

ESSENTIAL CIVIL WAR CURRICULUM

John Pope

By **Michael Burns**, U.S. Air Force

In June 1862, Major General John Pope, the new commander of the force known as the Army of Virginia, arrived in the commonwealth believing he could reverse the Union’s fortunes there. “I come to you from the West,” wrote the brash general, “where we have always seen the backs of our enemies; from an army whose business it has been to seek the adversary and to beat him when he was found; whose policy has been attack and not defense.”¹ His confidence instilled a sense of pride in some of his demoralized men and officers while it brought discontent from others. As a result of his performance at the head of the Army of Virginia, this braggadocious leader found himself banished to a region considered the backwater of the Civil War three months later.

John Pope has a complicated legacy rooted in the nineteenth century U.S. Army. Despite his role in surveying the West, leading soldiers on numerous battlefields, and influencing the Indian policies of the U.S. government, Pope’s confused, poor performance during the Second Bull Run Campaign has plagued his reputation. Although rightfully condemned for that period of his command, Pope’s career lasted over forty years, during which he had a greater role than most historians have recognized in the U.S. Army of the Civil War and Reconstruction era.

Born on March 16, 1822, in Louisville, Kentucky, Pope spent most of his early life in Kaskaskia, Illinois. Pope’s family had a long lineage in the United States dating back to the establishment of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the Popes continued their trek west, going to Kentucky before settling in western Illinois. Eventually, Pope’s father, Nathaniel Pope, a judge who later befriended a young lawyer named Abraham Lincoln, settled in Kaskaskia around 1809. The elder Pope influenced the early history of Illinois as a territorial delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives where he fought for its admission as a state and to incorporate the growing settlement of Chicago into its boundaries. As part of such a prominent family, John Pope received a relatively good education that allowed him to receive an appointment to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1838.

¹ Major General John Pope to the Officers and Soldiers of the Army of Virginia, July 14, 1862, in United States War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 70 vols. in 128 parts (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Series I, volume 12, part 3, p. 473-4 (hereafter cited as *O.R.*, I, 12, pt. 3, 473-4).

Even with this benefit from his family, Pope's education was behind his classmates from the east coast and he initially had a rough start to his tenure. He graduated seventeenth in the class of 1842 despite his difficulties maintaining his grades in his first years. Due to Pope's standing in the upper portion of his class, he received a spot in the prestigious Corps of Topographical Engineers.²

Pope started his army career in Florida under Captain Joseph Eggleston Johnston before spending his time surveying the U.S.-Canadian border in Maine and Minnesota. In the summer of 1846, Pope found himself in the middle of combat alongside multiple future Civil War commanders. When the War with Mexico began, then Lieutenant Pope joined the forces of General Zachary Taylor. Under Taylor, Pope took part in the U.S. victories at the Battle of Monterrey between September 21–24, 1846, and at the Battle of Buena Vista on February 22–23, 1847, where he served on Taylor's staff. After President James K. Polk's administration recalled Taylor's army, Pope returned to the Corps of Topographical Engineers. After more charting of the U.S.-Canadian border in the Midwest, Pope took part in the land exploration related to the proposed routes for a transcontinental railroad throughout the 1850s. As the lead engineer in the Department of New Mexico, he examined the proposed southern route that would extend from Mississippi to California. Soon after, Pope explored and mapped the area of southern Arizona that became part of the United States after the Gadsden Purchase in 1856. He then returned to the Midwest when Army officials transferred him to Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1859. Sent to design lighthouses along the Great Lakes, Pope also met his future wife, Clara Horton.³

Despite having never led soldiers in battle, Pope's political connections and his brash manner led to his quick rise through the ranks at the start of the Civil War. In 1861, Army officials selected Pope as one of four officers to accompany President-elect Abraham Lincoln on his train ride from Springfield, Illinois, to Washington, D.C. This connection between the two Illinoisans became integral to Pope's career during the conflict. After South Carolinian troops fired on Fort Sumter in April 1861, Pope volunteered his services to Lincoln as an aide. Instead, Lincoln appointed him as a brigadier general of volunteers on June 14, 1861. Pope initially spent his time recruiting troops out of Chicago before moving with those troops to Missouri as part of the Department of the West under Major General John Charles Frémont. After Pope's relationship with Frémont soured due to their dispute over Pope's policies to suppress guerrillas there, he went about conspiring against Frémont, who was relieved of command after he made an unapproved attempt to emancipate the enslaved population of Missouri. After the Lincoln administration removed Frémont, the War Department reorganized the troops into the Department of the Missouri. The new commander, Major General Henry Wager Halleck, placed Pope at the head of

² William A. Meese, "Nathaniel Pope," in *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 3 (January 1911): 7–21; and Peter E. Cozzens, *General John Pope: A Life for the Nation* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 3–10.

