

## Civil-Military Operations—At Antietam???

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During the U.S. Army Museum Conference in 1992, the assembled curators and their uniformed supervisors participated in an abbreviated staff ride at the Antietam battlefield. As a museum curator and graduate of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College with twenty-six years' active and reserve service, I was in my glory as we trekked from position to position, checking avenues of approach, fields of fire, and all that sort of thing. By the time we reached the Dunker church, however, it occurred to me that we were missing something. Putting on my Civil Affairs officer kepi, well-worn after years in a reserve civil affairs group and brigade, I realized that we were not taking sufficient account of the fact that the battle had taken place in an inhabited area. How did the presence of civilians affect the Union and Confederate armies and their conduct of the battle? How did the battle affect the people in and around Sharpsburg? These questions were not dealt with in sufficient detail to enable an assessment of civil-military operations.

Should civil-military operations (CMO) be included on a staff ride in a Civil War battlefield context, e.g., at Antietam? Clearly, they should be if one is to cover all aspects of a military operation. CMO are, after all, an element of the Combat Service Support Battlefield Operating System. Warfare takes place in populated areas today just as it did in the nineteenth century. But can sufficient information be gleaned from existing source materials to assess the impact of civil-military operations on a battle? I propose to review the doctrine for CMO and then to examine evidence of its application during the Antietam campaign.

Basically, CMO are undertaken to assist the commander in accomplishing the mission. Typically, this goal is met by the performance of the following tasks:

- \* Minimizing civilian interference on operations
- \* Assisting the commander in meeting his moral and legal obligations toward the civil populace
- \* Acquiring supplies and services from the local economy
- \* Supplementing the intelligence cycle

The Army's "doctrine" for CMO during the Civil War was not well defined. The organization of the staff in 1862 did not include a CMO staff officer, although

several members of the staff typically would be in contact with the civil population, e.g., the quartermaster, commissary, and provost marshal. There were no civil affairs units per se. The *Army Regulations* promulgated in 1861 provided some guidance to commanders and soldiers on relations with civilians and, since Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan was operating within the borders of the United States, this guidance was applicable (Confederate regulations were based on those of the U.S. Army, so the Confederate doctrine was similar). Soldiers were directed to "behave themselves orderly" on the march and not to waste or spoil houses, fields, or meadows or maliciously destroy any property of inhabitants of the *United States* (unless by order of the Commander in Chief!). Plundering and marauding of the persons and property of those the army had the duty to protect were considered disgraceful and punishable by court-martial. Marauding and plundering the enemy's population and property, however, were not likewise proscribed. Giving aid and comfort to the enemy was punishable by court-martial. The commander of an army was authorized to levy contributions in money or in kind on the enemy's country when "the wants of the army absolutely require it, and in other cases." Protection was granted to hospitals, public establishments, churches, museums and depositories of the arts, mills, post offices, and other "institutions of public benefit" in the form of a safeguard, usually a certificate by the commander designating a site as protected.

With 1862 CMO doctrine and CMO tasks in mind, one can review the battle of Antietam in terms of each of the above CMO tasks to see what can be divined about CMO's impact on the battle. To assess the extent of available information, I will turn to the *U.S. Army War College Guide to the Battle of Antietam* and to the "Antietam Staff Ride Briefing Book," issued by the U.S. Army Center of Military History.

### Minimize Civilian Interference

There were no uncontrolled movements of civilians on the battlefield at Antietam such as occurred in 1861 at Manassas (Bull Run). Any civilian congestion on the road from Shepherdstown to Sharpsburg would have spelled disaster for Robert E. Lee, who depended

upon the timely arrival of reinforcements to hold his position east of Sharpsburg. Was the lack of population movements the result of good traffic control, enforcement of curfews, or a dearth of civilians fleeing the battlefield, or just a dearth of civilians in the vicinity?

