

Mark A. Smith and
Wade Sokolosky

“No Such Army Since the
Days of Julius Caesar”

Sherman’s Carolinas Campaign
from Fayetteville to Averasboro, March 1865

ADVANCE EXCERPT



Savas Beatie
California

New materials copyright © 2017 by Mark A. Smith and Wade Sokolosky

Originally published in 2006 by Ironclad Publishing.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Smith, Mark A. (Mark Anthony), 1961- author. | Sokolosky, Wade, author.

Title: "No such army since the days of Julius Caesar": Sherman's Carolinas campaign from Fayetteville to Averasboro / Mark A. Smith and Wade Sokolosky.

Description: [Revised and updated edition]. | El Dorado Hills, CA : Savas Beatie, 2016. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2016038946 | ISBN 9781611212860 (alk. paper) | ISBN 9781611212877 (ebk.)

Subjects: LCSH: Sherman's March through the Carolinas. | Averasboro, Battle of, N.C., 1865.

Classification: LCC E477.7 .S64 2016 | DDC 973.7/38—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2016038946>



Published by

Savas Beatie LLC

989 Governor Drive, Suite 102

El Dorado Hills, CA 95762

916-941-6896

sales@savasbeatie.com

www.savasbeatie.com

Savas Beatie titles are available at special discounts for bulk purchases in the United States by corporations, institutions, and other organizations. For more details, please contact Special Sales, P.O. Box 4527, El Dorado Hills, CA 95762, or you may e-mail us at sales@savasbeatie.com, or visit our website at www.savasbeatie.com for additional information.

Proudly published, printed, and warehoused in the United States of America.

Dedicated to

Pvt. Benjamin Sarver, Co. F,
78th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry Regiment

Pvt. James Smith, Co. G,
169th New York Volunteer Infantry Regiment

Sgt. Lawrence M. Smith, Jr.,
Tank Destroyers, WWII

SSG John Sokolosky, 1st Bn. 244th Coastal Artillery
& 979th Engineer Maintenance Co., WWII

and to all patriots who have stepped forward to serve their country.

I offer neither pay, nor quarters, nor
provisions; I offer hunger, thirst'
forced marches, battles and death.
Let him who loves his country in his
heart, and not with his lips only, follow me.

—Giuseppe Garibaldi

Table of Contents

Preface and Acknowledgments

xiii

Foreword to the Savas Beatie Edition by Mark L. Bradley

xviii

Chapter 1: The Carolinas Campaign Begins

1

Chapter 2: Sherman Enters North Carolina

21

Chapter 3: Fayetteville Experiences the Hard Hand of War

47

Chapter 4: On to Goldsboro through Averasboro

62

Chapter 5: Hardee's Defense-in-Depth

88

Chapter 6: Sherman's Assault on the Third Line

120

Chapter 7: A Critical Analysis of the Actions from
Fayetteville to Averasboro

133

Appendix A:

Driving Tour From Fayetteville to Averasboro

147

Appendix B:

Order of Battle at Averasboro, March 15–16, 1865

167

Table of Contents (continued)

Appendix C:
Sherman's Logistic Concept for the Carolinas Campaign
175

Appendix D:
Averasboro Field Hospitals
191

Appendix E:
Janie Smith's Letter
203

Appendix F:
The Lost Gunners Quadrant
209

Appendix G:
Ensign William H. Hanks Letter
212

Bibliography
214

Index
223

List of Maps

Sherman's Carolinas Campaign	xviii
Sherman's Approach, March 1865	31
Sherman's Approach, March 10, 1865	39
Federal Forces Arrive, March 11, 1865	43
Battle of Averasboro, Situation about 10:00 a.m, March 15, 1865	63
Battle of Averasboro, Situation about 2:00 p.m, March 15, 1865	73
Battle of Averasboro, Situation 2:30-3:30 p.m, March 15, 1865	79
Battle of Averasboro, Situation 3:30-6:00 p.m, March 15, 1865	85
Battle of Averasboro, Situation about 6:30 a.m, March 16, 1865	89
Battle of Averasboro, Situation about 9:30 a.m, March 16, 1865	97
Battle of Averasboro, Situation 10:00 a.m, March 16, 1865	99
Battle of Averasboro, Situation 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m, March 16, 1865	105
Battle of Averasboro, Situation 1:00 p.m, March 16, 1865	117
Battle of Averasboro, Situation late afternoon, March 16, 1865	123
Fayetteville and Averasboro Driving Tour	146
Fayetteville Driving tour	151
Averasboro Battlefield Driving Tour	159
Union Logistics Sites in North Carolina	183

List of Maps (continued)

