men, see List of Staff Officers; S. Bassett French Biographical Sketches, Virginia State Library, Richmond; Roman, Beauregard, I, 493; Ezra J. Warner, Generals in Gray (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1959), pp. 241-242.

¹⁹OR, X, pt. 2, 370-371; C. J. Johnson to his wife, Corinth, Mississippi, March 23, 1862, Charles James Johnson Letters, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge.

²⁰See Charles P. Roland, Albert Sidney Johnston: Soldier of Three Republics (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1964), pp. 311-312; T. Harry Williams, P. G. T. Beauregard: Napoleon in Gray (New York: Collier Books, 1962), pp. 160-161.

²¹General Orders, Corinth, Mississippi, March 29, 1862, Bragg-Beauregard Headquarters Book, Civil War Papers, Louisiana Historical Association Collection, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, New Orleans (cited hereafter as Headquarters Book); OR, X, pt. 2, 371, 373.

²²David Urquhart to Thomas Jordan, Narragansett, Rhode Island, August 25, 1880, quoted in Roman, Beauregard, I, 275.

²³Grady McWhiney, Braxton Bragg and Confederate Defeat: Volume I, Field Command (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), pp. 202-203; OR, X, pt. 2, 443. The offenses against military regulations can be examined in detail in the court martial records, Headquarters Book.

²⁴For staff organization, see Headquarters Book; Reports, February 27, March 28, 1862, Francis H. Jordan, Compiled Service Records of Confederate General and Staff Officers and Nonregimental Enlisted Men, War Department Collection of Confederate Records, Record Group 109, National Archives, Washington, D. C. (cited hereafter as CSR); F. H. Jordan report, February 28, 1862, Thomas Jordan Papers; Roman, Beauregard, I, 270.

²⁵OR, X, pt. 2, 353; Circular, Corinth, Mississippi, March 31, 1862, Headquarters Book.

²⁶For the orders issued by the adjutant general's department, see Headquarters Book; also OR, X, pt. 2, 297-642, and XVII, pt. 2, 591-683.

²⁷Recent secondary accounts of the preliminary movements and the battle are Williams, Beauregard, pp. 161-189; Roland, Johnston, pp. 316-351; Thomas Lawrence Connelly, Army of the Heartland: The Army of Tennessee, 1861-1862 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), pp. 151-175; McWhiney, Braxton Bragg, pp. 218-252.

²⁸Williams, Beauregard, pp. 166, 188-189, does not agree that the delays were important. He argues that even on the 5th Grant had enough men to hold his own.

²⁹OR, X, pt. 1, 463. See also William Preston Johnston, Life of General Albert Sidney Johnston (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1879), p. 554.

³⁰Johnston's son blamed Beauregard; Beauregard blamed Polk; Polk's son claimed that the bishop-general was waiting for Hardee. More recent writers support the subject of their biographies, with the exception of Williams, who maintains that the error was probably Beauregard's, but that it made no significant difference to the outcome. W. P. Johnston, Johnston, p. 553; Roman, Beauregard, I, 275; William Mecklenburg Polk, Leonidas Polk, Bishop and General (2 vols.; New York: Longmans, 1893), II, 85; Roland, Johnston, pp. 316-317; Williams, Beauregard, pp. 165-166; Joseph H. Parks, General Leonidas Polk, C. S. A.: The Fighting Bishop (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1962), p. 228; Nathaniel Cheairs Hughes, Jr., General William J. Hardee: Old Reliable (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1965), p. 102, n. 7.

³¹Bragg's biographer believes that the Confederate army would have been better served had Bragg retained his staff duties and freed Beauregard for combat command. McWhiney, Braxton Bragg, p. 224.

³²OR, X, pt. 1, 392-395.

³³Misunderstanding of the verbal orders has usually been attributed to Polk. Roman, Beauregard, I, 275.

³⁴Thomas Jordan, "Recollections of General Beauregard's Service in West Tennessee in the Spring of 1862," Southern Historical Society Papers, VIII (1880), 412; also Jordan, "Notes...at Shiloh," 596, and Roman, Beauregard, I, 275. Roland, Johnston, p. 316, finds Jordan a partial rather than a reliable witness, but in this instance there are no grounds on which to discredit his statement.

³⁵Jordan, "Notes...at Shiloh," 595, n.; General Orders Nos. 6 and 7, Corinth, Mississippi, April 3, 1862, Headquarters Book; Special Orders No. 7, Corinth, Mississippi, April 3, 1862, George William Brent, CSR.

³⁶Braxton Bragg to W. P. Johnston, December 16, 1874, Mrs. Mason Barret Collection of Albert Sidney Johnston and William Preston Johnston Papers, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, quoted in McWhiney, Braxton Bragg, p. 221; Arthur Crego, "The Organization and Functions of the Staff of the Confederate Army of Tennessee," (unpublished M. A. thesis, Louisiana State University, 1965), pp. 71-72.

³⁷Roman, Beauregard, I, 285-321, 524-539; OR, X, pt. 1, 390-391. This dual role of the adjutant general's department accords with the definition given in H. L. Scott, Military Dictionary (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968, c. 1861), p. 14.

³⁸Jordan, "Notes at Shiloh," 599-603.

³⁹Scott, Military Dictionary, p. 17.

⁴⁰OR, X, pt. 2, 398.

⁴¹See General Orders Nos. 9-112, April 9-August 13, 1862, Headquarters Book.

⁴²Article intended for the Army Argus, at Corinth, Mississippi, published in the Daily Richmond Whig, August 23, 1862. See also Sam R. Watkins, "Co. Aytch." A Side Show of the Big Show (New York: Collier Books, 1962), pp. 138-139.

⁴³OR, X, pt. 2, 500; Special Orders No. 7, April 3, 1862, Brent, CSR; Brent to James Cooper, Richmond [Virginia], June 30, 1862, ibid. Jordan had been promoted brigadier general on April 17, and thus was Slaughter's junior in rank. General Orders No. 17, Headquarters Book. Presumably Jordan owed his appointment as chief of staff to his West Point background and his association with Beauregard.

⁴⁴Warner, Generals In Gray, p. 279; OR, XVII, pt. 2, 679.

⁴⁵Report, April 16, 1862, F. H. Jordan, CSR; General Orders No. 27, April 28, 1862, Headquarters Book.

⁴⁶General Orders No. 64, June 5, 1862, ibid. Headquarters Book provides regulation copies of all general orders, and these copies were originally unsigned; Jordan's signature was later entered under all orders, whether he issued them or not; in this case an order published on June 5, authorized by the "acting Chief of Staff," could only have been issued by Brent.

⁴⁷William Preston to [William Preston Johnston], Tupelo, Mississippi, June 14, 1862, Barret Collection.

⁴⁸OR, X, pt. 1, 781.

CHAPTER VI

Evolution

July 1862-December 1863

As commander of the Western Department Bragg inherited the administrative system built up under Beauregard. The system was incomplete, and in some areas ill-defined, but an attempt had been made to co-ordinate staff work under the direction of the general staff of the army, and, through inspection, to ensure its efficient performance. Bragg also inherited, at Beauregard's suggestion, his predecessor's administrative staff.¹ This should have provided continuity in the departments of the adjutant general and the inspector general, minimizing the upheaval caused by the change in commanders. Instead, it created dissent.

Bragg announced his staff on July 17, 1862.² In all he made ten administrative appointments, four in the adjutant general's department, five in the inspector general's, and one in the office of the judge advocate. Five of the appointments went to Beauregard's men, and five to Bragg's. Retained were the two Jordan brothers, Otey, Polignac, and a recent arrival, Captain Giles Buckner Cooke; added were Lieutenant Colonel George G. Garner, assistant adjutant general, Lieutenant Colonel William K. Beard and Captain J. P. Jones, assistant inspectors general, and Lieutenant Colonel Harvey W. Walter,

judge advocate; inspector general Slaughter, although appointed by Beauregard, was really one of Bragg's officers. Head of this mixed group was Brigadier General Thomas Jordan, confirmed in his position as chief of staff.³

The dissent among the staff arose from their sense of personal attachment to individual commanders. Rivalry between Bragg and Beauregard men led Jordan to suspect a plot to denigrate Beauregard, and to discriminate against his staff officers. "Toadeaters and sycophants," Jordan charged, curried favor by attacking Beauregard, and those of his staff who had not been replaced were the objects of "incessant petty jealousy." The chief of staff involved himself in these disputes, which were given wide publicity, with references, so he claimed, in both Montgomery and Richmond newspapers.⁴ Obviously personal loyalties outweighed esprit de corps among the staff.

There were other signs of difficulty. While at Chattanooga, in August 1862, Jordan tried to enforce a central authority over all the staff departments, by requiring that no staff chief should communicate directly with the commanding general, but only through himself.⁵ Such a system would have helped create a unified staff corps; it would also have increased Jordan's own power. But whatever the motive behind Jordan's attempt to develop a system of staff control, it was frustrated just a week later by a counter-order from Bragg. Bragg insisted that instructions from army general staff to junior staff officers in subordinate commands must proceed,

not through the staff hierarchy directed by Jordan, but through the appropriate line commanders. "Discipline and efficiency," he asserted, "can only be preserved by a rigid adherence to this rule."⁶ Bragg was emphasizing the need, not for a separate staff corps headed by its own chief, but for an interlocking staff-and-line system. This alone could secure communication and co-ordination among the various staff departments and line commands of the army. But as chief of staff in April 1862, Bragg had himself tried to exercise the kind of control claimed by Jordan in August. Bragg's failure to support Jordan, therefore, was not caused by a differing interpretation of the role of chief of staff. Instead, personal factors conditioned his response--Jordan was a focus of staff dissension, and Bragg, in August as in April, wished to keep army administration under his own close direction.

This conflict between Bragg and Jordan over staff organization occurred just as the army was preparing to leave on the Kentucky campaign. Jordan was ordered to remain behind at department headquarters in Chattanooga, and shortly afterwards he left the Western army to rejoin Beauregard.⁷ With Jordan's departure the Beauregard faction on Bragg's staff broke up, and its officers gradually moved to other assignments.

Bragg could thus leave Chattanooga for Kentucky with staff officers of his own selection. As his principal adjutant he took Lieutenant Colonel Garner, former West Point cadet, from 1847-1849, and ex-artillery lieutenant in the U. S. Army.

On October 2, 1862, Garner was superseded by Brent, who returned to the Western army as Bragg's chief of staff and adjutant general. Lieutenant Colonel Beard headed the inspector general's department, replacing Slaughter, on assignment elsewhere. No record of Beard's antebellum career has been found, but it is almost certain that he had no professional military experience prior to the Civil War. When he joined Bragg at Pensacola in 1861 he did so as a lieutenant colonel of Florida infantry, transferring to staff work in March 1862. In Brent and Beard Bragg had found the two men who, with the chief of staff, were to be his principal administrative officers. They served virtually throughout Bragg's command of the Army of Tennessee, Brent as adjutant general, and Beard as inspector general.⁸

With Jordan gone, and Brent and Beard as his chief administrators, Bragg was free to develop the embryonic staff system inherited from Beauregard. At this work, of organization and administration, even Bragg's detractors expected him to excel. In the spring of 1863, for example, General Leonidas Polk recommended that Bragg become inspector general of the Confederacy, because of his "peculiar talent" for the difficult and disagreeable tasks of organization and discipline; and Senator Wigfall, who believed Bragg "totally incompetent for independent command," nevertheless expected that under General J. E. Johnston Bragg would be an able administrator. These views of Bragg's unusual administrative capacity were shared by President Davis, Secretary of War Seddon, and Presidential

aide William Preston Johnston.⁹ With such rare consensus of opinion, based on Bragg's record of success in small commands,¹⁰ it is not surprising that Bragg chose to act largely as his own chief of staff, and to direct personally the administration of his army.