### **Fulfill Moral and Legal Obligations to the Civilian Populace**

We know that Lee hoped to impress Marylanders favorably with his army's good behavior so as to achieve the Confederate campaign's political objective. McClellan, in turn, issued orders against pillage. Although damage resulting from the battle was extensive, claims for damages are seldom mentioned in our two sources (an exception being the \$60 paid to Daniel Wise for the dumping of Confederate corpses into his well near Fox's Gap). Sites which should have been afforded protection under the existing rules of warfare—the Dunker church and the Lutheran church in Sharpsburg—were subjected to heavy damage. The Dunker church probably owed its injuries to its unchurchlike architecture. Had it been of a more conventional style or clearly marked as a church, would it have escaped damage? The Federals fired upon the Lutheran church when the Confederates used it as a signal station, a violation of the rules, at least from the Union point of view (Monte Cassino comes to mind). This church, as well as the Dunker church, was used as a hospital at the end of the battle. The farms between the two armies were devastated. The Confederates deliberately burned the Mumma Farm house and buildings to deny them to Union sharpshooters, a case of perceived military necessity. Clearly, there is evidence of the interplay of the commanders' moral and legal obligations and the exigencies of battle.

### **Acquire Supplies and Services**

The Federal Army was supplied chiefly from its supply depots but relied extensively on the use of railroads and boats to move its supplies. Frequent mention is made of the use of houses and barns (particularly as hospitals) by headquarters and units, though no information about compensation, if any, for such use is offered. The Confederate Army lived off the land but generally paid for its needs to avoid alienating the Marylanders. Lee did direct the "securing of the transportation of the country" in Virginia to move his sick and wounded. What percentage of each army's logistical tail was moved by civilian means? How many of their supplies were requisitioned from civilians?

### **Supplement the Intelligence Cycle**

Examples of this task are evident for both armies. It was a Maryland civilian who first reported the Confederate crossing of the Potomac to the Union forces. Likewise, it was a civilian who overheard McClellan's plan and disclosed it to Lee. There is no indication that either army assigned to any unit or agency the task of gathering intelligence from civilians. Yet, given the inadequacy of maps, both armies had to rely on civilians for information on the terrain. To what extent did the cavalry of either side extract useful data from civilians? To what extent did the screening forces deny their opponents access to information from civilians?

Even from this cursory look at our two sources on Antietam, it is evident that enough information about civil-military operations exists to pose questions for staff ride participants about their impact. Although we are left with several unanswered questions about the application of CMO tasks, the questions themselves can stimulate thought and discussion for staff ride participants. They can also serve as a guide for further research for a more detailed assessment of CMO. The *War of the Rebellion*—the official records of the Civil War—newspaper accounts, and the sources cited in Ted Ballard's article, "Antietam Staff Ride Guide," in *Army History*, no. 20 (Fall 1991), should provide the answers.

I can already hear the groans from staff ride coordinators who would have to do more research and cram even more information into their presentations. There is no need to worry: remember how Tom Sawyer got the fence painted. What an ideal research paper CMO would make for a student at the Command and General Staff College or the War College! There is, in addition, the 352d Civil Affairs Command (USAR), in Riverdale, Maryland, which has the CMO expertise to do the research and prepare instructional materials as a professional development project. Data could be accumulated over a period of time and incorporated into staff ride guides. Clearly, it is feasible to integrate CMO into the Antietam staff ride. This can be done without a research effort of epic proportions, and if it can be done for Antietam, why not for the others? The John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School might be recruited to oversee the integration of CMO—and possibly special operations as well—into the staff ride process.

Staff rides offer an excellent method for conveying the lessons of the past to today's leadership, yet as currently practiced by the Army, the staff ride over-

looks an important aspect of warfare—civil-military operations. Real warfare takes place on battlefields occupied by civilians. In the post-Cold War era, the presence of civilians and their impact on operations cannot be ignored. Integrating CMO into the staff ride will improve the training value of this experience, not just for those in Career Management Fields 38 and 39,

but for all leaders. The answer to the question posed in the title is “Yes, indeed.”

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