

BRIGADIER GENERAL MARSENA PATRICK,  
PROVOST MARSHAL GENERAL FOR  
THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC

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## ABSTRACT

BRIGADIER GENERAL MARSENA PATRICK, PROVOST MARSHAL GENERAL FOR THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC, by Major Jerome F. Koltz, 135 pages.

An understanding of Brigadier General Marsena Patrick and his work as Provost Marshal General for the Army of the Potomac during the Civil War should foster a better understanding of how American Army provost operations developed through the nineteenth century. This thesis examines first the origins of military police work in the United States Army. It then surveys Marsena Patrick's background, training, and leadership experiences prior to his appointment as provost marshal general. It goes on to study Patrick's performance as provost marshal general during the second half of the Civil War. The thesis concludes with an examination of the influence of Patrick's efforts on military police work today. Patrick's professionalism and dedication to duty live on in the duty performance of military police today.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE THESIS APPROVAL PAGE .....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION .....	1
CHAPTER 2 PROVOST MARSHAL ORIGINS .....	4
CHAPTER 3 MARSENA PATRICK PRIOR TO SERVING AS PROVOST MARSHAL GENERAL FOR THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC .....	20
CHAPTER 4 MARSENA PATRICK AS PROVOST MARSHAL GENERAL FOR THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC.....	57
CHAPTER 5 SIGNIFICANCE OF PATRICK’S SERVICE TO MILITAY POLICE TODAY.....	117
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	124

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Today's United States Army Military Police Corps traces its origins back to the Revolutionary War period. The Marechaussee Corps, established by General George Washington to keep order in the Continental Army, is celebrated as the predecessor of the modern American Military Police. Members of the modern Military Police Corps Regiment who are awarded the Order of the Marechaussee Medal for outstanding achievement are told of how:

[D]uring the Revolutionary War, the Marechaussee Corps was utilized in a variety of missions. The Marechaussee Corps was instructed to organize a patrol to obtain intelligence of the enemy's movement. They were to secure all its crossings to prevent persons from carrying intelligence to the enemy. During the Battle of Springfield, the Marechaussee Corps was utilized in a combat role. The Marechaussee Corps provided security for Washington's headquarters during the Battle of Yorktown in 1781. The apprehension, detention, security, and movement of prisoners of war were another mission for the Marechaussee. The Marechaussee Corps was the major military police-type unit during the American Revolution.<sup>1</sup>

When commissioning an artist to create a painting for the modern military police to call their own, the Military Police Regimental Association chose Rick Reeves, whose "Dawn of the Regiment" is a rendering of Washington's Marechaussee Corps at the Battle of Springfield in 1780.<sup>2</sup> While the United States Army's military police origins are celebrated, the branch's development during the Civil War is less well known. The United States Army Center of Military History's book, *Military Police*, devotes only two

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<sup>1</sup>Military Police Regimental Association, "Marechaussee," <http://www.mpraonline.org/mp/programs-events-and-awards/marechaussee/> (accessed 5 May 2013).

<sup>2</sup>Rick Reeves, *Dawn of the Regiment*, Old Glory Prints, <http://www.oldgloryprints.com/Dawn%20of%20the%20Regiment.htm> (accessed 5 May 2013).

pages to provost marshal operations during the Civil War.<sup>3</sup> Despite the existence of primary source material, Confederate and Union provost operations are most often mentioned fleetingly in books about campaigns or other issues. Kenneth Radley's *Rebel Watchdog: The Confederate States Army Provost Guard* and Steven J. Ramold's *Baring the Iron Hand: Discipline in the Union Army* are two of the rare books available that bring Civil War provost marshal operations into sharper focus. One individual worthy of a closer look, who left a memoir behind in the form of a diary which was published in 1964, is Brigadier General Marsena Patrick, best known for his service as Provost Marshal General for the Army of the Potomac.

Patrick was appointed the Army of the Potomac's Provost Marshal General by Major General George B. McClellan in October of 1862, and went on to serve in that position for each of the Army's subsequent commanders.<sup>4</sup> A West Point graduate and infantry officer by trade, he served as a brigade commander in the Army of the Potomac in the first two years of the war. Despite the publication of *Inside Lincoln's Army: The Diary of Marsena Rudolph Patrick, Provost Marshal General, Army of the Potomac*, his story has yet to be fully examined other than a few brief analyses in magazine articles. A better understanding of Patrick's role as Provost Marshal General of the Army of the Potomac will improve our understanding of the Civil War provost marshal's role in the branch's evolution into the United States Army Military Police Corps that we know today.

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<sup>3</sup>Robert K. Wright, Jr., *Military Police* (Washington, DC: United States Army Center of Military History, 1992).

<sup>4</sup>Ezra J. Warner, *General In Blue: Lives of the Union Commanders* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1964).



To better understand Patrick and his accomplishments, it is first necessary to understand the origins of provost marshal work in the American Army, the aforementioned Marechaussee Corps. An appraisal of Patrick's background, training, and leadership experiences early in the war should allow for a better recognition of what made him effective in the eyes of McClellan and his successors. A chronicle of Patrick's service as Provost Marshal General is best cast in the light of provost marshal operations for the Union Army. Most important, awareness of Patrick and his work should foster a better understanding of how American Army provost operations developed through the nineteenth century.

In order to fully appreciate Patrick, his service, and his contribution to military police development, four questions must be answered. What was Patrick's background before his appointment as provost marshal? How did that background and his experiences contribute to his success as Provost Marshal General? What, specifically, did Patrick do in the execution of his duties? What enduring influence does Patrick's service as Provost Marshal General have on military police operations today? These are the questions this study seeks to answer.

## CHAPTER 2

### PROVOST MARSHAL ORIGINS

The United States Army Military Police Corps that we know today traces its lineage back through both World Wars, the Civil War, and the Revolutionary War to the colonial era. For just as General George Washington's army was modeled in large part after the British army of the time, so too did American disciplinary measures and personnel mirror their European counterparts. The four centuries preceding the Revolutionary War had witnessed a series of developments in Europe, including a transition from mercenary employment to large standing armies, employment of firearms in place of pikes and other edged weapons, and the development of bureaucratic standards of discipline, including the French *ordre de tableau* or Table of Ranks, the precursor to later military regulations.<sup>5</sup>

The Continental Army initially employed personnel who performed duties which would in time become the purview of the provost guard, including officers of the day, adjutants, and inspector generals. These were augmented by physical security forces, temporary police patrols, and officers of police. Provost marshals and the Marechaussee Corps were to follow in the service of Washington's army before the end of the Revolutionary War.

A Captain or subaltern normally commanded the British Provost Guard of the eighteenth century. The provost guard was charged with common policing missions, incarceration of prisoners pending trial by court-martial, administration of executions

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<sup>5</sup>John A. Lynn, *The Cambridge Illustrated History of Warfare*, ed. Geoffrey Parker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 165.

and, at times, corporal punishment.<sup>6</sup> The provost marshal had authorization to employ what today would be considered torture, such as flogging, whether from a court martial's judgment or using his own discretion to counter waywardness within the ranks. This most often and formally meant lashes, from a maximum of 39 during the conflict's first year to 100 later in the war. Officers regularly exceeded these numbers.<sup>7</sup> During the French and Indian War, the provost marshal was authorized by the commanding general to execute marauders and stragglers by hanging.<sup>8</sup> Wrongdoers, anyone in violation of general orders of the Articles of War, and even civilians within the boundaries of military encampments were all accountable to the provost guard. The general orders of General Jeffery Amherst, British commander in chief in North America on 29 July 1760, in Oswego, New York, shed light on the provost marshal's role as executioner.

Ten prisoners under sentence of death were to be 'delivered by the Provost Marshal at 8 A.M. on parade.' After the prisoners were led in "devotions" by a chaplain at the site for executions, nine of the convicted soldiers were pardoned, including John Jones of the First New York Regiment, 'on condition of his serving the provost as executioner during the campaign.' Then 'James Ginnens of Colonel Fitch's (Connecticut) Regiment is to be executed by the Provost Marshal, or his man, hanging the prisoner James Ginnens until he is Dead.' Ginnens was 'to be left hanging till retreat beating, when he is to be cut down and buried by a party of the Regiment he belongs to.'<sup>9</sup>

Even before the Revolutionary War, the seeds for the work that the provost marshal and the provost guard would perform had been planted.

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<sup>6</sup>Harry M. Ward, *George Washington's Enforcers: Policing the Continental Army* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2006), 7.

<sup>7</sup>Robert Fantina, *Desertion and the American Soldier 1776-2006* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2006), 12.

<sup>8</sup>Ward, 7.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 8.

Officers of the day, adjutants, and inspector generals were among the earliest members of the Continental Army to perform duties that would evolve into those performed by the provost guard. Junior officers were charged with heavy responsibilities in the army's attempts to inculcate discipline.<sup>10</sup> Officers of the day, also known as duty officers, were charged with the oversight of the interior guards and their control over all internal security issues.<sup>11</sup> They were to perform many of the routine duties of command as designated by their commanding officer in general orders. A major general officer of the day served as the representative of the commander-in-chief, and all deserters and prisoners were to be examined before he determined their fates.<sup>12</sup> A brigadier general officer of the day commanded all the guards, to include oversight of a parade of guards at the outset of their duty day and the oversight of the guards at their posts. The parade is reflected in the guardmounts conducted by military police across the world, even to the present day. Field officers of the day supported the general officer of the day, inspecting the guards at night, receiving reports at the end of shifts, and collating them into a single report for the brigadier. Field officers of the day were also charged with maintaining discipline among the civilian camp followers, to include sutlers.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Charles Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War: The Continental Army and American Character, 1775-1783* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 83.

<sup>11</sup>Ward, 45.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 46.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 47.

The adjutant, or assistant to the commanding officer, was a position first developed in European armies in the sixteenth century.<sup>14</sup> The duties of the adjutant often coincided with those of the officers of the day. Adjutants were expected to know the whereabouts of unit personnel and to disseminate orders, assisting in the training, inspections, and duties of troops, and at regimental level, supervised the execution of court-martial judgments.<sup>15</sup> In providing accountability at the regimental level, the regimental adjutant had one of the most demanding of all staff jobs. Though assigned the rank of first lieutenant, they received the pay due a captain.<sup>16</sup> General Friedrich von Steuben's *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States* specified that the adjutant be one of the most experienced officers of his grade within the regiment. It further stipulated that the adjutant:

[M]ust keep an exact detail of the duty of the officers and non-commissioned officers of the regiment, taking care to regulate his roster in such a manner as not to have too many officers or non-commissioned officers of the same company on duty at the same time.

He must keep a book, in which he must every day take the General and other Orders . . . assembled the first sergeants of the companies, make them copy the orders, and give them their details for the next day.

He must attend the parade at the turning out of all guards or detachments, inspect their dress, arms, accouterments and ammunition, form them into platoons or sections, and conduct them to the general or brigade parade.

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<sup>14</sup>Merriam-Webster Dictionary, "Adjutant," <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/adjutant> (accessed 18 May 2014).

<sup>15</sup>Ward, 50.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

When the regiment parades for duty or exercise, he must count it off, and divide it into divisions and platoons, and carry out the orders of the colonel where necessary.<sup>17</sup>

Soldiers under arrest were brought to courts-martial by the adjutant. He was also expected to oversee any punishments meted out by the courts-martial. This resulted in the whipping post being referred to as the “Adjutant’s Daughter” by the officers and men of the regiment.<sup>18</sup>

Inspector generals were first employed by the French Army in the seventeenth century, and were more fully developed by Louis XIV.<sup>19</sup> The use of inspector generals in the American Army originated in the latter half of 1777, and the Continental Congress formally established the post on 13 December 1777, for the advancement of regulation in the Continental Army and the rectification of the abuses prevalent in the different departments.<sup>20</sup> The first Inspector General of the American Army, Major General Thomas Conway, reported directly to the Congressional Board of War, giving General Washington little if any notice of his reports. When Washington treated this arrangement with less than full enthusiasm Conway resigned on 28 April 1778.<sup>21</sup> The post remained open until 5 May 1778, when the aforementioned Friedrich von Steuben was promoted to

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 51.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 52.

<sup>19</sup>United States Army Inspector General, “History of the U.S. Army Inspector General,” <http://www.daig.pentagon.mil/history.aspx> (accessed 18 May 2014).

<sup>20</sup>Ward, 54.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

major general and appointed Inspector General of the Army.<sup>22</sup> Washington wasted no time in clarifying Steuben's task, purpose, and most importantly, to whom he was expected to report. In order to avoid the previous circumvention of the commander in chief with reports from the inspector general, General Washington's general orders of 15 June 1778 specified that "Steuben was responsible for preparing regulations for the army upon the approval of the commander in chief."<sup>23</sup> American military regulations had originated with the state and colonial militias prior to Steuben's arrival.

Born in Prussia in 1730, godson of Friedrich Wilhelm I, King of Prussia, Friedrich von Steuben was a Prussian Army officer and a veteran of the Seven Years War.<sup>24</sup> In the United States, Steuben created an Inspector General Department, with congressionally approved assistant inspectors and sub-inspectors named by General Washington. Armies, divisions, and brigades were all authorized inspector generals, ranked lieutenant colonels at division level, and majors for each brigade. The Inspector General Department was so successful that Steuben was not required to give it his full attention.<sup>25</sup> He devoted the majority of his attention to the implementation of his *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States*, performing duties consistent with those of today's drill sergeants. Steuben saw discipline as the

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 55.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Paul Lockhart, *The Drillmaster of Valley Forge: The Baron De Steuben and the Making of the American Army* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), 186.

<sup>25</sup>Ward, 56-7.

collective use of regulations that stemmed from observing a universal code of conduct.<sup>26</sup>

Historian Paul Lockhart has observed that though Steuben relied heavily on his prior

Prussian Military experience, he

[H]ad no intention of merely copying the Prussian military regulations. He admired the Prussian system, and overall believed it to be the best in all of Europe, but he also recognized that the center of military thought was not Prussia but France. The composition of the new regulations would involve picking and choosing the best elements from the Prussian and French systems, then adapting them to American conditions—and this required juggling a dizzying quantity of details and ephemera.<sup>27</sup>

Steuben set up an exemplary company with which to educate the rest of the army,

constituted predominantly of soldiers from Washington's Life Guard.<sup>28</sup>

General Washington's Life Guard was one of three groups within the Continental Army, which performed physical security functions, often performed by military police in the American Army today. His Life Guard, performing duties both as bodyguards and honor guards, was modeled after similar units in contemporary European armies. France employed the *Gardes Francaises*. Great Britain used both Horse Guards and Horse Grenadiers. Prussian monarchs drew upon the largest of their soldiers to serve as palace guards.<sup>29</sup> Washington's Life Guard consisted of 50 enlisted men, led by a Captain Caleb Gibbs, a former adjutant of a Massachusetts regiment. They served to protect their commander in chief, as well as his headquarters and property. In carrying dispatches and providing a security detachment for Continental Army Headquarters, they performed

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<sup>26</sup>Lockhart, 186.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 187.

<sup>28</sup>Ward, 55.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 59.



duties similar to those of military police detailed to general officers today. Different, however, was the provision of domestic service to the Washington family that would be considered personal servitude by today's standards.<sup>30</sup>

Soldiering life for those who guarded Washington was good. They were the precursors of the secret service that was later to protect presidents. Their commander saw to it that they were outfitted and fed better than the soldiers of the line.<sup>31</sup> Even at rest, they were never far from Washington. Their utmost concern was the personal safety of the single most prominent person in the nation at that time—George Washington.<sup>32</sup>

From the time of their establishment in March of 1776, Washington's Life Guard, distinctive in their unique uniforms, took pride and at times, advantage of their elite status. From allegations of conspiracy to aid the Royal Governor of New York to the courts-martial of a Life Guard sergeant for striking Captain Gibbs and another Life Guard sergeant for neglect of duty, Washington's Life Guard was not living up to its billing as the elite of the Continental Army.<sup>33</sup> The Life Guard, charged with preservation of the life and property of the commander-in-chief, were not at all times worthy of that trust.

The second units of soldiers in the Continental Army that performed physical security functions were the various generals' guards.<sup>34</sup> Any general officer in the army

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 59.

<sup>31</sup>Bruce Chadwick, *The First American Army: The Untold Story of George Washington and the Men Behind America's First Fight For Freedom* (Naperville: Sourcebooks, 2005), 244.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 245.

<sup>33</sup>Ward, 62.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 73.

could form a personal guard, intended to provide security for the headquarters, deliver the unit's dispatches, and see to any of various errands for the command.<sup>35</sup> Precedence had been set, much like Washington's Life Guard, in the armies of Europe. French marshals employed a guard of a captain, a lieutenant, an ensign, and 50 men. British lieutenant generals had guards of 33 men, major generals 23 men, and brigadier generals 15 men.<sup>36</sup> Due to a paucity of personnel in Continental line units and anti-aristocratic sentiment within the American officer corps, many generals refused formation of their personal guards. Others, such as Major General Benedict Arnold, were exceptional in their employment of guards of up to 100 men.<sup>37</sup> If a general's guard became large enough to be impractical, Washington was known to intervene directly to reduce its number, as he did with General Charles Lee upon Lee's departure from New York City in March 1776.<sup>38</sup> Unlike Washington's Life Guard, generals' guards were to return to their units of the line for battle. They did not enjoy the special identity or status of Washington's Life Guard, either.<sup>39</sup>

Camp guards, quarter guards, and pickets were the third category of Continental Army soldiers who performed physical security functions. According to Steuben's *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States*, soldiers serving as camp and quarter guards "are for the better security of the camp, as well as for

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 74.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 79.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 81.

preserving good order and discipline.”<sup>40</sup> The camp guard positioned itself outside the camp, 300 paces beyond its border. It was charged to keep good order and discipline, prevent desertion, and sound the alarm. The officer of the guard was expected to call “All’s Well!” every 30 minutes, followed by the man next to him, followed by the next man, until the call circled back to the officer of the guard. The alternative was to sound the alarm.<sup>41</sup>

In contrast to the camp guard’s exterior security around the camp’s perimeter, the quarter guard provided internal security.<sup>42</sup> The quarter guard provided an inner string of watchmen, augmenting the camp guard. They were charged with keeping unauthorized personnel out of camp while keeping soldiers in their dwellings during the night.<sup>43</sup> In performing their duties, quarter guards policed the camp much as military police patrol posts today. Like camp guards, picket men performed their duty outside the borders of the camp. Unlike camp guards, picket men were assembled in groups at remote locations at varying distances from camp. They were charged with shielding the unit from enemy incursions and to secure the neighboring countryside by preventing spying, straggling, desertion, and protecting civilians from wayward soldiers.<sup>44</sup> In the eighteenth century, desertion was of first and foremost concern to commanders of European and American

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<sup>40</sup>Friedrich von Steuben, *Regulations For the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States* (Boston: I. Thomas and E. T. Andrews, 1794), 92.

<sup>41</sup>Ward, 85.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 89.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 90.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 92.

armies.<sup>45</sup> They employed picket men and cavalry to maintain order in the ranks while on the march. Today, military police teams or squads perform many of the same functions.

Temporary police patrols, drawn from the regular guard service, worked for the field officers of the day, making sure that the guard force was awake and alert. They also searched the camp and surrounding area for law breaking soldiers.<sup>46</sup> While at Valley Forge in May 1778, temporary police patrols were employed to close unauthorized “tippling houses,”<sup>47</sup> or taverns, seizing alcohol found there. They were expected to protect authorized “Houses of Entertainment” for the accommodation of civilians within the vicinity of the camp.<sup>48</sup> Temporary police patrols were further employed in the apprehension of drunk soldiers when stationed near cities, in searching for military prisoners who had escaped custody, in rounding up stragglers, and in the apprehension of deserters.<sup>49</sup> Deserters could prove especially dangerous, as they would likely receive corporal punishment and perhaps execution.<sup>50</sup> The maximum corporal punishment authorized, short of death, was 100 lashes.<sup>51</sup> The temporary police patrols, short on policing experience or any of the *esprit de corps* typical of full-time units, proved to be

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<sup>45</sup>Lynn, 191.

<sup>46</sup>Ward, 102.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 103.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 104-108.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 109.

<sup>51</sup>Fantina, 22.

less than up to all the tasks expected of them as they rotated in and out of their regular units.

Desertion was a problem within the Continental Army throughout the Revolutionary War. According to historian Robert Fantina, Washington himself stated, “unless the people helped in returning the runaways he would be obliged to detach one half of the Army to bring back the other.”<sup>52</sup> Corporal punishment, arduous military duty, lack of food, lack of clothing and related provisions, illness, lack of pay, homesickness, economic need on the part of soldiers’ families, British enticements in the form of pardons and land, bounty jumping ambivalence to the cause, and self-preservation were all factors which contributed to the motives of thousands of Continental Army deserters.<sup>53</sup>

Much like the temporary police patrols, the regimental officer of police was a daily duty, rotated among the company grade officers of a regiment. Noncommissioned officers were not permitted to serve as officers of police. The regimental officer of police was charged with the inspection of the dwellings of the men and the grounds of his unit to make sure that the troops complied with regulations regarding hygiene and sanitation.<sup>54</sup> He was further to look after public property and to prevent the spread of disease, often rampant in the close quarters of the encampments. In doing so, his primary responsibility was the enforcement of regulations concerning latrines. The officer of police was expected to look after the cooking of food, the cleanliness of the camp’s water

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 12.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 14-25.

<sup>54</sup>Ward, 119.

supply, and the good order of military markets. In short, despite his title, the officer of police functioned far more in the field of health and disease prevention than he did in law enforcement.<sup>55</sup>

For the law enforcement, the Continental Army employed a provost marshal. Provost guards had been employed in the colonies long before the Revolution, as they performed police duties beyond those of the quarter guards of the various battalions of Massachusetts provincial units during the Seven Years War.<sup>56</sup> Unlike his British, French, and Prussian contemporaries, the American provost marshal was narrowly focused, primarily upon the custody of soldiers awaiting trial and, to a lesser degree, on the maintenance of order and discipline and apprehension of offending soldiers.<sup>57</sup> Three weeks into his command of the Continental Army, based on precedents established in the British Army, General Washington requested Congressional approval for the appointment of a provost marshal, which was granted on 29 July 1775.<sup>58</sup> Due in large part to a scorn for military police on the part of the Continental soldier, what was originally intended to be the duty of a commissioned officer fell to Sergeant William Marony, who was appointed “Provost Marshal to the Army of the United Colonies” on 10 January 1776.<sup>59</sup> The size of the provost guard, about 30 personnel strong, remained relatively constant

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<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 120-128.

<sup>56</sup>Fred Anderson, *A People's Army: Massachusetts Soldiers and Society in the Seven Years' War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 79.

