



# Civil War Battlefield Orders Gone Awry: The Written Word and Its Consequences in 13 Engagements

*Donald R. Jermann*

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During the Civil War, the outcome of many a battle or campaign hinged on the proper wording, dissemination and interpretation of battlefield orders. Early in the war, officers trained in small unit combat could suddenly find themselves commanding thousands of men and writing orders to subordinates with little experience in the practice. The inclusion of accurate origin information, up-to-date knowledge of the situation in the field, the amount of discretion given to recipients, and the speed and geographical acumen of couriers were critical. This innovative volume examines 13 cases in which the tide of battle turned on written orders, including Ball's Bluff, Fredericksburg, Vicksburg, Gettysburg and Chickamauga. The importance of this seemingly clerical task, this work shows, equaled that of tactics, manpower, and supplies in determining the course of the Civil War.

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