

# Good example of essay on the importance of logistics during the civil war

[Government](#), [Army](#)



In war, important are well-seasoned and properly drilled troops; however, logistics, a science of maintaining and supplying an army, is about as important since it is due to well-timed nourishment, ammunition replenishment and transportation that army can retain its physical wellbeing and fighting capacity. The importance of logistics during wartime is buttressed up by the fact that strings of carts have been targeted by hostile sabotaging agents, attempting to unhinge supplying lines over the years, whether it be in times of Alexander the Great or Ulysses Grant. He who maintains army properly by factoring in proper maintenance stands an excellent chance of winning as compared to an opposing commander. The Civil War that broke between the democratic North and the slavery-based South in the 19-th century was a fierce and all-out war of attrition, stretching for 4 long years. Spreading havoc and dissension, tearing the USA apart, it gave the concept of logistics a particular new sounding and importance as no other war would have arguably ever done.

Logistics may be defined as the art of securing army movement and opportune supply with the help of administrative leverage. Along with supply logistics allows for evacuation, hospitalization, services and transportation. Provision as well as camping equipment and tackles were needed to wage war and succeed while to get all these items delivered they needed to be properly distributed among regiments, shipped and delivered to the place of military operations, which required physical efforts of thousands of workers, to say nothing of the necessity of guarding major railway hubs and roads to prevent military subversion that required additional troops. As much as provision plays a vital role in giving military advantage, it yields its positions

to weaponry and destructive power. In order to gain military superiority it is usually required that up-to-date destructive weaponry should be added to armory. Technological innovations created the necessity of new military strategies being developed, with additional novelties introduced into logistics. New approaches in supply and maintenance science made it possible for the North to replenish manpower, victuals and war-related equipment regardless of the need to make long-haul deliveries. Having as many as 4, 070, 000 white males against 1, 140, 000 males between the age of 15 and 40 as well as 20, 000 miles of railway against 9, 000 miles of that in the South possession, it was only a matter of bureaucratic logistical machine to get the job done.

Hence, historians believe Northern armed forces to have wrested victory owing to well-established logistics. This notwithstanding, in the wake of the Mexican War in 1848, both armies seemed to be expecting easy victory to come with little efforts; still, what they received was a supply issue as well as enormous casualties, to say nothing of the period, over which the Civil War spanned. Unlike their southern counterpart, Northern America industrial complex was booming around the time, generating larger revenue than South with cotton for its staple product did, which means big-scale military materials production and ammunition supply were of significant importance. Both new-researched technologies and large industrial capacity of the North made slavery adversaries the first to mass-produce high lethality cannon and rifles that allowed quick reloading and reduced barrel gunpowder residue clogging as well as increasing accuracy and hitting range. Per history evidence, the Northerners even came to build machineguns and submarines.

In order for this high technological weaponry to be delivered to the fields of battle, the Northerners would put the network of railroads to a good use. As a matter of fact, the American Civil War was the first war on the American soil to have military supply carried over the extensive territory. Evidences point to both the North and the South taking advantage of the “ iron horse” for logistical purposes with the difference that the North managed to squeeze out the maximum use out of railways. Had the South seen a logistical value of railway connection, without failing to take control of private and public transportation networks, showing arguably little-to-no management and logistics skills, the USA history would be different. If truth be told, the North used to face those same collapse threatening transportation issues. However, efficiently and quickly did they take steps by cooperating with the US Military Railroad, integrating transport under the supervision of logistics professionals, such as John Garrett, Thomas Scott, and William Smith in order to arrange special movements of troops as well as materials. The word is that the Northern states would have hardly succeeded in waging a war against the Southerners, saving that they had harnessed railroad potential. In terms of providing logistic services railroads were second to waterways only as a means of transportation. To keep supply uninterrupted there was a huge project implemented by the USA Military Railroads’ Construction corps under Herman Haupt, a well-known civil engineer. The 1863 Tennessee bound railroad movement from Virginia was said to be a fine sample of what all-level railroad civilian personnel and military men cooperation would look like. Being an essential means of

transport communication that it was, railway was called an indispensable tool of warfare. Transportation operation involved as many as 17 regiments that had arrived from New York.

