

In April 1862, during the bloody two-day Battle of Shiloh, Grant did not share his colleagues' bleak view. Sherman was demoralized by the first day's fighting, while Don Carlos Buell, who arrived with reinforcements in the midst of the battle, advised retreat. Grant refused: "The distant rear of an army engaged in battle is not the best place from which to judge correctly what is going on in front," he asserts in his memoirs. By the next day, he continues, "we had now become the attacking party. The enemy was driven back all day, as we had been the day before, until finally he beat a precipitate retreat." In May 1864, after fighting to a costly stalemate in his first battle with Robert E. Lee, at the Wilderness, in Virginia, Grant surprised and delighted the Union Army of the Potomac by not retreating, as they had done so many times before under different commanders. "Most of us thought...that the next day we should recross the river," a captain in a Massachusetts regiment remembered, "but when the order came, 'By the left flank, march!' we found that Grant was not made that way, and we must continue the fight." Sherman likewise celebrated Grant's decision: "When Grant cried 'Forward!' after the battle of the Wilderness, I said: 'This is the grandest act of his life; now I feel that the rebellion will be crushed.' I wrote him, saying it was a bold order to give, and...it showed the me

He believed in success—but didn't romanticize the means to achieving it.

What Sherman called Grant's "simple faith in success" proved infectious. His confidence and determination made others believe in themselves as well: "when you have completed your best preparations, you go into battle without hesitation...no doubts, no reserve," Sherman wrote to Grant. "I tell you that it was this that made us act with confidence. I knew wherever I was that you thought of me, and if I got in a tight place you would come—if alive."

But Grant was no mystic, nor was he reckless. His confidence was rooted in an unswerving sense of purpose, an unflappable nature, an ability to delegate responsibility as opposed to micromanaging, and knowledge gained by cool and careful observation over the years. In the Mexican War, he

studied two commanders in action: Winfield Scott and Zachary Taylor, whose nicknames—"Old Fuss and Feathers" and "Old Rough and Ready"—encapsulate their antithetical styles. From Taylor, who always "put his meaning so plainly there could be no mistaking it," Grant learned the importance of clear and direct communication.

It was in Mexico, while serving as regimental quartermaster and involving himself in as many battles as he could, that Grant had learned the decidedly unromantic aspects of war: the ingenuity required to feed and supply an army, the hazards of poor camp sanitation, the value of different kinds of expertise and the unequivocal brutality of combat. In the last year of the Civil War, as casualties mounted and the horrors of trench warfare accumulated in the Battles of Cold Harbor and Petersburg, Grant remained fixed in his purpose to destroy Lee's army. ttle of which he was made."