<sup>57</sup>Ward, 129.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 130.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

throughout the war, but the duty was still not considered a permanent one, as provost guards rotated each day with personnel from different divisions.<sup>60</sup> Because of their relatively small number and rotational duty, the provost guard was hard-pressed just to oversee prisoner confinement and sentence execution. Its inability to maintain discipline and order in and around camp made it clear to Washington that a designated mounted unit would be required to perform all the duties of genuine military police.<sup>61</sup>

Several foreign officers in the Continental Army urged Washington to field a mounted police corps. Marechaussee, or “corps of mounted constabulary” in France where they had originated, were popular in Europe at the time, where armies performed both internal and external policing duties. In addition to the preservation of order and discipline, a mounted provost corps could function as escorts, couriers, guards, and camp police. Washington instructed Captain Bartholomew Von Heer, a Prussian with extensive European Military experience, to design the unit.<sup>62</sup> Congress authorized the Marechaussee Corps on 27 May 1778, and Washington appointed Von Heer its commander.<sup>63</sup> During encampments and marches, the Marechaussee Corps functioned as a police force, but during combat was stationed rearward to conduct security operations and minimize desertion.<sup>64</sup> Organization was similar to that of a contemporary Continental

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 135.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., 139.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 140.

<sup>63</sup>Wright, 3.

<sup>64</sup>John Ferling, *Almost a Miracle - The American Victory in the War of Independence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 340.

Army Company, with a captain, four lieutenants, a clerk, a quartermaster sergeant, two trumpeters, two sergeants, five corporals, 43 provosts, and four executioners.<sup>65</sup> Von Heer's appointment and his subsequent recruitment of men from his hometown of Reading, Pennsylvania, and its surrounding area led to the unit's composition being primarily made up of Germans. This helped fulfill General Washington's desire for an independent police corps, which was to behave with impartiality towards the soldiers in the rest of the army, though it could also create tension between soldiers of English descent and police of German ethnicity.<sup>66</sup> The camaraderie that sprang from a unit composed of men from the same area, and the *esprit de corps* that the unit's permanence provided, were both critical to its success. Equipped for conflict if necessary, the unit nearly saw combat at Springfield, New Jersey, on 23 June 1780. Ordered forward, the Marechaussee failed to see action before the British withdrew from the field.<sup>67</sup> The Marechaussee Corps was disbanded in 1783 toward the end of the American Revolution. According to Harry M. Ward, they were a failure because they "only supplemented and even duplicated other police personnel already in place in camp, particularly the quarter and other guards and duty officers."<sup>68</sup> Robert K. Wright, Jr., author of *Military Police in the United States Army's Army Lineage Series*, disagrees, as "their functions as well as

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<sup>65</sup>Wright, 3.

<sup>66</sup>Ward, 143.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 149.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 153.



their extraordinary mobility and communications capability established a legacy for the provost units that would follow.”<sup>69</sup>

American military policing developed in the Continental Army. American military regulations, with their roots in European traditions, were adapted for employment in the colonies by Friedrich von Steuben. George Washington’s provost marshals and the Marechaussee Corps had established precedents for the American Army’s future operations of provost marshals and provost guards.

In the period following the American Revolution, the army had limited use for a provost system. The War of 1812 and the Mexican War of 1846-1848 both saw limited use of provost marshals and provost guards, but neither led to a permanent provost establishment within the army. During the years leading up to the Civil War, the United States Army was spread out throughout the south and west, guarding against confrontations with American Indians on the frontier. A centralized provost system was not optimal for the enforcement of military discipline over such a sizeable area. The army relied instead upon unit leadership to maintain control in the ranks through nonjudicial punishment or courts martial.<sup>70</sup> It would not be until after the outbreak of the Civil War that the United States Army would again develop a strong, centralized provost system.

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<sup>69</sup>Wright, 4.

<sup>70</sup>William P. Moore, “Union Army Provost Marshals In the Eastern Theater,” *Military Affairs* (Fall 1962): 120.

## CHAPTER 3

### MARSENA PATRICK PRIOR TO SERVING AS PROVOST MARSHAL GENERAL FOR THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC

Marsena Rudolph Patrick was born near Watertown, in Jefferson County, New York, on 11 March 1811.<sup>71</sup> Located in upstate New York at the confluence of Lake Ontario and the Saint Lawrence River, Jefferson County is the present day location of Fort Drum. Separated from Ontario, Canada, by only the Saint Lawrence River, the area was the site of multiple battles during Patrick's youth, as British and American forces engaged twice at Sackets Harbor during the War of 1812.

Jefferson County itself predated Patrick by just six years, when in 1805 it was created from Oneida County. American settlement in the area had begun some 11 years earlier, as settlers from the New England colonies were drawn to the area by the Black River, which runs into Lake Ontario. These people were intent on employing the river to strengthen their economy, building the first mill on the river at the town of Carthage in 1795.<sup>72</sup> The expansion of manufacturing in the area was still reliant on the independent farmers of the time. The Patricks were reasonably prosperous farmers.<sup>73</sup>

Farm life in the colonial period was not easy. Making matters more difficult for the Patrick family was the relatively short planting and harvesting season in upstate New

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<sup>71</sup>Warner, *General In Blue*, 361.

<sup>72</sup>“Jefferson County Facts and Trivia,” <http://www.co.jefferson.ny.us/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=1675> (accessed 16 August 2013), 1-6.

<sup>73</sup>David S. Sparks, ed., *Inside Lincoln's Army: The Diary of Marsena Rudolph Patrick, Provost Marshal General, Army of the Potomac* (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1964), 12.

York. A lengthy, frigid winter made for a much shorter farming season than that found further south. The Patricks' settlement in a region just miles east of Lake Ontario placed them in an area that saw in excess of 100 inches of snowfall many years as a result of the storm fronts moving off the lake.<sup>74</sup> Marsena Patrick, born the youngest of 10 children, arrived as one more mouth to feed in a large family.

In order for their farming efforts to be fruitful, life in the Patrick family demanded diligent and hard work during planting, growing, and harvesting seasons. It also required careful rationing of the year's crop during the long, harsh winter. Marsena's mother was an authoritarian woman of deep-born Puritan faith. She was also reportedly a contributing factor in his decision to run away from home at just 10 years of age.<sup>75</sup>

The young Patrick left home and never looked back. His formative years were spent developing self-sufficiency and a drive to better himself that would go on to benefit him in later years. As he grew he worked on the canals in the area, eventually as a boat driver. He went on to work as a schoolteacher and studied medicine. Marsena was careful to develop social ties as he grew. One of the most influential of these, who he met during his teenage years, was Stephen Van Renssalaer.<sup>76</sup> While it is unknown how the two first met, Patrick's association with the influential Dutch family furthered his social advancement.

Van Renssalaer may have seen some of himself in the young Marsena Patrick. He, too, had grown up in the early years of the young American nation, relying more

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<sup>74</sup>“Jefferson County Facts and Trivia,” 3.

<sup>75</sup>Sparks, 12.

<sup>76</sup>Warner, *General In Blue*, 361.

often on drive and determination than on training to accomplish his goals. Early in the War of 1812, despite any previous military know-how, Stephen Van Renssalaer managed to secure a commission as a major general of New York volunteers from Daniel Tompkins, then the governor of New York State. Van Renssalaer's appeal to Tompkins lay less in any formal military training than it did in their mutual interests as well-connected Federalists in New York State. It was anticipated that Van Renssalaer's appointment might lead to an increase of Federalist support for the war effort against the British. It was also assumed that he would look to his cousin, Colonel Solomon Van Renssalaer, the adjutant general of New York State, for military advice and support.

Major General Stephen Van Renssalaer went to work in western New York, where he was to work with Brigadier General Alexander Smyth. Smyth, an officer from the regular army, refused to acknowledge Van Renssalaer's authority. Worse, he rebuffed orders from the War Department to place his own command under Van Renssalaer's control. Smyth maintained his garrison at Fort Niagara on Lake Ontario, unwilling to venture forth in support of any efforts by Van Renssalaer.

To his credit, Van Renssalaer was not stymied by Smyth's lack of support. By October 1812, he assembled a force of more than 3500 soldiers at Lewiston, New York, six miles south of Fort Niagara on the Niagara Escarpment. He was located just across the Niagara River from some 2000 British troops and allied Native Americans in Queenston in Ontario, Canada. Following unsuccessful efforts to persuade Smyth to join him in a simultaneous assault across the Niagara against Canadian Fort George just south of Lake Ontario, Van Renssalaer decided to take Queenston Heights, just to his southwest but across the Niagara River on the Canadian side of the Niagara Escarpment.

The attack was poorly coordinated from the start. Beginning on 13 October 1812, Colonel Solomon Van Renssalaer led a force across the Niagara to take the heights. When the British at Fort George realized they faced no threat from Smyth and his men at Fort Niagara, they moved quickly south to counter Van Renssalaer's efforts. After the wounding of Van Renssalaer, a regular army Lieutenant Colonel, Winfield Scott, crossed the river to take command of American forces there. Unable to convince the militia assembled to cross to the Canadian side of the river, Scott and his men were driven from Queenston Heights. When he retreated towards the river, he found no boats there for retreat back to American soil, and surrendered, going into British captivity. All told, the Americans counted more than 300 dead and wounded, with 958 (including Winfield Scott) in British captivity. The British had lost but 14 dead, with 77 wounded and personnel missing.<sup>77</sup>

The Republicans in President Madison's administration were appalled. They hurriedly accused Van Renssalaer of having warned the British of his intentions prior to the attack. Though Scott would be paroled within a matter of months and continue to fight on later in the war, Van Renssalaer was thoroughly distraught at the course of events, and asked for relief from his duties, though he did not resign. His request was granted by the War Department, and Van Renssalaer spent the rest of the war in relative obscurity.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup>Walter R. Borneman, *1812: The War That Forged a Nation* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), 70-75.

<sup>78</sup>*Ibid.*, 98.

Lack of military success did not ruin Van Renssalaer, though. After the War of 1812 he maintained a certain level of political clout, certainly in the state of New York. As he met and grew to know the young Marsena Patrick in the 1820s, he was likely impressed with much that he saw in the youth. He was to have a greater impact on Patrick's life than few other people at that point. For Van Renssalaer had retained sufficient influence that, in 1831, he obtained admission to the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, for Marsena Patrick.<sup>79</sup>

West Point, built during the late eighteenth century to deny British access to the Hudson River, was by the 1830s was one of the most nationalistic of all institutions in the country. Under Superintendent Sylvanus Thayer's reforms beginning in 1817, it had become the point of origin for a new growth of professionalism in the Army. Its careful selection of cadets to make up the student body reflected an approximately equal percentage of personnel from across the nation, based on both geographical and population-focused backgrounds. In a young nation where rumblings were heard of separatism as regional loyalties grew, West Point served as a uniting force for young would-be military professionals. Just as the populations of the states reflected, attendance by cadets from northern states was approximately double that of cadets from southern states.<sup>80</sup>

Contrary to any belief of an abundance of well-to-do cadets, a mere 4.4 percent of graduates prior to 1860 claimed to be "affluent" in the cadet register. Political weight was

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<sup>79</sup>Warner, *General In Blue*, 361.

<sup>80</sup>Edward M. Coffman, *The Old Army: A Portrait of the American Army in Peacetime, 1784-1898* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 46-47.

still important in obtaining a commission, underscoring the importance of Van Renssalaer's intervention on Patrick's behalf. While the majority of the Army Officer Corps received their professional education at West Point, this was never completely the case. Many Army officers, whose sons were refused admission to the institution sought direct commissions for their sons instead, and these officers made up a considerable percentage of that part of the officer corps which had not attended West Point.<sup>81</sup>

The requirements for admission to the Academy were not overly high. Cadets were expected to have a suitable understanding of arithmetic and of the reading and writing of the English language. Subsequent studies while a cadet were not as simple, however. The study and use of the French language, then the predominant language employed by the military profession, proved a stumbling block for some. Others had severe challenges adjusting from their former civilian lifestyles, to the stricter environment imposed upon the cadets during their tenure at West Point.<sup>82</sup>

Numerous cadets attending both before and after Patrick would become general officers during the United States Civil War. Among the group, several reasons existed for choosing to attend the institution. Some cadets, such as Ulysses S. Grant, Braxton Bragg, and William T. Sherman attended at the insistence of their parents or guardians. Others, including Philip H. Sheridan, Pierre G.T. Beauregard, and John B. Hood sought military careers. Many, to include Thomas J. Jackson, William S. Rosecrans, John B. Schofield,

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<sup>81</sup>William B. Skelton, *An American Profession of Arms: The Army Officer Corps 1784-1861* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1992), 147, 161.

<sup>82</sup>Coffman, 47.

and Henry Heth, attended in order to receive a free education.<sup>83</sup> While it is unknown what Marsena Patrick's primary motivation for attendance was, he was likely motivated at least in part by the lure of the solid yet inexpensive educational opportunity afforded him. During the 1830s, with the nation at peace for more than a decade since the War of 1812, the general education experience offered by West Point motivated many a cadet to attend. The institution graduated a good number more officers than were needed to fill the ranks of the peacetime Army of the time. The cadet who would rise to greatest prominence in the future from the class of 1835 was George G. Meade, who would one day command the Army of the Potomac.<sup>84</sup>

When Patrick arrived in 1831, the institution's basic curriculum had been set for better than a decade. Sylvanus Thayer, then superintendent of West Point, had been appointed in 1817.<sup>85</sup> He set a curriculum that focused primarily on mathematics, science, and the French language. This curriculum supported the study of artillery and fortifications, both important within the French military strategy and tactics of the time. Thayer's intent, evident in the curriculum for better than a decade both before and after Marsena Patrick's attendance, was to develop officers knowledgeable in engineering operations first and foremost. Liberal arts, ethics, government, history, and international law were all given less emphasis, time, and study. Even the law of land warfare received little attention in comparison to the hard sciences. After four years of this education,

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<sup>83</sup>Ibid., 48.

<sup>84</sup>Freeman Cleaves, *Meade of Gettysburg* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960), 10-11.

<sup>85</sup>Skelton, 123.



graduates were well prepared to work as military engineers. They were not, however, as well prepared for leadership in command of soldiers on the frontier, working within the bureaucracy to be found in Washington, D.C., or engaging in combat in either the Mexican War or the Civil War.<sup>86</sup> Still, their training at West Point had prepared them better than the rest of society to meet these challenges.

Patrick's day-to-day life while attending West Point had much in common with that of his fellow cadets. This similarity was due primarily to the very stringent code of regulations that directed every facet of the cadets' lives. Patrick and his peers learned to live with exacting attention to detail; from how they were to eat together, to what reading material they were allowed to check out from the library, to how classroom practices and procedures were to be followed. Class standing was of utmost importance, as those ranking topmost were to receive the most perks during attendance and the most desirable choice of branch positions in the Army upon graduation. Every cadet felt the pressure of competition. Bi-annual assessments given in January and June were difficult and exacting. The June testing period was particularly stressful, as notable invitees and other people often attended. It also determined where each cadet stood in relation to his peers in terms of class standing for the year. Several cadets felt pressured less to achieve a high standing than they felt pressured to avoid failure. Approximately one quarter of those who arrived at West Point between 1833 and 1854 failed one or more of their subjects. This triggered an immediate recommendation for dismissal.<sup>87</sup> As a group, those who were to graduate from West Point recognized the importance and impact of their experience at

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<sup>86</sup>Ibid., 167-170.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., 173-174.

the institution. The national representation within the corps of cadets, the standardized curriculum and regulations, and perceived objectivity of the assessment and standings system within each class united the cadets as a group, producing bonds that often outlasted even the strife which was growing in the nation and its eventual Civil War.<sup>88</sup>

Upon graduation, Patrick and his fellow graduates possessed a relatively similar knowledge and appreciation for military strategy and tactics, regulation, and administrative procedures. All of these would prove useful as junior officers. Thayer's focus on the hard sciences resulted in a level of technical expertise far superior to that typical of company grade officers before his time. Patrick and his peers absorbed a "professional military ethos, causing them to internalize such military values as discipline and regularity, identify with the Army as an institution, and, in many cases at least, make a strong personal commitment to military service," according to historian William B. Skelton.<sup>89</sup> Patrick did not fare as well as most of his peers in terms of class standing. When he graduated in 1835, he was ranked 48th out of 51 in his class.<sup>90</sup> His future commanding general, George G. Meade, finished a more respectable 19th.<sup>91</sup> In a class with few future general officers, Herman Haupt finished 31st.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>88</sup>Ibid., 177.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., 180.

<sup>90</sup>Sparks, 12.

<sup>91</sup>Warner, *General In Blue*, 315.

<sup>92</sup>West Point Association of Graduates, *Register of Graduates and Former Cadets of the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York: Class of 1900 Centennial Edition* (West Point: Association of Graduates, 2000), 4-19.

Patrick met his wife, the former Mary McGulpin, immediately following Patrick's 1835 graduation from West Point, when he was stationed at Fort Mackinac, on an island at the intersection of Lakes Michigan and Huron in northern Michigan, 20 miles from the Canadian border. Mary McGulpin Patrick, born and raised in Michigan, who would see her husband through multiple tours of duty in combat, adjusted to Patrick's more formal and regimented ways. He refers to her as "Mrs. Patrick" throughout the diary, and she was likely addressed the same way at home.<sup>93</sup>

After Mackinac, Lieutenant Patrick was assigned to the 2nd Infantry Regiment. He went on to serve for five years in Florida in the Second Seminole War.<sup>94</sup> These were to be difficult years, as officers educated and trained in the conventional European tradition were pitted against the Seminole Indians due to the government's attempt to relocate them from Florida. Even officers who had previously fought against Indians on the western frontier found duty in Florida to be difficult. Guerilla warfare in the swamps and bogs of Florida did not fit the models officers had learned at West Point, as the contemporary pursuit of Napoleon's glorious battle was ill suited for action against an enemy who chose not to fight an open, set-piece battle.<sup>95</sup> The war's onset in 1835 was, not coincidentally, concurrent with a spike in professional officer resignations. Between

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<sup>93</sup>Sparks, 13.

<sup>94</sup>Warner, *General In Blue*, 361.

<sup>95</sup>Samuel J. Watson, *Peacekeepers and Conquerors: The Army Officer Corps on the American Frontier, 1821-1846* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2013), 181.

1835 and 1837, nearly 18 percent of the officer corps resigned, compared to a norm of just four percent.<sup>96</sup>

The officer corps found the politicians in Washington to blame for the war. They felt as if their expertise in conventional conflict was useless in the guerilla war they faced in Florida. Further, once operational against the Seminoles, they received little of what they saw as essential reinforcement. Congress countered by denouncing the military from the nation's capital.<sup>97</sup>

Despite all this, the officer corps had among its number those who believed that duty called them to serve in Florida. Both William T. Sherman and George H. Thomas volunteered for duty against the Seminoles.<sup>98</sup> While Patrick did not record his intent for doing so, his service in five of the war's seven years between 1835 and 1842 indicates a certain commitment on his part. His service during the war's final years, under Colonel William Worth, required a delicate touch not found in the curriculum at West Point.

Worth was named commander of all United States troops in Florida in 1841. As the war began to wind down and militia and volunteer units departed toward the end of the conflict, Secretary of War John C. Spencer made Worth's appointment the first at the position for an officer not of general rank. He was unconcerned about any need to outrank the militia in theater as regular army forces assumed the entire mission.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>96</sup>Ibid., 180.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., 211.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., 228.

<sup>99</sup>John K Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1985), 294.

Worth's efforts to drive the Seminoles still living in Florida from the region included offensive military campaigns, negotiations to move them to the western territories of the United States, and resettlement efforts involving white American citizens.<sup>100</sup> He rounded up 211 Indians and sent them west on 12 October 1841.<sup>101</sup> Worth remained resolute that he would be able to do the same for any Seminoles who had fled south.<sup>102</sup>

By December 1841, Worth estimated that just over 300 Indians remained south of his area of control in Florida. In February 1842, he moved another 230 Indians west, but claimed that he was unable to bring those remaining in forcibly. He recommended a reduction in forces in Florida to protect white settlements and motivate any Seminoles left to resettle in the west. Secretary of War Spencer rejected this course of action.<sup>103</sup> Worth was not the first commander in Florida to seek permission for a truce. Several of the general officers that preceded him had asked for permission to seek a negotiated settlement as far back as 1838, but all had been rebuffed.<sup>104</sup>

By March 1842, in support of the third prong of Worth's strategy for Florida, nearly 500 white settlers and 150 black slaves lived in 12 different resettlement points under military protection. The Army provided them with foodstuffs, the process being

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<sup>100</sup>Ibid., 301.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., 302.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid., 304.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid., 307.

<sup>104</sup>Watson, 187.

directed by Worth's resettlement officer, Lieutenant Marsena Patrick.<sup>105</sup> Patrick's success in his position indicated a propensity for being able to think and work beyond what he had learned during his education at West Point.

As a group, Army officers of the day found it difficult to work with the white settlers they were charged to protect. Officers taught to embody the virtues of nationalism, civility, and selfless service, came into prolonged contact with civilians who were more focused upon their own self-interests than they were on the collective good or even social status.<sup>106</sup> Relations with civilians had deteriorated to the point that in 1842 Worth issued an order that civilians who had become insufferable to the military were to be removed from Fort Brooke.<sup>107</sup>

Despite his relatively low rank and the almost universal disdain he and his peers had for the white settlers of Florida, Patrick unearthed a way to serve the command as a successful resettlement officer. He did not, however, believe that the Army should allow the settlers to become too dependent on Army subsidies. According to historian John K. Mahon, "Patrick, the resettlement officer, good *laissez faire* devotee that he was, felt sure that this issue would sap the vitality of the settlers and pauperize them."<sup>108</sup>

When the Secretary of War rebuffed Worth's request to seek a treaty with the remaining Seminoles, the war continued. On 19 April 1842, Worth saw an opportunity to overtake a large group of Indians. He led approximately 400 troops of the 2nd, 4th, and

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<sup>105</sup>Mahon, 301.

<sup>106</sup>Watson, 179.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., 194.

<sup>108</sup>Mahon, 301.

8th Infantry Regiments against a group of Seminoles near Pelikaka. His efforts to encircle them were in vain, for though but one American Soldier was killed and three wounded, most of the Indians escaped.<sup>109</sup>

On 10 May 1842, just three months after refusing Worth's request to seek a truce with the Seminoles remaining in Florida, Secretary of War Spencer notified Major General Winfield Scott to cease hostilities in Florida. This was to take place as soon as possible. The time of the truce was to be left to Worth, who intended to work until the remaining Seminoles were south of Pease Creek.

Worth's efforts were about to be overcome by events, as both the Army and Navy began force reductions in Florida.<sup>110</sup> The House of Representatives passed a bill to cut the size of the Army back to that of 1821.<sup>111</sup> In August 1842, the Armed Occupation Bill For Florida passed both houses of Congress, becoming law. This ensured the presence of a set number of regular army soldiers in Florida as white settlers were given new and greater incentives to move into the territory.<sup>112</sup>

Worth, still in command of Army personnel in Florida, found the curtailment of the war to be as much a liability as a blessing. Still responsible for the protection of an ever-growing number of white settlers, the Army was forced to operate with a smaller force in the area than it had in years. Patrick, as resettlement officer, was ordered to

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<sup>109</sup>Ibid., 307-8.