In working with the adjutant general's department Bragg was especially fortunate in his relations with Brent. Brent had an unusual ability to retain the friendship and confidence of demanding and difficult commanders, serving to the satisfaction of both Beauregard and Bragg. Also, Brent's relations with Bragg, a notoriously stiff and rather frightening man,¹¹ never deteriorated with length of service, as did Jordan's and Mackall's. Bragg wrote of his adjutant general with unusual warmth: "He has not only won my confidence by his moral deportment and faithful intelligent discharge of...responsible and laborious duties..., but has endeared himself to me personally."¹² Brent for his part admired his commander, and in December 1863 believed that the Army of Tennessee, in losing Bragg, had lost a leader who combined an exact mind with the "expansiveness of thought and determination of purpose so necessary to constitute a general."¹³ To say this was to overrate Bragg, as Brent should have known from his own experience. Perhaps the lawyer adjutant was too much impressed by his general's professional expertise. But Brent's admiration did indicate a readiness to accept and respect the authority of his military superiors. The same readiness was not always found among professional officers like Jordan or Mackall,

although it was especially appropriate to an administrative role, and introduced an element of harmony into a particularly contentious army.

Throughout his service with Bragg, Brent kept a diary which indirectly revealed how his commander used the adjutant general's department.¹⁴ The department carried out the regulation duties of issuing orders, receiving reports, and keeping army records, the burden of work being heaviest in the periods of re-organization which followed major campaigns and battles. This burden Bragg tried to distribute by dividing responsibility for it. On November 20, 1862, he separated the offices of chief of staff and adjutant general, held jointly by Brent since October 2, and re-arranged the department's work so that it reflected Bragg's own double assignment as commander of geographical Department No. 2 and general of its principal field army. Brigadier General J. K. Duncan became chief of staff, while Garner was made adjutant general of the Department and Brent adjutant general of the army.¹⁵ This division of duties was an attempt at organization of staff work, in the interests of administrative efficiency.

Bragg also wished to see the development of a staff corps, with officers trained and experienced in the duties of their respective staff departments. Theoretically he was opposed to the common practice of a staff attached to the person of their commander, and believed that staff officers, other than aides, should be attached to a specific command, not to the general. Such a system would provide a qualified staff in each army,

with stability and efficiency coming from continuity of service. Orders issued by Bragg to the Army of Tennessee in January 1863 tried to implement these ideas, by requiring that whenever a general was relieved of his assignment his general staff officers had to report to his successor, and could not be transferred without special authority.¹⁶

Given an organized division of labor among the administrative staff and an experienced stable personnel, Bragg was prepared, again in theory, to delegate authority in routine matters to his chief administrative assistants. He would thus spare himself the "laborious attention to...details" which, so Preston Johnston reported in April 1863, occupied so much of Bragg's time. At his request Confederate Adjutant and Inspector General Cooper even relaxed the regulation requiring that orders issued by a staff officer must be signed by the appropriate commander.¹⁷ Ranking officers of the army staff were to be permitted to give routine orders on their own authority to both staff and line officers in the subordinate commands. This would make for greater cohesion within the staff system, reaching from army headquarters through the various command levels, and would also extend the role of the staff in army administration.

Apparently what Bragg wished to develop in the Army of Tennessee was an organized staff system in which trained and experienced officers were delegated power to carry out regulation duties. These officers, led by the chief of staff, the adjutant general, and the inspector general, would function impersonally as the administrative machinery of the command.

For a variety of reasons, however, Bragg's theories were never put fully into practice.

For one thing, Bragg's assignment of administrative duties did not work out as he had planned in November 1862. Duncan died before he could assume his position as chief of staff, and the division of the adjutant general's work between Garner and Brent collapsed when General J. E. Johnston was ordered on November 24 to assume command of Department No. 2.¹⁸ Johnston brought his own staff with him to the West, so that the duties of Bragg's adjutant general's department were reduced to those specifically related to the Army of Tennessee. With Duncan dead, and Garner off to a new assignment early in 1863,¹⁹ Brent remained the chief administrative officer of the army until Mackall's appointment in April as chief of staff. The projected re-organization of the department was therefore never put into effect.

Further, as has already been seen in his relations with his chiefs of staff, Bragg was not really willing to make any consistent delegation of authority. All those who remarked on his administrative capacity were also, by implication, commenting on his fascination with the details of routine. This great interest was not one which encouraged delegation, even of the crushing administrative duties of a large army, and by September 1863, in Mackall's opinion, Bragg's concern for detail had become so obsessive as to make him incapable of exercising the larger responsibilities of his command.²⁰

Also, in spite of Bragg's wish for an impersonal staff system, related to the command and not to the commander, he was unable to exclude the personal element from even his own staff. Jordan and Mackall were both highly qualified and experienced officers who failed as chiefs of staff largely because of deteriorating relations with Bragg. Brent, on the other hand, with no military qualifications and only limited experience, retained Bragg's personal confidence and, with it, his own adjutant general-ship. In these important cases, then, personality outweighed administrative theory.

Brent recorded in his diary how Bragg had deliberately brought his staff into the dispute, following the Battle of Murfreesboro, over his fitness for command. Beginning with his usual comment on the weather, Brent wrote:

Saturday, Jan. 10/63.

The day wet and gloomy. Gen Bragg called his staff together this morning, and read to them an article from the Chattanooga Rebel, declaring that Gen Bragg had lost the confidence of his army--that a change was necessary.... The General desired his staff to think about this matter, and said if he had lost the confidence of his army that he would retire. The staff met and compared opinions, and the conclusion was that under existing circumstances the general interests required that Gen Bragg should ask to be relieved.

Sunday, Jan. 11/63.

A bright day. Gen Bragg drafted a letter to his Corps Commanders, and Division Generals, asking their opinion, in regard to the feeling of the Army, and stating that they had advised a retrograde movement [from the battlefield at Murfreesboro].... It was clear today, from a communication made by Gen Hardee to Col Beard, that the Generals would say there was a want of confidence. There was no question, however, on the other point.... The Staff advised the General not to send the letter; that it was injudicious. He struck out those portions asking for an expression

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of opinion as to the confidence of the Army. The letter however, was still broad, and tended to open up controversy, which ought to be avoided.²¹

By consulting his staff in this way, Bragg involved them, no matter what their answer, in his own awkward dispute with his subordinate commanders,²² and thus encouraged partisanship among the staff at all levels. Partisanship was common, and indeed natural, and Bragg was not solely responsible for its existence. But to the degree that he encouraged it Bragg made all the more difficult of realization his theory of the staff as an impersonal administrative machine.

Meanwhile, and in spite of the failure to implement Bragg's administrative theories, the adjutants ran their department to the general's evident satisfaction. Brent had as his chief assistants Captains P. H. Thomson and Kinloch Falconer.²³ Neither Thomson, from Louisiana, nor Falconer, from Mississippi, had had any military experience prior to the Civil War. Both had, however, been among the men commanded by Bragg in 1861, and both had earned the favorable notice of their superiors. Bragg considered Thomson "a most capable and efficient officer," while Brent, with Mackall's endorsement, recommended Falconer for promotion in glowing terms: "In the discharge of his military duties he has exhibited great zeal and intelligence.... He has labored hard both day and night with a faithfulness and industry not surpassed by others." Thomson later transferred to the inspector general's department, but he remained with the Army of Tennessee till November 1863. Falconer served as assistant adjutant general under Bragg, Johnston, and Hood, until he was severely wounded in

October 1864. His unusually long and able service in the adjutant general's department provided some continuity in an administrative agency frequently upset by the changes of army commander.

Work in Brent's department did not always proceed smoothly, however, illness exacerbated by the pressure of work was partly responsible for Brent's temporary absences from his department in the early spring and mid-summer of 1863.²⁴ His diary reveals a constant procession of orders and reports through the adjutant general's office, in circumstances not always favorable to work--Tullahoma, for several months army headquarters, was "a miserable dirty village," and Brent's office there "a mere sty."²⁵ The task of keeping records was presumably made easier by the existence of "field note paper," which produced a copy at the same time as the original note was written.²⁶ But even with this help the department did not always succeed in keeping its work up to date. Following an inspection of the Army of Tennessee in March 1863, Colonel W. P. Johnston sent a critical report to President Davis:

In the office of Colonel Brent, assistant adjutant general, I found a large number of reports of the battles of Murfreesborough [sic], furnished by brigadier generals and their subordinates. On inquiry, Colonel Brent did not seem aware that it was proper and necessary, to complete the record, that these should be sent to their final depository--the Adjutant General's Office, at Richmond.

Johnston reported this inefficiency to Bragg, as the appropriate line commander, and to Brent's staff superior, with instructions for its correction.²⁷

In addition to the routine work of the adjutant general's office Brent attended at least some of Bragg's conferences with his corps and division commanders. There is no evidence that Brent took any part in the discussion at these meetings, but in his diary he commented on the making of certain command decisions. At the Battle of Murfreesboro, Brent noted, Bragg had withdrawn his own proposal for a Confederate attack on the enemy's left in favor of a proposal from Polk to launch the attack from the Confederate left.²⁸ Again, shortly before the Battle of Chickamauga, in September 1863, Bragg "yielded" to the views of his subordinates, Polk and Lieutenant General Daniel Harvey Hill. By September, Brent considered, Bragg had become "sick and feeble," bowed under his heavy responsibilities, showing "uncertainty and vacillation [sic]" in his decisions--an opinion which confirmed Mackall's impression of Bragg at this same time.²⁹

The adjutant general had observed in his commander a lack of decision at moments of crisis. A similar uncertainty characterized Bragg's use of the administrative machinery of the Army of Tennessee, and Bragg himself departed from the "rigid adherence" to regulations that he had earlier proclaimed essential to efficiency. Regulations defined the handling of orders and correspondence as one of the major functions of the adjutant general's department; Bragg, however, did on occasion issue orders directly, or by whatever staff officer was available, thus by-passing the regular channels of communication.³⁰ To do so was part of a commander's necessary

prerogative, but Bragg did not always advise Brent of the orders given. Where this happened the adjutant general was as a result not fully informed of the army's movements, leaving him in a state of ignorance inimical to efficient administration. The dangers of this situation were to be amply demonstrated under Hood's command, in the confusion of the Confederate attack at Spring Hill.

