Spies and espionage of the civil war

ASSIGN BUSTER

The American Civil War was one of greatest tragedies ever to happen to our great nation. The highly underestimated war, lasting from 1861 to 1865, resulted in slightly over one million deaths, approximately 3% of the population nationwide. This bloodshed consisted of not only soldiers, but children, women, slaves, and families. Considered to be the bloodiest event ever to happen on American soil, the effects of the Civil War have continued to alter our nation. Some argue that it is the singular, most horrific occurrence in all of America's history due to the idea that it was " brother killing brother". The family of the United States was split down the middle, separating the " slavery" branch from the " freedom" branch. The blue Union soldiers fired at their grey Confederate counterparts on a monthly basis. Most modern Americans could never imagine this kind of violence in a " brotherly" setting like the soldiers of the war experienced. A much more relatable experience is the arguing and secrecy in a sibling relationship. The contemporary family dynamic is accustomed to brothers and sisters going behind each others' backs, manipulating their parents and trying to gain the " favorite child" award. In this aspect, today's American families can relate to some actions that took place in the Civil War. Secrecy and manipulation played a large, underrated role in the war through spies, covert missions and espionage. The undercover scene of spies in the Civil War changed the course of some significant battles, therefore changing the course of the entire war itself.

Both the Union and the Confederacy utilized the weapon of spy work. The North, armed with more men, more weapons, and more resources, didn't rely upon espionage as much as their Southern counterparts. In the Confederacy,

the lack of a large army full of willing participants resulted in the need to " cheat" their way around such a disadvantage. At the start of the war, neither side was equipped with a formal military intelligence agency. In fact, a true surveillance organization (funded by the government) didn't appear until years after the conclusion of the Civil War with the creation of the U. S. Secret Service. Provided this absence of a spy association, before the start of the war many spies performed covert missions as " free-lancers", meaning they often went solo and without any back-up on missions. These free-lance spies performed their duties solely for the purpose of self-initiative; they had no orders from an authority to carry out a duty. Eventually, the South realized the necessity for a covert organization and capitalized on the spy industry, getting a head start on their Northern counterpart. Washington D. C., 60 miles south of the Mason-Dixon Line, became the headquarters for the Confederacy's spy network. The split nation's federal capital, full over Southern sympathizers, was approached by Virginia governor John Letcher as he mapped the plan for a secret system of espionage. Through his vast knowledge of the city, Letcher set up a network for Confederate spies that stayed unknown to the Union for months. Titled the Confederate Signal Corps, this organization " operated the semaphore system used for communicating vital information between armies on the field" (" Spies"). Letcher recruited the best in the business to be involved in this institution during its infancy. West Point graduate, Thomas Jordan, and prominent Southern socialite and widow, Rose O'Neal Greenhow, were chosen to serve in the Signal Corps and perform some of its first covert communications. Greenhow would continue to go on and become one of the South's most effective spies, while Jordan became a general for the Confederate States

Army. As the war progressed on, this Corps became more devoted to the underground messages needing to be transferred between the generals, politicians, and spies. Management of the border-crossing missions fell under the control of Baltimore lawyer William Norris and his newly-formed Confederate Secret Service Bureau. His operatives would travel into the North and over the Atlantic to capture information about Union tactics and armament plans and transport coded messages to other spies. Southern agents could easily assimilate in the crowded Northern cities, so they never feared being caught or even suspected. The bureau also handled the " Secret Line", which consisted of the Confederate couriers that relayed information between headquarters (Washington D. C.) and Richmond, Virginia. Messengers would cross the Potomac and Rappahannock Rivers to deliver their reports to Southern officials stationed outside of the federal capital. The Confederate bureau also supervised the trans-Atlantic communications with Europe for weapons and agents. This initiative to establish an undercover spy society launched the South into a long-time relationship with espionage, while the North eventually played catch-up.