<sup>110</sup>Ibid., 310.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid., 311.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid., 313-314.

inform those settlers who received foodstuffs or other such assistance from the Army that receipt of such goods would cease on 31 August 1842 in almost all cases.<sup>113</sup>

The war was declared over by Worth on 14 August 1842. He was given 90 days leave and promoted to brevet brigadier general.<sup>114</sup> The Armed Occupation Act provided incentives to settlers unavailable anywhere else in the United States. Three years following the proclamation of the war's end, Florida became a state.<sup>115</sup>

In the end, any remaining Seminoles retreated into the Everglades. 3,824 had been removed to the western territories by 1843.<sup>116</sup> The officer corps of the United States Army emerged from the Second Seminole War with a new patience in its subservience to a civilian government just beginning to show the cracks of sectional dissent.<sup>117</sup> American officers had gained valuable experience in a different, difficult kind of war. The Seminoles had been reluctant to fight open, set-piece battles. They were vulnerable, however, to the destruction of their settlements, food supplies, and livestock.<sup>118</sup> Marsena Patrick's fellow lieutenant in Florida, William T. Sherman, wrote to the woman who would become his wife that the "Indian is most likely our chief enemy for time to come."<sup>119</sup> In just a few years, he, Patrick, and their fellow company grade officers would

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<sup>113</sup>Ibid., 315.

<sup>114</sup>Ibid., 316-318.

<sup>115</sup>Ibid., 326.

<sup>116</sup>Ibid., 321.

<sup>117</sup>Watson, 185.

<sup>118</sup>Mahon, 322-323.

<sup>119</sup>Ibid., 320.



find themselves engaged in battle again, but it would not be against the enemy many foresaw.

In 1846, the United States invaded the northern regions of Mexico. Marsena Patrick had spent his years since the Second Seminole War stationed on garrison duty at Sackett's Harbor in New York.<sup>120</sup> Unlike many of the other officers of his day who were to wear stars in the Civil War to come, Patrick did not fight under Major General Zachary Taylor at Buena Vista. He was not fated to land at Vera Cruz and accompany Major General Winfield Scott to glory at Chapultepec and Mexico City. Patrick was assigned as the chief commissary officer for Brigadier General John E. Wool's expedition to Chihuahua.<sup>121</sup> In order to be effective on the mission to Chihuahua, Patrick would need to adjust to a completely different environment and terrain, to a different enemy, and especially to the different allied forces that made up the bulk of Wool's force.

General Wool is described by Historian David A. Clary as "a slender, erect man with a thatch of gray hair and a habit of looking at people with a sideways, almost skeptical expression. He was rigorous about discipline and details, oversaw everything, and earned complaints as well as respect from the men, who called him 'Old Fussy.'"<sup>122</sup> Captain Patrick, in his post as commissary officer, would need to do his utmost to meet the demands of his commander, especially as their force headed south. On 26 May 1846

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<sup>120</sup>George W. Cullum, *Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y. From Its Establishment In 1802 to 1890* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1891), 622.

<sup>121</sup>Warner, *General In Blue*, 361.

<sup>122</sup>David A. Clary, *Eagles and Empire: The United States, Mexico, and the Struggle for a Continent* (New York: Bantam Books, 2009), 164.

President James K. Polk and his cabinet decided to send Wool, who was the army's third-ranked officer, to San Antonio, Texas. From there he was to lead an expedition into Chihuahua, Mexico. Wool's record and experience justified his selection despite his advanced age of 62 years.<sup>123</sup> The President also saw Wool's ties to the Democratic Party as a plus. With a victory, he could steer public interest away from Major General Zachary Taylor, a Whig, who had already enjoyed considerable success in northwestern Mexico.<sup>124</sup> To make matters more challenging, nobody in Washington planning the expedition took the actual march into account. Wool's column was to march some 500 miles as the crow flies from San Antonio to Chihuahua, through mountains and deserts absent from the planners' maps. Of most impact on Patrick as commissary officer, no plans were made to adequately provision the column, leaving Patrick to scramble and scrounge for provisions as best he could.<sup>125</sup>

Polk's orders made their way to Wool in June, while he was mustering troops near Louisville. After putting together two regiments of infantry from Illinois, Wool left for San Antonio. Some of his volunteers took longer to arrive, but by 4 September 1846 he had a force of 3400, consisting of 600 regulars and the balance of volunteers from Arkansas and Illinois, one battery of regular light artillery, and a small number of Texas Rangers. Wool put considerable effort into training his volunteers in San Antonio. Where Regular Army soldiers could be drilled and disciplined according to military tradition,

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<sup>123</sup>Ibid., 148.

<sup>124</sup>Martin Dugard, *The Training Ground: Grant, Lee, Sherman and Davis in the Mexican War, 1846-1848* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2008), 236.

<sup>125</sup>John Edward Weems, *To Conquer a Peace: The War Between the United States and Mexico* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1974), 205.

volunteers expected that they would retain the rights and privileges of free men, often making them slow to respond to orders if they chose to do so at all.<sup>126</sup> The infantry from Illinois sulked but complied, while the cavalry from Arkansas were less compliant, earning their commander, Colonel Archibald Yell, the wrath of General Wool, and creating animosity between the Regular Army units and those composed of volunteers.<sup>127</sup>

Wool intended to march southwest and cross the Rio Grande enroute to Chihuahua, just as General Taylor moved on Monterrey further west. Wool was to follow Taylor's orders for the campaign's duration.<sup>128</sup> To offset the lack of intelligence regarding the route to be taken, Wool brought two small elements of engineers with his command. The first, a four-man group from the Topographical Corps, was to ride in advance of the main force, mapping northern Mexico. The second, a pair of engineers intended to supervise road and bridge construction, was made up of Captains William D. Fraser and Robert E. Lee.<sup>129</sup>

The expedition set off for Chihuahua on 25 September 1846. Wool doubted that the Mexicans would move to meet his advance, as did President Taylor.<sup>130</sup> Using bridges constructed in San Antonio, Wool's men crossed the Rio Grande on 12 October. Relations between his regulars and his volunteers continued to worsen as they made their

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<sup>126</sup>Richard Bruce Winders, *Mr. Polk's Army: The American Military Experience in the Mexican War* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1997), 81.

<sup>127</sup>Clary, 164-165.

<sup>128</sup>Weems, 208.

<sup>129</sup>Dugard, 237.

<sup>130</sup>Clary, 165.

way further south. At a gathering of all his officers, including Wool's provision of wine and spirits, the regular officers and volunteer officers split to opposite sides of the gathering. It was not until Brigadier General James Shields' arrival on 13 October that things improved somewhat, as Shields served as a buffer between Wool and the volunteers. Continuing south, the expedition arrived outside the town of Moncova on 29 October, occupying it on 3 November. It was then that an order from President Polk reached Wool, halting the advance towards Chihuahua. Wool decided to set up Moncova as a supply base for future operations.<sup>131</sup>

Moncova proved to be anything but restful for Wool and his men, as disease spread in the camps of the volunteers due to inadequate sanitation, and relations between Wool and the volunteer officers grew openly hostile. Patrick, as commissary officer, was responsible for providing sustenance for all of Wool's men, putting him in daily contact with volunteers who were openly contentious with regulars. General Taylor contacted Wool on 8 November, recommending that he move to Parras, which was 180 miles farther, to the southeast of Moncova. Taylor sent confirmation of the termination of the Chihuahua expedition, and ordered Wool to Parras the following week.<sup>132</sup>

It is at this point in history that the best contemporary description of Captain Marsena Patrick is found. Francis Baylies, a former United States Congressman from Massachusetts who wrote his *Major General Wool's Campaign in Mexico, in the Years 1846, 1847, and 1848* just three years after the end of the war, provides it. According to Baylies, "General Wool resumed march on the 24th of November, leaving 250 men under

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<sup>131</sup>Ibid., 225.

<sup>132</sup>Ibid., 224-227.

Major Warren of the First Illinois Volunteers to guard the depot of Moncova, and the indefatigable and efficient officer Captain Patrick, to procure additional supplies for his column.”<sup>133</sup>

Patrick, now in his 11 year of service following graduation from West Point, working for a commander historian John E. Weems describes as “a martinet,”<sup>134</sup> within a unit comprised primarily of volunteers who had little if any regard for regular Army officers, was praised for his dogged determination and competence. Unlike the majority of his peers, who were to accompany Wool to Parras and eventually in support of General Taylor in his successful defense of Buena Vista in February 1847, Patrick was fated to remain at Moncova, working to maintain the flow of supplies needed by Wool and his men.<sup>135</sup> Brought up as a junior officer in the disciplined environment of the 1830’s and 1840’s Regular Army, he had also experienced the measures necessary to introduce volunteer soldiers alongside regulars in Mexico. Despite accolades celebrating his diligence and resourcefulness and a brevet promotion to Major, after serving as Assistant in the Commissary General’s Office in Washington, D.C., in 1848 and 1849,<sup>136</sup> Patrick resigned his commission in 1850 after 15 years of service.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>133</sup>Francis Baylies, *Major General Wool’s Campaign in Mexico, in the Years 1846, 1847 and 1848* (Albany: Little and Company, 1851), 19.

<sup>134</sup>Weems, 205.

<sup>135</sup>Dugard, 275-285.

<sup>136</sup>Cullum, 623.

<sup>137</sup>Warner, *General In Blue*, 361-362.

Patrick went home to New York, first to the city of Geneva and later to a smaller town, Ovid. Lakes Seneca and Cayuga straddle the Ovid region, and it was there that Patrick and his family settled. Patrick worked hard to learn about agricultural advances and developments, attempting to share his interest and success with others in the community. He was named first President of the New York State Agricultural College, later part of Cornell University, indicating the confidence of those in the area in Patrick. The college had opened in 1859, and closed soon after with the onset of the Civil War in 1861.<sup>138</sup> Patrick's professionalism and the seriousness he displayed regarding discipline, developed during his military tenure, were likely of primary importance in his selection for the position.

The decade between his resignation from the regular army and the Civil War provided Patrick with the opportunity to renew his bonds with his family. Their importance to him is evident in the frequency that they are mentioned throughout his diary between 1862 and 1865. Patrick and his wife, Mary, had five children, two daughters and three sons. The Patricks' first child was a daughter, also named Mary, who was 18 years old in 1861. His notes regarding her in his diary indicate an almost constant fretfulness on his part regarding her well-being, fiscal responsibility, and spiritual life. His writings intimate a fear that she might choose to withdraw from the Presbyterian faith of the family. While he ran from his own mother's rigid Puritanism as a boy, Patrick remained true to the disciplinary strictness of Presbyterianism and expected the same for his family. Their second child, also a daughter, was named Julia. She was 15 years old in 1861. Where Mary's actions caused her father to worry, Julia was a source of solace to

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<sup>138</sup>Sparks, 12.

him. Their third child and oldest son, Brayton, was 12 years old in 1861. Nicknamed “Bucky,” he was to visit his father at City Point during Grant’s Overland Campaign in 1864. The youngest children, both boys, were Irenicus, nicknamed “Renie,” and George Benjamin, called “Geordie.” They were nine and six years old in 1861, respectively.<sup>139</sup>

On 12 April 1861, the day civil war ignited with the firing on Fort Sumter in South Carolina, Marsena Patrick was 50 years old, holding the position of a successful farmer and educator. He was a veteran of 15 years service in the regular army, a survivor of combat in two separate wars, and husband and father to a seven-person family. A far cry from the runaway he had been 40 years before, Patrick still felt the call of duty in service to his state and country. He volunteered for duty with the New York militia then being assembled. In May of 1861 the governor of New York, Edwin Morgan, commissioned him a brigadier general in the state militia with the duty position of Inspector General of the New York State Militia.<sup>140</sup> Patrick’s reputation as a West Point graduate, a veteran of two wars, and a man of integrity who related well to other military officers in New York State contributed to his selection by Governor Morgan.<sup>141</sup>

Brigadier General Patrick’s duties as Inspector General required some of the same industriousness and attention to detail that his previous experiences as a resettlement officer in Florida and a commissary officer in Mexico had, albeit at a higher level.

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<sup>139</sup>Sparks, 13.

<sup>140</sup>Ibid.

<sup>141</sup>Silas Wright Burt, *My Memoirs of the Military History of the State of New York During the War For the Union, 1861-1865* (Albany: J. B. Lyon Company, 1902), 25.

Splitting his time between Washington, D.C., and New York,<sup>142</sup> he was expected to maintain visibility of a mounting collection of orders and regulations pertaining to the establishing and equipping of state military organizations intended for Federal duty.<sup>143</sup> New York was raising troops at levels exceeding expectations, with the intent that they were bound for federal service. Patrick stepped up his efforts in Washington as the year wore on, becoming somewhat of an unofficial liaison between New York governmental officials in Albany, the soldiers being mustered by the state, and the Washington headquarters of Major General George B. McClellan.<sup>144</sup>

By autumn of 1861, with Patrick's name becoming better known outside just New York State as a result of his dealings in Washington, Governor Morgan became less supportive of Patrick's efforts outside the state. Whether the governor was opposed to the political capital that Patrick was creating for himself in the capitol or whether Patrick's relations with the governor fell short of Morgan's expectations is unclear. Patrick developed genial relations with McClellan, due in part to his attendance at West Point with McClellan's father in law, Brigadier General Randolph Marcy.<sup>145</sup> Patrick believed that all was well, expecting fulfillment of a promise of promotion to major general of New York State troops earlier in the year. When by the end of the year the promotion did

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<sup>142</sup>Sparks, 25.

<sup>143</sup>Ibid., 13-14.

<sup>144</sup>Ibid., 25.

<sup>145</sup>Burt, 68.



not materialize, Patrick decided to pursue assignment with the federal forces in Washington.<sup>146</sup>

By the second week in January, Brigadier General Marcy, serving as McClellan's chief of staff, informed Patrick of McClellan's intent to assign him as a brigade commander.<sup>147</sup> Discussions on 22 and 28 January 1862 between Patrick and McClellan confirmed this.<sup>148</sup> The assignment did not transpire quickly enough to keep Patrick from worry. As January and February passed without any appointment for him, Patrick wrote that even his sleep suffered. "I am getting very nervous at hearing nothing from Washington and becoming doubtful of my appointment," he wrote in his diary on 18 February.<sup>149</sup> At the time, McClellan was completely reorganizing his force, creating, amongst other positions, the position of Provost Marshal for the Army of the Potomac, appointing Brigadier General Andrew Porter to the position on 19 February.<sup>150</sup> Porter and his men had done an excellent job of restoring order in Washington, D.C., following the Union Army's debacle at First Bull Run.<sup>151</sup>

As the month drew on, tension heightened between McClellan and Secretary of War William H. Seward, and even members of McClellan's own staff cautioned Patrick

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<sup>146</sup>Sparks, 14.

<sup>147</sup>Sparks, 30; Warner, *General In Blue*, 311.

<sup>148</sup>Sparks, 33, 36.

<sup>149</sup>Ibid., 42.

<sup>150</sup>Kenneth Radley, *Rebel Watchdog: The Confederate States Army Provost Guard* (Baton Rouge: The Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 2.

<sup>151</sup>Jeffrey D. Wert, *The Sword of Lincoln: The Army of the Potomac* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2005), 32.

that McClellan's influence might have little worth.<sup>152</sup> After another month of apprehension, Patrick learned on 17 March that the Senate had confirmed his nomination. Brigadier General Marsena Patrick was to command the Third Brigade of Brigadier General Rufus King's Third Division, of Major General Irvin McDowell's First Corps, of the Army of the Potomac.<sup>153</sup> His brigade was composed entirely of regiments from his home state, as he commanded the 21st, 23rd, 35th, and 80th New York Volunteer Infantry Regiments.<sup>154</sup>

The Army of the Potomac moved into Virginia in March of 1862. While McClellan's vision of conciliation towards the population of the South was consistent with the policies of the Lincoln administration, the Army's officers and men were uncertain as to just how they were to relate to the civilians encountered there. Some saw the army as liberators to a people subject to the governance of erroneous leaders, while others saw the move as an occupation of an enemy's homeland. They were unsure as to whether to end an insurrection or to conduct an all-out war. Patrick's background in Florida and Mexico made him conservative, wanting to safeguard the citizenry of Virginia and sustain the rule of law.<sup>155</sup>

Patrick joined his men near Upton's Hill in Fairfax County, Virginia, on 23 March 1862. McDowell's I Corps had remained behind when McClellan moved the rest

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<sup>152</sup>Ethan S. Rafuse, *McClellan's War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 189.

<sup>153</sup>Sparks, 54.

<sup>154</sup>Scott C. Patchan, *Second Manassas: Longstreet's Attack and the Struggle for Chinn Ridge* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2011), 130.

<sup>155</sup>Sparks, 57.

of the Army of the Potomac to the Peninsula. Patrick's brigade drilled there before moving south toward Manassas Junction two weeks later. Continuing on through Bristoe Station, they arrived outside Fredericksburg, Virginia, on 20 April. Setting up camp at Falmouth across the Rappahannock River from Fredericksburg, Patrick again set about the training of his men.<sup>156</sup> This training of volunteers likely brought back memories of the volunteers in Mexico, as Patrick wrote on 21 April, "I am almost discouraged in my efforts to get thieves, skulks and political scribblers to become Soldiers."<sup>157</sup>

Bridge building across the river commenced, and on 30 April, General McDowell received orders from Washington to move into Fredericksburg, where he hoped to be able to move from against Richmond in support of McClellan.<sup>158</sup> When the bridges were complete on 2 May, Generals King and Patrick rode through the city together, selecting locations for checkpoints and meeting with the mayor of Fredericksburg for a short time.<sup>159</sup> Patrick's presence was not arbitrary on King's part, for he had chosen Patrick to serve as military governor of Fredericksburg. His reputation as a firm disciplinarian who supported conciliation made Patrick an excellent choice for the position.

In keeping with his conservative views regarding civilians and private property, Patrick did his utmost to govern the city in a just and impartial manner. Historian Duane Schultz provided an insight on the Fredericksburg civilians' appreciation of Patrick's

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<sup>156</sup>Ibid., 59-70.

<sup>157</sup>Ibid., 70.

<sup>158</sup>Edmund J. Raus, Jr., *Banners South: A Northern Community At War* (Kent: The Kent State University Press, 2005), 111.

<sup>159</sup>Alan T. Nolan, *The Iron Brigade: A Military History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1961), 49.

efforts, observing that “a local historian wrote that even the most ardent secessionists agreed that Patrick was ‘a generous man and a kind, humane officer. Under his government military rule in Fredericksburg was kindly exercised and the people were not oppressed and not a few of them conceived a sincere respect for his character.’”<sup>160</sup> Patrick ordered guards for homes occupied solely by women and children, and was quick to act against theft or plundering. He established his headquarters in the Farmer’s Bank, where President Abraham Lincoln and Secretary of War Edwin Stanton visited on 23 May to discuss a move south by McDowell against Richmond.<sup>161</sup> Patrick’s sympathy for the citizens of Fredericksburg is evident in his diary entry that night, as he wrote of a “feeling of sadness in the whole community & I feel sad myself, at the thought that these helpless families are to be left to the tender mercies of an Abolitionist.”<sup>162</sup> Patrick had written earlier, on 22 March, how McDowell and his wife were “the rallying point for all the Abolitionists & Anti-McClellan men, who are exceedingly intemperate in their language.”<sup>163</sup> His concern for Confederate civilians, of utmost importance to Lincoln’s policy of conciliation, is evident in his writing.

Patrick’s brigade was not to remain in Fredericksburg much longer. His old comrade from the Wool expedition to Chihuahua, Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson, was now leading operations for the Confederacy in the Shenandoah Valley. In order to trap

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<sup>160</sup>Dwayne Schultz, *The Fate of War: Fredericksburg, 1862* (Yardley: Westholme, 2011), 88.

<sup>161</sup>*Ibid.*, 88-89.

<sup>162</sup>Sparks, 82.

<sup>163</sup>*Ibid.*, 59.

Jackson and his command, President Lincoln ordered part of McDowell's command to move toward Front Royal at the same time that Union troops under Major General John C. Fremont moved in from the west. King's division was to serve as part of the eastern side of the attack.<sup>164</sup> They departed Fredericksburg on 28 May, marching in what seemed endless rain through Hartwood and Catlett's Station to Haymarket by 2 June. It was there that they learned of Jackson's escape southwards, back up the valley, two nights earlier.<sup>165</sup>

King's Division was to fall under Major General John Pope's command beginning in July after Pope's Army of Virginia was created on 26 June, with the intent to concentrate around Culpeper, Virginia. Pope's orders were harsher regarding treatment of civilians and property than those issued before in the Eastern Theater. While Pope's initiatives ingratiated him to the Radical Republicans, they were not as welcome with the generally conservative officer corps of the Regular Army. Pope's orders allowed Confederate civilian property to be seized without payment, Confederate guerrillas captured after firing on northern troops to be shot, expulsion of Confederate civilians who refused to take an oath of allegiance to the United States, and treatment as spies of any expelled person found returned.<sup>166</sup> According to Robert K. Krick, the Civil War "escaped much of the worst of the excesses that usually mark civil and religious conflicts. But the

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<sup>164</sup>Ibid., 85.

<sup>165</sup>Ibid., 87-90.

<sup>166</sup>James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 501.

savagery of some men dragged down the standards. John Pope was not the worst of these by any means, but he was the first to find authority in the Virginia theater.”<sup>167</sup>

Patrick reacted to these new standards with the ardor of a Christian officer and West Point-educated disciplinarian raised to believe in the inviolability of certain morals and what he considered natural laws. On 18 July, while camped in Stafford County, Virginia, he wrote that, “Pope has published his Address to the Army of Virginia, which seems, to me, very winded & somewhat insolent . . . giving us the Authority to lay contributions on every town & village thro (sic) which we pass—Contributions in Forage & Subsistence—I do not like his orders—they are the Orders of a Demagogue!” Two days later he continued, “Our men know every house in the whole county and . . . they now believe they have a perfect right to rob, tyrannize, threaten & maltreat any one they please, under the orders of Gen. Pope.” The following day, 21 July, Patrick wrote, “This Order of Pope’s has demoralized the Army & Satan has been let loose—I have been sending out Guards, again, as the only mode of keeping discipline in the Army.”<sup>168</sup> Patrick’s sentiments reflect those of most of his fellow West Pointers. Even Confederate General Robert E. Lee wanted to suppress Pope, as he feared that the harshness of Pope’s policies and their effects on the citizens of Virginia.

On 28 July, Patrick and his brigade moved back to Fredericksburg, and he reestablished his headquarters as military governor for the city at the Farmer’s Bank. Still under Pope’s command, he found duty there much more difficult than he had previously.

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<sup>167</sup>Robert K. Krick, *Stonewall Jackson at Cedar Mountain* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990).