Perhaps the most extraordinary instance under Bragg of by-passing the adjutant general's department occurred on September 19, 1863. According to Brent,³¹ Bragg issued a verbal order to Polk, to attack at daylight on the 20th, the second day of the Battle of Chickamauga; this order did not pass through the adjutant general's office. Verbal orders were risky at best, being more liable to non-delivery or misinterpretation than written ones; moreover, Polk had an unenviable record of failure to carry out important instructions, at Corinth in April 1862, on the Kentucky campaign in the fall, and again on the Chickamauga campaign, only six days before the battle.³² For whatever reason, the attack was not launched as planned, and Polk was subsequently relieved of his corps command.³³ Possibly the delay in Polk's attack would have occurred anyway, even had Bragg given the order in written form, through the regulation channel of the adjutant general's department. But Bragg's failure, on September 19, to employ the most efficient means of communication, with a difficult subordinate, at an important stage in the battle, showed a waning control over the army.

Thus Bragg did not necessarily take advantage in practice of that staff system which he advocated in theory. Delegation of authority was erratic, personalities did play a role in staff work, and the organization and functions of the adjutant general's department were never systematized, but always subject to upset and change. These difficulties, so noticeable in the adjutant general's department, were however significantly absent from the department of the inspector general.

Lieutenant Colonel Beard lost little time, once the Kentucky campaign was over, in implementing William Preston Johnston's recommendations of July 1862, that the inspector general's department needed more extensive organization and fuller instruction in its duties.³⁴ In a lengthy directive, probably issued in late November, Beard defined precisely the organization of his department:

When practicable the Inspector of Brigade will report daily to the Inspector of Division, and the latter to the Inspector of the Wing--now Corps--who will receive from the Army Inspector, and transmit[,] all special orders for the day.... Division Inspectors will be held responsible that the duties of the Brigade Inspectors are faithfully performed, and will report to the next higher Inspector all who may be negligent or inefficient. 35

The structure of the inspector general's department was thus more clearly defined than it had been in Brent's order of June 1862. The department appeared as a distinct administrative unit, with its own hierarchy, its own assignment of duties, and its own supervisory system. The inspectors were part of a staff corps, and Beard made no mention whatever of their

relationship or responsibilities towards the commander of the line unit to which they were attached. This was a potentially serious omission. The more independent the inspector general's department became, the more it assumed, in the eyes of the subordinate line commanders, the character of a presumptuous agency of informers, and the more difficult became the fulfillment of its responsibilities.

Beard's directive not only outlined the structure of his department, but also detailed its functions.³⁶ When the army was in motion the inspector general's department maintained the prescribed order of march, supervised the quartermaster, commissary, ordnance, and medical services, returned stragglers to their units, checked and where necessary punished depredations against civilians, and directed the encampment of the army. Similar duties of supervision were carried out on the battlefield, where the assistant inspectors general of each command were responsible for keeping the order of battle in that command, checking the ammunition supply, enforcing orders, providing for the care of the wounded, and receiving prisoners. Beard thus placed great emphasis on the campaign duties of his department, but he also instructed his inspectors in such routine matters as bi-monthly reports. Inspections were to be made at the brigade level, of all matters pertaining to the brigade's efficiency--its officers and men, camp location, sanitary condition, discipline, military instruction, arms and ammunition, clothing and other equipment, transportation, food supply, and staff work; and the findings were to be reported

first to the division inspector, and then through the corps to the inspector general of the army. Inspectors were further authorized to conduct inquiries into the loss or spoiling of stores, into financial accounts, or other matters where inefficiency was suspected, and to affix blame on the officers responsible.

In these careful instructions Beard was describing the regulation functions of the inspector general's department for the benefit of his subordinates. In no way did he exceed what the regulations permitted and required. What was new was the rigid departmental structure with its hierarchy of inspectors and responsibilities. Beard had created in a field army the kind of inspection corps which Davis would not permit in the Richmond War Department.

The army inspectors included only two of the five originally appointed by Bragg in July 1862: Beard himself, and Captain, later Lieutenant Colonel, J. P. Jones. If the department was to operate as Beard outlined in November, then new appointments had to be made. Lieutenant Colonel Andrew J. Hays, Major William Clare, and Captain James Cooper joined Beard in the winter of '62-'63, and additional officers assigned in the summer and fall of '63 were Major Pollock B. Lee, Captain P. H. Thomson, Major Gustavus Adolphus Henry, Jr., and Captain W. A. Reid. There is no evidence that any of these men had had military experience before the Civil War, although Henry had spent one year at West Point.³⁷ But together they constituted a sizable department, giving Beard in his direction

of the corps, division, and brigade inspectors considerably more than the two assistants later recommended by Bragg as ideal.³⁸ Five of their number, Clare, Cooper, Lee, Henry, and Reid, served as inspectors in the Army of Tennessee through the successive commands of Bragg, Johnston, and Hood, and were finally paroled with Johnston at Bentonville, North Carolina, in April 1865.³⁹ Under Beard's inspector generalship, therefore, the officers were appointed who became the core of the department throughout its existence.

With these assistants Beard put into practice the theory of departmental organization by which he hoped to ensure the efficient performance of his duties as inspector general. The records kept by his department, of correspondence, reports, and endorsements, indicate the extent to which he was successful.⁴⁰

According to the records for the period May 3-September 5, 1863, Beard as inspector general read and endorsed virtually all material coming into his department. Routine matters for his consideration included inspection reports, primarily of the quartermaster and commissary departments; civilian claims of depredations against their property; problems of inefficiency in certain commands; and the provision of necessary route reports. From his work Beard could show that the staff departments least competent in their duties were those of the quartermaster and the commissary, that the cavalry was most frequently blamed for the seizure or destruction of civilian property, and that the command found most lacking in

organization and discipline was Polk's corps.⁴¹ The inspector general could therefore detect weaknesses in the organization, administration, and discipline of the Army of Tennessee.

In dealing with these weaknesses Beard acted on his own authority. In the four months from May to September, 1863, there were only three cases of referral to a higher authority, twice to Bragg, concerning civilian complaints, and once to Mackall. On all other occasions Beard was apparently competent to handle matters himself, and there is no sign of intervention by Bragg. Beard worked directly with his department at all command levels, giving orders through a descending hierarchy of army, corps, division, and brigade inspectors, and receiving reports in the ascending line; he also communicated with other staff departments and with subordinate line commanders, requiring correction of the deficiencies reported by the inspectors. In all this Beard assumed and exercised considerable authority. He was the director of an inspection system extending throughout the army, and in relation to the line commanders he was, in the simple but graphic phrase of Captain Buck, "a sort of overseer of the army."⁴²

While fulfilling this responsible role, Beard had also to maintain constant supervision over his own department. In spite of his careful instructions, reports turned in by junior inspectors were not always sufficiently detailed, and had to be returned for further investigation and satisfactory completion. Captain Samuel L. Black, of Hardee's corps, was only one offender in this way.⁴³ Such inadequate reports delayed

the work of the department, and postponed attempts to correct inefficiency. Beard also found it necessary to assert his authority within the department. When Captain John Vaux, of Cheatham's division, questioned orders issued to him by Beard through Polk's corps inspector, Lieutenant Colonel T. F. Sevier, Beard ordered Sevier to reprimand Vaux, who was obviously "under a misapprehension of his duties." The authority of the army inspector general over his subordinates was made quite explicit in Beard's order:

The letters dated from this office the 7th and 11th [August, 1863] contained no 'suggestions', they were orders from the Chief to the subordinates of the Dep[artmen]t and as such must be obeyed. You [Sevier] will see that the instructions contained in these letters are carried out and that copies of them are furnished to Brigade Inspectors--or report the delinquent officer to this office.... You will report your action to this office as early as practicable. 44

Beard's respect for military hierarchy, his insistence on primacy within his own department, and his concern for the precise fulfillment of its duties may have earned him Bragg's confidence to an unusual degree. Certainly the evidence indicates that Beard ran the inspector general's department with an independence rare in the staff work of Bragg's Army of Tennessee. Beard's temporary absence in Richmond, to make formal presentation of the victorious news of Chickamauga,⁴⁵ demonstrated the solidity of his work. Under Lieutenant Colonel Jones the department continued to operate according to the system set up by Beard,⁴⁶ and substantially the same system was inherited by Johnston's inspector general in December 1863. In terms of structure, operation, and personnel, therefore, the inspector general's department of the Army of

Tennessee was largely Beard's creation.⁴⁷

Thus Brent as adjutant general and Beard as inspector general directed the routine administration of Bragg's army, although with varying degrees of independence and varying control over their subordinates. In that army they were responsible only to Bragg, as their line commander, and, on occasion, to Mackall as chief of staff. But Brent and Beard were also part of the wider staff system of Department No. 2, and as such were subject to the staff of the Department's commander, General Johnston. Therefore, in staff theory at least, Johnston's adjutant general and his inspector general might intervene in the administration of the Army of Tennessee, superseding the authority of Brent and Beard.

Johnston had assumed command of Department No. 2 on December 4, 1862.⁴⁸ His position gave him supervisory powers over the geographical Departments of Tennessee, East Tennessee, and Mississippi, but not, in Johnston's opinion, the command of any of the three armies of Bragg, E. Kirby Smith, and John C. Pemberton. Johnston was never happy with this situation. It contradicted the advice he had given Davis in 1861, that the organization of the Confederate armies should be tactical rather than geographical, so that the commander would be free of the routine "drudgery" of administering a department, and able to concentrate on "grand operations."⁴⁹ Command of Department No. 2 imposed on Johnston precisely those administrative duties which he believed detracted from his strategic responsibilities. Two months after taking up his assignment

he described his position to his friend Wigfall:

I have been very busy for some time looking for something to do--to little purpose, but with much travelling. Each of the three departments assigned to me has its general--and as there is no room for two, and I can't remove him appointed by the Pres[ident] for the precise place, nothing but the part of inspector general is left to me. I wrote to the President on the subject--trying to explain that I am virtually laid upon the shelf with the responsibility of command--but he has not replied.... I should much prefer the command of fifty men. 50

The inspector general's work to which Johnston referred included reporting to Richmond on the condition of the Western Department, distributing intelligence information among the generals of its armies, investigating the affairs of each command--especially the Army of Tennessee--and trying to provide a more efficient commissary service in the West.⁵¹ This limited interpretation, on Johnston's part, of his role as commander of Department No. 2, had its effect on the work done by his staff.

Johnston's staff in 1863 included the three men who, with Mackall, became in 1864 the chief administrators of Johnston's Army of Tennessee. Colonel Benjamin Stoddert Ewell was adjutant general, assisted by Major Arthur Pendleton Mason, and Lieutenant Colonel Edwin James Harvie inspector general.⁵² All three were Virginians, of distinguished social background. Ewell, fifty-three years old, a West Point graduate, had resigned as president of the College of William and Mary to join the Confederate States Army; Mason, twenty-eight, had attended the University of Virginia, read law, and then become

a planter; Harvie, also twenty-eight, graduate of the Virginia Military Institute, had been a professional soldier in the U. S. Army. The impression made by these officers on the army in 1863 would condition their effectiveness the following year.