³ Peter E. Cozzens & Robert I. Girardi, eds., *The Military Memoirs of General John Pope* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 188–205; John Pope Journal, 1850s, Transcontinental Railroad Expedition, John Pope Papers, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA; and Cozzens, *General John Pope*, 16–28.

an expeditionary force with the objective of capturing two significant points along the Mississippi River—New Madrid, Missouri, and the fortified island of Island No. 10.⁴

Events in Tennessee set the stage for Pope's operations along the Mississippi. Between February 6 and 16, 1862, Brigadier General Ulysses S. Grant's Army of the Tennessee captured Fort Henry on the Tennessee River and Fort Donelson on the Cumberland River. These two early victories caused the rebel forces to restructure their defensive line connected to the Mississippi. Brigadier General Leonidas Polk sent a large portion of his forces to Island No. 10, a fortified island in a bend of the Mississippi River that blocked the U.S. Navy's riverine force. Pope arrived in St. Louis, Missouri, to take command of the 12,000-man force designated as the Army of the Mississippi on February 25. Five days later, March 2, the lead pickets of Pope's command arrived outside New Madrid and the rest of his army appearing the following day. Pope ordered a reconnaissance-in-force that discovered a well dug-in Confederate force. After conferring with his subordinates, Pope decided to place New Madrid under siege, which culminated in an artillery duel that caused the rebels to abandon the town on the night of March 13. Soon after Pope captured New Madrid, which cut off Island No. 10 from supply ships down river, Admiral Andrew Hull Foote's fleet arrived from Cairo, Illinois. Pope pushed Foote to run his fleet past the fortified island, but Foote refused after his ships took damage in a duel with the island's defenses. To bypass the island, Pope ordered the engineering regiment to cut a canal through the peninsula north of Island No. 10. Although unable to move the entire fleet through the canal, it allowed for a strong enough force to dislodge the rebels, opening the river down to Memphis, Tennessee. That April, Pope commanded the Army of the Mississippi during the successful siege of Corinth, Mississippi.⁵

Pope's successes along the Mississippi River quickly gained the attention of the Lincoln administration. Throughout early 1862, Lincoln and Secretary of War Edwin McMasters Stanton struggled to get U.S. major general George Brinton McClellan to attack the main rebel force in Virginia. By late spring, McClellan had initiated his Peninsula Campaign, but his slow, cautious movements agitated Lincoln and Stanton. Hoping to pressure the Confederates further, Lincoln ordered the creation of a second army in Virginia that summer. Pope's personal connection with the president and his victories along the Mississippi, as well as the appointment of General Halleck to General-in-Chief, led to his appointment as the commander of the new Army of Virginia. When Pope departed a final dinner with his subordinates in the West, Brigadier General Gordon Granger quipped, "Good-bye Pope, your grave is made."⁶

Pope arrived in Washington, D.C., to take command of the Army of Virginia on June 26, 1862. He immediately stepped into a tenuous situation. The Army of Virginia consisted of three

⁴ Cozzens, *General John Pope*, 28–51.

⁵ "Reports of Maj. Gen. John Pope, U.S. Army, Commanding the Army of the Mississippi," in *O.R.*, I, 8, 77–90.

