

# The Camden Expedition of 1864 and the Opportunity Lost by the Confederacy to Change the Civil War

Michael J. Forsyth

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The Confederacy had a great opportunity to turn the Civil War in its favor in 1864, but squandered this chance when it failed to finish off a Union army cornered in Louisiana because of concerns about another Union army coming south from Arkansas. The Confederates were so confused that they could not agree on a course of action to contend with both threats, thus the Union offensive advancing from Arkansas saved the one in Louisiana and became known to history as the Camden Expedition. The Camden Expedition is intriguing because of the "might-have-beens" had the key players made different decisions. The author contends that if Frederick Steele, commander of the Federal VII Army Corps, had not received a direct order from General Ulysses S. Grant to move south, disaster would have befallen not only the Army of the Gulf in Louisiana but the entire Union cause, and possibly would have prevented Abraham Lincoln from winning reelection.



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