The Official Records gives little sign of intervention by Johnston's staff in the work of Brent or Beard. From Western Department headquarters, first at Chattanooga, Tennessee, and then at Jackson, Mississippi, Ewell functioned largely as a communications officer for the Department commanders. There is no evidence that he tried in any way to direct Brent's adjutant general's department, although Colonel W. P. Johnston did instruct Ewell to correct Brent's failure to send reports on to Richmond, and Bragg fulminated over the "profound ignorance" of one of Ewell's assistants.⁵³ Harvie's work concerned food supplies and transportation, for which the Department operated as a unit, so that inspection powers wider than those of Beard's army department were valuable.⁵⁴ Thus Johnston's reluctance to interfere with Bragg's army command was echoed by the limited use of their staff powers made by Ewell and Harvie.

If Johnston complained that he had little to do, the junior officers at his headquarters had even less. At least one of them was dissatisfied:

Our life...was not at all industrious--there being nothing to do. Genl. J[ohnston] managed his important business for himself, occasionally calling on Mason to write a letter or [Lieutenant J. Barroll] Washington to decipher a telegram. [Lieutenant Colonel T. B.] Lamar attended to the routine papers, which were but few as most of them were stopped at the Dept. Hd. Qrs. (Bragg's

or Pemberton's). For the rest of us, there was nothing to do. I had...begun to get heartily tired of the absolute idleness...read a good deal of Molière.... 55

Ewell had already written from Chattanooga that he did not know what Johnston could do with all his assistant adjutants, as he had at least six--an excessive number.⁵⁶ The adjutant general himself did not seem overly pressed with business. When his office was moved from Chattanooga to Jackson, it travelled, clerks and all, in a box car of which half was taken up by Ewell's military impedimenta--enough to justify a relative's opinion that Ewell was "quite careful enough of his own comfort--and rather slow than prompt."⁵⁷

The general impression is one of a staff overloaded with officers, but not overburdened with work, certainly exercising no close supervision over the administration of Bragg's army. Perhaps it was this relative inactivity which caused Hardee to confide to the sympathetic Polk: "Johnston is wanting in all those particulars in which you feared he was deficient, and in addition has a very inefficient staff."⁵⁸ But whether the reason was unwillingness to interfere with Bragg's staff system, or the inefficiency charged by Hardee, Johnston's administrative officers accepted the authority of Brent and Beard over their own departments.

The marked development in the administrative system of the Army of Tennessee therefore occurred under Bragg's command, as friends and foes had alike expected. Efforts were made to organize the work of the adjutant general and the

inspector general, to appoint competent officers who would serve their staff departments rather than their commanders, and to create a sense of staff hierarchy and discipline reaching from the highest command level to the lowest. The resulting staff structure had as its function the efficient performance of the routine administrative duties required by regulations or assigned through delegated powers. In all these areas of staff development, it is significant that the inspector general's department was more successful than the adjutant general's.

Various factors contributed to this different result. According to the evidence available, Beard, with an unusually precise and orderly mind, was more authoritative than Brent; the work of inspection was probably more susceptible to organization than that of the department of orders; and the inspector general's department was certainly less subject to the pressures of immediacy which affected the adjutant general's department on active campaign, or in the heat of battle. The decisive factor in the relative performance of the two administrative departments was, however, not an internal one, but lay instead in their relations with the commanding general.

Although his "peculiar talent" for administration had manifested itself in small commands, where he could be both line officer and staff officer, Bragg attempted the same dual role in a major army command of close on 50,000 men.⁵⁹ As the administrative machinery of this command, through which the

army responded to the general's will, the adjutant general's department stood in a closer relationship to Bragg than did the inspector general's department, and therefore was much more subject to his intervention. Such intervention, whether justified by Bragg's rank or by military crisis, undermined the organization of the department and made the fulfillment of its duties less reliable. By contrast, the inspector general's department went about its work in relative independence and with a greater degree of efficiency. Fortunately, under Beard's direction the potential disputes between inspectors and inspected did not materialize in any serious form, and therefore did not at that time restrict the department's independence. It is bitterly ironic, in view of Bragg's "peculiar talent," that the adjutant general's department in which he did intervene should have been less successful than the inspector general's department in which he did not. That this happened was less an administrative failure on Bragg's part, than an inability to establish a proper priority in his command responsibilities.

In spite of all difficulties and limitations, however, insofar as the Army of Tennessee ever had an effective administrative system it was the one developed under Bragg's command, and inherited by his successors.

Notes

¹P. G. T. Beauregard to Braxton Bragg, Mobile [Alabama], June 22, 1862, quoted in Alfred Roman, Military Operations of General Beauregard (2 vols.; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1883), I, 408; G. T. Buenavista [Beauregard] to Thomas Jordan, Bladon, Alabama, July 12, 1862, Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard Papers, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

²War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (128 vols.; Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Series I, XVII, pt. 2, 648 (hereafter cited as OR, with all references to Series I, unless otherwise indicated).

³Brent was temporarily absent in Richmond, and so received no appointment. He returned to the Western Department late in July, and Bragg assigned him first to the judge advocate's office, and then to the inspector general's department. OR, X, pt. 2, 602; G. W. Brent to Samuel Cooper, Richmond [Virginia], June 30, 1862, George William Brent, Compiled Service Records of Confederate General and Staff Officers and Nonregimental Enlisted Men, War Department Collection of Confederate Records, Record Group 109, National Archives, Washington, D. C. (cited hereafter as CSR); OR, XVII, pt. 2, 658; XVI, pt. 2, 758.

⁴Ibid., XVII, pt. 2, 640-641, 679-680.

⁵Circular, Chattanooga, Tennessee, August 12, 1862, Bragg-Beauregard Headquarters Book, Civil War Papers, Louisiana Historical Association Collection, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, New Orleans (cited hereafter as Headquarters Book).

⁶General Orders, No. 119, Chattanooga, Tennessee, August 20, 1862, Headquarters Book.

⁷OR, XVI, pt. 2, 780; XIV, 609.

⁸George G. Garner, George William Brent, William K. Beard, James E. Slaughter, CSR; OR, XVI, pt. 1, 1160; pt. 2, 790-791, 889. By using Francis B. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the U. S. Army...1789-1903 (2 vols.; Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965) it is possible to obtain negative evidence, that a certain Confederate staff officer did not serve in the old U. S. Army.

⁹OR, XXIII, pt. 2, 729; L. T. Wigfall to C. C. Clay, Orange [Virginia], June 12, 1863, Clement Claiborne Clay Papers, Duke University; Wigfall to J. E. Johnston, Richmond [Virginia], February 28, 1863, Joseph Eggleston Johnston Papers, Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California; OR, VII, 258; XXIII, pt. 2, 627, 659, 758.

¹⁰Grady McWhiney, Braxton Bragg and Confederate Defeat: Volume I, Field Command (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), pp. 75-76, 178-184.

¹¹For an analysis of Bragg, see ibid., pp. 388-391, and passim.

¹²Braxton Bragg to S. Cooper, [Tullahoma, Tennessee] May 8, 1863, Brent, CSR.

¹³Brent to Bragg, Dalton, Georgia, December 10, 1863, Braxton Bragg Papers, William P. Palmer Collection, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio.

¹⁴George William Brent Diary, October 1, 1862-December 2, 1863, ibid.

¹⁵Brent Diary, November 20, 1862. See also OR, XX, pt. 2, 411.

¹⁶Ibid., Series IV, III, 316; Series I, XX, pt. 2, 490.

¹⁷Ibid., XXIII, pt. 2, 758, 736-737.

¹⁸Ibid., XX, pt. 2, 423-424. Brent Diary, December 9, 1862, records Johnston's assumption of his command.

¹⁹Garner, CSR.

²⁰W. W. Mackall to Mrs. Mackall, [Missionary Ridge, Tennessee] October 3, 1863, William Whann Mackall Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

²¹Brent Diary, January 10, January 11, 1863.

²²For a discussion of this dispute, see McWhiney, Braxton Bragg, pp. 374-389.

²³For information about these officers see P. H. Thomson, CSR, especially Bragg to Cooper, Tullahoma [Tennessee], February 6, 1863, and Kinloch Falconer, ibid., especially Brent to Mackall, Chattanooga [Tennessee], August 23, 1863, and Mackall's endorsement thereon. Also OR, XXXIX, pt. 1, 807. Bromfield L. Ridley, Battles and Sketches of the Army of Tennessee, 1861-1865 (Mexico, Missouri: Missouri Printing and Publishing Company, 1906), p. 553, records that after the war Falconer became Secretary of State for Mississippi.

²⁴Bragg to Cooper, [Tullahoma, Tennessee] May 8, 1863, Brent, CSR.

²⁵Brent Diary, November 14, 1862, and passim.

²⁶Charles Marshall, An Aide-de-camp of Lee, Sir Frederick Maurice, ed. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1927), p. 270. The terms of surrender at Appomattox were written on field note paper.

²⁷OR, XXIII, pt. 2, 758.

²⁸Brent Diary, December 30, 1862. The most recent discussion of the battle of Murfreesboro is to be found in McWhiney, Braxton Bragg, pp. 348-373.

²⁹Brent Diary, September 7, September 15, September 17, 1863. For the Chickamauga campaign see Stanley F. Horn, The Army of Tennessee (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953), pp. 239-274. Also Mackall to Mrs. Mackall, Mission Ridge [Tennessee], September 29, 1863, Mackall Papers.

³⁰Brent Diary, September 25, 1863; OR, XXX, pt. 4, 523-757.

³¹Brent Diary, September 25, 1863.

³²McWhiney, Braxton Bragg, pp. 301-312; Brent Diary, September 12, September 13, 1863.

³³OR, XXX, pt. 2, 55; Brent Diary, September 29, October 25, 1863. For a discussion of Polk's failure, see Horn, The Army of Tennessee, pp. 260-261; Joseph H. Parks, General Leonidas Polk, C. S. A.: The Fighting Bishop (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1962), pp. 333-337; Hal Bridges, Lee's Maverick General: Daniel Harvey Hill (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1961), pp. 214-217, 227-230.

³⁴OR, X, pt. 1, 781.

³⁵W. K. Beard, "Duties of Inspectors," [Tullahoma, Tennessee, November] 1862, Confederate States Army Collection, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷William Clare, James Cooper, Andrew J. Hays, G. A. Henry, Jr., J. P. Jones, Pollock B. Lee, W. A. Reid, P. H. Thomson, CSR; G. A. Henry, Sr., to Jefferson Davis, Nashville [Tennessee], May 17, 1861, Gustavus Adolphus Henry Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

³⁸OR, Series IV, III, 316.

³⁹Clare, Cooper, Henry, Lee, Reid, CSR. The original parole order is in the Joseph Eggleston Johnston Papers.

⁴⁰Endorsements on Letters Received, Army of Tennessee, 1863-1864; [Letters Sent, 1864;] and Special Orders, 1864, Chapter II, Volume 15 $\frac{1}{2}$, War Department Collection of Confederate Records (hereafter cited as Ch. II, Vol. 15 $\frac{1}{2}$).