⁶ Quoted in Cozzens, *General John Pope*, 1.

corps that originated as separate armies positioned in the Shenandoah Valley and the Northern Virginia Piedmont throughout the spring and early summer. Each of the three commanders, Major General Irvin McDowell, Major General Nathaniel Prentiss Banks, and Pope's former commander, Major General John Frémont, had an opportunity to defeat and, potentially, destroy the rebel forces under Lieutenant General Thomas Jonathan "Stonewall" Jackson. Yet, Jackson's determined operation in his famed Shenandoah Valley Campaign handed defeats to all three armies, causing intense demoralization among the U.S. troops.⁷

Pope faced more than taking charge of a disheartened force. He was now commanding three corps commanders who outranked and disliked him—a feeling that was mutual. McDowell, Banks, and Frémont all received commissions as major generals in May 1861. In fact, McDowell, now commanding the III Corps, led the first Yankee army in Virginia, the Army of Northeast Virginia, during the First Bull Run Campaign. Banks, now in charge of the II Corps, initially commanded a force in Western Maryland the previous summer. Frémont refused to serve under Pope—remembering his earlier scheming—and resigned. Frémont's replacement for the I Corps, Major General Franz Siegel, received a primarily cold reception from his new commander. Pope increased the tensions between him and his subordinates when he released his statement quoted above that criticized the Union forces in the East and promoted his own success. His own subordinates found it insulting, and word soon spread to the officers of the Army of the Potomac, who responded harshly. Major General Fitz John Porter, the commander of the Army of the Potomac's V Corps, proclaimed that Pope had "now written himself down as what the military world has long known, an ass."⁸ These issues created an air of mistrust within the U.S. forces in Virginia.

Despite Pope's criticism in his initial declaration, he quickly garnered favor with the soldiers in the Army of Virginia. Within a month of taking command, Pope released multiple punitive orders that freed up the troops to focus on fighting the rebel forces. Prior to his arrival, U.S. soldiers in the region took a "kid glove" approach to local civilians, even those who openly disrupted their operations. Pope's General Order nos. 5, 6, 7, 11, and 13 changed these policies. The first three ordered the men to supply themselves off of local resources while the last two created harsher punishments for guerrilla activities. General Order no. 11 became the most contentious. In it, Pope gave his subordinates the power to arrest "all disloyal male citizens" near the army unless they took an oath of allegiance. If any of them violated the oath, then that person "shall be shot, and his property seized and applied to public use." It also gave permission for his

⁷ John J. Hennessy, *Return to Bull Run: The Campaign and Battle of Second Manassas* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993), 3–9. For more on the Shenandoah Valley Campaign, see Robert K. Krick, *Conquering the Valley: Stonewall Jackson at Port Republic* (New York: Morrow, 1996), and Peter Cozzens, *Shenandoah 1862: Stonewall Jackson's Valley Campaign* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

⁸ Quote in Cozzens, *General John Pope*, 85; Hennessy, *Return to Bull Run*, 6–8; and Cozzens, *General John Pope*, 80–84.

soldiers to exile known Confederate-sympathizers beyond the rebel lines and to execute any one of them who tried to return. The troops quickly applauded the new orders. One Yankee declared that the orders were “objectionable only in so far as they are not literally and completely enforced.” Another proclaimed that they “gratified us exceedingly for a while” and that the men “called out a hearty amen in all our corps.”⁹ Pope’s officers and opponents saw things differently. Union brigadier general Marsena Patrick called them “the Orders of a Demagogue,” while another U.S. officer baptized them “the last unabatable nuisance.” Most famously, Pope’s counterpart, General Robert E. Lee, declared that he planned to “restrain as far as possible, the atrocities which [Pope] threatened to perpetuate upon our defenseless citizens.”¹⁰ Pope’s arrival in Virginia introduced a new style of civil-military policy to the region that remained as a prominent feature for the rest of the conflict.

Entering the month of August 1862, Pope became focused on the rebel army that doomed his career in Virginia. When Lincoln appointed Pope, Halleck gave him a specific charge. His army had to defend Northern Virginia and Washington, D.C., especially once Lee’s army pushed the Army of the Potomac away from Richmond during the Seven Days Battles the last week of June. To prevent any rebel movements toward the federal capital, Pope extended his army from the Blue Ridge Mountains to the northern banks of the Rappahannock River. At the beginning of August, Lee ordered Jackson to march his 25,000 men north to threaten Pope while keeping 30,000 men under Lieutenant General James Longstreet in front of the Army of the Potomac.¹¹

