

Original not in General Lee's handwriting but signed by him.

HdQr ANVA

19th Dec 1863

Mr Gooch Raily

Charlottesville,

Sir:

Your letter of the 7th inst: is received. I am glad that your wish to enter the service has been gratified, now that you have obtained the consent of your parents to take that step. Your desire to distinguish yourself in the defense of your country is honorable to you, and I hope your wishes may be realized.

I cannot give you any other advice than to attach yourself to some command of your own selection; which at your age you have the right to make, and do your duty in the spirit that your letter manifests. If you fail to win fame, you will (not ?) have the greater satisfaction of having faithfully performed your duty.

Very respy,

Your obt servt

R E Lee