

Volume 10

Number 001

Stonewall Jackson and Friendly Fire -

I

Lead: In May 1863, during the Civil War, Stonewall Jackson, one of the most able generals, north or south, was mortally wounded by friendly fire. It was not that unusual a circumstance.

Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: Friendly fire (or casualties inflicted by your own side) happens in most combat situations. It is a consequence of warfare and can be very demoralizing. In the heat of battle, correctly distinguishing

between friend and foe historically has been difficult.

Until the advent of spotter airplanes and radio communication in the 20th century, problems of communication on the battlefield required leaders to be very close to the actual fighting, to actually see what happening in order to guide the tactical disposition of their units. For their number, Civil War Generals suffered higher combat casualties than enlisted men – a General's chance of being killed in battle was 50% higher than a private's. In both the Union and Confederate armies, twenty-nine Generals hundred twenty- nine Brigade Commanders were killed or mortally wounded in

battle.

Robert E. Lee considered Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson his most trusted and valuable subordinate. He referred to Stonewall as “my right arm.” Jackson became the Civil War’s most famous victim of friendly fire, mistakenly shot by his own men during a night reconnaissance at the Battle of Chancellorsville, Virginia in spring late 1863. Chancellorsville is considered by many historians to be Lee’s greatest victory but it clearly his most costly. The outnumbered Confederates inflicted 17,000 casualties on Union forces. Lee sustained fewer casualties - 13,000 - but it was 22% of his army. The loss of Jackson and this huge force

depletion, proved a decisive, perhaps crippling, factor as Lee moved his army into Pennsylvania and his July date with destiny at Gettysburg. Next time: Stonewall's last battle.

At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.

Resources

Constable, George, ed. *The Time-Life History of the Civil War*. New York: Time-Life Books Inc., 1990.

**“Friendly Fire That Changed a War?” Defense LINK
News
http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Feb1999/n02021999_9902028.htm.**

“Jackson, Thomas Jonathan” *Encyclopedia Britannica Online* <<http://www.britannica.com>.

McPherson, James. *Battle Cry of Freedom*. New York: Ballantine Books, Inc. 1989.

**Millett, Allan R. Houghton Mifflin’s Reader’s Companion to Military History, “Friendly Fire”
http://college.hmco.com/historyreaderscomp/mil/html/ml_019100_f...**

Vaughan, Donald. *The Everything Civil War Book*. Holbrook, Massachusetts: Adams Media Corporation, 2000.

**Wicker, Tom. Houghton Mifflin’s Reader’s Companion to Military History, Jackson, Thomas J. “Stonewall”.
http://college.hmco.com/historyreaderscomp/mil/html/ml_025600_j...**