Oak Grove Shell Holes 198

List of Illustrations

Chapter 1

Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman	2
Maj. Gen. Henry W. Slocum	6
Bvt. Maj. Gen. Judson Kilpatrick	12
Maj. Gen. Joseph Wheeler	13
Lt. Gen. William J. Hardee	16
Gen. Joseph E. Johnston	18
Lt. Gen. Wade Hampton, Jr.	20

Chapter 2

Lt. Col. Frederick L. Childs	24
Lt. Samuel A. Ashe	27
Maj. Matthew P. Taylor	29
Gen. Johnston and Gen. Hardee Meet	37
Arsenal Battalion Departing the Post	41
List of Illustrations (continued)	

Painting of the Fayetteville Arsenal before the
Destruction by Sherman's Troops 45

Chapter 3

Tug "Davidson"	49
Lt. Samuel Storrow	50
Union Engineers' Ram Destroying the Arsenal	53
Maj. Gen. Lafayette McLaws	54

Chapter 4

Washington Artillery Departing Fayetteville	57
Co. E, 56th Illinois Infantry	60
Brig. Gen. William B. Taliaferro	65
Col. Alfred M. Rhett	66
Maj. James J. Lucas	67
Huguenin Sketch of the First South Carolina Artillery, First Confederate Defensive Position	68
Capt. Thomas Abram Huguenin	71
Capt. Theodore F. Northrop	75
Rhett's Capture	76
Col. William Hawley	82
Capt. David Oakey	83

Chapter 5

Capt. James I. Grafton	90
Bvt. Maj. Gen. Alpheus S. Williams	92
Lt. Col. Robert Detreville	94
Pvt. Arthur Ford	95
Scouts of the Army of the Potomac	100
Sgt. Guibert of LeGardeur's Battery and General Taliaferro	103
First Sgt. W. H. Brown, 102nd Illinois	104
Col. Daniel Dustin	107
Case's Brigade Entering the First Confederate Line	108
Lt. James L. Robertson, 1st SC Heavy Artillery	111
Brig. Gen. Stephen Elliott, Jr.	113
2nd South Carolina Infantry Rear Guard Action	115
Earnest J. Bachoven, 82nd Ohio Infantry	118

Chapter 6

Brig. Gen. William Vandever	126
Vandever's Brigade at the Ravine	127

List of Illustrations (continued)

Chapter 7

15th Battalion S.C. Heavy Artillery Colors 144

Appendix A

- Ruins of the foundation of the arsenal 148
 “Ghost Towers” 148
Pile of rocks from the arsenal showing Sherman’s
 engineers’ handiwork 149
XIV Corps Enters Fayetteville 150
 Market House looking east 150
Looking west from the Market House back towards the arsenal 152
 View from the west bank of the Cape Fear River of
 Sherman’s Left Wing pontoon bridge 152
 Bluff Church graveyard 154
Church where Hawley’s brigade camped evening of March 15, 1865 154
 Silver Run Creek skirmish site 156
Looking south at the front of the William Smith plantation house 157
 Looking north. This is the location of Kilpatrick and
 Hawley’s defensive line 157
 Attic of the Oak Grove plantation house 158
 Front porch of Oak Grove showing bullet holes 158
Looking east along the Confederate defensive position 160
 Looking south from the 1st Confederate line 160
 Chicora Cemetery 162
The 40-foot-deep ravine that Vandever’s brigade encountered 163
 Averasboro Museum 164
The Lebanon plantation house 165
 Black River crossing site 166

Appendix C

- Bummer 181
The Port at Morehead City 184

List of Illustrations (continued)

Army Supply Wagon 189

Appendix D

Union Hospital at Savage Station 192
Sherman Visiting Wounded at Oak Grove 194
Oak Grove's bloodstained floor 196
Surgeon Simon Baruch 200
Surgeon Ratliff P. Talley 202

Appendix E

Janie Smith 204

Appendix F

Lost Gunner's Quadrant 210



Preface and Acknowledgments

This is the story of a crucial phase of the Carolinas campaign, fought during the closing days of the Civil War. In some respects, it was the most remarkable campaign of the conflict. Soldiers on both sides battled not only each other but rains, flooding, swamps, isolation from support, and the scarcity of food and supplies. This is a story told, as much as possible, in the words of those soldiers. We have sought only to provide a narrative framework to hold their stories.

While this book focuses primarily on the maneuvering and fighting that occurred as the Union and Confederate forces approached their climactic clash at Bentonville, we recognize, where possible, Sherman's "secret weapon"—his engineers/pioneers. Their ingenuity made this campaign successful. It is noteworthy that, with the goal of keeping the army constantly moving, Sherman had instilled in his army the mindset that every man was an engineer/pioneer.