After hearing about Jackson’s movement, Pope ordered his army from Culpeper Courthouse to the rail junction at Gordonsville, Virginia, to try to isolate the Confederate wing. Banks’s II Corps and Jackson’s wing clashed only five days later on August 9, the hottest day of the summer, during the Battle of Cedar Mountain. The bloody single day battle resulted in a draw, but Pope feared that his army now held a dangerous position between the Rapidan and Rappahannock rivers. Pope, with Halleck’s backing, ordered his forces into line along the Rappahannock River, using the waterway as a defensive barrier while awaiting reinforcements from the Army of the Potomac. For the next two weeks, Pope responded to Lee’s movements along the river, delaying for as long as possible.¹²

Delays in the Army of the Potomac’s movement prevented Pope from garnering the full strength he had desired. Lee’s inability to find an avenue for attack pushed him to make the

⁹ Hennessy, *Return to Bull Run*, 15; and Mark Grimsley, *Hard Hand of War: Union Military Policy Toward Southern Civilians, 1861-1865* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 88.

¹⁰ Grimsley, *Hard Hand of War*, 88; Hennessy, *Return to Bull Run*, 21; and “The Changing Tone of War,” Brawner Farm Wall Panel, Manassas National Battlefield Park, Manassas, Virginia.

¹¹ John Pope, *Letter from the Secretary of War, in Answer to Resolution of the House 18th Ultimo, Transmitting Copy of Report of Major General John Pope*, H. Ex. Doc. 37-81, at 5–8 (1862); General Robert E. Lee to Adjutant General Samuel Cooper, 3 September 1862, in *O.R.*, I, 12, pt. 2, p. 552; and Hennessy, *Return to Bull Run*, 38–50.

¹² Pope, *Letter from the Secretary of War*, H. Ex. Doc. 37-81, at 9–17; and Hennessy, *Return to Bull Run*, 28–30.

desperate move of splitting his force and sending Jackson's wing on a flanking march around the Army of Virginia. On August 26, now knowing that Jackson's 25,000 men were isolated after they destroyed the Army of Virginia's supply base at Manassas Junction, Pope ordered his force north. If he moved quickly enough, he believed that he could attack and defeat Jackson's force before Longstreet's wing arrived. He saw this moment as an opportunity to solidify his legacy by capturing the vaunted Jackson and destroying half of Lee's force all at once.¹³

By August 28, Pope and a large portion of his army arrived at Manassas Junction, where they found only straggling rebel soldiers who told the Federals that Jackson had moved his men to Centreville, Virginia, on the east side of Bull Run. Immediately, Pope revised his orders directing all his forces to Centreville. Jackson, however, sprung a trap late that afternoon, initiating a fight near the battlefield of First Bull Run. Now knowing Jackson's general location, Pope concentrated his forces on those fields just as Jackson hoped he would.¹⁴ Pope did not arrive on the field until midday of August 29. Earlier, his subordinates probed the Confederate line along Stony Ridge. They discovered that Jackson's line sat in an unfinished railroad grade that acted as a ready-made trench for many of his soldiers, but numerous low spots created weaknesses in their position that allowed the federals to achieve brief breakthroughs.¹⁵

By time Pope reached the field, the majority of fighting had stalled, allowing him to assess the situation and scout the Rebel line. As he did so, Major General Samuel Peter Heintzelman's III Corps and Major General Fitz John Porter's V Corps of the Army of the Potomac arrived as reinforcements. Now knowing the circumstances, Pope created an attack plan for that afternoon. He wanted most of his force to launch diversionary attacks against the unfinished railroad grade while Porter's V Corps and elements of McDowell's III Corps marched around Jackson's right

¹³ Pope, *Letter from the Secretary of War*, H. Ex. Doc. 37-81, at 16–17; General Robert E. Lee to Adjutant General Samuel Cooper, September 3, 1862, in *O.R.*, 1, 12, pt. 2, 554–5; Major General John Pope to Brigadier General G. W. Cullum, Chief of Staff and Engineers., Headquarters of Army, January 27, 1863, New York, in *O.R.*, I, 12, pt. 2, 36–37; Cozzens and Girardi, *Military Memoirs of General John Pope*, 148; and Hennessy, *Return to Bull Run*, 96–115, 138–52.