<sup>168</sup>Sparks, 108-110.

Things had already begun poorly for Pope, as elements of his command were defeated by Jackson at Cedar Mountain on 9 August. On 13 August, he wrote that McDowell, King, and “all others who command Troops have just the same difficulty about this order of Pope’s which gives a general license to pillage, rob, and plunder. . . . I am afraid of God’s Justice, for our Rulers & Commanders deserve his wrath & curse—There has never been such a state of things before, in any command—I have never seen anything like it.”<sup>169</sup>

These words were written by an officer who had experienced seven years of the harshest of conditions in Florida and Mexico. Patrick’s reaction, typical of many of the Old Army regulars, displays some of his core values. His insistence on the protection of civilians and private property was to serve the Army of the Potomac well in the future. But now, in less than one month’s time between August and September 1862, Patrick and his men were to fight in the three most demanding engagements during his tenure as a brigade commander.

The first would be at Manassas, or Bull Run, on the same ground where the theater’s first large battle took place. Pope’s men moved towards Manassas Junction in response to Jackson’s 25-27 August raid, with Patrick’s brigade still a part of King’s division under McDowell. Late in the afternoon of 28 August, the division marched east in a nearly mile long column on the Warrenton Turnpike, with Brigadier General John Hatch’s brigade in front, followed by Brigadier General John Gibbon and his brigade, then Brigadier General Abner Doubleday’s brigade, with Patrick’s command bringing up the rear accompanied by King. Patrick had never before led the brigade in battle. To the left or north side of the road was a large wooded area known as Brawner’s Woods, and

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<sup>169</sup>Ibid., 120.

behind it was the Brawner farm. Behind the farm was an unfinished railroad cut. Stonewall Jackson had hidden his wing, 24,000 men strong, in the unfinished railroad cut. At nearly 1800 hours, Jackson's men tore into the flank of King's division. King, who was taking supper with Patrick's command, had been suffering from the effects of an epileptic seizure five days earlier. He had another seizure just as the attack commenced.<sup>170</sup>

Gibbon sent his brigade into the woods in response to Jackson's artillery fire. Patrick refused to go to the aid of Gibbon without orders from King, who was in no shape to issue orders following his seizure. Engaged almost immediately by Confederate artillery, Patrick withdrew the bulk of his unit back across the road, south of the turnpike. As the engagement developed, Gibbon, in the middle of the division advanced further north into the woods against Jackson's men, sent multiple requests to his fellow commanders for assistance. Patrick and his brigade maintained their position at Pageland Lane-Warrenton Turnpike intersection out of harm's way for the time being.<sup>171</sup>

In his diary, Patrick wrote that Gibbon's men "sailed into the wood & made a fight—They were met by a large force & a terrible musketry fight ensued . . . I immediately threw out the 35' & 23' Regts., but the 20' had fled & I could not get their whereabouts for more than two hours."<sup>172</sup> Gibbon's official report later stated that Patrick's men did not move or fire at all. Patrick may well have believed that it was up to

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<sup>170</sup>John J. Hennessey, *Return to Bull Run: The Campaign and Battle of Second Manassas* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), 164-169.

<sup>171</sup>*Ibid.*, 180.

<sup>172</sup>Sparks, 131.



Gibbon to extract himself from the engagement he had gotten entangled in. It was Doubleday's two regiments of reinforcements that enabled the outnumbered Federals to fight to a stalemate after nearly an hour.<sup>173</sup> Jackson attempted an attack at 1930 hours, but the Union line held and darkness fell. King's division retreated southward toward Manassas at 0100 in the morning.<sup>174</sup>

On 29 August, Hatch replaced King as division commander. Hatch pushed forward to maintain contact with the Confederates, and ran into Brigadier General John Bell Hood's Texas Brigade at Groveton, with Doubleday the main force engaged. Doubleday was unable to achieve a decisive victory against Hood. Patrick's brigade spent considerable time maneuvering on Chinn Ridge, avoiding direct contact with any Confederates. Past 2100 hours, they were ordered to cover the retreat of the main body of Pope's men, unsuccessful in their attempt to defeat Stonewall Jackson. While emplacing his brigade on Dogan Ridge, he strayed too close to Confederate pickets. When failing the challenge issued by the southerners, he and his staff fled on horseback, narrowly escaping with nothing more serious than wounds from the rebel volley.<sup>175</sup>

The following day, 30 August, Patrick was to have a direct impact on Pope's plans, and it would prove to be a costly one. Early that morning, Patrick saw one of Major General James Longstreet's divisions moving west on the Warrenton Turnpike. He deduced that the Confederates were withdrawing in force, and passed the news through McDowell to Pope. Longstreet's men were, in fact, moving back to their assigned place

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<sup>173</sup>Hennessey, *Return to Bull Run*, 181-182.

<sup>174</sup>*Ibid.*, 183-193.

<sup>175</sup>*Ibid.*, 300.

in the Confederate line of battle, out of range of Patrick's men and other Union troops on Dogan Ridge. Pope agreed with Patrick's assessment, which was confirmed by McDowell but challenged by Porter, Reynolds, and other Union generals. His strong desire for a Confederate retreat not only caused him to agree quickly with Patrick, but to override evidence to the contrary offered by Fifth Corps Commander Major General Fitz John Porter. Brigadier General John F. Reynolds, whose men were directly opposite those of Longstreet, confirmed Porter's warning. Other reports of Jackson's continued presence on the Confederate left were contrary to Patrick's report. Pope chose to act on Patrick's report as confirmed by McDowell because it supported what Pope desired, and attacked Jackson in force.<sup>176</sup> His inability to overcome the combined might of Jackson and Longstreet's corps led to the Federal defeat on the field that day. Patrick's brigade supported Major General Fitz John Porter's unsuccessful midafternoon attack against the Confederates in the railroad's Deep Cut. The action was Patrick's true baptism of fire and resulted in the decimation of Patrick's 20th New York Infantry.<sup>177</sup> His poor tactical showing on 28 August had been followed up by an even worse operational impact on 30 August. The morale of the Union Army in the east was reflected in Patrick's 6 September entry. "There is a general feeling that the Southern Confederacy will be recognized & that they deserve to be recognized," he wrote.<sup>178</sup>

Pope's misfortunes worked to the advantage of General McClellan. Back at the head of the Army of the Potomac, McClellan was to pursue General Robert E. Lee's men

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<sup>176</sup>Patchan, 7-9.

<sup>177</sup>Hennessey, 354-355.

<sup>178</sup>Sparks, 140.

as they invaded Maryland in September 1862. Patrick's brigade, now the Third Brigade of Brigadier General Hatch's First Division, of Major General Joseph Hooker's First Corps of the Army of the Potomac,<sup>179</sup> was to prove successful in driving Longstreet's men from Turner's Gap during the afternoon and evening of 14 September.

Patrick's 21st and 35th New York Infantry Regiments acted as skirmishers for the division, and Patrick followed with his 20th and 23rd New York in support.<sup>180</sup> They advanced up Hill 1280 on the left flank of Hooker's attack. Gibbon's brigade was next to them along National Pike, on the far left.<sup>181</sup> Despite the wounding of Hatch, Patrick pushed forward with Doubleday to the forward knoll of South Mountain. Although the geography favoring the defense, and fire described by Patrick as "hot and heavy,"<sup>182</sup> the division was able to locate the Confederate defensive positions and overcome them. Patrick moved his entire brigade "in the general line of battle"<sup>183</sup> as the Union drove Longstreet's men back out of Turner's Gap in the day's waning hours. The Confederates had, however, fought a delaying action long enough for Lee to concentrate more of his forces near the town of Sharpsburg, Maryland, on Antietam Creek.

Patrick's assignment at Antietam on the morning of 17 September was to secure the corps' right flank. In order to do so, they were to attack south into the West Woods,

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<sup>179</sup>Ezra A. Carman, *The Maryland Campaign of September 1862: Volume 1, South Mountain* (New York: Savas Beatie, 2010), 448.

<sup>180</sup>D. Scott Hartwig, *To Antietam Creek* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), 380.

<sup>181</sup>*Ibid.*, 400.

<sup>182</sup>Sparks, 145.

<sup>183</sup>*Ibid.*, 144.

with part of Gibbon's brigade, clearing the woods of any Confederates found there. The balance of Gibbon's men moved with Colonel Walter Phelps' brigade along the adjacent road and into a cornfield. Patrick attacked just past daybreak, at the same time that Gibbon's advanced into the woods and cornfield. The crossfire created by the two Union brigades was sufficient to push the Confederates there to the south end of the woods.<sup>184</sup> Heavy fighting continued for hours, neither side giving way, until 0900.<sup>185</sup> Hood's Texas Brigade had driven into the woods to meet Gibbon and Phelps, but Union fire from the West Woods decimated Hood's ranks, and the Confederates were driven from the cornfield. Patrick was to describe Antietam as "one of the severest ever fought—I rode over the grounds, just at dark—They are covered with dead & our men are being carried to hospitals."<sup>186</sup>

Due to the casualties sustained by the First, Second, Ninth, and Twelfth Corps, the Army of the Potomac was in poor condition to resume the attack on 18 September. Major General George Meade, who had replaced Hooker as commander of the First Corps following Hooker's wounding, believed his men capable of resisting attack, but of insufficient morale to attack.<sup>187</sup> Patrick wrote, "We had all that we could do to hold our

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<sup>184</sup>Richard Slotkin, *The Long Road to Antietam* (New York: Liveright Publishing, 2012), 259-260.

<sup>185</sup>*Ibid.*, 285.

<sup>186</sup>Sparks, 150.

<sup>187</sup>Rafuse, *McClellan's War*, 328-329.

ground yesterday & if we attempted to push the enemy, today, with the same troops, we should have been whipped.”<sup>188</sup>

Over the course of Second Manassas, South Mountain, and Antietam, Patrick had progressed from a brigade commander inexperienced in combat to a seasoned veteran. While he performed few miracles tactically, he had made no major mistakes and had proven sound enough of judgment to retain command of his brigade. It was not, however, Patrick’s fate to remain in command of an infantry brigade. He had shown a dedication to the enforcement of regulations and respect of civilians and private property first as New York Inspector General and later as military governor of Fredericksburg. Earlier in 1862, he had specially formed patrols of his own men dedicated to policing of his own troops to keep order and protect civilian property while the Union Army was in Virginia.<sup>189</sup> Just three weeks after Antietam, on 6 October 1862, he wrote in his diary that he received “a note from Hardie (McClellan’s adjutant general)<sup>190</sup> asking if I would accept the appointment of Prov. Mar. Gen. I replied, ‘Yes.’”<sup>191</sup>

Brigadier General Marsena Rudolph Patrick, born the youngest of 10 children and a runaway at age 10, had become the Provost Marshal General for the Army of the Potomac. While his origins made this unlikely at best, his personal and professional development had molded Patrick into an officer remarkably well suited to the task. The ardent Christian faith and self-sufficiency of his youth stayed with him throughout his

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<sup>188</sup>Sparks, 151.

<sup>189</sup>Raus, 99.

<sup>190</sup>Warner, *General In Blue*, 204.

<sup>191</sup>Sparks, 158.

life, serving as the basis for his conduct and relations with others. Patrick lacked formal training as a provost marshal, as no military police branch yet existed in the army. His experiences overseeing the welfare of civilians as a resettlement officer during the Second Seminole War, his daily interaction with volunteer soldiers during the Mexican War, and knowledge of regulations and the attention to detail required as inspector general for New York State were all critical in his efforts as provost marshal general. Patrick's humanity and character, recognized during his tenure as military governor by the citizens of Fredericksburg, were crucial in his implementation of military law enforcement for Union soldiers, Confederate prisoners of war, and civilians both North and South as the war grew ever harsher before its conclusion.

## CHAPTER 4

### MARSENA PATRICK AS PROVOST MARSHAL GENERAL FOR THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC

Major General George B. McClellan appointed Brigadier General Marsena R. Patrick the Provost Marshal General of the Army of the Potomac in General Orders Number 161, dated 6 October 1862. The orders appointing Patrick did not enumerate or elaborate on the duties and responsibilities he would be expected to carry out.<sup>192</sup> When ordered to report to Army Headquarters early the next morning, Patrick received a copy of his orders and met with Lieutenant Colonel James A. Hardie, the Adjutant General for the Army of the Potomac, to get what Patrick called “a general idea of what was wanted.” He then sought out McClellan’s acting provost marshal, Major William H. Wood, who had occupied the post since Brigadier General Andrew Porter’s resignation for health reasons following the Peninsula Campaign. Neither Wood nor any of the rest of McClellan’s staff was able to give Patrick a clear idea as to what was expected from him in his new position.<sup>193</sup> Though Patrick did not know it at the time, he had one month to determine the scope of his duties and responsibilities before the Army of the Potomac moved south from Maryland into Virginia.<sup>194</sup>

Patrick’s appointment as Provost Marshal General was one small piece of McClellan’s reorganization of the Army of the Potomac in the weeks following

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<sup>192</sup>Ibid., 17.

<sup>193</sup>Ibid., 160.

<sup>194</sup>Ibid., 159.

Antietam. While the initial failure to provide Patrick with more detailed guidance concerning his new position seems inconsistent with the usual attention to detail McClellan gave to organization, it is more understandable when viewed in the context of events. Earlier that week, President Abraham Lincoln had visited the Army of the Potomac for several days. His tours of Harpers Ferry and the Antietam battlefield, reviews of Army of the Potomac units and conferences with McClellan and various corps commanders inevitably caused much distraction from planning and Army operations until his departure. “A growing disenchantment on Lincoln’s part with McClellan’s entire army,” wrote historian Ethan Rafuse, was evident in both the President’s remarks characterizing the Army of the Potomac as “General McClellan’s bodyguard” and his failure to openly acknowledge troops assembled during reviews.<sup>195</sup> Pressure from Washington following the President’s visit to move against Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia, the army’s response to the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, and raiding by Confederate Cavalry under Major General J. E. B. Stuart were just a few of the challenges McClellan faced in the first two weeks of October, 1862.<sup>196</sup> It was not until later that McClellan listed the duties that he expected Patrick to fulfill in an official report:

1. Prevention of straggling on the march.
2. Suppression of gambling-houses, drinking-houses, or bar-rooms, and brothels.
3. Regulation of hotels, taverns, markets, and places of public amusement.
4. Searches, seizures, and arrests.

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<sup>195</sup>Rafuse, *McClellan’s War*, 345.

<sup>196</sup>*Ibid.*, 346-349.



5. Execution of sentences of general courts-martial involving imprisonment or capital punishment.
6. Enforcement of orders prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquors, whether by tradesmen or sutlers, and orders respecting passes.
7. Deserters from the enemy.
8. Prisoners of War taken from the enemy.
9. Countersigning safeguards.
10. Passes to citizens within the lines and for purposes of trade.
11. Complaints of citizens as to the conduct of the soldiers.<sup>197</sup>

For the time being, Patrick did what he could to understand and execute the duties of the Provost Marshal General on his own. He sent cavalry patrols to Crampton's Gap on 11 October, resulting in the apprehension of what he termed "quite a large number of stragglers & marauders."<sup>198</sup> He was subsequently ordered to Harpers Ferry, where he met with the garrison's provost marshal, Captain Duncan A. Pell, in order to check on the operation of the straggler control holding area on Loudoun Heights there.<sup>199</sup> Upon his return to Army Headquarters, he engaged the commanders of I Corps, Major General John F. Reynolds, and V Corps, Major General Fitz John Porter, regarding their appointments of corps provost marshals. In the weeks that followed Patrick arranged for the transportation of Confederate prisoners to Fort Monroe, traveled to Washington, D.C., in order to look into matters concerning absentees in hospitals and convalescent camps

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<sup>197</sup>Sparks, 17-18.

<sup>198</sup>Ibid., 162.

<sup>199</sup>Ibid., 163.

there, and received reports from informants he termed the “Secret Service” regarding the disposition of the Confederate Army.<sup>200</sup>

Patrick carried out his duties with the assistance of soldiers assigned duties as Provost Guards. According to historian Steven J. Ramold:

As a rule, soldiers enjoyed their tenure on the provost guard, as the benefits outweighed the disadvantages. Soldiers serving as provost guards usually did not have to stand on picket duty, did not have to drill, enjoyed more comfortable lodgings and better provisions, and, as an extension of their duties, got to stand around and do nothing for long periods of time. . . . In exchange for the benefits of provost duty, the army expected soldiers serving as marshals to undertake the essential, mundane, and sometimes dangerous tasks necessary to keep the army together. Provost guards were the main enforcers of regulations regarding alcohol, the suppressors of plundering, and the deterrent against desertion. None of these duties was pleasant, some of them were dangerous, and all of them caused resentment by the soldiers under the eye of the provost guard.<sup>201</sup>

By the first week of November the Army of the Potomac had begun to move south in pursuit of the Army of Northern Virginia. Patrick began to receive disturbing reports, and wrote on 5 November that he was “distressed to death with the plundering & marauding of the Army—I am sending out detachments in all directions & hope to capture some of the villains engaged in these operations.”<sup>202</sup> The following day, he wrote “as soon as breakfast was over I started to put a stop to depredations—I know not how many men I have had arrested today . . . I have got a number of horse thieves in Custody & have handled some marauders very severely.”<sup>203</sup> Patrick’s willingness to deal harshly

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<sup>200</sup>Ibid., 165-169.

<sup>201</sup>Steven J. Ramold, *Baring the Iron Hand: Discipline In the Union Army* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010), 306-307.

<sup>202</sup>Sparks, 171.

<sup>203</sup>Ibid., 172.

with Union miscreants in order to protect the lives and property of Southern civilians was consistent to the approach he had previously taken as military governor of Fredericksburg. It was also consistent with the conciliatory orders and policies established by McClellan. The people of the South must be convinced, he held, that in ending their resistance, they were not giving up their welfare to an unfriendly government.<sup>204</sup> Patrick's demonstrated support of conciliation likely contributed to his selection as the Army's Provost Marshal General.

In the weeks that followed, when McClellan was relieved as commander of the Army of the Potomac in favor of Major General Ambrose E. Burnside, Patrick's diary was full of support for his departed commander. On 8 November, he wrote "an Order was recd. by McClellan to turn over to Burnside the Command of the Army of the Potomac & report at Trenton (New Jersey)—The Army is in mourning & this is a blue day for us all."<sup>205</sup> Two nights later, he wrote, "We had a rough time last night, as Officers & men had been drinking, to drown grief & the Camp was noisy; but in their cups men spoke their minds."<sup>206</sup> Patrick's devotion to his McClellan was evident in his description of the staff's initial reception of Burnside, where he recorded that "we turned out again & received him—(Burnside) handsomely—but not enthusiastically. . . . He appeared well—very well, but all seemed to think that there was one they liked much better."<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>204</sup>Rafuse, *McClellan's War*, 121.

<sup>205</sup>Sparks, 173.

<sup>206</sup>*Ibid.*, 174.

<sup>207</sup>*Ibid.*, 175.

Burnside's assumption of command came at a sensitive time for the Army of the Potomac. Though McClellan stayed on long enough to discuss his plans with Burnside and for the Army to gather near Warrenton, Virginia, Burnside had to decide for himself whether to continue with McClellan's campaign plan or to execute one of his own. He also needed to take stock of his staff, and determine who to retain and who to replace. Operationally, he decided to group the Army's corps into Grand Divisions and changed the Army's campaign plan, planning to move as swiftly as possible to Fredericksburg, in order to move on Richmond.<sup>208</sup> He also made it plain that he intended to retain Marsena Patrick as his Provost Marshal General. On 14 November, upon his return to camp, Patrick arrived "just in time to be taken (photographed) in a Group of Burnside & his Generals—Burnside insisted upon my being taken as I was, with my riding whip in hand."<sup>209</sup> Four days later, Patrick was ordered to Falmouth, Virginia, "to be in readiness for marching into Frederic(k)sburg with the first (troops)."<sup>210</sup> As the former military governor of the city, Patrick was well known and respected by its citizens. Returning as Provost Marshal General, he was to play a different role for Burnside.

In the morning of 21 November, Patrick made his way down to the bank of the Rappahannock River across from Fredericksburg. Using a white towel as a flag of truce, he was to deliver a letter to the mayor of the city. Major General Edwin V. Sumner, who commanded the Right Grand Division of the Army of the Potomac, sent the letter in order

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<sup>208</sup>Edward J. Stackpole, *The Fredericksburg Campaign* (Mechanicsburg: Stackpole Books, 1991), 64-65.

<sup>209</sup>Sparks, 176.

<sup>210</sup>*Ibid.*, 177.

to demand the surrender of the city under threat of shelling. Patrick, ferried across the river to a guardhouse on the other side, waited throughout the afternoon and evening for a reply. He returned to Sumner's headquarters after 2100 hours that night. The mayor, after discussion with Confederate Lieutenant General James Longstreet, replied that the Confederates had no desire to occupy the city, so there was no need for Union bombardment.<sup>211</sup> Patrick wrote, "Had our Pontoon Train arrived, as it ought, we should have crossed the River before Longstreet arrived, on Thursday, as there was less than a Regt. in town."<sup>212</sup>

As the Army waited for the arrival of pontoons to continue the expected push across the Rappahannock to Fredericksburg, Patrick began to receive reports of plundering by Union soldiers. He expressed frustration with the lack of support from commanders for his initiatives. "Horses without number are stolen, all over the Country & Brigade, Division & Corps Commanders wink at it," he wrote.<sup>213</sup> Patrick's report to Burnside concerning the situation failed to produce results. "I am Sorry to say that Burnside has not shown, thus far, enough back bone to enable me to stop the robbery," he wrote on 26 November.<sup>214</sup> Laxity on the part of the Union leadership concerning the plunder of civilian property was to have a terrible effects once the Army of the Potomac made its way into Fredericksburg.

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<sup>211</sup>Schultz, 106.

<sup>212</sup>Sparks, 180.

<sup>213</sup>Ibid., 181.

<sup>214</sup>Ibid., 182.

Patrick was concerned with depredations in Fredericksburg for good reasons.

Burnside's Orders for 29 November specified the prevention of depredations on property and the oversight of all seizures of property as provost marshal responsibilities. Published two weeks later in the *New York Times*, the order read:

Headquarters Army of the Potomac, Camp Near Falmouth, Virginia,  
Nov. 29, 1862.

1 Each Grand Division to have a field officer of energy and experience, to exercise a rigid supervision over the department of the Provost Marshals within his own division, and extending his jurisdiction over the surrounding country beyond the range of duties of the Provost Marshals of Corps. He will be furnished from time to time with such force as the General Commanding his Grand Division may deem necessary.

2. Each Corps to have a Captain or field officer as Provost Marshal, with at least one hundred Infantry and fifty cavalry under his command, to be at headquarters of the Corps, and to have, as subordinate, a Captain of infantry, with his company in each division.