⁴¹Ibid., 50-80.

⁴²Irving Ashby Buck to Dear Lucie, Tullahoma [Tennessee], February 19, 1863, Irving Ashby Buck Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

⁴³Endorsements of May 6, May 9, August 10, 1863, Ch. II, Vol. 15 $\frac{1}{2}$, 53, 56, 71.

⁴⁴Beard to Sevier, Chattanooga, Tennessee, August 21, 1863, ibid., 79.

⁴⁵Special Orders, Missionary Ridge [Tennessee], September 25, 1863, Beard, CSR.

⁴⁶Ch. II, Vol. 15 $\frac{1}{2}$, 81-89.

⁴⁷Beard even stayed on under his successor, till the summer of 1864, when he was transferred at his own request to inspection duties in Florida. Beard to S. Cooper, Dalton, Georgia, April 18, 1864, and endorsements thereon, Beard, CSR.

⁴⁸OR, XX, pt. 2, 439.

⁴⁹Johnston to Davis, Manassas [Virginia], September 3, 1861, Jefferson Davis Papers, Duke University; Frank E. Vandiver, Rebel Brass: The Confederate Command System (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1956), pp. 58-59, points out that Johnston insisted on a limited interpretation of his powers as commander of Department No. 2, even in the face of assurances from Secretary of War Seddon that the general's authority was much more extensive.

⁵⁰Johnston to L. T. Wigfall, Knoxville, Tennessee, February 14, 1863, Louis Trezevant Wigfall Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

⁵¹See, for example, OR, XXIII, pt. 2, 613-826; Joseph E. Johnston, Narrative of Military Operations (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1874), pp. 147-173; Gilbert E. Govan and James W. Livingood, A Different Valor: The Story of General Joseph E. Johnston (Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1956), pp. 162-197.

⁵²For biographical information on these men, see S. Bassett French Biographical Sketches, Virginia State Library, Richmond; also, for Ewell, Dictionary of American Biography, Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, eds. (20 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928-1936), VI, 228-229.

⁵³OR, XXIII, pt. 2, 613-826, 758, 706-707.

⁵⁴Ibid., 764-765, 769-770.

⁵⁵George Campbell Brown, "Military Reminiscences from 1861-1865," Manuscript Division, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

⁵⁶B. S. Ewell to Miss Lizzy Ewell, Chattanooga [Tennessee], January 22, 1863, Richard Stoddert Ewell Papers, microfilm at the Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

⁵⁷Brown, "Military Reminiscences from 1861-1865."

⁵⁸W. J. Hardee to [Leonidas Polk], Morton, Mississippi, July 27, 1863, Leonidas Polk Papers, microfilm copy in the Southern Historical Collection.

⁵⁹The size of the army varied, of course, but in December 1862 it approximated 50,000 men. McWhiney, Braxton Bragg, p. 344.

CHAPTER VII

Decline

January-December, 1864

In December 1863, General Joseph E. Johnston assumed from Bragg the command of the Army of Tennessee--the army, Johnston said, "which has the reputation, here in itself, of having the only general officers in the Confederacy who practice here against each other, the arts to which they were accustomed to resort in electioneering before the war." In the face of this military politicking, "have a little charity for Bragg," Johnston appealed, and then went on to assert: "If I were President I'd distribute the generals of this army over the Confederacy." Within one month of the rout at Missionary Ridge and the retreat from Tennessee into northern Georgia, General Johnston had acquired the command of an army notorious for factious dispute and insubordination among its generals. He faced the inevitable controversy between the adherents of the old commander, and the welcomers of the new.¹ If in these difficult circumstances Johnston was to establish discipline, prestige and confidence in the Army, to increase its numbers, to replace all lost equipment, and to ensure the necessary flow of supplies,² then he had obvious and immediate need of an efficient staff system.

As Bragg had done when he succeeded Beauregard, Johnston inherited his predecessor's staff. Even Colonels Brent and

Beard, under Bragg heads of their respective departments, remained to serve the new commander in subordinate capacities, Brent till March 1864 and Beard till the summer. But Bragg's staff did not stay on, as Beauregard's had, temporarily, as a gesture of personal favor from one commander to another. Their continued service in the Army of Tennessee was due rather to their assignment to, and identification with, the Western command; they did not follow the personal fortunes of their general. In this respect there had been some evolution of staff practice.

Inevitably, however, there were some changes when Johnston took over. The most obvious of these was the introduction of Johnston men to head the staff departments. Brigadier William W. Mackall became chief of staff, Colonel Benjamin S. Ewell adjutant general, and Lieutenant Colonel James E. Harvie inspector general. In addition, Major James B. Eustis, lawyer son of a distinguished Louisiana family, was assigned to court martial duty in the adjutant general's department, and Major Arthur P. Mason was later appointed assistant adjutant general, replacing Brent.³ These were Johnston's only administrative appointments. They indicated several changes in the adjutant general's department, but only a single change in the inspector general's department, of Beard by Harvie. When Lieutenant Colonels H. W. Walter and A. J. Hays were ordered to Richmond in the spring of 1864,⁴ no new appointments of judge advocate or assistant inspector

were made in their place. Thus to a large degree Johnston used Bragg's administrative staff, but at the same time made sure that it was headed by his own officers.

Under Colonel Ewell the adjutant general's department did not operate as it had done under both Jordan and Brent. Then the majority of all orders issued by the department had been signed by its head, but under Ewell this was not the case. In January and February of 1864, when army reorganization was at its height, Ewell sent out ten orders, Brent twenty-nine, and Major Kinloch Falconer thirteen. This distribution suggests that the greater part of the department's work continued to be carried out by Bragg's two principal officers, Brent and Falconer; and after Brent left early in March, by Mason and Falconer.⁵ It was therefore to the assistants, rather than to the adjutant general, that Johnston entrusted the regular work of the field department.

This distribution of the adjutant's work was presumably not due to any lack of confidence in Ewell on the part of his commander. The two men were close personal friends, and Johnston's proposal to make Ewell his chief of staff had only been frustrated by Davis's refusal to confirm the appointment. Johnston had then made Ewell his adjutant general, the highest staff position in his power to offer to an officer of colonel's rank.⁶ But in 1864 Ewell was fifty-three years old, according to his nephew slow and careful of his comfort, and destined to resign from the service for reasons of ill-health. Little wonder, then, that two weeks after Johnston took command of

the Army of Tennessee Ewell was writing to Brigadier General Mackall, pressing him to return to the army as chief of staff and head of administration.⁷ When Mackall did return Johnston was able to assign office duties to Ewell which relieved him of the burden and strain of field campaigning. In February Ewell was sent to organize and take charge of an adjutant general's office in Atlanta; in April he was sent to Richmond to discuss the military situation in Georgia with Davis and Bragg; and in May, when the army went on active campaign, Ewell's duties kept him behind the front lines.⁸ The adjutant was thus largely a figurehead in his own department, and the administrative duties at field headquarters were carried out by experienced junior officers.

This distribution of the responsibilities of the adjutant general's department was made possible by Mackall's presence at headquarters. Johnston regarded his chief of staff as the administrative head of the army,⁹ and as such Mackall was inevitably closely associated with the department of orders, providing for it the focal staff authority which Ewell, in Richmond or in Atlanta, could not. Mackall did not, however, interfere with the routine work of the department, leaving the issue of general and special orders entirely to the adjutants. While the army was in camp the chief of staff shared with the adjutants the work of correspondence with the line commanders; only when the period of reorganization at Dalton was over, and the Confederate forces were actively engaged in the Atlanta campaign, did Mackall assume almost

total charge of the orders directing the movements of the army. Thus the adjutant general's department functioned in routine matters without the direction of its adjutant general, and was superseded by the chief of staff when campaign pressures replaced routine.¹⁰

The adjutant general's department never had achieved any consistent degree of internal organization. Jordan did assert his own authority as head of the department, and did set up an organized division of its duties, but these rudiments of efficiency were not maintained under Bragg. Whatever his intentions, and whatever the difficulties he faced, Bragg in effect undermined the authority of his adjutant general and disturbed the assignment of responsibilities within the department. Then in 1864, by his use of Ewell in assignments away from field headquarters, Johnston destroyed the department's unity. It continued to function, but did so as a loose agglomerate of officers under the general direction of the chief of staff. No evidence has been found of any attempt to maintain, or to establish, a structural organization existing in its own right and strong enough to survive yet another change of commander and the consequent loss of its administrative director.

The absence of a structural organization led, during Hood's tenure of command, to an increasing reliance on the largely uncoordinated efforts of individual officers. Brigadier General Francis A. Shoup, who as chief of staff might have given direction to the work of the adjutant general's

department, was inexperienced in administration and resigned his position in mid-September; Ewell had never been replaced; and Falconer, who had served longest with the department, under Bragg, Johnston, and Hood, was seriously wounded in October.¹¹ Thus by a process of attrition the burden of the adjutant general's work fell upon Mason, who, at Spring Hill in particular, proved unable to handle it. Administrative failure deprived Hood of the efficient control of the Army of Tennessee and was at least a contributory factor in the disasters of the Tennessee winter campaign.

The adjutant general's department thus experienced a progressive deterioration in efficiency throughout 1864. Responsibility for the decline cannot be attributed to any single person or event, but one obvious cause of failure was Johnston's limited interest in creating a staff organization or administrative system.

Johnston's concern was less for the administrative departments than for the individual officers within them. These men--Ewell, Mason, Eustis, and Harvie--met the standards of good education and honorable family which Johnston considered important in an officer. His preference on this point was apparently well-known, since Wigfall advised him that one of his assistant adjutants, Major A. D. Banks, was "not regarded as occupying that social position in Virginia as to entitle him to a place" on the general's staff.¹² Those who were acceptable constituted a personal staff for Johnston, serving their commander rather than any one command,

and staying with him through most of the war. In some respects Johnston regarded them as senior aides-de-camp, liable to "miscellaneous employment" and to casual use as opportunity offered. In an 1863 letter to President Davis the general indicated the informality of his staff arrangements.

"Dispatches were read to me by the officer who happened to be nearest," Johnston wrote, "and replies were usually dictated by me to him who happened to be nearest."¹³ Such a casual approach to staff work, perhaps appropriate while Johnston held the nebulous position of commander of Department No. 2, was not suited to the heavy administrative burdens imposed by the field command of the Army of Tennessee. But the general refused to reorganize his staff departments, and thus exposed himself to the Richmond critics of a personal staff system.

On February 14, 1864, the Confederate Senate passed a bill providing for a field army staff appointed partly by the commanding general and partly by the President. The commander was to assign three brigadier generals to duty as chief of staff, inspector general, and chief quartermaster, and two officers of lesser rank as heads of the commissary and ordnance departments; the President would appoint a medical director and five aides-de-camp.¹⁴ The bill reflected Senator Wigfall's belief that the general of a field army should be allowed to select his own principal staff officers from among experienced line commanders, without interference from Richmond.¹⁵ His proposals aroused serious opposition,

however, from Davis, from Bragg, and even from Wigfall's usual military ally, General Johnston. Davis's principal objections, with which Bragg concurred, were to the appointing power given the commander, and to the use of line officers for staff work, and the bill in its final form bore little resemblance to the original February version.¹⁶ But where Davis and Bragg insisted on alterations in the Senate bill on grounds of constitutional and military theory, Johnston opposed it because of the immediate, practical effect it would have on his own command.