¹⁴ Pope, *Letter from the Secretary of War*, H. Ex. Doc. 37-81, at 19; Brigadier General John Gibbon to Captain R. Chandler, Assistant Adjutant General, King's Division, September 3, 1862, Upton's Hill, Va., in *O.R.*, I, 12, pt. 2, 377–8; General Robert E. Lee to Adjutant General Samuel Cooper, September 3, 1862, in *O.R.*, 1, 12, pt. 2, 555–6; Pope, "The Second Battle of Bull Run," in Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, eds., *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War. Being for the Most Part Contributions by Union and Confederate Officers. Based Upon "The Century War Series"*, 4 vols. (New York: The Century Co. 1884-1888), based on "The Century War Series" in *The Century Magazine*, November 1884 to November 1887, 2:470–1; John Gibbon, *Personal Recollections of the Civil War*, (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1928), 51–54; and Hennessy, *Return to Bull Run*, 150–72.

¹⁵ Pope, *Letter from the Secretary of War*, H. Ex. Doc. 37-81, at 21 – 22; General Robert E. Lee to Adjutant General Samuel Cooper, September 3, 1862, in *O.R.*, I, 12, pt. 2, 556–7; and Pope, "Second Battle of Bull Run," in *Battles and Leaders*, 2:471–2.

flank just north of the Brawner Farm, where the fighting had started the night before. At least, this was what he envisioned. His actual orders were ambiguous.¹⁶

As Porter's and McDowell's men approached the Warrenton Turnpike, the main thoroughfare in the region just south of the Confederate position, they started to encounter resistance from an unknown Confederate force. Porter and McDowell then spotted a large cloud of dust in the distance, an indicator that Longstreet's wing had arrived on the field. This resistance and the dust were not actual indicators of Longstreet, however. They were Major General Jeb Stuart's cavalymen riding back and forth with brush and branches to disturb the roads while pickets fired on the advancing federals. Stuart's actions, meant to buy time for Longstreet's wing to truly come to the field, had slowed the Federal advance. Soon after, Porter and McDowell received Pope's plan, known as the Joint Order. While Pope believed the order provided clear instructions, he never explicitly ordered an attack. Additionally, it told the two Corps commanders to remain prepared to retreat behind Bull Run and concluded with the line, "If any considerable advantages are to be gained from departing from this order it will not be strictly carried out."¹⁷ Just after reading these instructions, McDowell received a report from his cavalry commander, Brigadier General John Buford, that Longstreet's wing was approaching the battlefield. With both Porter and McDowell convinced that they now faced Longstreet's wing, they decided to remain in place and Porter limited his corps' movements throughout the day. McDowell never delivered Buford's report to Pope. Believing that Porter and McDowell were approaching Jackson's right flank, and that Jackson remained isolated, Pope followed through with the diversionary assaults while he grew increasingly frustrated with Porter's inactivity. When the fighting closed that night, Pope felt his force was on the verge of victory despite Porter undermining his plan in his mind.¹⁸

When day broke on August 30, Pope believed that his army would destroy Jackson's force with one final assault. Yet, his obsession with Jackson left him vulnerable to the real situation. He remained unaware that Porter's Corps sat along the right flank of Longstreet's position while the rest of his force occupied ground between the two Rebel wings. Convinced that his army faced only Jackson's wing, Pope ordered Porter and McDowell to shift their soldiers north to link up with the other Yankees. Additional Confederate movements that morning convinced Pope that the Rebels were retreating, when in reality they strengthened their lines. Believing he had the

¹⁶ Pope, *Letter from the Secretary of War*, H. Ex. Doc. 37-81, at 21 – 22; General Robert E. Lee to Adjutant General Samuel Cooper, September 3, 1862, in *O.R.*, I, 12, pt. 2, 556–7; and Pope, "Second Battle of Bull Run," in *Battles and Leaders*, 2:471–2.

¹⁷ Pope to Major General Irvin McDowell and Major General Fitz John Porter, August 29, 1862, in *O.R.*, I, 12, pt. 2, 76.

¹⁸ Pope to Major General Irvin McDowell and Major General Fitz John Porter, August 29, 1862, in *O.R.*, I, 12, pt. 2, 76; Pope, *Letter from the Secretary of War*, H. Ex. Doc. 37-81, at 21–22; Brigadier General John Buford to Brigadier General James B. Ricketts, August 29, 1862, in *O.R.*, I, 12, pt. 3, 730; Hennessy, *Return to Bull Run*, 233–5; and William Marvel, *Radical Sacrifice: The Rise and Ruin of Fitz John Porter* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021), 198–214.

