

headquarters. This position, along with most other staff positions, was used as an individual commander saw fit, making staff responsibilities somewhat different under each commander. This inadequate use of the chief of staff was among the most important shortcomings of staffs during the Civil War. An equally important weakness was the lack of any formal operations or intelligence staff. Liaison procedures were also ill defined, and various staff officers or soldiers performed this function with little formal guidance. Miscommunication or lack of knowledge of friendly units proved disastrous time after time in the war's campaigns.

Table 2. Typical Staffs

General Staff	Staff Corps
Chief of staff (personal staff)	Engineer
Aides (personal staff)	Ordnance
Assistant adjutant general	Quartermaster
Assistant inspector general	Subsistence
	Medical
	Pay
	Signal
	Provost marshal
	Chief of artillery

The Armies in the Overland Campaign

The forces in the Overland Campaign evolved through several organizational changes over the course of the two-month struggle. The details of these changes are covered in the campaign overview and in the appendixes. Some key aspects of these organizations are summarized below.

On the Union side, Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant, in addition to being the commander of all of the Union forces arrayed against the Confederacy, commanded all Union forces in the eastern theater of operations that fought in the Overland Campaign. His main force was Major General George G. Meade's Army of the Potomac, which initially consisted of three infantry corps and one cavalry corps. An additional infantry corps, the IX Corps under Major General Ambrose E. Burnside, began the campaign as a separate corps reporting directly to Grant, but was later assigned to the Army of the Potomac. Major General Franz Sigel commanded a Union army in the Shenandoah Valley that had only an indirect role in the Overland Campaign. On the other hand, Major General Benjamin F. Butler's Army of the James was more directly involved in the campaign. His army consisted of two infantry corps and about a division's

worth of cavalry troops. Later in the campaign, at Cold Harbor, one of Butler's corps, the XVIII under Major General William F. Smith, was temporarily attached to the Army of the Potomac. The initial strength of the Army of the Potomac and the IX Corps at the beginning of the Overland Campaign was slightly under 120,000 men.

There are some factors affecting the strength, quality, and organization of the Union forces that should be noted. First, just prior to the campaign, the Army of the Potomac had abolished two of its infantry corps (the I and III Corps, both of which had been decimated at Gettysburg) and consolidated their subordinate units into the remaining three corps (II, V, and VI). This definitely streamlined the Army's command and control, but it also meant that some divisions and brigades were not accustomed to their new corps' methods and procedures at the start of the campaign. Second, soldiers in a large number of the Federal regiments were approaching the expiration dates of their enlistments just as the campaign was set to begin in May 1864. Most of the troops in these regiments had enlisted for three years in 1861, and they represented the most experienced fighters in the Army. A surprisingly large number of these soldiers reenlisted (over 50 percent), but there was still a large turnover and much disruption as many of the regiments that reenlisted returned to their home states for furloughs and to recruit replacements. Finally, the Union did tap a new source for soldiers in 1864: the "heavy artillery" regiments. These were units designed to man the heavy artillery in the fortifications around Washington, DC. Grant decided to strip many of these regiments from the forts and use them as infantry in the 1864 campaign, and he employed these forces more extensively as his losses accumulated. The heavy artillery regiments had a slightly different structure than the traditional infantry regiments, and they had not suffered battle casualties; thus, they often still possessed about 1,200 soldiers in a regiment. This was as large as a veteran Union brigade in 1864.

On the Confederate side, there was no overall commander in chief or even a theater commander with authority similar to that of Grant. Officially, only President Jefferson Davis had the authority to coordinate separate Confederate armies and military districts. However, the commander of the Army of Northern Virginia, General Robert E. Lee, had considerable influence over affairs in the entire eastern theater due to the immense respect he had earned from Davis and other Confederate leaders. Lee's army consisted of three infantry corps and a cavalry corps. One of these corps (Lieutenant General James Longstreet's I Corps) had been on detached duty just prior to the opening of the campaign and would not join the rest of Lee's army until the second day of the battle of the Wilderness

(6 June). Additional Confederate forces in the theater included Major General John C. Breckinridge's small army in the Shenandoah Valley and General P.G.T. Beauregard's forces protecting Richmond, southern Virginia, and northern North Carolina. In the course of the campaign, Lee received some reinforcements from both Breckinridge and Beauregard. The Army of Northern Virginia (including Longstreet's I Corps) began the campaign with about 64,000 soldiers.

Although plagued by an overall shortage in numbers, Lee had fewer worries about the organization and quality of his manpower. Most of his soldiers had enlisted for the duration of the war, thus his army lost few replacements due to expired terms of service. Also, thanks to its better replacement system, Confederate regiments were usually closer to a consistent strength of 350 to 600 men instead of the wild disparity of their Union counterparts (as low as 150 soldiers in the decimated veteran regiments and as much as 1,200 in the heavy artillery regiments). Overall, Lee could count on the quality and consistency of his units, and he did not have to endure the turmoil of troop turnover and organizational changes that hindered Grant's forces.