Though the Confederacy had a multiple month head start on them, the Union finally got into the spy game with the introduction of Allan Pinkerton. Originally a detective in Chicago, during the first few months of the war, Pinkerton began operating directly for Union General George B. McClellan, chief General of the Army of the Potomac. The bond between these two was displayed when Lincoln summoned McClellan to Washington D. C. the general placed Pinkerton as head of intelligence operations for the Army of the Potomac. In mid-1861, these operations became titled the U. S. Secret

Service with Pinkerton at the command. The counterintelligence network also declared its headquarters at Washington D. C., while operatives spied on the Southern activities through undercover work in Richmond. The Union spies weren't as daring and adventurous as the Confederate spies, so most of them covertly stayed in Richmond and didn't dare go farther south. Unlike their Southern cohesive complement, the North remained very decentralized the entirety of the war. Many major generals and every President Abraham Lincoln had their personal detectives which reported directly to them. So even though Pinkerton's operation was called the " U. S" Secret Service, it really consisted of his reports and surveillances for McClellan. Other Union spies that worked with a specific general included Lafayette C. Baker with Lieutenant General Winfield Scott, William Alvin Lloyd with President Abraham Lincoln, and Colonel George H. Sharpe with Major General Joseph Hooker. Even with all these working operatives, they never decided to join forces for a combined, Union intelligence corporation.

There were always two dark horse threats in the espionage world of the Civil War - women and slaves. Both the Confederacy and the Union utilized many female spies in the process of collecting information and surveillance tips. These women would flirt and socialize with the other side's generals, wooing them until they revealed confidential plans. Plus, women were much underrated in Civil War society, so they weren't seen as a large threat. The Southern women, however, were much more notorious and daring in their deeds than the Northern women. For many years, female agents dominated the intelligence missions of the South and provided the majority of crucial military information. On the flipside, the Union's relied more on the word of

escaped slaves than the word of their female operatives. On the quest for freedom, slaves in the South would flee to the North. Southern generals and politicians, viewing the blacks as inferior, never feared speaking openly about confidential information in the presence of slaves. With knowledge of Confederate plans, the slaves would make a break for the Union and relay their news to Northern officials. In fact, most of the significant military intelligence supplied to the Union officers throughout the war actually came from runaway slaves. The lesson to be learned here is never doubt the underdog.

" Little Rose" and Rose O'Neal GreenhowFemale Southern spies gained acknowledgement and fame through their daring exploits, never-ending persistence, and unbroken dedication. A prime example of this is renowned Confederate spy Rose O'Neal Greenhow, often called " Rebel Rose". Orphaned as a child, Greenhow went to live in her aunt's boarding house in Washington D. C., and thrived in the capital's social world. Ironically, the boarding house where she grew up was the Old Capitol, which was soon turned into a massive prison, and eventually she would return there as the Union's proudest captive. Beautiful, lively, and popular, she gained connections with politicians, generals, and other socialites throughout the city. In the 1830s, she met and eventually married Dr. Robert Greenhow. After the birth eight children, the passing of her husband, and the close friendship made with John C. Calhoun, Greenhow readily began her spy work for the Confederacy. As the few first weeks of the war passed, she transferred information along the Secret Line to Thomas Jordan in Richmond. Greenhow's shining moment came early when she supplied information to

General Beauregard about the Northern advance on Manassas in mid-July, 1861 (Farquhar). She heard word from Union generals of the Federal army's movements and took action immediately. Sewing a ciphered message of ten words into a piece of silk wrapped around a package, Greenhow hid the letter in the hair of her courier Betty Duvall. Duvall was soon riding to relay the package to Beauregard. Once the message was received and the rout of the Northern army uncovered, the Confederates were able to prepare themselves for the Civil War's opening battle at Manassas. The South would go on the win that battle through a heavy wave of reinforcements from General Joseph E. Johnston and Colonel Thomas J. Jackson. Later on, Confederate President Jefferson Davis and General Beauregard " honored her [Greenhow] for her contribution to the rout of the Northern army in this opening conflict of the Civil War" (Farquhar). This attention from two powerful, Southern commanders attracted Union detective Allan Pinkerton. Still fully aware she was being watched, Greenhow continued on her covert missions definitely. She was soon arrested on August 23, 1861. Trapped within the confines of her house, Greenhow was under constant surveillance by sentinels and Union troops. A little more than a week later, more convicted Southern women transferred into " Fort Greenhow", so attention on Rebel Rose diminished. Always working, Greenhow managed to continue communicating with the outside world, including a letter about her in-home oppression to William H. Steward that eventually was published in a newspaper. In early 1862, Fort Greenhow closed and Rose was transferred with her 8-year old daughter " Little Rose" to Old Capitol. In that building, Greenhow defended herself against charges of espionage while in a hearing and successfully continued to inspire Southern efforts through her defiance.