3. Provost Marshals of Grand Divisions to extend their operations beyond the Corps, sending out patrols over the country, and causing guards to be established wherever necessary, arresting suspected persons, tracing out crimes and criminals, receiving and examining deserters and prisoners from the enemy, as well as soldiers, sent to their own command, searching or causing search for concealed stores, contraband property &c. As far as possible the patrols and guards should be furnished from the permanent Provost Guards of the Corps.

4. Provost Marshals of Corps to preserve order and discipline among troops beyond the limits of camp, enforcing the orders regulating trade, examining the stock of sutlers and traders, protecting marketmen, preventing depredations upon property, arresting stragglers found without the passes required under General Orders, Headquarters, Army of the Potomac, following up and flanking the march of the column with cavalry to prevent marauding and to drive up loiterers and stragglers.

5. Hereafter, when it shall become necessary for any General Commanding a Grand Division or Corps, or any other officer detached from his Grand Division with a separate command, to take horses, mules or other animals, forage or subsistence stores, or any other property, from the inhabitants of the country, the authority to do it, and the manner of doing it, shall be given in writing to the officer charged with carrying out the order, and such officer shall make daily reports, in writing, to the Provost Marshal of his Corps, if present with his

Corps—if not, to the commanding officer giving him the authority to make the seizure—of the number and description of the property so taken, with the name and residence of the owner thereof. All such reports to be sent to the Provost Marshal of the Grand Division. Any person not authorized in accordance with this regulation, who shall take a horse, mule or other animal, or any other property from any citizen of the country, without full payment therefor, shall be punished as his crime deserves.

6. The Provost Marshals of Grand Divisions will make semi-weekly reports to the Provost Marshal General at these headquarters.

7. The Provost Marshal General will make frequent inspections of the operations of his department and will issue such orders as may be necessary for its future direction.

By Command of Major-General BURNSIDE. (Signed) LEWIS RICHMOND,  
Asst. Adj't-Gen.<sup>215</sup>

In the days that followed, Patrick saw to the business of maintaining order in the best way possible. His challenge was not one of sufficient authority, but one of sufficient manpower. The provost guard consisted of two companies of Illinois Dragoons, one company of the 9th New York Volunteer Infantry Regiment, the 93rd New York Volunteer Infantry Regiment, the 2nd United States Cavalry Regiment, and the 8th United States Infantry Regiment.<sup>216</sup> In sum, Patrick's men made up a brigade-sized element. Patrick required the assistance of the grand division, corps, and division commanders to maintain control of their men.

In response to allegations of marauding and theft by local civilians, Patrick enlisted Sumner's support. As commander of the Union Right Grand Division, Sumner

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<sup>215</sup>New York Times, "The Police of the Army of the Potomac, General Orders," 14 December 1862, <http://www.nytimes.com/1862/12/14/news/the-police-of-the-army-of-the-potomac-general-orders.html> (accessed 5 November 2013).

<sup>216</sup>Francis Augustin O'Reilly, *The Fredericksburg Campaign* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003), 508.

ordered troopers from his attached cavalry division under Brigadier General Alfred Pleasanton to “scour the whole country & shoot down anyone committing these depredations” on 1 December.<sup>217</sup> In the following days, Patrick worked to establish systems with the provost marshals of the Army’s Corps and Grand Divisions, oversaw the comings and goings of civilian sutlers and traders within the Army’s area of operations, and inquired on the status of civilians detained by the Army of the Potomac. One, a former Confederate surgeon, was paroled at Patrick’s discretion. By 10 December, as the Army made ready to cross the river, Patrick wrote, “civilian prisoners are being taken up by the pickets throughout the country—I have been overrun by that kind of business.”<sup>218</sup>

As the Union Army moved across the long awaited pontoon bridges on 11 December, Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia withdrew to the hills west of the city. Confederate Brigadier General William Barksdale’s Mississippi brigade remained behind in the city, hindering Union engineering efforts and opposing the initial advance across the bridges.<sup>219</sup> Patrick’s efforts as Provost Marshal General shifted from concentrating on soldier misconduct and civilian detainees to the organization of support for the Union advance. A significant obstacle between Fredericksburg and the Confederate positions to its west was a millrace around the city. Fifteen feet across, its walls were steep, at places seven feet in height, five feet of which were covered in standing water. On 12 December,

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<sup>217</sup>Sparks, 183.

<sup>218</sup>Ibid., 186.

<sup>219</sup>Ezra J. Warner, *Generals In Gray: Lives of the Confederate Commanders* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1959), 16.



Patrick coordinated with Brigadier General Alfred Sully to “turn off the water from the upper canal, by raising the mill sluice.”<sup>220</sup> Sully’s men located a paper mill that housed the control for the water and cleared it of remaining Confederates, and Patrick opened the opposite end of the millrace at Heston’s Mill. Their efforts lowered the water level to a more fordable three feet.

As the Confederates abandoned the city for the hills to the west, Union troops in the city made their presence known. Earlier permissiveness on the part of Union commanders concerning plunder of civilian property came to a head. Sumner’s soldiers, and several of his officers, were destroying Fredericksburg, committing acts of pillaging, destruction, and devastation to a greater degree than ever seen before in the war.<sup>221</sup>

According to 14th Indiana Regiment historian Nancy Baxter,

[T]he men were motivated by a bitterness that went beyond their desire to retaliate against the enemy. (They were) in a surly mood, ‘demoralized.’ They had lost too much, too often; their energies had turned sour, passing from cider to vinegar in about three months’ time. They were lawless and on the rampage—like a gang of tough boys who find the soda shop closed and go to smashing windows. Their bitterness was also increased by one final realization—the knowledge, gradually dawning, that the Northern position in the battle tomorrow was probably hopeless.<sup>222</sup>

The sacking of Fredericksburg was the first of an American city its size since Washington burned during the War of 1812. Its destruction was the most extensive of its kind to be inflicted on an American city by American citizen soldiers, more extensive than that of Athens, Alabama earlier in 1862. According to historian Francis Augustin

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<sup>220</sup>O’Reilly, 116.

<sup>221</sup>Schultz, 152.

<sup>222</sup>Ibid., 156.

O'Reilly, a Union soldier from Minnesota reflected that, "In short, everything is destroyed and the citizens of Fredericksburg are houseless, homeless, and destitute. . . . It will be a hard winter of intense hardship for them."<sup>223</sup>

Despite his employment of cavalry and four companies of infantry, Patrick could not clear Fredericksburg of pillagers.<sup>224</sup> His men numbered too few to restore order amongst the tens of thousands of Union soldiers inside the city. A provost guard patrol in northern Fredericksburg, led by Sergeant Solomon Cover of the 127th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry Regiment, was captured by the Confederates, leaving northern Fredericksburg even more exposed to Union looting.<sup>225</sup> Patrick shifted his efforts to the pontoon bridges, where his provost guards stood in wait for personnel departing the city with arms or bags full of plundered goods. The provost guard detained hundreds of pillagers who attempted to rustle civilian property out of the city. Unable to arrest such a large number of soldiers, Patrick repossessed their booty and returned the soldiers to their units. The most serious offenders, such as officers caught in possession of jewelry and other valuables, were sent directly to Major General Hooker.<sup>226</sup> Patrick's efforts made it possible for his small group of guards to check the success of marauders in the city, while his release of personnel detained to their units ensured their availability for Burnside's operations in days soon to come. While it can be argued that Patrick's failure to maintain

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<sup>223</sup>O'Reilly, 126.

<sup>224</sup>George C. Rable, *Fredericksburg! Fredericksburg!* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 525.

<sup>225</sup>O'Reilly, 124.

<sup>226</sup>*Ibid.*, 125.

discipline and order in Fredericksburg resulted in its sacking, critics should remember that command responsibility for the Right Grand Division rested with Sumner and his corps, division, and subordinate commanders. Without their support, Patrick and his men were too few to effectively stem the tide of destruction throughout the city.<sup>227</sup>

In the days immediately preceding the Union assault on Lee's positions just west of Fredericksburg, Burnside leaned heavier on Patrick. For the first time, entries appeared in Patrick's diary which indicated that the Provost Marshal General had become not just a member of the Army staff but one in whom the commanding general chose to confide. On Thursday, 11 December 1862, Patrick recorded that during the previous evening he "did not sleep after 2 o'clock & at Four Burnside came in, to talk about matters & arrange for the day." On Friday 12 December, after "a night of little sleep, Burnside came to my Tent at 4 o'clock to talk over matters & when he left I got up." On Saturday 13 December, the morning of the Union assault, Patrick wrote, "I was again roused by Burnside in my Tent—After he left I was up, & saddled as soon as Breakfast was over—Went into town & was about there till 12 at which time I had to meet with Burnside & the Generals Comdg. Grand Divisions and Corps."<sup>228</sup> Patrick did not leave written record as to the specifics of his conversations with Burnside, but is clear that during the busy, stressful period preceding his planned attack, that with his series of early morning visits, Burnside valued and sought the counsel of Patrick, perhaps to discuss initiatives and operations necessary to maintain control of Union soldiers and protect civilian lives and property in Fredericksburg.

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<sup>227</sup>Ibid., 124.

<sup>228</sup>Sparks, 187-189.

The afternoon of the battle, 13 December, was a busy one for Patrick. Major General William B. Franklin, commander of the Grand Division on the Union left, enjoyed some initial success. In Patrick's words, "Franklin's strong position helped him & he took 500 prisoners by surprise."<sup>229</sup> While prisoners kept Patrick and his Provost Guard occupied, the Union efforts to Franklin's right failed, as the Army of the Potomac was unable to dislodge the Confederates there, as they were deployed in a sunken road behind a stone wall with plentiful artillery in support on the hills behind them. "The day," wrote Patrick, "closed sadly & I remained until late in town, coming in so sadly fatigued that I lay down as soon as I could get my dinner."<sup>230</sup> The responsibility for rounding up stragglers and skulkers in the aftermath of the battle was immense.

14 December was a difficult day for Patrick and his provost guards. According to unit historians, the 93rd New York Infantry was placed on guard around the "whole camp to prevent any one approaching or entering day or night without giving the countersign, also forming a guard at regimental headquarters, besides which we acted as Provost Guard to arrest and confine all suspicious persons."<sup>231</sup> Much as modern military police perform detainee functions in conjunction with physical security and other missions, so too did the 93rd on 14 December. They reported that, "Thousands of prisoners captured

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<sup>229</sup>Ibid., 189-190.

<sup>230</sup>Ibid., 190.

<sup>231</sup>David H. King, A. Judson Gibbs, and Jay H. Northup, *History of the Ninety-third Regiment, New York Volunteer Infantry, 1861-1865* (Milwaukee: Swain and Tate Company, 1895), 46.

in time of battle were brought to us for safe-keeping. Details were frequently made to take prisoners to Washington to be turned over to authorities there.”<sup>232</sup>

It was a dark time for the Army of the Potomac. Patrick’s tone reflected that of the army, as he wrote of the Army’s loss, “without gaining anything & in reality inflicting no loss at all on the enemy scarcely—It is understood that Hooker’s Corps is withdrawing, tonight (14 December) from the other side of the River—A wise step in my opinion, if followed by the withdrawal of all the Troops from that side of the River, where the enemy may, at any moment, slaughter us wholesale.”<sup>233</sup> The 93rd New York Volunteer Infantry, which was one of Patrick’s Provost Guard units at the time, reported on their 14 December activities in the unit’s official history:

We formed a guard round about the whole camp to prevent any one approaching or entering day or night without giving the countersign, also forming a guard at regimental headquarters, besides which we acted as Provost Guard to arrest and confine all suspicious persons. Thousands of prisoners captured in time of battle were brought to us for safe-keeping. Details were frequently made to take prisoners to Washington to be turned over to the authorities there. At this date we had many prisoners in our custody, all of whom seemed anxious to be paroled and get home. No fighting today.<sup>234</sup>

Burnside met with his commanders in Fredericksburg on 15 December to decide whether to remain in Fredericksburg, in part or in total, or whether to withdraw back to the eastern shore of the Rappahannock. Concern over the danger of a coordinated attack by Lee with the river at the Union’s back led Burnside to order the withdrawal of his men that night, under the cover of darkness. The thunderstorms that blew in that night helped

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<sup>232</sup>Ibid.

<sup>233</sup>Sparks, 190.

<sup>234</sup>King, Gibbs, and Northup, 46.

mask the retreat, and the morning revealed empty positions opposite those of the Confederates.<sup>235</sup> On 16 December, Patrick wrote “the Troops have resumed their former positions—The General sent over a flag today, & the result is, an agreement to exchange prisoners, bury dead, etc. . . . There is a feeling of deep and painful anxiety as to the future. No confidence is felt in anyone.”<sup>236</sup>

“This winter is, indeed, the Valley Forge of the war,” wrote Major Rufus Dawes of the 6th Wisconsin. The period following the retreat from Fredericksburg was full of bitter cold weather, deprivations, and hopelessness for the men of the Army of the Potomac.<sup>237</sup> The days to come saw deaths every day, as the wounded succumbed to their injuries and those not injured in battle fell prey to the numerous diseases which ran thick throughout the camps, killing both veterans and newly arrived replacements.<sup>238</sup> Patrick wrote much in early January 1863 of his efforts to curb what he called “robbery of the worst kind”<sup>239</sup> as Union Cavalry ranged far and wide in the Army’s rear, in part to make up for what the Army itself had failed to provide during the “Valley Forge of the war.” Shortages of food, problems with pay and disagreement with the conduct of the war contributed to make desertion the best option in the eyes of many a soldier. On 11 January, Patrick wrote that if, “our Troops be paid off before the next action, I predict

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<sup>235</sup>Schultz, 227-228.

<sup>236</sup>Sparks, 192.

<sup>237</sup>Schultz, 231.

<sup>238</sup>Ibid., 232.

<sup>239</sup>Sparks, 201.

very large desertions & no possibility of staying them.”<sup>240</sup> He was correct. When units were paid, more men deserted. “There is no honor in this war as it is now being carried on,” explained a sergeant, of deserters’ attitudes, “& consequently no dishonor in leaving it.” 25,363 men were listed as deserters at the end of January 1863.<sup>241</sup>

Determined to move against Lee despite the recent loss at Fredericksburg, Burnside planned a move around the Confederate left before the month of January was out. “There is to be a movement this week,” wrote Patrick on 12 January, “So Burnside says. . . . The ground is muddy every morning from the effects of frost coming out of the ground—I am tired of this kind of life.”<sup>242</sup> His mention of muddy conditions was prophetic. Patrick spent the next week coordinating for guides and acquiring information about the fords across the Rappahannock, the roads, and other features of the territory on the other side of the river. 20 January was chosen as the first day for the operation, as Patrick arose, “early and breakfasted, then saw Burnside about the arrangement of Troops for Rail Road Defenses, Depots & Landing. . . . The Troops moved at 12 o’ clock, in readiness to go over the river at 2 or 3 points between Falmouth and Scotts Dam.”<sup>243</sup> The initial movement started well enough, but a winter storm that night halted progress and made conditions miserable. Patrick’s 93rd New York Infantry, after striking tents on 20 January, attempted to move in support of Burnside’s plan, but wrote that “on the morning

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<sup>240</sup>Ibid., 202.

<sup>241</sup>Wert, 211.

<sup>242</sup>Sparks, 202.

<sup>243</sup>Ibid., 205.

of the 21st we were floundering and stuck in the mud, utterly unable to move.”<sup>244</sup> The storm continued on 21 January, rendering the roads impassable to wagons and artillery. The men continued to struggle to march.<sup>245</sup>

Patrick wrote that the “Artillery and Pontoon Train can scarcely move, off the road, & the ground has become saturated—The movement is, necessarily postponed—How long it is impossible to say, but the men are greatly demoralized. The Sick & Stragglers are very numerous.”<sup>246</sup> Conditions worsened the following day, causing Burnside to call off the movement, ordering a return march that was labeled “a living Hell” by a soldier of the 7th Wisconsin.<sup>247</sup> Patrick wrote “the mud is awful. Our Camp is flooded with liquid mud.”<sup>248</sup>

The Army of the Potomac returned from what was publicized as the “Mud March” to their previous quarters around Falmouth, Virginia. They had been ordered to demolish their camps prior to departure, so their morale sunk even lower as they returned to their ruined camps, full of mud.<sup>249</sup> “It is said,” wrote Patrick, “that a very bad feeling has sprung up in the Army against Burnside, growing out of his Fredericksburg failure and the last sad attempt, which is, perhaps, more disastrous to him than the first.”<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>244</sup>King, Gibbs, and Northup, 48

<sup>245</sup>Wert, 214.

<sup>246</sup>Sparks, 206.

<sup>247</sup>Wert, 214.

<sup>248</sup>Sparks, 206.

<sup>249</sup>Schultz, 255.

<sup>250</sup>Sparks, 206-207.



Burnside then went to Washington, seeking the President's support in relieving generals he deemed disloyal or incompetent, at threat of resignation by Burnside. President Lincoln took one day to accept Burnside's resignation, naming Major General Joseph Hooker to command the Army of the Potomac.<sup>251</sup>

Burnside gave up command of the Army to Hooker during the morning of 26 January 1863. "He came over early & at about 1030 we all met at Burnside's Tent & took leave of him," wrote Patrick. After addressing those assembled, he departed for Washington. Hooker met with his staff later in the morning, and Patrick wrote of his intent to continue to serve as Provost Marshal General. "He has desired for me to go forward & do as I have done, using his name in the same manner that I have used Burnside's & McClellan's," wrote Patrick.<sup>252</sup>

A veteran of the Seven Days Battles, Second Manassas, Antietam, and Fredericksburg, Hooker had a solid reputation as a division commander and subsequently as commander of the First Corps and a Grand Division.<sup>253</sup> He was also known to be vain, boastful, and open in his condemnation of fellow officers, projecting a self-assurance that many viewed as arrogance. Despite an ambition that drove his criticism of Burnside following Fredericksburg, he had the backing of Radical Republicans for his earlier criticisms of McClellan. Of benefit to the Army of the Potomac at the time, Hooker possessed a flair for administration and the ability to identify skillful subordinates.<sup>254</sup>

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<sup>251</sup>Wert, 216.

<sup>252</sup>Sparks, 208.

<sup>253</sup>Warner, *General In Blue*, 233-234.

<sup>254</sup>Wert, 218-219.

Hooker's magnetism appealed to other officers who, for a variety of causes, were unfriendly with McClellan and his supporters.<sup>255</sup>

With morale in the Army of the Potomac at a dismal level, Hooker moved swiftly to improve the lot of those under his command. Understanding that an army marches on its stomach, he ordered the construction of bakeries and the provision of fresh vegetables for his men. His medical director, Jonathan Letterman, oversaw improvements in sanitation in and around the army's camps. A new system of furloughs for outstanding soldiers and units was instituted, and a whiskey ration was provided for regiments upon their return from picket duty. Hooker, like McClellan before him, believed in and utilized reviews and inspections of the army's units to instill a sense of pride in his men. He issued corps badges to the men. Originally intended to make unit identification of stragglers easier, the badges became a source of unit pride and *esprit de corps* for the men.<sup>256</sup>

The most significant of Hooker's efforts for Patrick as provost marshal were the initiatives to counter desertion, a problem of a magnitude so large that it exceeded the provost marshal's capacity to come to terms with it alone. Nearly a third of the army was absent when Hooker took command, and half of those were gone without leave. As parcels from home often provided soldiers with civilian clothing and other items needed to desert, a package inspection program commenced. The provost guard stepped up its

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<sup>255</sup>Stephen R. Taaffe, *Commanding the Army of the Potomac* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas), 20.

<sup>256</sup>John J. Hennessy, "We Shall Make Richmond Howl—The Army of the Potomac On the Eve of Chancellorsville," in *Chancellorsville: The Battle and Its Aftermath*, ed., Gary W. Gallagher (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 9-11.

patrols of roads leading north. Courts-martial for deserters, in which provost guards provided security and order, were accelerated to administer swift justice.<sup>257</sup> On 31 January, Patrick wrote that the “great business of the morning was, getting of deserters, of whom about 344 were dispatched to their Regts. but a number more have since come in.”<sup>258</sup> Desertion dropped as discipline improved. The number of men absent without leave from the Army of the Potomac fell from 76,878 in January 1863, to 48,638 in April.<sup>259</sup>

The Army’s quartermasters and civilian sutlers were another focus of Patrick’s efforts. On 4 February, the provost guard captured a large number of government wagons that sutlers had been using to transport goods past the usual military checkpoints. Things were no better in the town of Falmouth, where, on 13 February, Patrick closed all civilian shops in response to corruption found there. He set up a new system for registration of shopkeepers, who were given 36 hours to comply or face confiscation of their property.<sup>260</sup>

Patrick was also busy establishing what he called his “System of Secret Service.” This intelligence gathering entity was not one with which Patrick was comfortable, as he wrote that it was “hard to organize where there is so little good Material . . . I do not fancy the class of men & think they do not fancy me.”<sup>261</sup> His solution was to interview

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<sup>257</sup>Ibid., 10.

<sup>258</sup>Sparks, 209.

<sup>259</sup>Hennessy, “We Shall Make Richmond Howl,” 10.

<sup>260</sup>Sparks, 210-213.

<sup>261</sup>Ibid., 211.

Colonel George Sharpe, a lawyer in the 120th New York, who Patrick intended to make Chief of the Secret Service Department. Sharpe would serve as a buffer between Patrick and the department's operatives, as Patrick observed "he appears well, & I think he would be a pleasant man to be Associated with."<sup>262</sup> Hooker appointed Sharpe Deputy Provost Marshal, allowing him to organize what became the Army's Military Information Bureau. The bureau grew throughout the war, serving as the predecessor to today's military intelligence systems.<sup>263</sup> While Sharpe would occasionally stand in for Patrick as the army's provost marshal general, Sharpe reported directly to Hooker on most matters of intelligence and received guidance from Brigadier General Daniel Butterfield, Hooker's chief of staff.<sup>264</sup>

As the months wore on, Patrick's greatest frustrations came not from his duties nor from the winter weather conditions, but from inside the Headquarters of the Army of the Potomac. While he did not enjoy the relationship with Hooker that he had with Burnside, Patrick was not quick to criticize his new commander. "Hooker is determined to do a great many things that are right," he wrote on 30 January. "I expect that the Grand Divisions will be broken up tomorrow, & the old System of Corps again resumed—Of this thing I am glad," he wrote the following week. On 21 February, after nearly a month of

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<sup>262</sup>Ibid., 212.

<sup>263</sup>Edward J. Stackpole, *Chancellorsville* (Mechanicsburg: Stackpole Books, 1988), 16.