Since the northern states carried the war on a hostile territory both literally and figuratively, they are largely credited with having let logistics evolve into what it is these days. Quartermasters did a lot to keep the Union army fighting capacity, performing housing and foraging duties. Vulnerable and often destroyed was railroad due to the Confederacy military sabotage, which created a plethora of supply-related problems. In doing so, those to have seceded from the Union only for them to shape a belligerent opposition would oftentimes attempt to derail much-needed lines of supply and terminate the land mastery of the North in terms of the “ scorched land” tactics. All the North had left to do by then was repair the destroyed roads being forced into guarding along the most important of tracks to avoid disruption.

At the same time, it is not that the Confederation had no logistic planning due to a quicker access to resources; it is that it largely failed. It did exist and was applied by the southern authority, but then again, disproportionate industry, which segments were mostly occupied by cotton agriculture, generating the better part of the revenue, being coupled with the ever-increasing possibility of territorial takeover, put a serious strain on army supply. Limited resource available were not replenished, much less properly managed. Not only transportations system losses but also marine blockade was what produced logistic setbacks. Still, it was only after the final stage of war unfolded that the Confederacy surrendered. The expert argument is that

logistic problem must have been anything but a reason for military failures of the South that was significantly outnumbered from day one.

The original idea was for the Union army to lure the Confederates into the open space where the number advantage as well as artillery superiority could have come into play. General Robert Lee is said to have started the war of attrition, rather than facing the hostile army in a frontal bayonet collision, causing Ulysses Grant to introduce countermeasure, such as attrition and total war, which implied the application of all the resources accessible. The strength of the Confederate army faded as compared to that of the Union, leading to multiple victories. Even then the army of the Northerners had hard times fighting their adversaries to conduct trench warfare, demanding that a bigger number of attackers be sent to get them dislodged from their ditches; however the days of resistance were already counted. General Sherman, in turn, tried to avoid fighting the army of the South in pitched battles by using supplies and logistical exhaustion to harass the enemy.

Attrition naturally could not but make it necessary permanent and intense supply of ammunition and provision as both were melting at a rapid pace. It was only their quick replenishment via railroad supply that gave the Northern states the upper hand in the strife against slavery condoning Southern counterparts. All the attempts of cutting the channels of supply as well as intercepting land shipment never were a success. Speaking of logistical miscalculations of the South, there was more to it than that.

Mobilization was at its worst, stumbling from the beginning, putting the then inherent American unpreparedness for war on display. This is not to say that

the Southerners were the only to experience preparation and supply issues at the beginning of the conflict. Lincoln was being very vocal about troops not be provided for as efficiently as they were enlisted. Rarely were military men well-rigged, clothed in appropriate uniform and, more importantly, well-nourished. To see a full picture one needs to add to the list such important campaign items as tents, sewing needles, buckles, blankets, to name a few that were far from being in abundance.

The lack of uniform alone caused plenty of confusion on the battlefield since it was difficult to differentiate between soldiers; hence, mobilization campaigners had nothing else to do but stop recruiting efforts for the time being, which took its toll on the combatants and the overall death toll. Not all the regiments were successful enough to have medication to treat the wounded. As may be easily deducted from the abovementioned facts, what created serious problems were difficulties other than food supply. For the record, the early stages of war used to see provision delivered by means of railways, wagon trains as well as water routes. Though delivered on a regular basis, the amount of the ration consumed left much to be desired, failing to prevent scurvy, with 22 ounces of flour or bread, 16 ounces of hardtack biscuit, 12 ounces of bacon, and 20 ounces of fresh or salted meat included in soldier's daily diet.

Ammunition and food were not the sole priorities of logistics, forasmuch as the wounded required immediate evacuation from the battlefield to be cured at hospitals. Interesting fact about the War Between the States is that major battles were conducted in immediate proximity to railroads that depleted army resources would be easily replenished since distancing from the source

of resources would cause the amount of provision and the number of wagons to be increased dramatically. With every extra kilometer away from the transportation route, more soldiers were getting hungry, if not starved. Overall, logistics played a crucial role in the course of the Civil War, helping the North secure a much needed victory over the slave-owning South. Food and ammunition supply as well as the evacuation of the wounded became possible due to proper logistical calculations and the application of railway and marine connections. Coupled with the abundance of financial supply and human superiority logistical planning made it possible for the army of the North to abolish slavery by defeating their militant opponents.

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