Confederates on the run, Pope wanted to use the freshest troops to attack the remaining force. Despite Porter's objections, Pope ordered Porter's 10,000 men into the center of his position.¹⁹

Having seen what he interpreted as the Confederate's retreating along the Warrenton Turnpike, Pope believed the weakest point in Jackson's line was just north of the roadway along a section of the unfinished railroad known as the Deep Cut. He ordered Porter to plan a frontal assault against the position for later that morning. Porter encouraged Pope to reconsider. Pope did not trust Porter's assessment, thinking that the McClellan protégé wanted to sabotage his plan to embarrass him. Pope, however, still believed Longstreet's men could not have reached the field yet and his army only faced Jackson's wing. He continued to ignore any indications that the Confederate force had reunited, including additional reports from other Federal officers that stated they confronted parts of Longstreet's wing the previous day. He ordered Porter to go ahead with the assault. In the early afternoon, six thousand men from Porter's Corps charged across the half-mile of open ground. Within thirty minutes, two thousand men fell as casualties, and the remaining four thousand fled for safety. Remaining concerned with Jackson's force, Pope shifted his lines to strengthen his center, leaving only 3,000 Yankees directly in front of Longstreet's 30,000 Rebels.²⁰

When Longstreet's entire wing counterattacked later that afternoon, Pope initially did not respond, still convinced that he only faced Jackson. Once the Union position along Chinn Ridge started to collapse—leaving Pope's escape route, the Warrenton Turnpike, vulnerable—Pope ordered his line back to Matthews Hill and Henry Hill where they held off the onslaught until night ended the fighting. Pope used the cover of darkness to abandon the field, concluding the Battle of Second Bull Run as a Confederate victory. As Pope and his army retreated back toward Washington, D.C., they faced Jackson's wing in one more brief fight at the Battle of Chantilly, Virginia, on September 1, which allowed his army to keep the route to Washington open. The Lincoln administration relieved Pope of command five days later on September 6, folding the Army of Virginia into the Army of the Potomac.²¹

Soon after the defeat at Second Bull Run, Pope turned his frustration against Porter, who he scapegoated for the defeat at Second Bull Run. Arguing that Porter purposely ignored his orders

¹⁹ Pope, *Letter of Secretary of War*, H. Ex. Doc. 37-81, at 21–22; and Cozzens and Girardi, *Military Memoirs of General John Pope*, 170.

²⁰ Pope, *Letter of Secretary of War*, H. Ex. Doc. 37-81, at 21–22; Cozzens and Girardi, *Military Memoirs of General John Pope*, 170; General Robert E. Lee to Adjutant General Samuel Cooper, September 3, 1862, and Lieutenant General James Longstreet to Assistant Adjutant General R. H. Chilton, October 10, 1862, in *O.R.*, I, 12, pt. 2, 557, 565.

²¹ Pope, "Second Battle of Bull Run," in *Battle and Leaders*, 2:487–9; Lieutenant General James Longstreet to Assistant Adjutant General R. H. Chilton, October 10, 1862, Winchester, Va., in *O.R.*, I, 12, pt. 2, 566; General Robert E. Lee to Adjutant General Samuel Cooper, September 3, 1862, in *O.R.*, I, 12, pt. 2, 557; Pope, *Letter of Secretary of War*, H. Ex. Doc. 37-81, at 24; Hennessy, *Return to Bull Run*, 375–406; and Cozzens, *General John Pope*, 192–200.

to ensure his army's defeat, Pope pushed for Porter's court-martial. By December 1862, the U.S. Army convened a hearing for Porter. Due to Pope's political connections, as well as Porter's inability to provide evidence of the presence of Longstreet's wing, the court-martial quickly found Porter guilty, fulfilling Pope's desire for deflecting blame for the loss. Porter, however, continued to defend his actions while Pope continued to blame Porter for the results. Their dispute remained an open fight for the next twenty-five years. Eventually, Porter received another court-martial tribunal in 1887 that reversed the original findings due to new evidence from veterans of Longstreet's wing that supported Porter's argument. Although upset with the new decision, Pope did not push for another hearing—using his writings to disparage Porter instead.²²

