

*Historical Notes* to accompany letter dated:

08/14/62: 037

### *Historical Notes*

Cyrus Hardaway's letter home on August 14, 1862 continued to advise his family that a move by Berdan's Sharpshooters and the Army of the Potomac away from the Virginia Peninsula and back to Washington seemed imminent. In addition to the actual transfer of "a great deal of artillery," and "some troops," Hardaway appreciated the use of wooden (fake) artillery pieces designed to disguise the Federal army's real movements from the observant Confederates.

In addition to his perpetual, and amusing discussion of food and army cuisine, Cyrus Hardaway also evidenced a sophisticated awareness of the newest Federal military strategy and its already developing problems. After the *Seven Days Battles*, the Federal government had assembled a new 50,000 man army (Army of Virginia), from the troops that might have reinforced McClellan, and appointed General John Pope as its commander. Pope's orders were to move toward Richmond. Together Pope and McClellan's armies vastly outnumbered Lee but the problem for the Federals was in the execution of a joinder of the two armies. As was his style, McClellan could not, and would not, move quickly. When approached by Commander in Chief Henry Halleck regarding such a strategy, McClellan indicated that he needed supplies, men, and much more time. Convinced that the Army of the Potomac could make no progress from its Harrison Landing location, Halleck ordered it back to Washington by way of the Chesapeake. Once back in Northern Virginia, the two armies would be united and this new massive combined Federal force could move "on to Richmond."

General Robert E. Lee understood the situation perfectly and realized that the new combined Federal army would be an impossibly large force for his smaller Confederate army to defeat. So, while McClellan sulked and dallied at Harrison's Landing, Lee sent his most aggressive general, "Stonewall" Jackson to separately deal with Pope's new army. After a Confederate victory at Cedar Mountain, Lee detached the bulk of his army from McClellan and began a series of military maneuvers that are still studied by military strategists. Violating the basic rules of most military textbooks, he divided his forces, and then divided them again, sending 'Stonewall' Jackson off around Pope's flank. The end result of these complicated movements was the complete defeat of the new Federal Army of Virginia at the *Second Battle of Bull Run* (Manassas) in late August 1862. Few of McClellan's reinforcements for Pope ever arrived; the bulk of the Army of the Potomac was still several days away. After the battle, Pope blamed McClellan for his tardy arrival and the Union's second defeat at Bull Run (Manassas).

Hardaway's comments seem to clearly comprehend the Federal situation, "I think if Pope had been driven back we should have been up there with him by this time but as it is I do not think we shall hurry up very fast . . ." If a common soldier, such as Cyrus Hardaway, could perceive these failings of Union military operations, it can only be imagined the frustrations felt by Lincoln as he watched his "military professionals" further endanger the Union.