As for staffs, on the Union side Grant maintained a surprisingly small staff for a commander in chief. His personal chief of staff was Major General John A. Rawlins, a capable officer who generally produced concise and well-crafted orders. In addition, he was Grant's alter ego, a trusted friend who took it upon himself to keep Grant sober. In fact, recent scholarship indicates that Grant's drinking was far less of a problem than formerly indicated, and there were certainly no drinking difficulties during the Overland Campaign. The rest of Grant's small staff consisted of a coterie of friends who had earned Grant's trust from their common service in the western theater campaigns. In general, this staff performed well, although a few glaring mistakes would come back to haunt the Union effort. Of course, one of the major reasons Grant could afford to keep such a small staff in the field was that the chief of staff for the Union armies, Major General Henry W. Halleck, remained in Washington with a large staff that handled Grant's administrative duties as general in chief. In fact, Halleck was a superb staff officer who tactfully navigated the political seas of Washington and gave Grant the freedom to accompany the Army of the Potomac in the field.

In contrast to Grant's field staff, Meade had a huge staff that Grant once jokingly described as fitting for an Imperial Roman Emperor. Meade's chief of staff was Major General Andrew A. Humphreys, an extremely capable officer who only reluctantly agreed to leave field command to

serve on the army's staff. Humphreys has received some criticism for not pushing the Army of the Potomac through the Wilderness on 4 May; but for most of the campaign, his orders were solid and his movement plan for the crossing of the James River was outstanding. Another excellent officer on the army staff was the chief of artillery, Major General Henry J. Hunt. Recognized as one of the war's foremost experts on artillery, Hunt had a more active role in operational matters than most artillery chiefs who usually just performed administrative duties. The rest of Meade's staff was of mixed quality. In addition, the poor caliber of Union maps coupled with some mediocre young officers who were used as guides repeatedly led to misdirected movements and lost time.

Compared to Meade's large headquarters, Lee maintained a smaller group of trusted subordinates for his staff. Lee did not have a chief of staff, thus much of the responsibility for writing his orders fell on the shoulders of a few personal aides and secretaries, especially Lieutenant Colonel Charles Marshall. Lee employed several young officers, such as Lieutenant Colonel Walter Taylor and Colonel Charles S. Venable, as aides, and had great faith in these men to transmit his orders to subordinates. However, the lack of a true staff to ease his workload probably took its toll on Lee who was ill and physically exhausted by the time of the North Anna battles at the end of May. Other than his young aides, Lee had several other staff officers of mixed quality. His chief of artillery, Brigadier General William N. Pendleton, was mediocre at best, and the Army commander usually relegated his chief of artillery to strictly administrative duties. On the other hand, Major General Martin Luther (M.L.) Smith, Lee's chief engineer, played an active and generally positive role throughout the campaign.

Weapons

Infantry

During the 1850's, in a technological revolution of major proportions, the rifle musket began to replace the relatively inaccurate smoothbore musket in ever-increasing numbers, both in Europe and America. This process, accelerated by the Civil War, ensured that the rifled shoulder weapon would be the basic weapon used by infantrymen in both the Federal and Confederate armies.

The standard and most common shoulder weapon used in the American Civil War was the Springfield .58-caliber rifle musket, models 1855, 1861, and 1863. In 1855, the US Army adopted this weapon to replace the .69-caliber smoothbore musket and the .54-caliber rifle. In appearance, the rifle musket was similar to the smoothbore musket. Both were single-shot

casualties in May and the first half of June put considerable strain on the Union efforts. After the bloody fights at the Wilderness and Spotsylvania, the Federals established an extensive field hospital and evacuation center at Fredericksburg, probably the largest of its kind in the war.

The Confederates were able to take advantage of protected rail lines to evacuate most of their casualties to Richmond. Their bigger problem was a lack of trained surgeons and medical supplies. The Southern medical facilities were meager compared to their Union counterparts and barely adequate for needs of the campaign.

Table 5. Casualties of the Campaign

		Union	Confederate *
Wilderness	Killed	2,246	
	Wounded	12,037	
	Missing	3,383	
	Total	17,666	11,400
Spotsylvania	Killed	2,725	
	Wounded	13,416	
	Missing	2,258	
	Total	18,399	12,000
North Anna	Killed	591	
	Wounded	2,734	
	Missing	661	
	Total	3,986	2,500
Sheridan's Raid	Killed	64	
	Wounded	337	
	Missing	224	
	Total	625	400
Cold Harbor	Killed	1,845	
	Wounded	9,077	
	Missing	1,816	
	Total	12,738	3,400
The Campaign Total**	Killed	9,634	
	Wounded	48,274	
	Missing	13,587	
	Grand Total	71,495	32,000

*Confederate numbers are often rough estimates in part because Confederate records were more difficult to maintain and many were lost in the last year of the war.

**Includes additional losses from engagements outside of the major battles.