Sherman's troops were so successful in keeping his army on the move that Joe Wheeler's cavalry gave up felling trees in roadways in an effort to slow its advance, for the Union soldiers removed them in less time than it took to cut them down. To read more about the remarkable feats and accomplishment of Sherman's engineers, we recommend Dr. Philip Lewis Shiman's outstanding 1991 dissertation "Engineering Sherman's March: Army Engineers and the Management of Modern War, 1862-1865."

We have always been interested in the Carolinas campaign, although Wade has the greater interest because of his North Carolina roots. By contrast, Mark's interest developed by accident. Like most people, he initially focused on Sherman's March to the Sea, but as he read of the Carolinas campaign, it began to intrigue him more. When Mark was stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, in 1993, the Carolinas campaign came alive for him. The proximity of the

Monroe's Crossroads battlefield (which is actually on the grounds of Fort Bragg Military Reservation), Fayetteville, and the Averasboro and Bentonville battlefields attracted his attention, and he read a multitude of books and battle reports on the campaign. Mark L. Bradley's book *Last Stand in the Carolinas: The Battle of Bentonville* drew his attention to the preceding Fayetteville and Averasboro portions of the campaign. Bradley's use of firsthand accounts helped to make the campaign both personal and vivid.

In 1995, Mark Smith began writing and drawing maps on the battle of Averasboro, and he met Walt Smith of the Averasboro Battlefield Commission, whose group has made tremendous strides in preserving the battlefield. They discussed the two-day battle and shared information. In 1999, Walt Smith introduced Mark to Wade, who was also in the early stages of writing about Averasboro.

Wade focused his master's thesis, *The Role of Union Logistics in the Carolinas Campaign of 1865*, on Sherman's logistics during the campaign. While researching, Wade discovered information on a fascinating Confederate unit, the Arsenal Battalion, that seemed to contradict the conventional wisdom that the unit had evacuated Fayetteville in the face of Sherman's advancing army without firing a shot. He found that the unit engaged in actions west of Fayetteville and at Elizabethtown, which offers fresh insight to present-day students of the Carolinas campaign. Because of other commitments, Wade tabled this new information for later. Subsequently, Wade and Mark decided to join forces in telling the story of two critical aspects of the Carolinas campaign: Fayetteville and Averasboro.

Fayetteville marked the turning point in Confederate strategy—it was now time to stand and fight. In turn, the action at Averasboro set the stage for Bentonville, the largest battle of the campaign, where Gen. Joseph E. Johnston attempted to destroy one of Sherman's wings in one last attempt to even the odds for the dwindling Confederacy.

* * *

There are many people we would like to thank for helping us with this book. If you helped us and your name is not included here, please accept our apologies and know we are thankful.

We are grateful to Theodore P. Savas for agreeing to republish this revised edition of *No Such Army Since the Days of Julius Caesar* (the phrase a quote from General Johnston). The first edition has been out of print for several years, to

the dismay of many interested in the Carolinas campaign. Ted's team members at Savas Beatie are simply the best at what they do, and we are extremely pleased with the updated version. Developmental Editor Steven Smith's help made this a much better book, and Production Manager Lee Merideth was a joy to work with and an excellent task master. Quality maps is one standard for which Savas Beatie is well known, and for the maps in this revised edition we have Hal Jespersen to thank. His work ranks at the top when it comes to Civil War cartography.

There are many other people who deserve our thanks. We remain indebted to Eric Wittenberg, as his guidance, professionalism, mentoring, and most of all his friendship, helped us in our quest to tell the story of this portion of the important Carolinas campaign. Eric's tireless efforts and inspiration have made this study a quality product, and words cannot describe our deepest appreciation.

We also would like to extend our appreciation to Mark L. Bradley. We met Mark many years ago, and he has been a true friend. Mark Smith's first draft on Avasboro dates back many years, and Mark graciously and probably painfully read that early draft, which we refer to as the "Big-Chief-Tablet-and-Crayon" phase. We hope we have improved since then. We treasure his encouragement over the years and his insightful discussions. It was only fitting that he wrote the Foreword for this book.

To the many folks who helped us collect the resources for this study, thank you. Special thanks go to Bryce Suderow for his timely and in-depth researching, and Si Harrington of the North Carolina Archives for the help he gave and the time he took to read and provide excellent recommendations that improved the overall quality of this study.