<sup>264</sup>Edwin C. Fishel, *The Secret War for the Union: The Untold Story of Military Intelligence in the Civil War* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996), 288-289.

service to his new commander, Patrick wrote, “I have had no reason to find fault, so far, with Hooker.”<sup>265</sup>

Patrick’s concerns lay not with Hooker, but with the Army’s new chief of staff, Brigadier General Butterfield, who as early as 30 January was recognized by Patrick as one who “delights in papers & Orders.”<sup>266</sup> Butterfield and Hooker’s efforts to lessen the influence of those loyal to the army’s former commander, George McClellan, were not received warmly by Patrick and his fellow West Pointers. Two days later, Patrick was “very much disgusted with his manner and the view he takes of our affairs—his Ex Cathedra way of speaking, & the flippancy of the whole Head Quarters establishment.”<sup>267</sup> Butterfield’s perceived heavy-handedness with the Army staff was more pronounced in Hooker’s absence. Instead of answering to Hooker, with whom he had reasonable confidence, Patrick found himself answering the whims of Butterfield. Patrick’s mounting frustrations were evident in his journal, as on 14 February he recorded that “Dan the Magnificent (Butterfield) was in command today, & improved it by sending for the Staff as often as the gas pressed strongly within him which, of course, was pretty often.”<sup>268</sup> Discussing his frustrations regarding Butterfield with Hooker the following week brought no relief. By the end of February, Patrick could no longer endure working with Butterfield. He submitted a request for relief to Hooker, who was understood by

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<sup>265</sup>Sparks, 209-215.

<sup>266</sup>Ibid., 209.

<sup>267</sup>Ibid., 210.

<sup>268</sup>Ibid., 213-214.

Patrick to “relieve me as soon as he could.”<sup>269</sup> But as the first days of March 1863 came and went, so did any chance of relief for Patrick. For reasons unknown, Hooker decided to retain Patrick in his position. The provost marshal stayed busy securing headquarters, monitoring the dealings of sutlers and drilling his Provost Guard as the weather improved and the Army of the Potomac faced another spring. The Union’s Enrollment Act of March, 1863 created the office of Provost Marshal General for oversight of the draft and mobilization. Its first occupant, James B. Fry, had little contact or impact on Patrick and his fellow operational provost marshals in their service to the armies in the field.<sup>270</sup>

As Hooker planned his move against Lee, he clamped down on newspaper correspondents in the area. Edwin F. Denyse of the *New York Herald* was arrested on 16 March and tried by a military commission in Patrick’s office two days later. Denyse had written of the “unmistakable preparations now being made for a speedy movement of the army,” saying that “no one in the army doubts that it will come at the earliest possible moment.” Denyse was convicted by the commission and sentenced to six months hard labor for the Army’s Quartermaster Department.<sup>271</sup> Hooker, who cared less about the inaccuracy of Denyse’s report than he did the possibility that the correspondent might be right with his next story, reduced his punishment to being transported outside the Army’s lines permanently.<sup>272</sup>

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<sup>269</sup>Ibid., 219.

<sup>270</sup>William A. Blair, *With Malice Towards Some: Treason and Loyalty In the Civil War Era* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 112.

<sup>271</sup>Sparks, 225.

<sup>272</sup>Stephen W. Sears, *Chancellorsville* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996), 74.

It was during the planning of the Army's spring campaign that Colonel Sharpe's Information Bureau began to show its true value. Sharpe had created a network of agents, all charged to bring accurate information concerning Lee and his men back to their chief. As a result, Hooker knew which units comprised Lee's force, their whereabouts, and their relative strengths. Sharpe developed intelligence far superior to Allan Pinkerton's old spy networks, whose exaggerated estimates of Confederate troop strength had been of little use to Major General McClellan. When Hooker decided to move, he would do so with a greater understanding of his enemy than any of his predecessors had enjoyed.<sup>273</sup> Patrick continued in his nominal oversight of Sharpe's efforts.

Lincoln came to visit the Army for the better part of a week in early April. While many a general might work to maximize their personal exposure to the Commander in Chief, Patrick's diary entries during the visit reveal him to have little interest in doing so. "I recd. orders to go over to call on the President at 10," he wrote on 6 April, "So we went over—all at Head Quarters & called on him—I crawled out the Back Way as soon as presented." When Hooker and Brigadier General George Stoneman held a review of the Army's Cavalry Corps that afternoon for the President, Patrick wrote "I staid & saw it all over—a muddy time they had, indeed. . . . The enemy have had us in plain Sight all day & if they had desired, could have dropped a Shell amongst us." A few days later, after the President and Hooker had conducted review after review of the Army's corps, Patrick wrote, "I hope the President will soon get off so we can once more get to work. The roads are fast drying & every thing indicates a speedy movement of our troops." Though Lincoln was to depart shortly thereafter, the Army's movement would be further delayed

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<sup>273</sup>Wert, 229.

by weather. Patrick's 15 April description of it was one of "the very worst Storms of the season. . . . Its consequences will be very grave to us, I fear, and may defeat the movement of our Troops."<sup>274</sup>

Hooker's initial plan depended heavily on movement and surprise. He envisioned leading the V, XI and XII Corps, almost 60,000 men, to the northwest round Lee's left flank. The success of this movement depended in large part upon the portion of the Army he left opposite Fredericksburg. The I, III, and VI Corps, composed of another 65,000 men, would act as a diversion under Major General John Sedgwick's command.<sup>275</sup>

When the Army of the Potomac finally moved, on 27 April, Patrick wrote of the consequences of being accused of violating the secrecy of the commanding general's plans. Hooker had called for Patrick, placing in his charge two Union officers, Robert Wallace and Arthur Bernard. "There have been a number of Officers in arrest today, sent over to me," wrote Patrick, "prisoners, for Signaling the enemy last night—It will be Strange if this should be proven on them."<sup>276</sup> Patrick sent them to the rear the next day. Intelligence gained indicated that surprise was, thus far, maintained. "So far, I think the rebels have not the slightest idea what we are about today," wrote Patrick, "Even the pickets know nothing about it."

On 29 April, when Major General John Reynolds' I Corps and Major General John Sedgwick's VI Corps crossed the Rappahannock River at Fredericksburg, they sent

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<sup>274</sup>Sparks, 231-232.

<sup>275</sup>Chris Mackowski and Kristopher D. White, *Chancellorsville's Forgotten Front: The Battles of Second Fredericksburg and Salem Church, May 3, 1863* (El Dorado Hills: Savas Beatie, 2013), 29.

<sup>276</sup>Sparks, 236-237.



some 80 prisoners to Patrick. They were all from Brigadier General Jubal Early's Division of Stonewall Jackson's Corps. The intelligence gave Patrick cause for optimism. "They must be driven if Hooker gets across & in their rear, by their left Flank," he wrote, "& I think he will."<sup>277</sup> On 30 April, Patrick recorded Hooker's 1700 departure from Army Headquarters to command the Army's right wing. "Unless they are playing us a deep game, we shall cut them sadly to pieces-being on their flank & rear."<sup>278</sup>

On Friday 1 May 1863, when Hooker's lead elements came into contact with the Army of Northern Virginia, Patrick directed his Provost Guards behind both wings of the Union Army. Lieutenant Paulding of the Provost Guard was directed to move behind the right wing while Lieutenant Nichols, also a Provost Guard Officer, was behind the left wing near Fredericksburg. Both led mounted elements in order to "scour the Country for Stragglers" and return them to their units.<sup>279</sup> If Paulding detected any Confederate attempt to move around the Union right flank, no record of his report exists. Colonel Sharpe's Secret Service Bureau, too, failed to provide advance warning of the attack. Patrick's description of the predominantly German units in action with the 11th Corps on 2 May made his poor opinion of their efforts clear, as he wrote, "The Enemy had massed their Troops on a certain point . . . when the whole mass opened and the 11' Corps ran away to 'fight mit Sigel' in the rear." The enemy Patrick wrote of was Lieutenant General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson, and the attack was Jackson's on Hooker's exposed right flank. Patrick and his men worked well into the night, rounding up stragglers from the

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<sup>277</sup>Ibid., 238.

<sup>278</sup>Ibid., 239.

<sup>279</sup>Ibid., 240.

rout of the Eleventh Corps and moving a group of prisoners from the 23rd Georgia back across the river to the rear. The men of the 23rd were commanded by Colonel Emory F. Best, and had been captured on a probe by Union soldiers under Major General Dan Sickles.<sup>280</sup> The following day, 3 May, was spent overseeing “the crossing of Troops, Supplies, Stragglers, prisoners, sick & wounded, the care of roads, depots, communications & Telegraphs, with an occasional visit to the front & establishing of Provost Lines.”<sup>281</sup> On 4 May, Patrick wrote, “I was engaged in much the same way as Yesterday, but the Silence in front was ominous & I could not account for it.” Things became clearer by 5 May, when Patrick received orders to “Stake out the Ford.” He held U.S. Ford, “whip in hand, using it freely & directing the movement successfully, until every wheel & hoof had crossed the bridges.” He worked throughout the night, when the pontoons were recovered and the Army of the Potomac continued its retreat.<sup>282</sup>

In the words of Major General Darius Couch, Commander of Hooker’s Second Corps and the senior of the Army’s corps commanders at the time, “In looking for the causes of the loss at Chancellorsville, the primary ones were that Hooker expected Lee to fall back without risking battle. Finding himself mistaken he assumed the defensive, and was outgeneraled and became demoralized by the superior tactical boldness of the enemy.”<sup>283</sup> If Hooker was demoralized, he was not alone. On 6 May, Patrick’s diary entry

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<sup>280</sup>Sears, Chancellorsville, 255.

<sup>281</sup>Sparks, 241.

<sup>282</sup>Ibid., 243.

<sup>283</sup>Ned Bradford, ed., *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1956), 336.

reflected the mood of the Army, saying “No Confidence is felt in Hooker. . . . There is a feeling of universal disgust & indignation . . . I feel perfectly disheartened & cannot see the close of this War–It is now in the hands of Gamblers.” The following day, Patrick wrote, “The President and Gen. Halleck have been here today and I understood that the whole thing has been represented by Hooker as a grand Success and Abraham has gone back well pleased with every thing.”<sup>284</sup> It was clear to Patrick that Hooker would not be immediately removed.

The President’s visit marked the beginning of a revolt by the senior corps commanders against Hooker, who had previously attempted to remove any remaining vestiges of McClellan’s influence from the ranks of the army’s senior commanders. Career professionals, including Second Corps Commander Major General Darius Couch, Fifth Corps Commander Major General George Meade, Sixth Corps Commander Major General John Sedgwick, and Twelfth Corps Commander Major General Henry Slocum, had minimized their air of political discussion previously.<sup>285</sup> After Chancellorsville, this was no longer the case. Slocum, counting on the support of Couch, Sedgwick, and Meade, intended to approach President Lincoln and throw the support of the group behind appointing Meade as Hooker’s replacement.<sup>286</sup> For his part, Meade wrote to his wife that he was “much gratified at the frequent expression of opinion that I ought to be placed in command. Three of my seniors (Couch, Slocum and Sedgwick) have sent me

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<sup>284</sup>Sparks, 243-244.

<sup>285</sup>Hennessy, “We Shall Make Richmond Howl,” 16.

<sup>286</sup>Sears, *Chancellorsville*, 435.

word that they were willing to serve under me.”<sup>287</sup> Meade was not agreeable to joining Slocum in open revolt against Hooker, however, so Slocum did not approach the President directly. Couch pressed the issue in a different way, requesting relief from command under Hooker and urging that Meade be made Commander of the Army of the Potomac in place of Hooker. While Couch was relieved of his command, no immediate action was taken regarding his request for Hooker’s relief.<sup>288</sup>

Patrick was not alone in his assessment of his superiors. In a letter to his wife just after Chancellorsville, Major General Winfield S. Hancock, Commander of the First Division, Second Corps under Couch, wrote that he did not “know of what will be the next turn of the wheel of Fortune, or what Providence has in store for this unhappy army . . . . Hooker’s day is over.”<sup>289</sup> Writing to his daughter later in May, Brigadier General Alpheus S. Williams, a Division Commander in Slocum’s XII Corps, opined that, “People at home are fancying this war is waged for the Union and for a stable and united government, but it is a mistake. It is carried on exclusively to make heroes of charlatans and braggarts!”<sup>290</sup> At month’s end, Williams observed that, “We have lost physically and numerically, but still more morally, not by being dispirited, but by a universal want of confidence in the commanding general, growing out of the recent operations. I have not

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<sup>287</sup>George G. Meade, *The Life and Letters of George Gordon Meade* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1913), 1:373.

<sup>288</sup>Sears, *Chancellorsville*, 435-6.

<sup>289</sup>Almira R. Hancock, *Reminiscences of Winfield Scott Hancock* (New York: Charles L. Webster and Company, 1887), 94-95.

<sup>290</sup>Milo M. Quaife, ed. *From the Cannon's Mouth: The Civil War Letters of General Alpheus S. Williams* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 203.

met the first officer who does not feel this, from the highest to the lowest. Of course, with such a feeling offensive operations are out of the question.” Williams’ expectations of the Army of Northern Virginia proved accurate. “I suppose now it is expected that Lee will cross and try his hand on us.”<sup>291</sup>

The provost guard was busily engaged apprehending stragglers after Chancellorsville. Patrick had sent out mounted detachments some two miles north of United States Ford near Aquia Creek immediately when the Union Army retreated, and “succeeded in arresting a great many.”<sup>292</sup> In the first weeks of May, he learned that “far out beyond our lines, along the White Ridge road, about 18 miles from Falmouth, and in the vicinity of White Ridge, the country is swarming with them. They belong mainly to the First, Eleventh, and Twelfth Corps, and in many instances have taken the clothing of the inhabitants from them by force, and have gone in the direction of Alexandria.”<sup>293</sup> Patrick sent Provost Guard detachments out to apprehend them, in order to return them to their units and spare Alexandria and the surrounding countryside from what had earlier befallen Fredericksburg.

Straggling had become such an issue for the army that it was addressed in General Orders No. 62, dated 12 June 1863. “The crime of straggling, either in camp or on the march, is plainly set forth and positively prohibited in General Orders, Nos. 122, 155, 157, of 1862, and No. 10, of 1863, from these headquarters,” it stated, “and any officer of

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<sup>291</sup>Ibid., 204.

<sup>292</sup>U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*. 70 vols. in 128 parts (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office: 1880-1901), Chapter 37, 476.

<sup>293</sup>Ibid., 476.

any corps whatever is authorized to order forward or arrest any straggler of any regiment in the army. Resistance to such exercise of authority will be at the risk of death.”<sup>294</sup> In order to ensure the army got the message, it closed with instructions that “This order will be read at the head of each company, battery and detachment in this army.”<sup>295</sup> While Patrick and his Provost Guards continued to be the primary enforcers of anti-straggling measures in the Army of the Potomac, Hooker’s General Orders No. 62 enlisted all the officers of the army in support of their efforts to come to terms with a problem that was bigger than the Provost Guards could handle alone.

Patrick was further preoccupied with the gathering of intelligence during the month of May. It was during his examination of letters obtained from the “other side” that he learned of Major General J.E.B. Stuart’s command of the fallen Stonewall Jackson’s men during the battle of Chancellorsville. As the Army of the Potomac began its move north, Patrick met repeatedly with a Mrs. Stuart, a cousin of General Lee’s wife, Mary Custis Lee, regarding Lee’s 24-year-old daughter, Mary, who remained with her in Union territory. Though Confederate Cavalry had been sent for her numerous times, she had declined to leave. While he “learned many other things in relation to Lee and others,” Patrick gave Mrs. Stuart his advice as to how best to return Mary Lee south before moving on.<sup>296</sup>

Issues with sutlers were prevalent. Patrick’s efforts to keep “purveyors and caterers” in line with regulations were never ending. These business people, controlled

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<sup>294</sup>Ibid., Chapter 39, 78.

<sup>295</sup>Ibid., 79.

<sup>296</sup>Sparks, 249-251.

less by army contract than by the law of supply and demand, provided wares to officers as a privilege, wares not available at the regular army sutler establishments. The army had forbid the sale of alcohol to soldiers, making liquor sales legal only for officers with brigade or division commander approval. Patrick, noted for his personal abstinence from alcohol, had helped enact the orders banning alcohol sales in late 1862.<sup>297</sup> Issues arose when purveyors who had been issued passes used their access to camp in order to move around and make unauthorized sales to soldiers. Patrick wrote that the “vast numbers of purveyors, caterers, messengers, clerks, employees, and etc. hanging upon this army are a curse to it; and refugees from taxation and conscription at home are fattening upon the plunder obtained here.”<sup>298</sup> He moved to establish firmer control over purveyors, sutlers, and the like. On 12 June 1863, Patrick held a council to entertain bids for “Sutling at these Head Quarters and for the furnishing of Newspapers & Periodicals to the Army at 5 cents each.” The council would soon announce the results of the bidding. William J. Babcock was awarded the sutling contract, and John M. Lamb that for the newspapers. Patrick was satisfied that those chosen were “fully acquainted with the terms and ready to meet them.”<sup>299</sup>

Patrick was more concerned with Hooker’s treatment of Colonel Sharpe’s “Secret Service Department.” Sharpe and his men, having provided the Army with intelligence unmatched prior to Chancellorsville, were now “treated . . . with indifference at first, &

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<sup>297</sup>Francis A. Lord, *Civil War Sutlers and Their Wares* (Thomas Yoseloff: New York, 1969), 46.

<sup>298</sup>U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion*, Chapter 37, 512.

<sup>299</sup>Sparks, 256-257.

now with insult,” according to Patrick. The development of intelligence from prisoners taken during cavalry skirmishes continued, but despite providing “accurate information . . . . Hooker will not use it and insults all who differ from him in opinion—He has declared that the enemy are over 100,000 strong—it is his only salvation to make it appear that the enemy’s forces are larger than his own, which is false & he knows it—He knows that Lee is his master & is afraid to meet him in fair battle,” wrote Patrick on 19 June.<sup>300</sup> Whether by design or by accident, a 27 May assessment of Lee’s positions by Sharpe’s men was delayed after being delivered to Hooker, failing to reach Washington until 8 June.<sup>301</sup> Lee’s realignment of his army, necessitated by the loss of Jackson at Chancellorsville, was issued in an order by Lee on 30 May. Less than two weeks later, on 9 June, Sharpe and his men had sufficient information to provide Hooker with a summary, including the three new corps, placement of nearly all divisions, and attachments to Stuart’s cavalry.<sup>302</sup> Patrick’s concern over the treatment of Sharpe’s bureau and the utilization of its inputs appears justified.

Hooker’s plan to march north in pursuit of Lee was difficult for all involved. The Third Corps moved first, toward Manassas. The First Corps and the Eleventh Corps followed it. The Sixth Corps withdrew from the Rappahannock during the night of 12 June. The Second, Fifth, Sixth, and Twelfth Corps moved further east on 13 June, towards Fairfax Court House. Hooker had been directed by Major General Halleck, General in Chief in Washington, to keep the Army of the Potomac between Lee and

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<sup>300</sup>Ibid., 261.

<sup>301</sup>Fishel, 416-418.

<sup>302</sup>Ibid., 420-421.



Washington.<sup>303</sup> Poor planning and coordination of the march stretched Patrick's Provost Guard assets to the limit as they worked to minimize straggling. Patrick came face to face with the problem upon his arrival at Edwards Ferry on 26 June. He found two officers with whom he was acquainted and ordered them to clear roads and bridges with personnel from the 20th New York Infantry. Patrick or another senior officer needed to post there from the outset in order to control traffic. In the evening, Patrick wrote that, "I am much fatigued, feel very much disgusted and satisfied that there is great want of a Commander."<sup>304</sup>

Two days later, Hooker was gone. "After breakfast went over to Head Quarters to find a change," wrote Patrick on 28 June near Frederick, Maryland, "Gen. Hooker had been relieved from Command and Maj. Gen. (George Gordon) Meade placed over the Army of the Potomac. Of course this has caused great commotion, but as yet I heard no regret. . . . He leaves few friends behind him, altho' personally, he is the most agreeable commander I have yet served under." Patrick's last observation reveals an ability to look at Hooker's five months in command as opposed to just his final weeks. Of his new commander and former classmate at West Point, Patrick wrote that what "Meade will do is a question, but he has taken hold of work with a will."<sup>305</sup> Brigadier General Alpheus Williams was representative of Patrick's observation that Hooker had few friends, when he wrote on 29 June, "I cannot conceive of greater imbecility and weakness than

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<sup>303</sup>Allen C. Guelzo, *Gettysburg: The Last Invasion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013), 51.

<sup>304</sup>Edwin B. Coddington, *The Gettysburg Campaign: A Study In Command* (New York: Touchstone, 1968), 125-126.

<sup>305</sup>Sparks, 265.

characterized that campaign from the moment Hooker reached Chancellorsville and took command.”<sup>306</sup> The pro-Hooker faction within the army remained, however. Senior officers like Sickles, Butterfield, and David Birney had associated themselves with Hooker because they were not in favor of McClellan’s generalship, and they welcomed Fighting Joe’s direction. They believed that the same West Point group that had applauded McClellan and his limited war ideas had secured Meade’s promotion at Hooker’s cost.”<sup>307</sup>

Patrick made but one more entry in his diary before the Battle of Gettysburg. At Taneytown, Maryland on 30 June, he wrote of sending his cavalry back to Frederick to “clean out that town, which was reported full of drunken men & Stragglers.” He recognized Meade’s efforts in issuing “two excellent business Orders for battle.” Meade had assumed command of the army with General Orders No. 67 on 28 June, and followed up with marching orders for the army’s corps into Maryland.<sup>308</sup> Patrick noted that intelligence collection efforts showed that the “Enemy are concentrating in the direction of Gettysburg, or perhaps York. . . . They have broken up our Rail Road Communications with Washington & Baltimore.”<sup>309</sup>

Unlike many of his peers, whose efforts in the following days would be chronicled in the battle histories written in times to follow, Patrick’s view of Gettysburg was not one of glorious charges and heroic last stands. Brigadier General Alpheus

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<sup>306</sup>Quaife, 221.

<sup>307</sup>Taaffe, 110.

<sup>308</sup>Meade, v.2, 6-10.

<sup>309</sup>Sparks, 266.

Williams found himself in temporary command of the Twelfth Corps at Gettysburg.<sup>310</sup> Williams wrote of leading his men in combat, of his attendance at Meade's council of war after the second day's action, and how his vote to remain and defend against Lee was the action endorsed by the majority of those present.<sup>311</sup> Patrick would not write of charges and stubborn defenses, nor would he write of any input at councils of war. He spent the first week of July behind the lines, seeing to the affairs of stragglers, wounded, detainees, and the dead.<sup>312</sup>

1 July 1863 found Patrick at Army Headquarters near Taneytown, Maryland, "overhauling trains & examining prisoners etc. sent down from Reynolds & Cavalry." He was still there in the early afternoon when he witnessed Reynolds' remains being carried to the rear, which he called a "Sad beginning, truly." Working his way north, he established a depot for prisoners before arriving at Meade's headquarters before nightfall. The Union position on 2 July, commonly referred to as a fishhook today, was described as "the form of a Horse Shoe" by Patrick.

Patrick, as Provost Marshal General, was charged with the establishment of a holding area for prisoners and placing a ring of his provost guards behind friendly lines to maintain order and stop runaways from the front.<sup>313</sup> Assigned to Patrick as Provost Guards were the 93rd New York Infantry, eight companies of the 8th United States Infantry, the 2nd Pennsylvania Cavalry, and two companies of the 6th Pennsylvania

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<sup>310</sup>Quaife, 225.