A full trial and additional hearing were deemed unnecessary, so in March of 1862 Greenhow walked out of the Old Capitol with Little Rose in tow, " draped in a Confederate flag" (Farquhar). Upon her return to Richmond, Greenhow was praised as a hero. Eventually, President Jefferson Davis got her back into espionage duties by sending her on a mission to Britain and France. There, she met with Napoleon III and Queen Victoria to raise vital assistance for the Confederacy. While here, Greenhow published her memoir My Imprisonment, and the First Year of Abolition Rule at Washington. After about a year, Greenhow boarded the Condor on her return home. She was carrying $2000 in gold. While nearing the North Carolinian coast, a Union gunboat pursued them onto a sandbar. Unwilling to surrender, Greenhow and two other passengers stole away on a rowboat, which eventually capsized. It is believed that she drowned from the weight of the gold around her neck. A day later, Greenhow's body was recovered onshore and she was buried with full, military honors by Confederate officials. Rose ONeal Greenhow

The beauty herself - Belle BoydRebel Rose was not alone in the dedicated effort to supply the Confederacy with information. " Another famous southern belle-turned-Confederate spy", Belle Boyd went down as one of the most infamous Confederate agents. From a young age, Boyd was under watch by many Union surveillance operatives. At age 17, she shot and killed a Union officer that drunkenly entered her family's home, in Martinsburg near Harpers Ferry, to tear down Confederate flags. Though she was immediately arrested, Boyd was soon acquitted of all charges and set free. In a continuation of assisting the South, she wrote messages to Confederates

about the nearby Federal troops, whose movements she could readily observe. Information in these messages also came from the Federal officers themselves, whom Boyd charmed into spilling confidential plans. However, youth and beauty comes with stupidity. Boyd " made no attempt to use a code or cipher or even to disguise her handwriting" (Boyd) and was eventually re-arrested and set free again. Just like the previous occasion involving arrest, she continued her surveillance work and remained active by carrying messages between important Confederate figures. At this point, wary Union officials forced her to move to Front Royal, Virginia with family. While here, Boyd's shining moment came during " Stonewall" Jackson's Shenandoah Valley campaign. On May 23, 1862, Jackson's army was fast approaching her home of Front Royal. Through eavesdropping on Union General James Shields army's meeting and flirtations with other Union generals, Boyd had all the information Jackson needed to secure a Confederate victory. She knew the movements of the Federal armies, the strength of each army in the Shenandoah Valley, and the retreat plan for those in Front Royal was to flee to Winchester and burn bridges along the way, eventually joining with General Banks's force. As the firing began, Boyd ran to the Confederate line to deliver the message. Yes, she ran under fire from both sides to Jackson's army, narrowly getting hit by rifle balls as they zipped past her. Once arriving at the line, her information was transferred from an officer to General Stonewall himself, and soon the Confederates secured a victory. Though the depot building was burnt to the ground, they caught up to the escaping Union army and saved the bridges from a similar fiery death. For her extreme bravery and dedication to the Confederate cause, Boyd received the Southern Cross of Honor and personal props from

Stonewall Jackson. Her daring exploit earned her much attention from the Union War Department, and on July 29, 1862 she was arrested by a detective from the United States Secret Service (Boyd). By the next day, Boyd's new home was the Old Capitol Prison in Washington D. C. Though she was only there for a month, Boyd made an immediate impact on the current prisoners there. During an interview with chief of detectives Lafayette C. Baker, she publically retorted "'if it is a crime to love the South, its cause, and its President, then I am a criminal… I would rather lie down in this prison and die, than leave it owing allegiance to such a government as yours'" (Boyd). Throughout the rest of her stay at the Old Capitol, Boyd was showered with applause and gifts from her fellow inmates. She was released to Fort Monroe in Virginia, but was arrested once more after being discovered behind federal lines. Imprisoned once again, Boyd was released after three months and continued her spy work. While attempting to smuggle Confederate papers into England in 1864, she was arrested again. Before returning to prison, Boyd made her escape to England to hide out from Federal detectives. After a period of time, Boyd made an attempt to return to the states on a blockade-runner; it was captured by a Union naval vessel. A naval officer by the name Samuel W. Hardinge, one of her capturers, and Boyd eventually got married in England until Hardinge returned briefly to the United States. In the fleeting time he was in America, Hardinge was arrested for suspicious activity and assisting Boyd in her escape. Shortly after his release, he died. All the while, Boyd was in England making a career off acting on stage and publishing her book Belle Boyd in Camp and Prison. Beautiful Belle Boyd eventually died in 1900 in Wisconsin, where her grave lies today. Belle Boyd