No work of this nature would be complete without the help of local historians and curators. We extend special thanks to Walt Smith of the Avasboro Battlefield and Jim Greathouse of the Museum of the Cape Fear for all their support and information. Thanks also to the Phillip Byrd family, the former owners of "Oak Grove," who graciously opened their doors to us over the years and allowed numerous tours and photograph sessions. We are happy to report in this edition that the "Oak Grove" house has been meticulously restored under the careful hands of Ron and Jennifer Lewis.

We also wish to thank the following individuals for allowing us to publish material from family journals, letters, and histories: George R. Farr for Maj. Robert M. McDowell's diary; John DeTreville for Col. Robert DeTreville's photograph; Mrs. Vereen H. Coen for Maj. Thomas Huguenin's journal;

Charles and Richard Townsend for the Anthony Riecke narrative; Henry G. Fulmer, South Caroliniana Library for his assistance with the Frederick L. Childs Papers; and Israel West for Maj. Matthew Taylor's photo. Thanks in addition to Barry T. Dofelmire for graciously allowing us to use the image of Company E, 56th Illinois Infantry, a unit whose story is one of such horrible tragedy. Finally, Robert Magee who allowed to publish the Lucas's Battalion colors.

We owe a debt of gratitude to our friend Col. Darrell Combs, USMC (ret.), for his outstanding illustrations of some of the key events pertaining to Fayetteville and Avasboro. Darrell's interest stems from our long-term friendship and from the fact that his great-great-grandfather fought at Avasboro as a member of the 82nd Ohio Infantry, and he was killed several days later at Bentonville. A special thank you to the Bentonville Battlefield staff members, and especially Amanda Brantley and Derrick Brown, for all their assistance. To all those people who provided excellent support from the numerous libraries, historical societies, and museums too numerous to list—thank you.

We also owe a special thanks to Larry Strayer, Eric Wittenberg, and Bryce Suderow, who were all instrumental in gathering information on and providing photos of the daring Capt. Theodore F. Northrop, Kilpatrick's Chief of Scouts. Our thanks, too, go to Howard Allgood, Kenneth Cain, and Curtis Robertson, Jr. for their help with the map of Fayetteville.

None of this would have been possible without the help, love, and support of our families. Mark would like to thank his wife, the former Tracey L. Atkison, for her support, even as he forced her to read many drafts and trek around the battlefields. Mark is also grateful to his sons, Joshua and Benjamin, who helped in preparing the driving tour portion by bravely entering the sharp ravine on the third line, the obstacle which Vandever's troops struggled to negotiate so many years ago. They also tolerated Mark's many evenings on the computer working on this study. Mark would like to thank his mother-in-law, Ann W. Atkison, who taught him the basics of research, which greatly helped in this project. Finally, Mark would like to thank his father, Lawrence M. Smith, Jr., to whom he attributes his fanatical love of the Civil War. His numerous stories, talks, and trips to Gettysburg inspired Mark to learn more; or, as Union officer Joshua L. Chamberlain once stated, "to see where and by whom great things were done and suffered."

Wade wishes to thank his wife, Traci, for her patience and love in allowing him to pursue his passion in studying and writing on the Carolinas campaign.

Thanks also to his friend and former instructor at the U.S. Army's Command and General Staff College, Dr. William G. Robertson, who unknowingly provided him the inspiration to go through with this project. Finally, he wishes to dedicate this book to his late parents, John and Daisy Sokolosky.

Wade Sokolosky
Beaufort, NC

Mark A. Smith
Claysville, PA

Foreword to the Savas Beatie Edition

Ten years have elapsed since the publication of Mark A. Smith's and Wade Sokolosky's *"No Such Army Since the Days of Julius Caesar": Sherman's Carolinas Campaign from Fayetteville to Averasboro*. While this volume remains the definitive account of the operations that occurred in and around Fayetteville from March 11-16, 1865, that culminated in the Battle of Averasboro, co-authors Smith and Sokolosky decided to make some crucial additions to their study.