<sup>311</sup>Ibid., 229.

<sup>312</sup>Sparks, 245.

<sup>313</sup>Coddington, 332.

Cavalry. Despite every effort by Patrick and the 2,000 men assigned to him, thousands of soldiers leaked past from the Gettysburg battle from Frederick, Maryland, to Westminster, Maryland, to Hanover, Pennsylvania, back to Gettysburg, and again back to Frederick.<sup>314</sup> Patrick recorded that on the second day of battle the “fighting was very heavy & we were obliged to leave the place we had selected under the furious shelling and musketry—Gen. Meade had to abandon his own Head Quarters for a time & I had my hands full, with the Prov. Guards to keep the Troops from breaking—It was hot work & I had several lines formed, so that very few succeeded in getting entirely through.” On 3 July, Patrick “went up early to the front.”<sup>315</sup> As he ordered his provost guards behind the Union defenses around the fishhook, he received orders that would frustrate his efforts to keep straggling in check. Just before noon Major General Meade gave an order that all soldiers detailed as provost guards must return to their regiments.<sup>316</sup> Soon after, the Confederate Artillery opened up. Patrick wrote, “I never saw such artillery fire as came upon us at one time—It was terrific & I had my hands full with those who broke to the rear, but we succeeded in checking the disorder & organized a guard of Stragglers to keep nearly 2,000 Prisoners all safe.”<sup>317</sup> According to Lieutenant William Peel of the 11th Mississippi, Patrick addressed the prisoners in a manner both hospitable and intimidating, saying:

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<sup>314</sup>Guelzo, 281.

<sup>315</sup>Sparks, 267.

<sup>316</sup>Coddington, 484.

<sup>317</sup>Sparks, 267.

Prisoners, you are here now in my charge; quite a large number of you: I guarantee to you the kindest treatment the nature of the case will permit, so long as you conduct yourselves in a becoming manner. If, however, there should be any attempt, upon your part, to escape me, woe be unto you. My splendid cavalry is at hand armed & ready for action, & in numbers almost equal to your own, & in case of any disturbance among you, they shall be ordered to charge you, cutting & slashing right & left, indiscriminately.<sup>318</sup>

After nightfall, Patrick sent the prisoners south to the army depot at Westminster, Maryland.<sup>319</sup> These were the first of many prisoners whose transfer would be overseen by Patrick. In his 4 October 1863 report of “captures from the enemy during their raid in Pennsylvania, in June and July, 1863,” Patrick recorded a total of 754 officers and 12,867 enlisted men in captivity. They had been transported to Fort Delaware, David’s Island in New York, West’s buildings in Baltimore, and government hospitals in Gettysburg, Chester, and Harrisburg in Pennsylvania and Frederick in Maryland.<sup>320</sup>

Patrick spent Saturday 4 July moving around the battlefield and surrounding area, “busy gathering men from their places of retreat.” Making his way as far as the edge of town, he was “fired at by the Sharp shooters & just missed their fire.” On Sunday, with Army Headquarters reestablished on the Baltimore Pike, he was “ordered by Gen. Meade to go into the town & make arrangements with responsible parties for the burial of the dead & Securing of the property on the battle field.” Patrick was disgusted at how intent the local populace was to scour the battlefield for property to sell back to the army. Since all property on the battlefield, even that which was abandoned, was still government

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<sup>318</sup>Earl J. Hess, *Pickett’s Charge—The Last Attack at Gettysburg* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 330.

<sup>319</sup>Sparks, 268.

<sup>320</sup>U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion*, Chapter 39, 224.

property, the provost guard warned civilians on the battlefield not to attempt to carry off government property, including weapons, clothing, foodstuffs, or any other government property. Patrick was finally required to ask for assistance from the Pennsylvania militia to drive off the scroungers. Patrick's assistant quartermaster, Henry Boyden Blood, was assigned to the task, which he executed mercilessly. Blood's enthusiasm in arresting civilians found in possession of federal property quickly made him one of the most hated men in the area.<sup>321</sup> Lieutenant Waters Whipple Braman, of Patrick's 93rd New York Volunteer Infantry, described the aftermath of the battle in a 5 July letter to his uncle, reflecting that "the citizens are doing all they can for the wounded, every barn, house, and tent is a hospital, and the smell which arises from the battlefield is sickening and intense."<sup>322</sup> On 6 July, "starting the Cavalry on all the roads & over the Battle field, to pick up Stragglers & prisoners, wounded, from the Rebels," Patrick was summoned a few miles beyond Gettysburg. Confederate Major General Isaac Trimble, wounded in the battle and left behind as the Confederates retreated, had requested that Meade allow him to be "brought into town & his family sent for in Baltimore." Patrick made the necessary arrangements personally.<sup>323</sup>

On Thursday 9 July, as the Army of the Potomac pursued the Army of Northern Virginia, Meade announced his nomination of Brigadier General Andrew A. Humphreys

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<sup>321</sup>Guelzo, 470.

<sup>322</sup>Waters Whipple Braman, "War of the Rebellion 1861-1865—Letters Written While In the Service," New York State Military Museum and Veterans Research Center, New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs, [http://dmna.ny.gov/historic/reghist/civil/infantry/93rdInf/93rdInf\\_Braman%20Letters\\_1863\\_02.pdf](http://dmna.ny.gov/historic/reghist/civil/infantry/93rdInf/93rdInf_Braman%20Letters_1863_02.pdf) (accessed 3 November 2013), 182.

<sup>323</sup>Sparks, 268-269.

as his Chief of Staff, replacing Patrick's old nemesis, Brigadier General Butterfield. Humphreys, who aligned with Meade more than Hooker, had been a topographical engineer for more than 30 years, had a key eye for terrain. His opinions regarding Lee's defensive positions during the retreat would prove key to decisions made by Meade.<sup>324</sup> Patrick recorded that "Butterfield was struck by a spent piece of shell, in the back, at Gettysburg, fortunately for him & to the joy of all, has gone home."<sup>325</sup> Elements of the 93rd New York Volunteer Infantry and 8th United States Infantry, both Provost Guard units near South Mountain at that time, "were ordered to protect the mountain passes from raids and attacks in the rear, and furnished a heavy picket guard for that purpose," according to Lieutenant Robert S. Robertson of the 93rd New York.<sup>326</sup> The next day, Patrick wrote that "probably we shall make no attack until the enemy's plans are developed, as he holds a very strong position & is intrenching." As his provost guards stayed busy with "a great deal to do with prisoners," Patrick developed a better understanding of Lee's position. "They are short of supplies of all kinds & admit a loss of some 40,000 men," he wrote on 13 July, "but they are so strongly intrenched that we cannot attack them, with success."<sup>327</sup> When, on 14 July, it was learned that nearly all of the Army of Northern Virginia had crossed back into Virginia during the night, Patrick

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<sup>324</sup>Eric J. Wittenberg, J. David Petruzzi, and Michael F. Nugent, *One Continuous Fight: The Retreat from Gettysburg and the Pursuit of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, July 4-14, 1863* (New York: Savas Beatie, 2008), 240.

<sup>325</sup>Sparks, 270.

<sup>326</sup>Robert S. Robertson, *Personal Recollections of the War. A Record of Service With the Ninety-third New York Volunteer Infantry, and the First Brigade, First Division, Second Corps Army of the Potomac* (Milwaukee: Swain and Tate Company, 1895), 64.

<sup>327</sup>Sparks, 271.

wrote that the Army was “satisfied with what has been accomplished and believe, as we did at Antietam, ten months ago, that it is a mercy to us that the Rebs left as they did—We could not attack them safely.”<sup>328</sup>

On 22 July, as Lee made his way south through the Shenandoah Valley, the Army of the Potomac followed a parallel course east of the Blue Ridge Mountains through the Loudoun Valley. Meade saw a chance to sever Lee’s line of retreat, and sent the Third Corps under Major General William Henry French through Manassas Gap to strike Lee’s columns. French’s attack, executed too slowly to surprise Lee, failed to slow the Confederate retreat, and Lee moved his men south of the Rappahannock River.<sup>329</sup> For his part, Patrick noted that discipline among both officers and men in the Army of the Potomac was deteriorating, writing that, “Officers & men are turned thieves & robbers. The whole country is full of stragglers & the officers permit it and say nothing.”<sup>330</sup> The army, back in Virginia following the campaign in Pennsylvania, had fallen back upon its old habits.

Meade and Lee spent July, August, and the better part of September reconstituting the Army of the Potomac and the Army of Northern Virginia, respectively. After the Confederates sent Longstreet’s Corps west in September, the Union countered by sending Hooker in charge of the 11th and 12th Corps. Meade and Lee were left, in the words of David S. Sparks, “substantially reduced in strength, glaring at each other.” When, in

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<sup>328</sup>Ibid.

<sup>329</sup>Huntington, 204.

<sup>330</sup>Sparks, 275-276.



October, Lee tried to turn the right flank of Meade at Bristoe Station, Meade reacted in time to return the armies to their positions on the Rapidan and Rappahannock Rivers.<sup>331</sup>

Patrick wrote comparatively little in his diary during this time. Sutlers continued to place significant demands on his time and efforts, as he wrote on 31 August that the “new Orders in relation to Sutlers has given me an increase in labor & confinement.”<sup>332</sup> Officers of the Army of the Potomac, permitted to order items from sutlers only for themselves, had instead grown accustomed to ordering goods for any number of other personnel. General Meade’s concern regarding the situation resulted in the assignment of one sutler per unit, who was authorized to deliver goods ordered on lists signed by general officers and approved by Patrick. The sutlers, motivated by profit, found the new directives much more restrictive.<sup>333</sup> On 9 September, Patrick wrote that the “Sutler’s papers are a very great nuisance—They keep me tied up a large portion of the time & prevent me from doing any thing else.”<sup>334</sup> Patrick’s challenges with sutlers continued long into the fall. On 1 November, he wrote that “the matter of tobacco alone is causing more disaffection as the men are without it, and Sutlers not being allowed to come up.”<sup>335</sup>

The sutlers may have been restricted partly because of plans to move against Lee. On 7 November, Meade pushed south against Confederate positions north of the the Rapidan River at Rappahannock Station. Patrick and his Provost Guard operated near

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<sup>331</sup>Sparks, 280.

<sup>332</sup>Ibid., 284.

<sup>333</sup>Lord, 26-27.

<sup>334</sup>Sparks, 286.

<sup>335</sup>Ibid., 302.

Kelly's Ford,<sup>336</sup> taking charge of the 1600 prisoners captured before they could retreat south across the Rapahannock River, just north of the Rapidan.<sup>337</sup> Less than a week later, he wrote that there was, "a strong feeling rising up against Meade because he does nothing to keep up his Army or provide for its wants, outside of Ordnance, Subsistence, Quarter Master's Stores—I am trying to get him to act for the Supply of Sutlers' Goods, but thus far without Success."<sup>338</sup> Discussions between Meade, Humphreys, and Patrick did little to resolve the issues in Patrick's eyes, as on 17 November he concluded his diary entry by observing, "Meade does not yet move and I don't know much of his plans, but he seems to know little about his Army. He disgusts by his Apathy and indifference as regards his Troops."<sup>339</sup>

Meade did, in fact, plan to move against Lee one more time before the end of November. He had learned that Lee was building positions on the Confederate right flank perpendicular to the Rapidan River, and intended to hit Lee there in order to turn Lee's right flank or force Lee out to attack the Army of the Potomac. Meade began to move on 26 November, headed south over Jacob's and Germanna Fords. Patrick, instead of securing the fords ahead of the movement, wrote of moving "slowly and independently," likely focused more on straggler control than route security.<sup>340</sup> A portion of the Union Third Corps, under Major General William French, failed to move on time, resulting in

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<sup>336</sup>Ibid., 304-305.

<sup>337</sup>Wert, 318-319.

<sup>338</sup>Sparks, 306.

<sup>339</sup>Ibid., 308.

<sup>340</sup>Ibid., 313.

delays for the entire Sixth Corps.<sup>341</sup> “Meade was very angry (& justly) at this terrible delay & carelessness about roads on the part of the 3’ Corps,” wrote Patrick. “The Army was ordered to keep on the move all night, in order to get the position it would have had but for the bulk of the 3’ Corps, which (Meade said at the moment) would cost us a delay of 48 hours, & full notice of our movements to Lee.”<sup>342</sup> French’s misfortunes continued the following day, as a portion of his men became lost and fought at Payne’s Farm against Major General Edward Johnson’s Division. Johnson’s presence was proof of a quick reaction on Lee’s part.<sup>343</sup> Patrick recorded that French “wrote to Meade that he had repulsed the enemy & taken about 900 prisoners—He delayed the whole Army all day Friday, and did not get in position at all that day—he lost in killed, wounded & missing near 1000 men & his 900 prisoners dwindled down to 40!”<sup>344</sup>

On 5 December, it was apparent to Patrick that the campaign season had ground to a halt. “I think it is the intention of the General to remain here for some time—He & his Staff are getting floors in their tents & preparing to make themselves comfortable for the winter,” he wrote.<sup>345</sup> Patrick’s efforts returned once more to those of a Provost Marshal General for an army of occupation. On 8 December he discussed the “general relaxation of discipline, the disposition to plunder, burn & commit all sorts of depredations & vandalism, by our Troops” with Humphreys, noting that Meade “had taken no steps to

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<sup>341</sup>Wert, 320.

<sup>342</sup>Sparks, 313.

<sup>343</sup>Wert, 320.

<sup>344</sup>Sparks, 314.

<sup>345</sup>Ibid., 320.

check this conduct until the evil had become too great too be borne.”<sup>346</sup> The pattern seen earlier during the sack of Fredericksburg continued, as Patrick’s brigade-sized Provost Guard was again overmatched in maintaining discipline without the support and attention of unit commanders from company to corps level in the army. On 23 December he wrote that “I have been exceedingly busy all day, with matters connected with the trade of the Army—I have had the Oyster business in hand, it having been referred back to me by Gen. Meade.”<sup>347</sup> It was not until 2 January that Patrick was to open the bids for the Army’s oyster contracting, when he was hopeful that his efforts with Baltimore’s Maltby and Company might successfully resolve the contracting issue. Oyster contracting, like control of sutlers, was charged to the control of the provost marshal in the army of occupation.

“Genl. Grant arrived here today around 3 o’clock and in the midst of a heavy rain,” wrote Patrick on 10 March. “He looks well, says he is in good health and has changed but very little since I saw him, except by 10 added years—he was very cordial & seemed much as I expected.”<sup>348</sup> Grant’s arrival heralded a new season, full first of planning and then of campaigning as he directed all Union armies against the Confederacy. Friction between Meade’s staff and that of Grant caused by the co-location of the commanders was soon apparent. This was recognized even by Patrick, who wrote on 17 March of “some trouble with Lt. Col. Cyrus B. Comstock, the Staff Officer (Sr.

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<sup>346</sup>Ibid., 321-322.

<sup>347</sup>Ibid., 324.

<sup>348</sup>Ibid., 347.

*Aide-de-Camp*) of Genl. Grant, on account of his being too big for his breeches.”<sup>349</sup>

Nothing more regarding his relations with Comstock is mentioned by Patrick. Tensions within the ranks of the senior commanders likely did little to assuage discipline problems in the ranks, as officers were more focused on jealousies and rivalries than on their own commands. April 1864 saw Patrick make arrangements regarding newspaper correspondents, sutlers and other traders, prisons, and reviews of his own provost guard prior to the coming campaign.<sup>350</sup> More time than usual was necessary for drill, as the troops under Patrick’s command had again rotated back to their parent brigades. For the coming campaign, the 3rd Pennsylvania Cavalry and Companies C and D of the 1st Massachusetts Cavalry would constitute the mounted portion of the Provost Guard, while the 68th and 114th Pennsylvania and 80th New York Volunteer Infantry Regiments made up the Provost Guard’s dismounted element.<sup>351</sup>

The Army of the Potomac moved south on 4 May 1864, as Grant drove Meade and his men against Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia, in what has become known as the Overland Campaign. Patrick and the Provost Guard shifted once again from focus on protection of civilian property and sutlers to combat support, especially straggler and detainee control efforts. Before the end of July, the armies clashed at the Wilderness, Spotsylvania Courthouse, the North Anna River, and Cold Harbor. “We start off with 15 days supplies and just as little baggage as we can get along with & be comfortable,”

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<sup>349</sup>Ibid., 350.

<sup>350</sup>Ibid., 351-362.

<sup>351</sup>Ernest B. Furgurson, *Not War But Murder: Cold Harbor 1864* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000), 261.

wrote Patrick on 3 May.<sup>352</sup> At the end of the following day, he noted that “Meade & Grant are encamped close by and in fine spirits.”<sup>353</sup>

Things changed on 5 May, as Warren’s Fifth Corps came in contact with Lieutenant General Richard Ewell’s Second Corps of Lee’s Army. Patrick’s Provost Guard was busy that day in the rear of Warren’s lines, driving stragglers forward. They did much the same for Major General Winfield Hancock’s Union Second Corps on 6 May as Hancock was “fighting furiously” on the Union left.<sup>354</sup> Patrick wrote of a resumption of fighting the next day, along with a general movement of the whole army to the left. On 7 May, Meade called upon Patrick to steady the men of the 22nd New York Cavalry when their commander, Colonel Samuel J. Crooks, was unable to do so. With the assistance of his 3rd Pennsylvania Cavalry, Patrick did so, also relieving the New Yorkers of some of their horses.<sup>355</sup> From 4 through 7 May, Patrick left Brandy Station, crossed the Rapidan at Gold Mine Ford, and guarded prisoners while on the march, some 25 miles.<sup>356</sup> During the following week, near Spotsylvania Courthouse, Patrick wrote of heavy losses in all ranks to both sides. After getting no sleep the night of 8 into 9 May, Patrick’s first efforts the morning of the ninth involved the movement of prisoners some three to four miles in the rear to trains awaiting them there. He then wrote that “I have to

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<sup>352</sup>Sparks, 364.

<sup>353</sup>Ibid., 367.

<sup>354</sup>Ibid., 368.

<sup>355</sup>Gordon C. Rhea, *The Battles for Spotsylvania Court House and the Road to Yellow Tavern May 7-12, 1864* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), 26.

<sup>356</sup>U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion*, Chapter 48, 279-280.

record the sad fate of John Sedgwick (Sixth Corps) who was killed dead this morning by a Sharpshooter–It has caused universal grief and sadness.” 11 May was consumed with efforts to move the prisoners to Washington. 12 May saw Hancock’s Second Corps deliver even more prisoners, bringing Patrick’s total to 3,000, including Confederate Major General Edward Johnson, a pre-war acquaintance who was glad to see Patrick.<sup>357</sup>

From 8 through 20 May, the provost guard continued to guard prisoners while marching to Fredericksburg, another 70 miles.<sup>358</sup> As the Army continued south, Patrick’s concerns switched from prisoners to Union soldiers marauding civilian property. On 22 May, when he “had a Culprit” he brought to Meade, Patrick was unable to obtain help, as “Grant had expressed himself strongly against protecting these people at all, and I learned that his Staff, were, themselves, engaged in sheep stealing, fowl stealing and the like, for I caught the men at it whom they sent. . . . I feel very despondent about Grant’s notions of discipline.”<sup>359</sup> From 21 to 26 May, Patrick reported marching 25 miles to reach Wright’s Tavern.<sup>360</sup> After crossing the North Anna River during the last week of May, Patrick and his provost guards followed Army Headquarters to Cold Harbor, arriving 2 June. From 27 May to 2 June, Patrick reported marching 50 miles, across the Pamunkey River to camp at Parsley’s Corners.<sup>361</sup> On 3 June, Patrick wrote that “There was a tremendous assault along the lines (to judge from the noise) & (Gen. Francis C.) Barlow’s Division of

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<sup>357</sup>Sparks, 372.

<sup>358</sup>U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion*, Chapter 48, 279-280.

<sup>359</sup>Sparks, 375-376.

<sup>360</sup>U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion*, Chapter 48, 279-280.

<sup>361</sup>*Ibid.*

Hancock's Corps carried the Works, but there (were) no reserves, as usual, and the whole lot failed with a loss (Meade told me) of 8000 men on our side, we taking but 300 prisoners."<sup>362</sup>

It was at Cold Harbor that Patrick, operating under orders from Meade, meted out discipline on a correspondent for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Edward Cropsey. Cropsey had earlier touched a nerve with Meade when reporting on the 6 May actions of the Army of the Potomac, insinuating that Grant's presence alone kept Meade from retreating back across the Rapidan River following the Battle of the Wilderness.<sup>363</sup> Having just returned to the Army, he was detained by mounted provost guards, who delivered him back to Meade. After being subject to Meade's wrath, Patrick ordered him paraded around the camp on the back of a mule, seated between two placards reading, "Libeler of the Press."<sup>364</sup> Patrick noted on 8 June that Cropsey "was completely cut down—It will be a warning to his Tribe."<sup>365</sup> Unfortunately for Meade, the end result of the action was to sour his relations with the press for the remainder of the war. Any immediate satisfaction gained in Cropsey's banishment was soon outweighed by the long-term consequences of Patrick's zealous execution of Meade's orders. Following Cropsey's banishment, Meade's name was avoided in publication by nearly all members of the northern press, much to his consternation.

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<sup>362</sup>Sparks, 380.

<sup>363</sup>Tom Huntington, *Searching for George Gordon Meade: The Forgotten Victor of Gettysburg* (Mechanicsburg: Stackpole Books, 2013), 294.

<sup>364</sup>Cleaves, 253-254.

<sup>365</sup>Sparks, 381.



Patrick and his Provost Guard continued to follow the Headquarters of the Army south through the end of June and into July 1864. During movement, the Provost Guard operated behind the lines of march, apprehending stragglers and returning them to their parent units. On 20 June, after overseeing the hanging of a convicted rapist,<sup>366</sup> he wrote that “Ewell is somewhere, with his Corps, on detached service—Said to have gone up to the valley.”<sup>367</sup> On 6 July, Patrick was appointed by Grant as the Provost Marshal General of the Armies operating against Richmond, with the intent of regulating the Provost Guards of Major General Benjamin Butler and others.<sup>368</sup> The end of July found the Army of the Potomac around Petersburg, Virginia, planning to follow Major General Burnside’s Ninth Corps’ assault, at what became called the Battle of the Crater. Patrick wrote of 236 prisoners taken on 30 July, but followed up the next day with the observation that “there is much sadness and deep feeling in relation to the affair of yesterday.”<sup>369</sup>

Patrick performed his duties as the veteran of several years’ fighting. “It now seems tacitly, or openly acknowledged, that the time for carrying Richmond by ordinary Army operations ceased with the Peninsular Campaign of McClellan,” he wrote on 5 August, “That the time for carrying it by assault ended with the Burnside failure of last Saturday; that all we can do now, is to begin a regular system of works around both cities, so strong that a small body can hold them and wait for 100 or 150 thousand more

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<sup>366</sup>Ibid., 385.