David Owen Dodd: " Boy Martyr of the Confederacy" Not all Confederate spy stories are as lengthy and riveting as the stories of Rebel Rose and Belle Boyd. One of the most short-lived and saddening stories of the Confederacy's espionage world is that of David Owen Dodd, a 17-year-old that was hanged as a Confederate spy illegally in Northern territory. Dodd, born November 10, 1846, lived his childhood in Lavaca County, Texas, until the family moved to Little Rock, Arkansas to be close to his sister's school. Dodd soon had to drop out of school due to malaria, but took a job at the local telegraph office and learned Morse code. Dodd grew up in a pro-South household, so when the Union occupied Little Rock, the Dodd family retreated behind Confederate lines (" David"). Soon, Dodd's father sent his son back to Little Rock for business matters, which required Dodd to obtain a pass from Confederate General James F. Fagan. While Dodd stayed in Little Rock with his aunt, Susan Dodd, many of the teenage girls grew fond of him, especially Mary Dodge. The Union troops took attention to the obvious relationship building between Dodd and Dodge; they were wary of Dodd's Confederate affiliations and Dodge's pro-South opinion. On December 29, 1846, Dodd left Little Rock to spend the night at his uncle's house. Union guards of the city took his pass, expecting Dodd not to return. Little did they know that Dodd planned to come back the following morning, so when Dodd was questioned by Union patrols the next day, he was without a pass. Dodd's form of identification was his birth certificate, which was bound in a small leather notebook and informed that he was a minor. They discovered " a page with dots and dashes", which one of the Union officials easily deciphered as " exact information about Union troop strength in Little Rock" (" David"). Dodd was immediately suspected as a Confederate spy and arrested. In Little Rock

Arsenal, the prison where he was incarcerated, Dodd was asked multiple times by Union General Frederick Steele to reveal the name of the Union traitor that supplied the information of the army's strength. Though offered freedom for the name, Dodd would not talk. Therefore, on January 8, 1864, David Owen Dodd, still seventeen, was hung at St. Johns', his former school. He was charged with being a Confederate spy and betraying the Union government. Whether it was his height, weight, or issues with the rope, onlookers witnessed not an immediate death, but the slow strangulation of a good-looking, popular youth for over five minutes. It was recorded that many Union troops and witnesses became sick. Soon after his killing, General Steele sent Mary Dodge and her father back to their original homestead of Vermont. It remains unknown whether Dodd was actually a Confederate spy with a Morse coded message for undercover rebels, or if he was just a poor soul in the wrong place at the wrong time. No matter the answer, Dodd's tragic execution inspired many in the South and gained much sympathy from those who straddled the Union vs. Confederacy line. David Owen Dodd was rightfully titled the " Boy Martyr of the Confederacy".

http://emergingcivilwardotcom. files. wordpress. com/2011/10/david-dodd. jpg

Sarah Emma Edmonds as a man

Sarah Emma Edmonds as a womanThough not as numerous within the Union network of espionage, female spies did exist in the North. One of the most infamous of these few females was Sarah Emma Edmonds, the woman known mainly for her crazy transformation to obtain information in Confederate camps. Born in Canada, Edmonds lived in the far West. Once

word traveled west that war had erupted, however, Edmonds packed up everything and went east to volunteer as a field nurse for the Union. She experienced First Manassas and McClellan's Peninsular Campaign first hand, which shocked her into the reality of war. Later, at the Battle of Yorktown, witnessing the burial service of her childhood love inspired Edmonds to abandon nursing. With sorrow in her heart and anger in her mind, Edmonds volunteered to serve as a Union spy. After getting her life-threatening mission approved by Union General Chaplain, the transformation into an African American man began. Donning contraband clothing, a thick layer of silver nitrate to dye her skin black, a black wig, and a heavy accent, Edmonds started her journey to the rebel pickets in Yorktown, Virginia. After being picked up by a band of slaves carrying provisions to the nearby camps, she soon assimilated herself into the black community in the rebel picket. With the freedom to roam around the fortification at night after tirelessly working the first day in the camp, Edmonds was able to sketch all the mounted artillery on a piece of paper she hid in her shoe. On the second day, she heard that Confederate General Lee was to arrive in Yorktown to inspect the Yankee fortification and that a combined force of Lee and Johnston presented an army of 150, 000 strong in and around Yorktown (Edmonds). While supplying some officers water that second night, Edmonds overheard a man perfectly describing the nearby Federal picket and all of McClellan's position to some Confederate generals. She recognized the man as a newspaper dealer who stayed around the Federal camp about once a week. Shocked and worried, Edmonds made sure to alert Chaplain of this undercover South operative once she returned to the safety of the Union. Even in her shock, Edmonds comprehended that the rebel sharpshooters