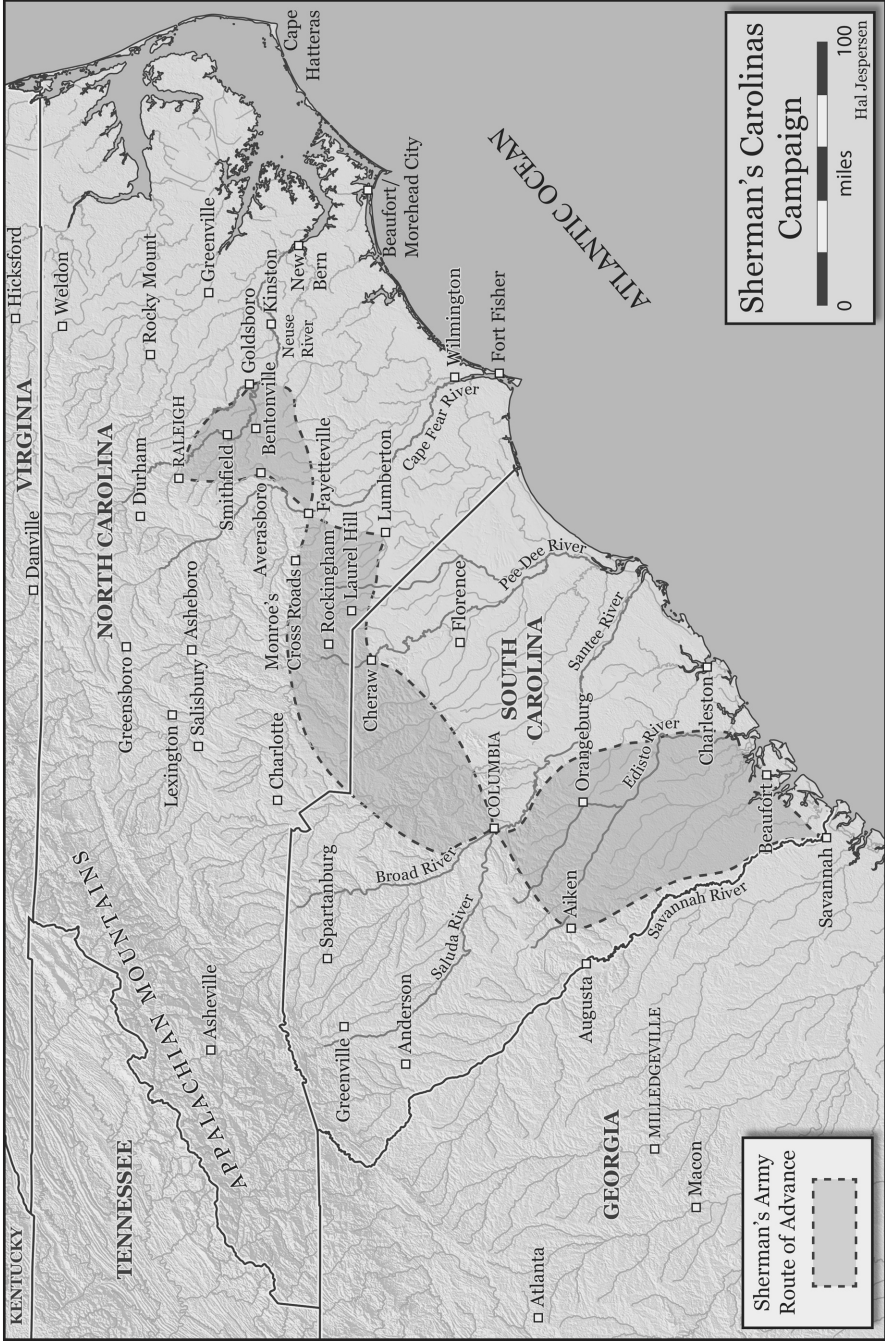
First, they enlisted the talents of military cartographer Hal Jespersen, who crafted a set of nineteen superb tactical maps. Second, they added some new soldier photographs, several of which appear in print for the first time. Third, they reprinted a letter written by a Confederate officer describing the damage to the machinery at the Fayetteville Arsenal wrought by the 1st Michigan Engineers and Mechanics. The letter provides a fitting backdrop to the story of "The Lost Gunner's Quadrant," about a long-lost keepsake recovered from the debris of the demolished arsenal. Fourth, they provided a multi-stop driving tour from the Museum of the Cape Fear at Fayetteville to the Averasboro battlefield. The self-guided tour provides readers with the opportunity to further deepen their understanding of the Carolinas campaign in general, and the Battle of Averasboro in particular.

As noted in the previous edition, the authors are not content to recount the Battle of Averasboro. Instead, they begin with Sherman's planning for the Carolinas campaign at Savannah, Georgia, and then trace his progress through South Carolina to Fayetteville, North Carolina. In addition, they provide a complete order of battle for the Union and Confederate forces that fought at Averasboro.

Smith and Sokolosky also offer two informative essays that appeared in the first edition. “Sherman’s Concept of Logistics for the Carolinas Campaign” reveals that the Union foraging detachments were just a part of the vast logistical infrastructure that supported Sherman’s army, and the authors explain how that supply system functioned. A second essay entitled “Averasboro Field Hospitals” tells the often neglected story of the sick and wounded, reminding us of the grim consequences of warfare. The Janie Smith letter is once more reprinted in its entirety, and deservedly so, for it is one of the most extraordinary documents to emerge from the war. Written when her memory of the Battle of Averasboro was still fresh, the eighteen-year-old Smith’s vivid prose makes her narrative spring to life.

