

Robert E. Lee,

Farewell to The Army of Northern Virginia

Headquarters, Army of Northern Virginia
Appomattox Courthouse, April 10, 1865

(General Orders No. 9)

After four years' arduous service, marked by unsurpassed courage and fortitude, the Army of Northern Virginia has been compelled to yield to overwhelming numbers and resources.

I need not tell the survivors of so many hard-fought battles who have remained steadfast to the last, that I have consented to this result from no distrust of them, but feeling that valor and devotion could accomplish nothing that could compensate for the loss which would have attended the continuation of the contest, I have determined to avoid the useless sacrifice of those whose past services have endeared them to their countrymen. You will take with you the satisfaction that proceeds from the consciousness of duty faithfully performed, and I earnestly pray that a merciful God may extend to you His blessing and protection. With an increasing admiration of your constancy and devotion to your country, and a grateful remembrance of your kind and generous consideration of myself, I bid you an affectionate farewell.

Robert E. Lee
General

~~~~~  
SOURCE: Richard N. Current, editor-in-chief, *The Encyclopedia of the Confederacy*, vol. 4 (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993), p. 1792.