were to target and kill a certain " Lieutenant V" on his visit to the picket line (Edmonds). With this information, Edmonds was content to leave and supply her newfound knowledge back to her commanders. The next night, she luckily was forced to replace one of the black guards on the night shift of the post. Equipped with a rifle, Edmonds was left alone at the post. She eventually slipped into the forest under the cover of darkness and made her way back to Union lines. The next morning, she delivered her report to General Chaplain and General McClellan and successfully concluded one of the riskiest operations in espionage history. http://upload. wikimedia. org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/e/e6/Sarah_Edmonds_lg_sepia. jpg/200px-Sarah_Edmonds_lg_sepia. jpghttp://gaggingonsexism. files. wordpress. com/2011/06/images-32. jpeg

Policeman turned spy, Timothy WebsterAs if to one-up their Confederate counterparts, more and more Union operatives began to undertake ridiculously dangerous missions. America's first double agent, Timothy Webster, moved from his homeland of Britain to Princeton, New Jersey. After maintaining a job as a policeman for a few years, Webster was introduced to Allan Pinkerton, and the two immediately became close friends. It was Pinkerton that suggested Webster to go into the detective business. Convinced that espionage was his calling, Webster traveled to Richmond undercover as a secession advocate. Pretending to be a courier for the Confederate's Secret Line, he gained the trust of Judah P. Benjamin, then the Confederate Secretary of War (" Spies"). Benjamin entrusted Webster, a " pro-secession" kind of guy, with a series of documents for the secessionists in Baltimore. Taking a detour, Webster reviewed the papers with Pinkerton

and his associates before heading to Baltimore. Still unsuspicious upon his arrival, Webster heard snippets of some pro-South radicals, properly called the Sons of Liberty, planning to assassinate President Lincoln while he switched trains in Baltimore on his way to the inauguration in 1861. He reported this information to Pinkerton, who successfully rerouted Lincoln, therefore probably saving his life. The following year, Webster became ill with rheumatism on a mission to Richmond. Worried and wanting information, Pinkerton dispatched agents Lewis Pryce and John Scully to locate Webster behind Confederate lines in Richmond. While in the search, the two operatives were captured and eventually spilled the beans about Webster's double identity. Providing this information, Pryce and Scully were released while Webster was hanged. On April 29, 1862, the first double agent in America also became the first person to be executed on espionage charges in the Civil War (" Timothy"). http://upload. wikimedia. org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/b/b6/TimothyWebster. JPG/220px-TimothyWebster. JPG

Secret Unionist, Elizabeth Van LewIf pretending to be a secessionist for a couple months and making some Confederate sounds difficult, try being a Northern sympathizer and advocate in the middle of Richmond, Virginia. A pro-North woman by the name Elizabeth Van Lew thrived and survived in General Lee's backyard. Born in Richmond, Van Lew was educated at a Quaker boarding school in Pennsylvania, reinforcing her family's abolitionist ideals. On her return to her hometown, she strongly opposed slavery and secession, opposing the population of Richmond's mind-set. Her friends, neighbors, and associates celebrated the early Confederate families as Van

Lew secretly cringed. Throughout the span of the war, she relayed information to Union officers, supplied food and to the Federal prisoners of war, helped the prisoners in escaping back to the North, and conducted a spy network from her house. After the First Manassas in July of 1861, Van Lew and her mother took the opportunity to begin caring for the prisoners of war. Locked away in the infamous Libby Prison, the terrible conditions and lack of sanitation caused despair and hopelessness among the men. With her high social status, Van Lew and her mother were permitted to bring food, medicine and books to the imprisoned men. This brought much negative attention, causing the Richmond upper class to shy away from them. Angered and inspired, Van Lew began passing information to and communicating with the prisoners, getting some of them transferred to hospitals for interviews and medical help. She also hid some of these prisoners while they planned an escape route home. One of the escapees informed Union General Benjamin Butler of Van Lew's efforts. Impressed, Butler asked her to become an official Union spy, and Van Lew soon became the " chief source of information about Richmond" (Lineberry). She began sending reports to Butler on January 30, 1864, when she informed him of the transfer of prisoners from Richmond to Andersonville Prison in Georgia. The raid on that shipment was unsuccessful due to a Northern traitor warning the Confederates of the raid. Van Lew's second dispatch was much more successful than her first. The freeing of the prisoners came from within the prison itself; they had dug a tunnel under the street. On February 14, 1864, about 100 Union officers escaped Libby Prison through the tunnel - they recaptured less than half of the escapees. Federal operatives were waiting outside Richmond to assist the recently escaped officers back home due to