As soon as he knew the terms of the staff bill, Johnston withdrew his earlier support for reform, believing that the Senate proposals would not add to the efficiency of his army.¹⁷ Particularly subject to criticism, in the general's opinion, were the use of line officers for staff work, the failure to provide adjutants at army headquarters, and the appointment by the President of the five aides. In a letter to Wigfall, Johnston developed his views at some length:

My objection to the bill is that it will take so many of the best officers from their proper places with the troops, for others in which they have not been tried. In taking a brigadier general for Inspector general or Chief Quartermaster, a good one would always be chosen--probably the best--but the officer who had distinguished himself in the command of a brigade might utterly fail as a staff officer, while the senior colonel, his successor in command of the brigade, would probably fill his place badly.... I think it an evil in the army to appoint men for one branch of the service and be compelled to use them for others. I think that every office of importance enough to be worth creating should be filled by a man appointed for it. Not by men appointed for places of almost equal importance which are left vacant by the transfer. I have now a colonel [E. J. Harvie] in the Provisional Army for Inspector

general, who in my opinion is fitter for the place than any brigadier general under my command. Your bill would deprive me of him and compell [sic] me to deprive some brigade of a good commander.... The want of adjutant generals would be a serious inconvenience, I think.... Your bill would throw out of service a large body of valuable officers who have been serving since the war began, in the A[djutant] G[eneral's] Dep[artmen]t and put in their places young gentlemen as A. D. C.s.... Those who have served long, have claims which it would be difficult to put aside. 18

Thus Johnston was concerned that the line commands should not be bled of their best officers to provide staff personnel. To prevent this, officers should be recruited and trained in the special duties of the staff departments. At no time, however, did Johnston consider that staff recruitment and training would create a staff corps as an independent branch of the military service, with a centralized organization and power to make its own appointments. His opposition to any such idea was seen in his refusal to accept aides appointed in Richmond as adequate replacements for his adjutants. Johnston's refusal, however, was based only partly on his concern over the appointing power; he also wished to protect those able and loyal senior officers who had followed his personal fortunes throughout the Civil War but would be displaced under the Senate bill. Nowhere in his letter did the general indicate a sense of the importance of the adjutant general's department as part of an administrative system.

Johnston's opposition to the Senate's proposals for staff reform was based, in short, on his refusal to accept

any authority save his own over his command. For essentially personal reasons he withdrew his support from the movement for staff reform. "I have taken little interest in this subject," he wrote in justification to Wigfall, "from a belief that the president prefers the present system to any you may offer as a substitute for it."¹⁹

Johnston's rejection of administrative changes in his army was occasioned not only by the proposed new legislation, but also by suggestions of reorganization originating in the War Department. General Orders No. 44, issued at Richmond from the Adjutant and Inspector General's Office on April 29, 1864, regulated the size of a commander's staff, and provided for the re-assignment of all officers over the authorized number.²⁰ Instead of the six administrative officers allowed him by these regulations, Johnston had at least thirteen, whom he refused to give up. When pressed to do so by General Cooper, he replied with a letter which effectively illustrated the near impossibility of making substantial staff changes while fighting a major war:

This army has been for the past month in the immediate presence of a powerful Federal army--engaged almost daily. The officers of the adjt. genl's dept. have had and still have great labour and are performing indispensable services. Under these circumstances I respectfully submit to the War Dept. that it would be cruel to these meritorious officers to put them aside at such a time--and contrary to the public interest to attempt now to reorganize any part of this army. I therefore respectfully ask to be permitted to postpone the execution of the order...until the condition of affairs may make it easier. 21

Apparently Johnston's resistance was successful, for in July 1864 Bragg reported acidly that in spite of the orders of

April there was "a large excess of staff officers" in nearly every command of the Army of Tennessee.²²

The War Department also hoped to re-organize the work of inspection in the Confederate armies. The proposal to create a separate inspector general's department was defeated by the opposition of the President, but approval was given to the suggestion of a corps of inspectors operating as one branch of the combined adjutant and inspector general's department. According to the approved plan an inspector general at Richmond would appoint and direct ten inspectors, each with the rank of colonel; these men would work in rotation, each inspecting in turn a Confederacy divided for the purpose into ten districts; together the inspector general and his ten subordinates would constitute a centralized system of inspection, with authority over all the Confederate states and the Confederate armies.²³ A skeleton organization for this system was created in February 1864,²⁴ but there is no evidence that any inspector general was appointed to direct it, or that the organization was developed as fully as had been planned. Nevertheless the duties of inspection were carried out, by officers working as part of a central organization, under orders from General Bragg.²⁵

A centralized inspection system was as little welcome to Johnston as the attempt to limit the size of his staff had been. The general feared to lose not only his supernumerary staff to Bragg, but also the control of his department of inspection.²⁶ Johnston had no intention of doing either,

partly from a desire to maintain his own authority over the administration of his army, and partly from a conviction of the special abilities of his inspector general, Lieutenant Colonel Edwin J. Harvie.

According to his commander, Harvie was "an officer of rare merit--full of courage, truth, zeal, and fidelity."²⁷ In a general order, probably drawn up in 1863, the inspector general had outlined his concept of the function of his department. "Correction," he declared, "[is] designed only for the interest of the service and the establishment of system and discipline, contributing to the greater health and comfort of the whole command...." Ultimate Confederate victory would depend in part on the "patient untiring efforts marked by courtesy and forbearance [sic]" of the inspector general's department.²⁸ Judged able by his commander, and with a strong sense of the important purpose of his work, Harvie took over from Beard early in January 1864 the duties of inspection in the Army of Tennessee.

Under his immediate authority the new inspector general had seven assistants--Beard, Clare, Cooper, Hays, Henry, Lee, and Reid. Assignments for these officers were announced through special orders, issued in regulation form, but signed by Harvie as inspector general, rather than by one of the adjutant general's department of orders. Harvie thus assumed direct control over the inspectors at army headquarters.

The inspector general also gave orders directly to the provost marshal, whose department acted as the enforcing arm

for the inspectors and as an intelligence agency. The two departments worked closely in checking derelictions in guard duty and in controlling the illegal movement of troops. Another subject of continual concern was the disruptive presence of camp followers. "The influx into this Army of women of bad character has become a serious evil, and steps must be taken at once to remedy it," Harvie informed Colonel B. J. Hill, provost marshal of the army at Dalton. "You will therefore instruct the Provost Marshals in this Dept. and particularly at Atlanta," Harvie went on, "to furnish no passports to women coming to the Army, except to such as can give conclusive evidence of their respectability. This order will be executed in as gentlemanly and as mild a manner as practicable--taking care to give no just cause of offense to any." Perhaps Hill's officers were too gentlemanly, for the problem continued unabated.³⁰

Harvie also directed the provost marshal's department in its intelligence duties. Scouts were instructed to obtain reliable information about the enemy forces in northern Georgia, concerning their organization, movements, and intentions; it was, the inspector general remarked, "of the greatest importance to the General to get a correct knowledge of the Army immediately confronting him."³¹ Funds for intelligence work were disbursed by the chief quartermaster, Lieutenant Colonel T. B. McMicken, on Harvie's instructions. The disbursements illustrated effectively the chaotic state of Confederate finances; on one occasion Hill received \$160 in

Federal Greenbacks, \$125 in Georgia funds, \$20 in Louisiana funds, \$300 in Kentucky funds, and \$200 in gold.³²

Also subject to orders from the inspector general was Captain Slover of the commissary department. From February to mid-March food was regularly issued to married women, usually to be prepared for sale to the army, and to destitute families. Issues to the destitute were apparently made under direct instructions from General Johnston.³³

Harvie thus exercised a considerable range of authority outside his own department. Further, in his issue of orders, he assumed some of the duties more properly belonging to the adjutant general's department. Both developments indicated a willingness on Harvie's part to extend his role as inspector general, and these extensions were ultimately to cause his department considerable difficulty in carrying out even its regular duties.

Those regular duties involved maintaining army rolls, conducting musters, and carrying out the inspections required by departmental regulations issued from Richmond. But the heaviest work at Dalton concerned requests for passes and furloughs, the inspection of pickets, and the supervision of all movement along the railroad from Atlanta to Dalton and Tunnel Hill. In a general sense, therefore, inspection routine contributed to the organization, discipline, and efficiency of the line commands.³⁴

Harvie exercised close supervision over his department, personally endorsing all incoming correspondence and signing

all outgoing orders, instructions, and inquiries. Of the outgoing material, approximately two thirds was sent in Johnston's name, and one third in Harvie's. There was no clear distinction between the two categories, although Harvie usually believed his own authority adequate in all correspondence dealing with regulation inspection duties.³⁵ It is probable, considering Johnston's great confidence in his inspector general, that Harvie acted largely on his own initiative, even where he used his commander's name as a matter of required form. Thus as inspector general Harvie had considerable independence in his department, and exercised in addition some authority over other administrative agencies.

Unfortunately Harvie was not as successful as Beard had been in avoiding the army's natural antagonism towards the inspector general's department. Certainly other staff departments were jealous for their own authority, as were the principal line commanders. But much of the difficulty which the inspector general encountered was of his own making.

At twenty-eight, Harvie was young for his responsible position, and, as a Virginian, he was an outsider in the Army of Tennessee. Moreover, he had replaced a successful officer who had served in that army from its earliest days, but was demoted to an inferior position in his own department on Harvie's arrival. In this admittedly difficult situation Harvie showed himself to be stiff, tactless, and overly concerned with his own dignity and importance. When a minor clerk in the Dalton quartermaster's office spoke to the

inspector general in "an independent, repelling manner," Harvie complained to the man's superior: "I am not accustomed to such treatment at the hands of anyone, nor do I believe for one moment that you authorize it. I...request that I may not be subjected to the same treatment a second time."³⁶

On another occasion, Harvie quarrelled with the captain of Johnston's escort company over a very minor matter, and issued a reprimand which showed a basic inability to handle people.

"You were officially ordered in this case," he lectured Captain Guy Dreux, "and had no right to take any other but an official action in it.... Your failure to do this, is what I complain of, and where I think you were guilty of an official error. In writing this letter, I am governed strictly by my ideas of official duty--personal feelings have nothing to do with it."³⁷ Evidently the inspector general had forgotten his own recommendation of courtesy and forbearance in carrying out the duties of his department.

More serious than his quarrels with other staff departments, or his disagreements with junior officers, was Harvie's failure to maintain good relations with Johnston's principal line commanders. Harvie rebuked division commander Benjamin F. Cheatham for indiscipline among his men and wanton destruction of civilian property; although the letter was sent in Johnston's name, it was signed by the inspector and its wording could only increase hostility towards his department.³⁸ Most far-reaching in its effects, however, was the dispute

between Harvie and the senior corps commander, Lieutenant General William J. Hardee.

