

*Historical Notes* to accompany letter dated:

11/12/62: 048

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Cyrus Hardaway's letter home dated November 12, 1862 was his first and only which clearly criticized and admonished his mother. It is difficult, even 135 years later, to not cringe at its harshness and tone. At best, it is an emotional response to the funeral like departure of General George B. McClellan and the depression felt by most soldiers of the Army of the Potomac. "Little Mac" was beloved by his soldiers. His removal was sudden, shocking, and supercharged with the politics of the Civil War. Lincoln decided to remove McClellan on November 5 but the popular Union general was not notified until November 7. Witnesses to his notification were completely surprised by this turn of events; McClellan himself, made an extraordinary effort to prevent anyone from seeing his amazement. He later commented, "I am sure that not the slightest expression of feeling was visible on my face."

McClellan's official comment was contained in his memorandum to all officers and soldiers of the Army of the Potomac dated November 7, 1862. "An order of the President devolves upon Major-General Burnside the command of the army. In parting from you, I cannot express the love and gratitude I bear to you. As an army, you have grown up under my care. In you I have never found doubt or coldness. The battles you have fought under my command will proudly live in our nation's history. The glory you have achieved, our mutual perils and fatigues, the graves of our comrades fallen in battle and by disease, the broken forms of those whose wounds and sickness have disabled-the strongest associations which can exist among men-unite us still by an indissoluble tie. We shall ever be comrades in supporting the Constitution of our country and the nationality of its people