In short, the expanded and updated edition of *“No Such Army”* will appeal not only to students of the Carolinas campaign, but also to readers with a more general interest in the Civil War.

Mark L. Bradley,
October 19, 2016
Stafford, Virginia,



Sherman's Carolinas Campaign

0 100 miles
Hal. Jespersen

Sherman's Army
Route of Advance

— — — — —

Chapter 1

“Where other people live we can, even if they have to starve or move away.”

—Maj. Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman

The Carolinas Campaign Begins

Major General William T. Sherman’s Carolinas Campaign spanned the final months of the Civil War, when the Confederacy faced a dire military situation. In Virginia, Gen. Robert E. Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia was fighting desperately to defend the Confederate capital of Richmond and the vital rail junction at Petersburg. In December 1864, Gen. John B. Hood’s Army of Tennessee was shattered at Nashville by Union Maj. Gen. George H. Thomas’s Army of the Cumberland, leaving it a shell of its former self. More recently, Sherman had presented the captured Atlantic seaboard city of Savannah, Georgia, to President Abraham Lincoln as a “Christmas gift.”

The fall of Savannah was a tremendous blow to Southern morale, but it was Sherman’s drive to the coast from Atlanta that had proved more damaging to the Confederacy’s economic war effort. Sherman’s march had sliced through the Confederate heartland and disrupted the flow of vital logistical resources that Georgia provided to the Southern cause.¹

1 Mark L. Bradley, *Last Stand in the Carolinas: The Battle of Bentonville* (Campbell, CA, 1995), 1-2; William T. Sherman, *Memoirs of W. T. Sherman by Himself*, 2 vols. (New York, NY, 1891), vol. 2, 181, 190, 219, 227-228, 231; Maj. Johnny W. Sokolosky, “The Role of Union Logistics: Sherman’s Carolinas Campaign of 1865,” Master’s Thesis (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2000), 3.



Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman
Library of Congress

Sherman was already in deep discussion with the Union army's commander-in-chief, Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, as to his next move. Grant's first thought was to transfer Sherman's army north to Virginia to join him in confronting Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. Grant wrote, "I had no idea originally of having Sherman march from Savannah to Richmond, or even to North Carolina."²

Grant, too, was concerned about the weather. The winter of 1864 had been one of the rainiest in memory. Grant knew that torrential rains had rendered most roads impassable and that the terrible weather would cause Sherman's army much trouble when attempting to maneuver.³

Sherman had other ideas. "Sherman realized that by marching his army through the Carolinas," commented historian Mark L. Bradley, "he would inevitably cut Lee's supply lines to the Deep South and induce hundreds—if not thousands—of Lee's troops from that region to desert." His march through Georgia had demonstrated the devastating effect an army could have on an enemy's transportation and supply networks. If Sherman marched his army through the Carolinas, it would eviscerate what little remained of the Confederacy.⁴

This argument convinced Grant, and on December 27, 1864, he instructed his trusted lieutenant to "make your preparations to start on your expedition without delay." Grant directed Sherman to "break up the railroads in South and

2 Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant*, 2 vols. (New York, NY, 1885), vol. 2, 529.

3 Sherman, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, 253, 259-261, 269; Sokolosky, "The Role of Union Logistics," 9; Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, vol. 2, 529.

4 Sherman, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, 224-225; Bradley, *Last Stand*, 2.

North Carolina, and join the armies operating against Richmond as soon as you can.”⁵

Such an undertaking was fraught with risk, but Grant had confidence in Sherman’s abilities as a military commander. This confidence stemmed from their close personal relationship, forged through several of the war’s most successful campaigns earlier in the war. Sherman served under Grant in some of the most significant clashes of the Western Theater, including Shiloh, the drives on Vicksburg, and Chattanooga, and emerged from these battles as a trusted subordinate who demonstrated the skills needed to conduct independent operations. Grant’s confidence was then fully vindicated by Sherman’s independent leadership in the Atlanta campaign, followed by the March to the Sea.