The dispute concerned the authority asserted by the inspector general's department over officers of the line.³⁹ Assistant inspectors were superseding field officers by giving orders directly to Hardee's picket line; this Hardee regarded as a dangerous and unjustifiable assumption of authority by a staff department. He also considered it an affront to the dignity of his rank to receive instructions from a junior inspector rather than requests from the inspector general. In the resulting disagreement Harvie refused to be conciliatory, insisted on maintaining his ground, and thus forced Johnston to intervene.

Johnston had no alternative but to support his senior corps commander. Otherwise he would have made nonsense of the army's system of rank, and would have weakened the control of his line officers over their own men. Harvie's officers were ordered to confine their duties to inspection only, and to leave action on their reports to the appropriate officer commanding. Harvie himself had to write to General Hardee, "to remove all doubt and conflict of authority," by confirming that Johnston had withdrawn his sanction from all previous orders given by inspectors to Hardee's troops.⁴⁰ Thus the conflict between line and staff which had always been implicit in the duties of the inspector general's department was decided, by Johnston's instructions, in favor of the line.

By forcing an issue which he was bound to lose Harvie had brought about the humiliation of his department and the weakening of the army's administration. Not only did the inspector general lose his assumed power of giving orders to officers and men not in his department, but he also lost the direct control of his assistant inspectors in the subordinate commands. For example, when Harvie wanted a list of all inspectors serving in Hardee's corps, he could not obtain this through his own department, but had instead to apply to the lieutenant general for the necessary information.⁴¹

The hierarchical structure of the inspector general's department no longer reached from army to brigade headquarters, but was diverted by way of the line commanders; inspectors were accompanied in their duties by line officers to give all necessary orders,⁴² and were integrated more closely into the line unit they served. Because Harvie pushed his authority too far, the department set up by Beard lost much of its earlier cohesion and effectiveness.

Ironically, the deterioration in the inspector general's department of the Army of Tennessee began just when the Adjutant and Inspector General's Office in Richmond was recognizing the importance of inspection. General Orders No. 42, of April 14, 1864, required regular and frequent inspections of all major army units by officers of an inspection corps, and provided that all reports should pass through an inspection hierarchy reaching from brigade level, through army headquarters, to the War Department. The purpose of these

orders was clearly stated; it was to "give a more clear and full idea of the condition of the Army and the relative efficiency of its different organizations and their commanders."⁴³

Harvie never found it possible to comply with General Orders No. 42. The difficulties caused by his disputes were of course compounded by the opening of the Atlanta campaign early in May, and the inspector general used the campaign to justify his "apparent neglect of duty" in failing to carry out the new inspection orders.⁴⁴ Also apparent, however, was a progressive decline in the efficiency of the inspector general's department which, once begun under Johnston, proved irreversible under Hood.

In November 1864 Harvie wrote to Hood in a last effort to restore efficiency to his department. He described the lamentable state of inspection, and revealed incidentally the degree to which failures in inspection were costing Hood the administrative control of his army:

As the department now stands corps, division, and brigade inspectors are almost wholly independent of the inspector general of the army, each general officer having a system, or no system, of his own, with such authority over these officers as renders them incapable of performing the necessary duties pertaining to the department. There is no head, each inspector looking to his immediate commander for the class of duties he is to perform. When property is captured from the enemy it finds its way into private hands, no one seeming to know or care what becomes of it. Applications are daily made by officers to purchase public animals, and there is no organized system by which it can be ascertained whether these applications should be granted. Orders are daily issued by the Adjutant-General of the Army, and it is impossible to tell whether they find their

way even as far as corps headquarters. Abuses of every nature are being constantly reported, and under the present system there is no way by which they can be reached. 45

Clearly the challenge to Harvie's authority as inspector general, made by Hardee and sustained by Johnston, had had serious consequences for the administration of the Army of Tennessee. The inspector general's department had ceased to function as an organized staff unit, and direction of its officers had passed to the line commanders, leaving Harvie incapable of supervising or of co-ordinating such inspection duties as were still carried out.

Harvie's letter had no discernible effect on his commander. There is no evidence that Hood took any action to improve the alarming situation described by his inspector general. Harvie had made suggestions designed to restore order and efficiency to his department, although these consisted in the main of giving him "unlimited control" over all inspectors in the army.⁴⁶ Reform on these lines would have re-awakened the conflicts over authority between line and staff which Harvie had already lost. It is doubtful, however, in view of Hood's apparent disinterest in staff work, whether the general realized the implications of his inspector's recommendations; more probably, his lack of response to Harvie's letter was due to the immediate pressures of a crucial campaign.

Thus with an administrative system declared by its ranking staff officer to be inefficient the Army of Tennessee

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marched in the fall of 1864 towards the disasters which destroyed it as a major Confederate army.

Responsibility for the administrative collapse of 1864 must rest largely with General Johnston. Regarding his staff in personal terms rather than as members of a staff corps, Johnston insisted on the right to select his own administrative officers. Repeatedly he rejected attempts by Congress and the War Department to institute staff reforms, as infringements on his authority as commander. Thus by considering his staff a personal matter Johnston became peculiarly responsible for the performance of his nominees, Ewell and Harvie. Neither officer was successful as the head of an administrative department. As adjutant general Ewell failed to provide leadership and authority for his assistants, while Harvie through excessive zeal provoked, and lost, a major conflict between the inspector general's department and the line commanders. As a result the departments of both men lost their internal cohesion, and their officers ceased to be collective members of a staff corps, becoming instead individual adjuncts of the army unit they served. The infant administrative system had been unable to accommodate itself to the personal factor of rivalry and jealousy between individual officers and between different branches of the military service; and in the Army of Tennessee of 1864 system gradually reverted to the haphazard methods with which the war had been begun.

Notes

¹J. E. Johnston to L. T. Wigfall, Dalton [Georgia] , January 5, 1864, Louis Trezevant Wigfall Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.; also [Johnston] to Mansfield Lovell, Dalton [Georgia], January 6, 1864, Mansfield Lovell Papers, Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California. Bragg's supporters included Colonel J. P. Jones, Major General Joseph Wheeler, and Colonel G. W. Brent; see their letters to Bragg of December 10, December 15, and December 26, 1863, William P. Palmer Collection of Braxton Bragg Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio.

²Joseph E. Johnston, Narrative of Military Operations (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1874), p. 263.

³Memorandum of Staff Officers in the Army of Tennessee for February 1864, imprint in the Henry E. Huntington Library; "James Biddle Eustis," Dictionary of American Biography, Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, eds. (20 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928-1936), VI, 193; W. W. Mackall to Mrs. Mackall, Dalton [Georgia], March 4, 1864, William Whann Mackall Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

⁴On February 24, 1864, Bragg was charged with "the conduct of military operations in the armies of the Confederacy." His requests for Brent, Walter, and Hays, and his assignment of these officers to inspection duties, suggest that Bragg found his supervisory role similar to that of J. E. Johnston in Department No. 2--without field command of a specific army Bragg's role was that of inspector general of the Confederacy. See War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (128 vols.; Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Series I, XXXII, pt. 2, 799 (cited hereafter as OR, with all references to Series I, unless otherwise indicated); G. W. Brent, H. W. Walter, A. J. Hays, Compiled Service Records of Confederate General and Staff Officers and Nonregimental Enlisted Men, War Department Collection of Confederate Records, Record Group 109, National Archives, Washington, D. C. (cited hereafter as CSR).

⁵See especially OR, XXXII, pt. 2, 505-833; also, pt. 3, 574-879.

⁶Johnston, Narrative of Military Operations, pp. 299-300; J. E. Johnston to B. S. Ewell, Harrison's [Virginia], May 28, 1862, Richard Stoddert Ewell Papers, microfilm at the Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

⁷"Benjamin Stoddert Ewell," Dictionary of American Biography, VI, 228-229; George Campbell Brown, "Military Reminiscences from 1861-1865," Manuscript Division, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville; Ewell to Samuel Cooper, Richmond, Virginia, March 8, 1865, B. S. Ewell, CSR; Mackall to Mrs. Mackall, Enterprise [Mississippi], January 13, 1864, Mackall Papers.

⁸Special Orders No. 90, Dalton, Georgia, April 1, 1864, Ewell, CSR; Special Orders No. 5, Dalton, Georgia, April 8, 1864, ibid.; OR, XXXVIII, pt. 3, 985.

⁹Johnston, Narrative of Military Operations, p. 351.

¹⁰OR, XXXII, pt. 2, 505-833, pt. 3, 574-879; XXXVIII, pt. 4, 654-807, pt. 5, 858-891; in support of the statement about Brent, see especially XXXII, pt. 2, 792-812.

¹¹Ibid., XXXIX, pt. 1, 807; John Bell Hood, Advance and Retreat (New Orleans: Hood Orphan Memorial Fund, 1880), p. 262.

¹²Johnston to J. R. Poinsett, Augusta [Virginia], June 23, 1858, Joseph Eggleston Johnston Papers, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina; Wigfall to Johnston, North Garden Depot, Virginia, March 18, 1864, Joseph Eggleston Johnston Papers, Huntington Library; S. Bassett French Biographical Sketches, Virginia State Library, Richmond.

Johnston's aides followed the same social pattern. Lieutenants Richard Irvine Manning and Wade Hampton, Jr., came from prominent South Carolina families, both of which provided state governors; Lieutenant J. Barroll Washington was the "nearest collateral descendant of Genl. Geo. Washington." Dictionary of American Biography, VIII, 213-214, XII, 251; S. Bassett French Biographical Sketches.

¹³OR, XX, pt. 2, 489; Johnston to Davis, Atlanta [Georgia], September 9, 1863, Johnston Papers, Duke University.

¹⁴"Proceedings of the First Confederate Congress, 4th Session, 7 December, 1863-18 February, 1864," Southern Historical Society Papers, L (1953), 420-421.

¹⁵Wigfall to [Johnston], Virginia [April 1864?], Johnston Papers, Huntington Library.

¹⁶OR, Series IV, III, 450-455, 316, 497-498. A brief analysis of the debate may be found in Wilfrid Buck Yearn, The Confederate Congress (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1960), pp. 108-109.

¹⁷[E. J. Harvie] to Lewis E. Harvie, Dalton, Georgia, February 10, February 11, 1864, Endorsements on Letters Received, Army of Tennessee, 1863-1864; [Letters Sent, 1864;] and Special Orders, 1864, Chapter II, Volume 15 $\frac{1}{2}$, 305-306, War Department Collection of Confederate Records (hereafter cited as Ch. II, Vol. 15 $\frac{1}{2}$).

¹⁸Johnston to Wigfall, Dalton [Georgia], April [23], 1864, Wigfall Papers; see also Johnston's letter of March 6, 1864, ibid.

¹⁹Johnston to Wigfall, Dalton [Georgia], April 30, 1864, ibid.

²⁰OR, Series IV, III, 352-353.

²¹Johnston to Cooper, Lost Mountain [Georgia], June 8, 1864, Johnston Papers, Huntington Library.

²²OR, LII, pt. 2, 713.