Pope's career did not come to an end after the humiliating defeat. At the same time as the Second Bull Run Campaign, Dakotas in Minnesota, after facing years of abuse and starvation, assaulted numerous settlements and army forts during an event then-known as the Sioux Uprising. Pope received the appointment to command of the Department of the Northwest in part to suppress the Dakota attacks. Initially, Pope followed in the footsteps of many previous U.S. Army officers who commanded forces against Native Americans. He advocated policies of extermination. "We have and can have troops enough to exterminate them all, if they furnish the least occasion for it," Pope wrote to his subordinate Colonel Henry Hastings Sibley in October 1862.²³ His ideas changed a few months later after he became more familiar with the situation before the conflict. He blamed white settlers, such as traders, liquor sellers, and gamblers, who took advantage of the government trade agreements and forced the Dakotas into a cycle of debt that led to starvation and anger. After some Dakota leaders established a Peace Party and the government executed thirty-eight Dakotas whom it found to have committed crimes beyond fighting in the uprising, Pope created a dual track policy of continuing vigorous campaigns against Dakotas who refused to move to the new reservations in the Dakota Territory while attempting to ensure fair treatment of those who did.²⁴

²² Cozzens, *General John Pope*, 214–26, 291–2, 297–300, 327–37; Hennessy, *Return to Bull Run*, 464–5; and William Marvel, *Radical Sacrifice*, 308–27, 339–53.

²³ Pope to Colonel Henry H. Sibley, October 6, 1862, St. Paul, MN, Letters Sent, volume 1, September 1862–July 1865, Headquarters, Department of the Northwest, General Records, Correspondence, Entry 3436, Records of the U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1821–1920, Record Group 393, Part 1, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited as Letters Sent, vol. no., DNW, Entry 3436, RG 393, pt. 1, NARA).

²⁴ Pope to General Henry W. Halleck, September 23, 1863, Milwaukee, WI; Pope to Halleck, March 30, 1864, Milwaukee, WI; and Pope to Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton, February 6, 1864, Milwaukee WI, all in Letters Sent, vol. 2, DNW, Entry 3436, RG 393, pt. 1, NARA; Cozzens, *General John Pope*, 200–24; Michael Burns, "The Civil War on the Northern Plains: John Pope's Military Policies against the Sioux in the Department of the Northwest, 1862–65," in *Great Plains Quarterly* 38 (Winter 2018): 77–103; Richard N. Ellis, *General Pope and U.S. Indian Policy* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1970), 7–19; and Gary Clayton Anderson, *Massacre in Minnesota: The Dakota War of 1862, the Most Violent Ethnic Conflict in American History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2019), 47–188.

For the final three years of the Civil War, Pope remained with the Department of the Northwest. Seeing these campaigns as an extension of the larger conflict in the East, Pope conducted vigorous campaigns that eliminated as many resources as possible to deprive the remaining non-reservation Dakotas of any material for the winter months. Doing so, he believed, had a dual effect. It pushed the suffering but peaceful Dakota population to settle on the reservation while reducing the strength of the factions still fighting the U.S. Army. Unlike previous commanders, and in contrast to his original push for extermination, Pope also supported increasing government support, such as annuity payments, supplies, and protected fair trade with white settlers, for the surrendering Dakotas. In the summers of 1863 and 1864, Pope's subordinates, now Brigadier General Sibley and Brigadier General Alfred Sully, followed his push for destructive campaigns, even going as far as wiping out entire encampments. His proposed policy to aid the peaceful populations that settled on the reservations never fully developed due to the War Department controlling Indian policies during campaigns while the Bureau of Indian Affairs regulated the reservation policies, leaving them in a deplorable condition. Pope officially declared an end to the hostilities in February 1865 but remained in the region as the commander of the new Military District of the Missouri.²⁵

He remained in that position until April 1867 when he received an appointment as the governor of the Reconstruction Third Military District. The district included Georgia, Florida, and Alabama. As the governor, Pope defended the new voting rights of African Americans, but soon found himself at odds with the administration of President Andrew Johnson, who prominently aligned with Democrats. Despite Pope having strong backing from General Ulysses S. Grant and Alabama governor Robert Miller Patton, among other prominent Republicans, Johnson quickly removed Pope from the governorship only nine months after his appointment. He then moved briefly to command of the Department of the Lakes based in Detroit, Michigan.²⁶

