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Presidents

U.S. PRESIDENT AS COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

A Working Bibliography of MHI Sources

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TACTICAL/FIELD COMMAND

When the question arises on which occasions did a serving American President actually command troops in a tactical sense, three come to mind: Washington at Carlisle, 1794; Madison at Bladensburg, 1814; and Lincoln, summer 1862. That Madison had a firmer and more direct grasp of troops at Bladensburg than did Washington during his Carlisle review of troops in 1794 is questionable. To what extent in 1794, 1814 and 1862 were the commands issued directly, rather than through the hovering covey of military bureaucrats? Perhaps Washington's orders were as directly transmitted as were the orders (or questions) of Madison, who had certain advisors near at hand, including the Secretary of War.

See, at least: pp. 225-29 of Leland D. Baldwin's Whiskey Rebels (PA: U of Pitt, 1939; E315B25) and pp. 298-303 of Irving Brant's James Madison, Vol. 6 (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrills, 1961; E342B7.).