²³Ibid., Series IV, II, 944-946; III, 44-45.

²⁴Ibid., 170.

²⁵ See Braxton Bragg Correspondence Book, 24 February, 1864-26 January, 1865, Civil War Papers, Louisiana Historical Association Collection, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, New Orleans.

²⁶ Johnston to Wigfall, [Dalton, Georgia,] April 23 [1864], Wigfall Papers.

²⁷ Johnston to Cooper, Dalton [Georgia], April 12, 1864, Harvie, CSR.

²⁸ General Order No. -, Chattanooga, Tennessee [1863?], Confederate States Army Collection, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge.

²⁹ Ch. II, Vol. 15 $\frac{1}{2}$, 200-208.

³⁰ Ibid.; Letters Sent and Endorsements, Army of Tennessee, 1863-1864, Chapter II, Volume 158 $\frac{1}{4}$, 37-71, War Department Collection of Confederate Records (hereafter cited as Ch. II, Vol. 158 $\frac{1}{4}$), especially Harvie to Hill, Dalton, Georgia, February 19, April 5, 1864.

³¹ [Harvie] to Hill, Dalton, Georgia, March 6, 1864, Ch. II, Vol. 158 $\frac{1}{4}$, 52.

³² Harvie to McMicken, Dalton, Georgia, March 18, 1864, Ch. II, Vol. 15 $\frac{1}{2}$, 207.

³³ Ibid., 200-208.

³⁴Ch. II, Vol. 158 $\frac{1}{4}$, 37-71, 275-308; OR, Series IV, III, 297-299.

³⁵Ch. II, Vol. 15 $\frac{1}{2}$, 200-208; Vol. 158 $\frac{1}{4}$, 37-71, 275-308.

³⁶[Harvie] to Major Ayers, Dalton, Georgia, January 30, 1864, ibid., 40.

³⁷[Harvie] to Captain Guy Dreux, Dalton, Georgia, March 9, 1864, ibid., 54.

³⁸[Harvie] to [B. F.] Cheatham, Dalton, Georgia, February 19, 1864, ibid., 46.

³⁹For correspondence relating to this dispute, see ibid., 62-65.

⁴⁰[Harvie] to [W. J.] Hardee, Dalton, Georgia, April 6, 1864, ibid., 65; a copy of this letter was also sent to corps commander J. B. Hood.

⁴¹[Harvie] to W. J. Hardee, Dalton, Georgia, April 28, 1864, ibid., 70.

⁴²[Harvie] to Majors W. Clare and P. B. Lee, Dalton, Georgia, April 6, 1864, ibid., 65.

⁴³OR, Series IV, III, 297. For Richmond's interest in inspection see also the circular of June 4, 1864, ibid., 466-471.

⁴⁴Ibid., Series I, XXXVIII, pt. 5, 956-957; also XXXIX, pt. 3, 871. The growing weakness of the inspector general's department is confirmed in the few letters of November-December 1864, found in Letters Sent, Inspector General of the Army of Tennessee, 1864-1865, Chapter II, Volume 19 $\frac{1}{4}$, War Department Collection of Confederate Records.

⁴⁵OR, XXXIX, pt. 3, 880-881.

⁴⁶Ibid., 881.

CHAPTER VIII

Conclusion

March 1862-December 1864

Effective military administration was essential to the Confederacy. Without it she would be unable to organize and train her armies in camp, or to direct them in campaign or on the battlefield. Military and political leaders alike realized this, and drew on the military theory and practice of the old United States Army in repeated attempts to evolve an administrative system for the Confederate armies. Any success in field administration depended on the important roles of the chief of staff, the adjutant general, and the inspector general.

Without exception the field commanders of the Army of Tennessee chose to appoint chiefs of staff, but there was no agreement on the role of that officer. General A. S. Johnston associated the chief of staff with command functions; Beauregard allowed Jordan considerable administrative responsibility; Bragg varied in his attitudes, but was inclined to restrict the chief of staff's duties to those of the adjutant general's department; J. E. Johnston relied on Mackall as the link between administration and command, and consulted him on tactical matters; and Hood made no effective use at all of his chief staff officers. The wide difference

in role reflected the qualifications of each chief of staff, his commander's intention, and the ability of the two men to work well together.

By contrast, there was no doubt about the duties of the adjutant general's department. Army regulations defined these at length. They consisted primarily of paperwork, and most important in an immediate sense was the adjutant's responsibility for orders and correspondence. As joint chief of staff and adjutant general, under Beauregard and Bragg, Jordan introduced the elements of efficiency into his department. He classified its work, allocated it to specific assistants, and insisted that all communications be directed through him, as head of the department. To a certain degree this organization was maintained under Bragg, but it was undermined by the general's tendency himself to direct, and sometimes even to execute, routine administrative work. As a result the adjutant general's department gradually lost the coherence of its earlier organization. This process was accelerated throughout 1864, when under Johnston the field work of the department was carried on by assistant adjutants, and under Hood became completely unreliable, in the essential duty of issuing orders.

The inspector general's department represented a field development of the earlier inspection service. At one time inspectors had functioned as individual officers, appointed from the line for a specific assignment on inspection duty. Any necessary assistance was provided by the adjutant

general's department. But in Beauregard's Army of Tennessee a distinct department of inspection was established, with its own organization and its own hierarchy of officers, in a line of authority from army to brigade level. Under Beard and Harvie, successive inspectors general, the department was distinguished by its relative independence of the commanding general, and by an unusual continuity of service among its officers. Commended for its efficiency, the department depended for its success on maintaining good relations with the line and staff units it inspected. In this essential factor Beard was largely successful, but Harvie through excessive zeal reawakened the traditional conflict between headquarters staff and subordinate line commanders. In the ensuing dispute the authority of the line officers was upheld, inspectors were made primarily responsible to the line units they served, and the integrated departmental structure of inspection collapsed. In spite of his appeals for support, Harvie was never able to restore it.

The field practice of the Army of Tennessee thus demonstrated a number of attempts to develop the staff role. Among the innovations were the appointments of chiefs of staff, the coordination of administrative work at all command levels through a departmental structure, and the emergence of the inspector general's department. These changes were marked, however, by a series of conflicts which finally negated them.

The President and the War Department wished to establish a centralized system of administration. A permanent staff corps, directed from Richmond, would select candidates for staff commissions, train them, and control their assignment to the field armies of the Confederacy. This proposal, if carried out, would increase the War Department's control over the field commanders, and at the same time make the staff more independent of the line. For these two reasons the line commanders of the Army of Tennessee opposed the plan for a centralized staff system. Even Bragg, who supported the scheme when on assignment in Richmond in 1864, showed no inclination as a field commander to relax his authority over his own staff. Opposition from the generals combined with the immediate problems of the war to prevent the establishment of a centralized administrative system.

In these circumstances the army commanders became peculiarly responsible for the performance of their staff. Although appointments had to be formally approved by the President, the generals selected their own officers and largely determined the role they should play. The generals discovered in the field what they had already experienced, from a different standpoint, in their dealings with Richmond--that where they, as army commanders, had resented the centralization of administrative authority in the War Department and an independent staff corps, the corps and division commanders resented in their turn the centralization of field administration under army headquarters staff. In each case

the line officers won the dispute, serving the interests of their personal authority at the expense of army administration as a whole. Perhaps equally interested in the aggrandizement of their own role, at the expense of the line, were the headquarters staff. Thus there was at different levels of the military hierarchy a significant rejection of the principle of subordination, an insistence on the personal rather than the systematic, and a lack of harmony between command and administration.

As a result the Confederacy failed to develop an efficient administrative system. By relying on the personal equation, it exposed the staff to the rivalries and jealousies which plagued the Confederate armies, and encouraged many staff officers to participate in these disputes. That the officers did participate was probably due in part to the traditional democratic egalitarianism of the South; but it also indicated the persistence in the Confederate armies of the long-standing American tradition of hostility between political control and military command, between centralization and independence in the field, between staff and line. Thus David Donald's suggestion that the Confederacy "died of democracy"¹ may appropriately be applied to army administration, if to that diagnosis is added the contributory factor of an inherited weakness for dispute over the nature of military authority.

Note

¹David Donald, "Died of Democracy," Why the North Won the Civil War, David Donald, ed. (New York: Collier Books, 1962), pp. 79-90.

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APPENDIX

Chronological outline of the major campaigns and battles of the Army of Tennessee

1862 March, the principal armies of the Western Confederacy assembled near Corinth, Mississippi, to become the Army of Tennessee; April 6-7, the Confederate forces under Albert Sidney Johnston attacked the Union army of Ulysses S. Grant at the Battle of Shiloh, Johnston was killed on the battlefield, Beauregard replaced him as commander, and on the second day of the battle the Confederates were forced to withdraw from the field; April-July, the Confederate army remained in camp, first at Corinth and then at Tupelo, Mississippi, while Beauregard was relieved of command and replaced by Braxton Bragg; July 23-early August, Bragg moved his army from Tupelo to Chattanooga, Tennessee; August 28-late October, Bragg struck northwards into Kentucky, but after initial successes was obliged to withdraw into Tennessee; November-December, the army remained in camp near Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

1863 December 31, 1862-January 2, 1863, Bragg's army assaulted Union forces led by William S. Rosecrans in the Battle of Murfreesboro, and after an indecisive engagement the Confederates withdrew from the field;

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January-June, the Confederates remained in camp at or near Tullahoma, Tennessee, and Bragg weathered a demand early in the year for his replacement by another commander; June 26-July 7, the army moved from Tullahoma to Chattanooga; September 8, under Union pressure Bragg withdrew from Chattanooga; September 19-20, Bragg and Rosecrans opposed one another in the Battle of Chickamauga, but in spite of Confederate success on the battlefield Bragg's troops failed to take Chattanooga, and settled down instead to besiege it; September-November, the Army of Tennessee watched Union forces in Chattanooga, while Bragg survived yet another demand for his relief from command; November 23-25, Union reinforcements under Grant assaulted Missionary Ridge, and drove the Confederates in ignominious retreat into Georgia; December 2, Bragg was relieved of command, and replaced later in the month by Joseph E. Johnston.

1864 January-May, the Army of Tennessee remained in camp at Dalton, Georgia, under Johnston's command; May-September, William T. Sherman's Union army forced the Confederates to withdraw towards Atlanta; July 17, withdrawal led to Johnston's replacement by John B. Hood; September 2, Hood surrendered Atlanta to Sherman; September-November, Hood left Georgia for Alabama and Tennessee, hoping to draw Sherman after him, but Sherman continued his march through Georgia to the sea; November 29-30, Hood tried and failed to trap the army of

John M. Schofield at Spring Hill, Tennessee; November 30, the Confederates caught up with Schofield's men and attacked them in the costly but unsuccessful Battle of Franklin; December 15, Hood was routed by George H. Thomas in the Battle of Nashville, the last major engagement for the Army of Tennessee.

1865 January-April, the army withdrew from Tennessee, Hood was replaced by Johnston, and the shattered army finally surrendered to overwhelming forces at Bentonville, North Carolina, on April 26, 1865. The Civil War was over.