By early 1870, Pope returned to the Department of the Missouri where he became the U.S. Army's prominent expert in American Indian policy. For the next thirteen years, Pope planned campaigns against tribes that refused to settle on reservations while he also advocated for better treatment of subjugated populations. In the mid-1870s, Pope led the campaigns against the Cheyenne, Kiowa, Comanche, and Arapaho on the Southern Great Plains that resulted in those tribes settling on reservations in modern-day Oklahoma. At the same time, Pope continually criticized the government's reservation and treaty systems. He blamed white encroachment for hostilities between American Indians and the U.S. Army and argued for fairer treaties that provided

²⁵ Pope to Brigadier General Alfred Sully, February 20, 1865, Milwaukee, WI, Letters Sent, vol. 2, DNW, Entry 3436, RG 393, pt. 1, NARA; Cozzens, *General John Pope*, 228–62; Ellis, *General Pope and U.S. Indian Policy*, 20–106; Burns, “The Civil War on the Northern Plains,” 77–103; and Linda M. Clemmons, “‘We are writing this letter seeking your help’: Dakotas, ABCFM Missionaries, and Their Uses of Literacy, 1863–1866,” in *Western Historical Quarterly* 47 (Summer 2016): 183–209.

²⁶ Cozzens, *General John Pope*, 247–94; and Ellis, *General Pope and U.S. Indian Policy*, 118–29.

tribes increased supplies, annuities, and guarantees of protection from corrupt traders and for continued hunting rights off reservations. He believed the best option for implementing these policies was for the War Department to take full control of Indian policies and end the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Yet, by time Pope retired from the Army in March 1886, at the rank of major general, no administration had accepted his policies and continued its policies that Pope saw as failures previously, something he lamented.²⁷ “There is no rest for the Indian on this continent except in the grave to which he is being driven with accelerated speed every day,” Pope wrote in 1887. Having recognized his policies would never be implemented, Pope believed that “death alone [for Native Americans] appears to offer relief from an outrage which will be a stain on this government and this people forever.”²⁸

After his retirement, Pope wrote his memoirs for publication in *The National Tribune* in which he criticized his perceived enemies, including McClellan and Porter, between 1887 and 1891. During that time, he lost his wife, Clara, who died in 1888, and he moved into the Ohio Soldiers and Sailors Home in Sandusky, Ohio. He died in his sleep at the home on September 23, 1892, and was buried next to his wife at Bellefontaine Cemetery in St. Louis, Missouri. Although Pope received a poor reputation due to his brash character and his terrible performance at Second Bull Run, he garnered significant respect from some of his contemporaries for his long service to the United States.²⁹ His time in the Army took him throughout the country where he had a hand in the development of the transcontinental railroads, development in civil-military policies during the war, and in attempting to influence Indian policies. While Pope will always be remembered for three days in August 1862, he took part in even larger developments than that single campaign that influenced the progress of the United States during the Civil War and Reconstruction.

²⁷ Cozzens, *General John Pope*, 235–8; and Ellis, *General Pope and U.S. Indian Policy*, 130–231.

²⁸ Pope to Benjamin H. Grierson, December 16, 1887, quoted in Cozzens, *General John Pope*, 338.

²⁹ Cozzens, *General John Pope*, 336–40.

John Pope

Born	March 16, 1822
Died	September 23, 1892
Buried	Bellefontaine Cemetery, St. Louis, Mo.
Father	Nathaniel Pope
Mother	Lucretia Backus Pope
Career Milestones	Graduated, U.S. Military Academy at West Point, 1842 Mexican-American War, 1846–47 Mapped Gadsden Purchase, 1856 Appointed brigadier general of volunteers June 14, 1861 Capture of New Madrid, MO, March 13, 1862 Capture of Island No. 10, MO, April 8, 1862 Command of Army of Virginia, June 26, 1862 Battle of Second Bull Run, August 28–30, 1862 Relieved of command of Army of Virginia, September 6, 1862 Appointed command of Department of the Northwest, September 1862 Dakota Campaigns, 1863–1865 Command of District of the Missouri, February 3, 1865 Appointed governor of the Reconstruction Third Military District, April 1867 Command of the Department of the Missouri, April 30, 1870 Command of the Military Division of the Pacific, November 1, 1883 Retired, March 16, 1886
