

Confederates Outsmart Yankees

[Confederate Captain John Singleton Mosby] got word that the first breech-loading rifles ever made were coming down (a whole shipment of them) to General Pope commanding the Union forces in Virginia. With these rifles the Union Army would undoubtedly defeat Lee and walk into Richmond. So it was believed. The rifles were carried in a great train to Alexandria, loaded onto wagons, some fifty or sixty of which were being escorted by the Thirteenth Pennsylvania Cavalry. The munitions wagon train was to park right in the heart of General Pope's army. Getting this information, Mosby decided to do something about it. It was a very, very wet, rainy, cold spring night. He waited and the escort came along. Mosby, debouching from a road at the left, rode up with the Colonel boot-to-boot. The Colonel saluted. "Colonel Graham," said Mosby, "the orders have been changed; your men are tired and have been thirteen hours on the march. My orders are to take over and escort the wagon train to another parking place." The Colonel gave over, and Mosby took over, and parked the munitions train in the heart of General Lee's army. Thus it was that the Confederates had breech-loading rifles and ammunition before the Union troops had them.