

Robert E. Lee, General Orders, No. 73

Headquarters, Army of Northern Virginia
Chambersburg, Pennsylvania
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The commanding general has observed with marked satisfaction the conduct of the troops on the march, and confidently anticipates results commensurate with the high spirit they have manifested.

No troops could have displayed greater fortitude or better performed the arduous marches of the past ten days.

Their conduct in other respects has with few exceptions been in keeping with their character as soldiers, and entitles them to approbation and praise.

There have however been instances of forgetfulness on the part of some, that they have in keeping the yet unsullied reputation of the army, and that the duties expected of us by civilization and Christianity are not less obligatory in the country of the enemy than in our own.

The commanding general considers that no greater disgrace could befall the army, and through it our whole people, than the perpetration of the barbarous outrages upon the unarmed, and defenceless [sic] and the wanton destruction of private property that have marked the course of the enemy in our own country.

Such proceedings not only degrade the perpetrators and all connected with them, but are subversive of the discipline and efficiency of the army, and destructive of the ends of our present movement.

It must be remembered that we make war only upon armed men, and that we cannot take vengeance for the wrongs our people have suffered without lowering ourselves in the eyes of all whose abhorrence has been excited by the atrocities of our enemies, and offending against Him to whom vengeance belongeth, without whose favor and support our efforts must all prove in vain.

The commanding general therefore earnestly exhorts the troops to abstain with most scrupulous care from unnecessary or wanton injury to private property, and he enjoins upon all officers to arrest and bring to summary punishment all who shall in any way offend against the orders on this subject.

R. E. Lee
General

SOURCE: Reprinted in Clifford Dowdey, editor, *The Wartime Papers of R. E. Lee* (New York: Bramhall House, 1961), pages 533-534.