Success had not always come easy to Sherman. Following his graduation from West Point in 1840, he served 13 uneventful years in the army before resigning his commission to pursue civilian job opportunities. For the next six years, he tried his hand, unsuccessfully, at banking and law. In 1859, with the help of two former Army comrades, Braxton Bragg and Pierre G. T. Beauregard, Sherman secured a position as the superintendent of the Louisiana State Seminary of Learning and Military Academy (the forerunner of LSU). From this time in Louisiana plus his military tours in South Carolina and Florida earlier in his military career, the Ohio-born Sherman came to know, like, and understand Southerners. His insight into the southern psyche would serve him well in the coming campaigns.⁶

Following Louisiana’s secession in January 1861, Sherman resigned his superintendent position and returned to Federal service, accepting a commission as colonel of the 13th U.S. Infantry Regiment. His tenure with the regiment proved short-lived, and he soon found himself in command of a volunteer brigade at the July 1861 battle of Bull Run. His brigade was one of the few to hold steady during that unfolding Union fiasco. Thereafter, Sherman was transferred to the Western Theater, where he eventually came to serve under Grant. Over two years of hard-won Union victories, coupled with a few sharp tactical reverses, the two generals emerged as the Union’s most successful command partnership.

5 Sherman, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, 238.

6 Ezra J. Warner, *Generals in Blue* (Baton Rouge, LA, 1992), 441-444.

Following Grant's overwhelming victory at Chattanooga in November 1863, Congress reinstated the rank of lieutenant general, previously held only by George Washington, and the quiet Grant was promoted to that rank as commander of all Federal armies. President Lincoln summoned him to Washington, where Grant designed a grand strategy that was ultimately to win the war for the Union. The new general-in-chief intended to exert constant, unrelenting pressure on the limited resources of the Confederacy by campaigning on all fronts simultaneously, thereby preventing the Confederates from shifting forces to offset their numerical inferiority. Grant would maintain his headquarters with the Army of the Potomac, leaving Sherman to command all Union forces in the Western Theater.

Sherman proved up to the challenge. From Chattanooga to Savannah, his ability to wage war became more and more evident. With the capture of Atlanta on September 2, 1864, Sherman's reputation and popularity soared. More importantly, the love and admiration of the men who served under him grew steadfast.⁷ His subsequent march across Georgia to the coast, foregoing a supply line while living his army off the land, proved to be a devastating psychological blow to the Confederacy.

As he prepared to move north from the coast of Georgia through the Carolinas, Sherman set forth two key strategic goals, both of which would have serious consequences for Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. First, a march through the Carolinas would break the back of the Confederate logistics system, depriving the Confederacy of its ability to sustain Lee's army. Second, Sherman's imposition of "hard war" would have a serious effect on the morale of those Carolinians serving in the Army of Northern Virginia. Some units nearly dissolved overnight as anxious men deserted in hopes of reaching their families and homes that lay in the path of Sherman's army.⁸

In designing his expedition through the Carolinas, Sherman drew upon invaluable experience gained during the March to the Sea. He would cut loose from his army's latest logistical base at Savannah and subsist his army off the land as it moved. His concept for supplying his army was simple: "Where other people live we can, even if they have to starve or move away." As his army drove north, eviscerating the Carolinas, Sherman planned to link up with other Union forces, which would advance inland from the coast. These forces would merge

7 Ibid.

8 Bradley, *Last Stand*, 2; Sherman, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, 213, 238, 271.

at Goldsboro, a key railroad junction in the Tar Heel State. The combined armies would then be linked to the Union-occupied coast by rail.⁹

In January of 1865, Grant ordered an expedition against the Confederate bastion at Fort Fisher to support his trusted lieutenant's planned movement into North Carolina. Located at the mouth of the Cape Fear River, Fort Fisher protected Confederate blockade-runners attempting to penetrate the Union naval cordon and reach the critical port city of Wilmington. The defenders of Fort Fisher had already held out against a Federal amphibious force in December 1864, ineptly led by Maj. Gen. Benjamin Butler. This time Grant chose Bvt. Maj. Gen. Alfred H. Terry's Provisional Corps to make the expedition against Fort Fisher. Terry's command consisted of elements from his former XXIV Corps and units from the XXV Corps. Rear Admiral David D. Porter's North Atlantic Squadron, stationed offshore, would support Terry's expedition. If Terry could reduce Fort Fisher and close the Confederacy's last major seaport at Wilmington, Sherman would have a safe haven on the coast halfway between Petersburg and Savannah should he require one. More importantly, occupying Wilmington would enable Sherman to move reinforcements and supplies via the Cape Fear River as far north as Fayetteville. The river port town of Fayetteville thus became an intermediate objective for Sherman's invasion of North Carolina.¹⁰

In addition to force and logistics, Sherman's plan also employed deception. When he invaded the Palmetto State, Sherman planned to feint simultaneously toward Augusta, Georgia, and Charleston, South Carolina. In so doing, he would compel the Confederate high command—which included his old friends Pierre G. T. Beauregard and Braxton Bragg—to divide their already outnumbered forces to defend both cities. After he reached the interior of South Carolina, Sherman would turn his columns toward Columbia, the state capital, and, after its capture he would continue north. Upon departing South Carolina, and uniting with the forces from the coast, Sherman's next objective

9 Sherman, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, 263; Sokolosky, "The Role of Union Logistics," 10; *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 128 vols. (Washington, DC, 1880-1901), Series 1, vol. 47, pt. 1, 136. Hereafter cited as OR. All references are to series 1 unless otherwise noted.