<sup>367</sup>Ibid., 386.

<sup>368</sup>Ibid., 393.

<sup>369</sup>Ibid., 406.

men to blockade & starve out these cities—This is now our only resource and the sooner it is put into operation the better.”<sup>370</sup> Patrick and the Provost Guard reverted from the straggler and detainee control operations necessary in support of maneuver to a greater focus on protection of civilian property and sutler oversight required in static, occupational operations.

On 10 August 1864, Patrick filed his official reports regarding the units conducting provost guard operations during the Overland Campaign. Patrick wrote that his 3rd Pennsylvania Cavalry, 68th Pennsylvania Volunteers, and 114th Pennsylvania Volunteers traveled with the Army’s Headquarters daily, clearing Guiney’s Bridge of Confederates in a skirmish there on 21 May. He reported that the 3rd Pennsylvania, often acting in front of or flanking the Army’s movement, “behaved with great coolness and judgment.” Patrick wrote of the 68th Pennsylvania’s work as headquarters prison guards, “by no means a light duty, and has given very general satisfaction in their performance of it.” His 114th Pennsylvania was “doing exclusively guard duty for headquarters camp and train.”<sup>371</sup>

As the Army of the Potomac settled into its lines at Petersburg, Meade tried to end the problems with illegally provided alcohol permanently. His General Order Number 36 of 15 September 1864 made both the importation and the sale of alcohol near army camps illegal. Patrick, widely known as a teetotaler, actually encouraged Meade to allow hard cider, which was abundant in Virginia. He believed the cider to be healthier for the men than what he termed “Commissary Whiskey.” According to historian Steven J.

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<sup>370</sup>Ibid., 410-411.

<sup>371</sup>U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion*, Chapter 52, 272-273.

Ramold, “A soldier from the Fourteenth Indiana opined that commissary whiskey was little more than ‘bark juice, tar-water, turpentine, brown sugar, lamp oil, and alcohol’ with perhaps only a small amount of sarcasm.” Meade was not convinced, and added hard cider to the list of banned alcoholic beverages.<sup>372</sup>

In historian David S. Sparks’ words, “with the fighting falling into a routine the interest of the Army and of Patrick turned to politics.”<sup>373</sup> Upon hearing of George B. McClellan’s impending nomination for President, Patrick wrote that, “It is believed that a great political Revolution is at hand, to be consummated this year.”<sup>374</sup> His support of McClellan did not go unnoticed, as Patrick was mentioned by name in a list of officers McClellan considered trustworthy in a letter dated 21 September 1864 to his lifelong friend and political supporter from New York, Samuel L. M. Barlow.<sup>375</sup> Just weeks before the election, McClellan was to describe Patrick to Barlow as “perfectly sound.”<sup>376</sup> Patrick wrote that his vote was cast for McClellan “because I cannot vote for Lincoln—and because I believe it will most surely, bring us to peace.”<sup>377</sup> On the night of the election, Patrick considered the day “an important one in the destinies of our country.”<sup>378</sup> For all of his excitement and attention over the election in the fall, Patrick’s lone entry

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<sup>372</sup>Ramold, 166.

<sup>373</sup>Sparks, 408.

<sup>374</sup>Ibid., 418-419.

<sup>375</sup>Stephen W. Sears, ed., *The Civil War Papers of George B. McClellan: Selected Correspondence 1860-1865* (New York: Ticknor and Fields, 1989), 600-601.

<sup>376</sup>Ibid., 613.

<sup>377</sup>Sparks, 433.

<sup>378</sup>Ibid., 438.

afterwards was anticlimactic, as he wrote “although the Presidential Vote is given to . . . Lincoln, many believe that New York has gone for McClellan and Seymour,” as Patrick held out hope that Horatio Seymour, the Democratic candidate, would defeat Reuben E. Fenton in his home state’s election of its governor. Seymour, like McClellan, was defeated.<sup>379</sup>

Patrick’s diary reflects his preoccupation with Army matters to the rear of the front lines during the winter of 1864 and 1865. His focus on Thanksgiving Day was on the loss of the *James T. Brady*, a boat full of holiday supplies for the Army of the Potomac. “The ‘James T. Brady’ with another load of thanksgiving Truck for the Soldiers, ran aground at Jamestown, and has not yet come up,” he wrote. “The impression is strong that the Pilot grounded her intentionally and I am of the opinion that several of our Pilots, and Masters of Government Transports, are Secesh in their proclivities and ought not to be in our Service.”<sup>380</sup> He continued to oversee prisoners of war, writing on 15 December that he “had the fitting up of new Barracks on hand, for the men, examining in relation to the escape of two Rebel Scouts from the Guard House, last night by cutting thro’ the floor.” His examination was insufficient to rid his detention operations of concern, particularly with company grade officers in the Provost Guard, as he wrote the following night that “Capt. Leslie has done just as Capt. Scoville did—let one of his prisoners escape—I am perfectly disgusted with this neglect of duty—Genl. Meade may well find fault with me for it.”<sup>381</sup> The close proximity of the Union lines to those of Lee’s

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<sup>379</sup>Ibid., 440.

<sup>380</sup>Sparks, 444.

<sup>381</sup>Ibid., 450.

army made it easier for the hungry Confederates to desert. Those who entered the Union lines, up to eighty per day, were placed under the charge of the Provost Guard and interrogated by Sharpe and his men.<sup>382</sup>

In early January, Patrick and his men were “engaged in ferreting out some leaks in the way of passes.” He was concerned that there was “a great deal of money made out of the Sale of Genl. Grant’s Passes . . . from \$100, to \$125 each—Also money made among the Quarter Masters’ employees by hiding deserters.”<sup>383</sup> This continued in the weeks to come, as on 12 January 1865 Patrick recorded that his men “made a large number of arrests today, of Soldiers engaged in selling passes.” Arrests continued the following day, not for misuse of passes but for abuse of new recruits by the soldiers of the Reserve Corps detailed to guard them.<sup>384</sup> Instead of dealing with hundreds of detainees at a time, Patrick found himself engaged in disciplinary measures for individual soldiers as winter ground on. On 25 February he “had to overhaul a Soldier of the 5’ U.S. Cavalry for attempting to marry a girl while he has a wife already living in Falmouth.”<sup>385</sup>

In early March, Major General Meade notified Patrick that he was to be replaced as the Army of the Potomac’s Provost Marshal General, with the intent that Patrick would devote his energies to the same position he already fulfilled on Grant’s staff. Brigadier General George N. Macy spent the first half of the month with Patrick in an effort to understand the duties and responsibilities of the position. Patrick was formally

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<sup>382</sup>Fishel, 550.

<sup>383</sup>Sparks, 456.

<sup>384</sup>Ibid., 458.

<sup>385</sup>Ibid., 473-474.

relieved in orders dated 17 March 1865, and received a letter of endorsement from Meade the following day. In it, Meade wrote that Patrick did “not leave the Army by his Act, and that it was not initiated by him.” While it is not contained in the *Official Records of the War*, Patrick considered it “a Singular letter, and perfectly characteristic.”<sup>386</sup>

The opportunity to concentrate on one instead of two staff positions could not have come at a better time for Marsena Patrick. Spring of 1865 brought better weather to Virginia, and battle loomed. Grant worried that Lee would withdraw and attempt to move with General Joseph E. Johnston. According to Union Major General Andrew A. Humphreys, “There had been indications for some time past that General Lee would abandon his Petersburg and Richmond intrenchments for the purpose of uniting with General Johnston, then in front of Sherman, and General Grant was apprehensive this might be done before he was prepared for an effective pursuit.”<sup>387</sup> Lee would, indeed, attempt to resume a war of maneuver, as just over a week after Patrick left Meade’s staff, the Army of Northern Virginia made its last full-scale attempt to break the Union siege. Major General John B. Gordon’s Second Corps led the unsuccessful assault against Fort Stedman on 25 March.<sup>388</sup> Patrick recorded the capture of 104 officers and 2,467 enlisted.<sup>389</sup> In the week to follow, Grant sought to turn the western end of Lee’s defenses south of Petersburg, placing Major General Philip H. Sheridan in command of a force

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<sup>386</sup>Ibid., 476-481.

<sup>387</sup>Andrew A. Humphreys, *The Virginia Campaign 1864 and 1865* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1883), 316.

<sup>388</sup>Wert, 397-398.

<sup>389</sup>Sparks, 482.

consisting of his Cavalry Corps and the Army of the Potomac's Second and Fifth Corps. Sheridan's efforts were too much for the Confederate defenses at Five Forks on 1 April, and Grant's full assault along the length of the Petersburg defenses collapsed Lee's lines on 2 April.<sup>390</sup>

Patrick wrote of his receipt of 120 prisoners on 30 March, and sent what he termed "My Troops"—a portion of the Provost Guard—to Ninth Corps, where they were "engaged, as I understand, and behaved very handsomely" on 2 April. The move was possible partly due to a lack of straggler control operations, as Patrick recorded nothing regarding stragglers after the Petersburg breakout and pursuit west.<sup>391</sup> The successful Union assault on the Confederate lines prompted Grant to estimate some 10,000 more prisoners for Patrick and his men to secure. Seven thousand of those were accounted for the next day, according to Patrick, followed by another 4,000 by Lee's surrender at Appomattox on 9 April. Patrick himself was not at Appomattox, having remained at his headquarters in City Point, Virginia.<sup>392</sup> The 9 April surrender prevented those captured in the war's final days from the long road to a Union prison. George Sharpe, promoted from colonel to brigadier general in February, was present at Appomattox. He paroled some 26,000 men of the Army of Northern Virginia, the remnant of Lee's once powerful force after its retreat from Petersburg.<sup>393</sup>

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<sup>390</sup>Wert, 399-401.

<sup>391</sup>Sparks, 486-488.

<sup>392</sup>Ibid., 484-491.

<sup>393</sup>Fishel, 557.

On 10 April, Patrick wrote of the parole, stating that “Officers and men of Lee’s Command are to be paroled and return to their homes—This is all right.” On 13 April, Grant informed him that Major General Edward Ord was to command the post-war Department of Virginia, and that Patrick would function both as his Marshal and be in control of Richmond, much as he had earlier overseen Fredericksburg.<sup>394</sup> Ord would be replaced by the end of April by Major General Halleck, the former army chief of staff.<sup>395</sup> Patrick established residence in Richmond on 13 April, and the following day, 14 April, President Lincoln was assassinated.<sup>396</sup> Without units assigned under his command, Patrick ordered troops from outside the city, both for service with city marshals and as a reserve in the event of unrest following Lincoln’s assassination.<sup>397</sup>

Patrick’s efforts in the coming weeks focused on the efforts immediately necessary to assist the city of Richmond in its recovery. On 20 April, he cited concerns with “many matters of rent, lease etc. as well as these . . . claims etc. etc. There will also be a system of detective Police taken up.”<sup>398</sup> The following day, he spent an hour and a half with General Robert E. Lee, at Lee’s request. “We had,” wrote Patrick, “a very full

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<sup>394</sup>Sparks, 492-494.

<sup>395</sup>Nelson Lankford, *Richmond Burning: The Last Days of the Confederate Capital* (New York: Viking, 2002), 235.

<sup>396</sup>Sparks, 494-495.

<sup>397</sup>*Ibid.*, 496.

<sup>398</sup>*Ibid.*, 498.



and free exchange of opinions and views. . . . He is feeling sadly at the prospect before us. . . . On the whole I almost feel that our troubles are to come.”<sup>399</sup>

Patrick remained busy overseeing the recovery of Richmond. On 13 May, he wrote that “Ord has turned over to me the control of Negro affairs hereabouts, and of Suffering Inhabitants, in order to check the Subsistence of destitute persons.”<sup>400</sup> Later in the month, Patrick wrote of his concern over a heavy rain “washing away by the docks & markets, and doing a great deal of damage.”<sup>401</sup>

Unfortunately for Patrick, his efforts on behalf of the impoverished residents of Richmond made him a target of Radical sentiment following the assassination of President Lincoln.<sup>402</sup> Patrick could not bring himself to rationalize any mistreatment of the citizens of Richmond, writing that “I can never love these people very strongly, who are so bitter against the South.”<sup>403</sup> His compassion for his fellow man was well know, as General Grant wrote to Halleck, “Do you not think it advisable to relieve General Patrick? The machinery kept up in his duties is represented as heavy, and his kindness of heart may interfere with the proper government of the city.”<sup>404</sup> By 7 June, Patrick made up his mind to resign, writing in his diary that he was “disgusted.” Two days later, Major General John W. Turner was designated to replace Patrick. After visiting once more with

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<sup>399</sup>Ibid., 499.

<sup>400</sup>Ibid., 507.

<sup>401</sup>Ibid., 509.

<sup>402</sup>Warner, *General In Blue*, 362.

<sup>403</sup>Sparks, 507.

<sup>404</sup>U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion*, Chapter 46, 1244.

General Lee on 10 June, Marsena Patrick packed up his belongings, said his farewells to his staff, and departed for Fort Monroe by boat on 12 June 1865.<sup>405</sup>

Looking back over his tenure as the Army of the Potomac's Provost Marshal General allows for examination of Patrick's contributions as a whole. Dedicated to the conciliation of the American people, his efforts to protect civilian lives and property were a constant during his service to four different Army commanders. His contribution to the codification of subordinate provost marshal duties, established by orders on 29 November 1862, had a lasting impact until war's end. Patrick's establishment and oversight of his System of Secret Service, including his appointment of Colonel Sharpe as its Chief, provided intelligence at a level not previously seen and led to today's modern military intelligence systems. His provost guards, assigned on a rotational basis and without previous training in military law enforcement, prevented straggling when the army marched, apprehended deserters and returned them to their units, protected the civilian populace to the degree allowed by their relatively small number compared to the size of the Army, and safeguarded and transported enemy prisoners of war. Patrick's dedication to conciliation served him well in the administration of military law enforcement and was in keeping with President Lincoln's intent for the post-war South. Sadly, that same dedication contributed to his departure from the service after Lincoln's death.

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<sup>405</sup>Sparks, 515-516.

CHAPTER 5  
SIGNIFICANCE OF PATRICK’S SERVICE  
TO MILITARY POLICE TODAY

The Provost Marshal Corps and the Office of the Provost Marshal General were abolished just one year after the end of the Civil War. According to historian Robert K. Wright, Jr.,

Following the pattern set at the end of the Revolutionary War, the Office of the Provost Marshal General was discontinued in 1866. In fact, despite the appointment of Brig. Gen. Arthur McArthur as military governor and provost marshal general of Manila in the Philippines after the War with Spain in 1898, the creation of a permanent military police branch in the Army would not be seriously considered until the latter stages of World War I. Ironically, it was during this period of organizational neglect that the term ‘military police’ first came in vogue in Army circles.<sup>406</sup>

What enduring influence, then, does Marsena Patrick’s service as Provost Marshal General have on military police operations today? An examination of Patrick’s duties and responsibilities through the lens of the military police doctrine of today reveals a relationship and an evolution within the mindset of Army provost marshals and military police over the last 150 years.

United States Army Field Manual (FM) 3-39, *Military Police Operations*, was published on 26 August 2013. It lists three “Military Police Disciplines” and one “Military Police Integrated Function” that military police perform in support of Army and joint operations.<sup>407</sup> Each discipline or function is made up of several specific technical

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<sup>406</sup>Wright, 6.

<sup>407</sup>Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-39, *Military Police Operations* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2013), 3-2.

capabilities and tactical tasks. These capabilities and tasks echo the duties and responsibilities of Marsena Patrick and his Provost Marshal Corps during the Civil War.

The first Military Police Discipline in FM 3-39 is Police Operations. Its technical capabilities and tactical tasks include the performance of law enforcement and the conduct of criminal investigations.<sup>408</sup> The 29 December 1862 orders of the Army of the Potomac required Patrick to arrest suspected persons and trace out crimes and criminals.<sup>409</sup> Today's military police conduct law enforcement operations all over the world, from stateside garrisons to posts and forward operating bases overseas. Patrick and his Provost Guard fulfilled the same function for the Army of the Potomac, seeking to maintain the rule of law in the Civil War's Eastern Theatre, especially during periods of static occupation duty in Virginia.

A second capability and tactical task found within Police Operations today is the provision of straggler movement control.<sup>410</sup> Patrick and his men were busy throughout any movement of the army, "following up and flanking the march of the column with cavalry to prevent marauding and to drive up loiterers and stragglers," according to orders dated 29 December 1862.<sup>411</sup> Mounted Military Police teams and squads of today, in their armored Highly Mobile Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles and Armored Security Vehicles, provide support to the army by securing straggling individuals and vehicles today during army movements.

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<sup>408</sup>Ibid., 3-2.

<sup>409</sup>New York Times, "The Police of the Army of the Potomac, General Orders."

<sup>410</sup>Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-39, 3-2.

<sup>411</sup>New York Times, "The Police of the Army of the Potomac, General Orders."

A third capability and tactical task listed within FM 3-39 for Police Operations today is restoration and maintenance of order.<sup>412</sup> Modern military police restore and maintain order on military installations worldwide, both on Army garrisons in the United States and on overseas posts and forward operating bases. The Provost Guard of the Army of the Potomac was required to “preserve the order and discipline among troops beyond the limits of camp.”<sup>413</sup> Less effective at Fredericksburg, the Provost Guard was more successful after Hooker replaced Burnside and the army’s commanders focused more effectively on the discipline of their troops along with the Provost Guard. In doing so, Patrick and his men performed the same function within the Army of the Potomac that military police perform today.

The second Military Police Discipline in FM 3-39 is Detention Operations. Its technical capabilities and tactical tasks include the confinement of United States military prisoners and the conduct of detainee operations.<sup>414</sup> Military police today play a vital role in detention operations worldwide, providing security and oversight both to incarcerated Soldiers and to enemy personnel detained in combat. Patrick’s Provost Guard was employed in “receiving and examining deserters from the enemy, as well as soldiers, sent to their own command.”<sup>415</sup> Whether in contact with the enemy during maneuver operations or static near Petersburg later in the war, the Provost Guard handled tens of thousands of detainees, safeguarding them from the front to Union stockades in the north,

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<sup>412</sup>Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-39, 3-2.

<sup>413</sup>New York Times, “The Police of the Army of the Potomac, General Orders.”

<sup>414</sup>Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-39, 3-2.

<sup>415</sup>New York Times, “The Police of the Army of the Potomac, General Orders.”

far from lines of battle. Detention operations are one of the combat support roles played by Civil War Era Provost Marshals and their men, still being conducted by military police today.

The third Military Police Discipline in FM 3-39 is Security and Mobility Support. Its technical capabilities and tactical tasks include the conduct of movement support to mobility operations.<sup>416</sup> In “following up and flanking the march of the column with cavalry to prevent marauding and to drive up loiterers and stragglers,”<sup>417</sup> the men of Patrick’s Provost Guard performed much the same mission for the Army of the Potomac. In conducting movement support, military police today utilize Highly Mobile Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles and Armored Security Vehicles to perform route reconnaissance and main supply route regulation missions that Patrick’s mounted Provost Guard performed on horseback.

Field Manual 3-39 describes one integrated Military Police function, Police Intelligence Operations. Modern Military Police Soldiers are expected to perform its technical capabilities and tactical tasks while conducting Police, Detention, or Security and Stability Support Operations. Its technical capabilities and tactical tasks include providing support to situational understanding, collection of police information, conducting police information analysis, and the development of police intelligence products.<sup>418</sup> The Army of the Potomac, with Provost Marshal Marsena Patrick’s oversight of Colonel George Henry Sharpe’s Secret Service Department, established a link between

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<sup>416</sup>Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-39, 3-2.

<sup>417</sup>New York Times, “The Police of the Army of the Potomac, General Orders.”

<sup>418</sup>Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-39, 3-2.

intelligence and military law enforcement.<sup>419</sup> While the Intelligence Branch is a separate entity in today's Army, military police recognize their role in obtaining, analyzing, and developing police intelligence as they perform their daily missions.

In a 2005 briefing to General (Retired) Al Gray, the 29th Commandant of the United States Marine Corps, Major Mark M. Weber, an Army Military Police Officer serving on the Joint Staff, focused, at General Gray's request, on the role of the Military Police Corps in a Joint environment. Weber's briefing grew from his studies at Georgetown on how the Armed Forces of the United States should evolve in the twenty first century. His discussion with General Gray focused largely around stability and support operations in post-conflict environments, operations that Military Police Soldiers have since conducted throughout Iraq and continue to perform in Afghanistan. Marsena Patrick and his men conducted stability and support operations throughout Union-occupied territory in Virginia, in the Civil War. Mark Weber recognized that it took 160 years for military police to be established as a permanent branch of the Army during the Second World War.<sup>420</sup> Patrick and his Provost Guard were visible proof of the effectiveness of American military policing at the half way point between Washington's Marechaussee Corps and the 1941 establishment of the Military Police Corps as a branch of the Army.

The one aspect of Patrick's service that pervaded all that he did, and which is still relevant to military police today, is the spirit with which he accomplished his duties. The

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<sup>419</sup>Fishel, 287-288.

<sup>420</sup>Mark M. Weber, E-mail PowerPoint presentation to Jerome F. Koltz, 27 February 2005. Koltz personal collection.

humanity, character, and concern for the oppressed that Marsena Patrick displayed 150 years ago are the same traits so highly prized in Military Police Soldiers today. From responding to violent domestic disturbances in family housing areas on Army posts, to providing safety and security to detainees in combat, modern military law enforcement places a premium on compassion and integrity. As a Brigade Combat Team Provost Marshal in Iraq's Diyala Province in 2006, the author oversaw the operation of the brigade's detention facility. A local civilian, who spent a short time in the facility before being cleared and released, went back to his work with the local Provincial Reconstruction Team. Instead of being upset over his detention, he told the American officers with whom he worked that he had lived better during his time as a detainee than he did in town. His remarks were a testament to the professionalism of the Military Police Soldiers who worked 24 hours daily for 15 months, to care for the detainees under their charge. They displayed the same compassion and professionalism that Marsena Patrick required of his provost guards nearly 150 years earlier.

In a speech to Military Police Officers at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, on 6 August 2013, Military Police Corps Commandant Brigadier General Mark Spindler addressed the significance of the military police mission today, charging those present to maintain the mindset necessary to "preserve the fighting force."<sup>421</sup> That charge sums up the approach of the provost marshal and provost guard of the past and the military police of today. In preserving the fighting force of the Army of the Potomac, Brigadier General Marsena Patrick and his Provost Guard conducted police operations, detention operations, security

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<sup>421</sup>Brigadier General Mark Spindler, Military Police Commandant, Address to Command and General Staff College Military Police Officers (Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 6 August 2013).



and stability support operations, and police intelligence operations with a spirit of compassion and humanity which served as the basis for the Army's requirements of its Military Police Branch in years to come.

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