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## JANUARY 26 - FEBRUARY 1, 1862

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Following a centuries-old precedent, the United States and Confederate governments used parole and prisoner exchange early in the Civil War, relying on the parties to comply with any terms.

On Jan. 27, 1862, in return for parole, Col. Milton J. Ferguson of Wayne County gave a pledge of honor to obtain the release of Lt. Col. George W. Neff of Kentucky within 60 days or to surrender in Ohio County. In the interim, Ferguson could neither return to active service against the United States nor provide any aid to its enemies.

Ferguson attempted to get the Confederate government to effect an exchange, and once the 60 days had elapsed, he urged the government to act or to allow him to return to captivity. "I am doing nothing for the good of my country while in my present condition," Ferguson noted. Confederate President Jefferson Davis forbade his return.

The United States and Confederate governments reached a short-lived agreement to handle the exchange of POWs in July 1862. Ferguson was able to return to active service and in late summer organized a company of Virginia cavalry.

This sesquicentennial moment is brought to you by the West Virginia Sesquicentennial Commission and the West Virginia Division of Culture and History, Archives and History Section.

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