Van Lew's warning. Later, on March 1st, a raid was sent to Richmond to set the rest of the prisoners free. The mission, let by Colonel Ulric Dahlgren and General Judson Kilpatrick, was highly unsuccessful. Most of the men in the skirmish were captured, while Dahlgren was killed. Initially buried in a grave, Dahlgren's body was soon uncovered and mutilated for the public to see once it was proven the raid was on a continued mission to assassinate President Jefferson Davis. With her connections and trusty agents, Van Lew discovered Dahlgren's new grave, recovered the body and returned it to his family. By June of 1864, five stations in and around Richmond relayed information through twelve undercover agents, handpicked by Van Lew, to the Union. Later on, Union General Ulysses S. Grant declared Van Lew as his most reliable resource in Richmond throughout the war (Lineberry). Though she got personal gratitude and money from many Union generals after Grant captured Richmond in April 1865, Van Lew was an iconoclast in Richmond's society. She was without any money and any friends. Things got better once Grant became president in 1869; she was appointed to postmaster of Richmond and held the position for eight years. Eventually, Van Lew was replaced and lived off donations from wealthy families in Boston whom she helped in the war. Until her death in 1900, the once prosperous and popular Elizabeth Van Lew lived off the money of others in the city that hated her. http://4. bp. blogspot. com/-e-qqPq4sKJU/UJEydh8fgvI/AAAAAAAACUQ/Nn1ky_N5y2Q/s1600/van+lew. jpg

Though each and every spy, undercover agent, and operative had their own personalized style of sending information and surveillance, the general idea

about transferring secret messages remained the same: keep them secret. A popular method to this was the usage of a cipher or code. A cipher is a written system of code in which letters are replaced with other letters according to a key word. Throughout the Civil War, the cipher that appeared most was Morse Code. Contrary to belief and the actual title, Morse " Code" wasn't a code, but a cipher. In codes, single, meaningless words replace words or entire phrases from the original message. Ciphers contain an exchange of individual symbols for every letter, so there are many more characters to encipher than there are to encode. Anyways, advancements were made on the Morse Code in just years after its first debut in 1837, when it transmitted a message over 1, 700 feet of wire. Just seven years later, in 1844, a message was made from Washington D. C. to Baltimore, approximately 40 miles. An epic switch came to America's coding society with the publication of Edgar Allen Poe's " The Gold-Bug", a short story that explained " how any simple substitution cipher can be solved by using the frequency of letter occurrence as a means for revealing the hidden message" (Stern). Poe's pamphlet unleashed a wave of cryptography in America, inspiring many young soldiers on both sides of the Civil War to utilize ciphers and codes. People began developing their own ciphers to deliver confidential information across border lines without the fear of outside forces discovering their plans. Many of these new methods were adaptations of older, code languages, such as Vigenére, or Vicksburg Code to Confederate spies. The Confederacy favored this Vigenére for its military dispatches, and came up with a giant array of key words for elaborate combination ciphers. Others were completely original ciphers, such as the Major Albert J. Myer's " little figures of men" in his groundbreaking book Manual of Signals.

Other operatives strayed completely away from the entire coding world. Elizabeth Van Lew communicated her dispatches to General Butler and General Grant through using a special ink that appeared when soaked with milk. Initially clear, chemicals within the ink would react when placed in contact with milk, so the inked message would go from transparent to black. Rose O'Neal Greenhow used the tactic of innocence and concealment when she sent her female courier, Betty Duvall, with a coded, ten-word message to General Beauregard hidden in her hair. Another example of a hidden, secret message is the Special Order 191 found by one of Union General McClellan's scouts in early September of 1862. A box of cigars was discovered containing all of Confederate General Lee's plans in his Maryland campaign, which consisted of the epic but tragic Battle and Antietam. Lee's battle plans and movements were written in plain old English, making that box the luckiest find of McClellan's life. If the message was coded and they couldn't decipher the message, the Army of the Potomac couldn't have been as prepared as they were. That's why it was important for secret messages to be coded - so they stay secret! On the occasions that a report couldn't be ciphered due to time constraints, some would resort to just writing the words backwards. Later in the war, a Union telegrapher came up with the ingenious idea to not only send a backwards message, but also in " garbled phonetic spelling" (Stern). If you couldn't get a message