10 Bradley, *Last Stand*, 4. Chris E. Fonvielle, Jr., *The Wilmington Campaign: Last Departing Rays of Hope* (Campbell, CA, 1997), 197-198, 331-332, 473-475. A detailed examination of the Wilmington Campaign goes far beyond the scope of this book. Fonvielle's superb study provides the most detailed examination of the campaign. Sherman, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, 258-259.



Maj. Gen. Henry W. Slocum

Library of Congress

would either be Raleigh, the Tar Heel state capital, or the important railroad town of Weldon. He would then be within a week's march of Grant's forces at Petersburg. Sherman wanted his army to be able to cooperate with Grant's final push in Virginia in the spring.¹¹

Sherman executed a combination of land- and sea-based movements designed to concentrate both wings of his army and his cavalry at strategic points on the South Carolina side of the Savannah River. During the March to the Sea, his army had moved as two separate wings, an arrangement that had worked well. Sherman intended to retain this organizational scheme for the Carolinas Campaign.¹²

Deployment by "wings" permitted a field commander to divide a large force into two separate columns, both focused on a single objective. The wings facilitated movement by relieving congestion along routes of march and, in the case of large armies such as Sherman's, expanded the ability to forage over a wider area. The parallel wings formation required ample terrain to maneuver, which is why both the Union Army of the Potomac and the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia had discontinued use of the formation early in the conflict. Another problem that would concern Sherman later in the Carolinas Campaign was the fact that a wings formation is vulnerable to a concentrated enemy. Therefore, it was imperative that the wings remain within a mutually supportive distance in the event that one of them made contact with a large enemy force.

In order to make certain that neither wing would outpace the other, Sherman imposed control measures on his commanders. Each wing commander adhered to a strict movement table that was adjusted daily based

11 Bradley, *Last Stand*, 2-4; Sherman, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, 225.

12 Sherman, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, 239-240.

upon that commander's reported progress. In this fashion, Sherman retained close control of his wings and ensured ease of concentration of his army if necessary.

Use of the wing formation required excellent communications, a highly trained army, and competent leaders. Interestingly, all of Sherman's major subordinates were rejects from the Army of the Potomac. The Right Wing, commanded by Maj. Gen. Oliver O. Howard, consisted of the XV and XVII corps, while the Left Wing, commanded by Maj. Gen. Henry W. Slocum, consisted of the XIV and XX corps. The cavalry, led by Bvt. Maj. Gen. Judson Kilpatrick, operated independently under Sherman's direct guidance. All told, Sherman had a combined force of over 60,000 campaign-hardened veterans "burning with an insatiable desire to wreak vengeance" upon South Carolina, which they blamed for bringing about the hated Rebellion.¹³

During the early weeks of January, the army's subordinate commanders made their designated movements under the most difficult conditions. Shortages of supplies and transportation assets, combined with poor weather, delayed Sherman's departure from Savannah. January's winter rains had flooded most of the low-country regions, raising the water levels of rivers and local tributaries, creating natural obstacles that either slowed or halted the troops altogether. The terrible weather conditions, and the havoc they wreaked on his logistics, delayed Sherman's departure by several weeks.¹⁴

Due to the delays Sherman encountered at Savannah, Terry captured Fort Fisher on January 15, 1865, prior to the main army's departure. Terry's success pleased Sherman, who understood its value to his logistical plans. "The capture of Fort Fisher has a most important bearing on my campaign," he wrote to Grant, "and I rejoice in it for many reasons, because of its intrinsic importance, and because it gives me another point of security on the seaboard." Sherman's ability to resupply his army either by wagon or rail from the coast or by utilizing the Cape Fear River increased his confidence and expanded the possibilities for his coming campaign in North Carolina.¹⁵

After the veritable destruction of John Bell Hood's army at Nashville, Grant had transferred Schofield's XXIII Corps to the North Carolina coast

13 Ibid., 268-269, 227.

14 John G. Barrett, *Sherman's March Through the Carolinas* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1956), 45, 47; Sherman, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, 255.

15 Sherman, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, 258.