

**July 21,  
1861**  
*First Battle of  
Bull Run*

**March 9,  
1862**  
*Battle between  
the Merrimack  
and the Monitor*

**April 6-7,  
1862**  
*Battle of Shiloh*

**September 17,  
1862**  
*Battle of Antietam*

**1861**

**1862**

**1863**

# 1 From Bull Run to Antietam

## SECTION PREVIEW

### Objectives

- 1 Describe the First Battle of Bull Run and the war preparations of the two sides.
- 2 Explain the importance of Union victories in the western part of the Confederacy during 1862.
- 3 Describe the outcome of the battles in the East during 1862.
- 4 **Key Terms** Define: Civil War; First Battle of Bull Run; casualty; war of attrition; shell; canister; Battle of Shiloh; Battle of Antietam.

### Main Idea

Bloody fighting during the first two years of the Civil War made it clear to both the North and the South that the struggle would be long and difficult.

### Reading Strategy

**Formulating Questions** Reread the Main Idea above. Then rewrite it as a question. As you read, take notes about events that help answer the question.

In May 1861, after the Upper South (Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Arkansas) seceded from the Union, the Confederate states shifted their capital from Montgomery, Alabama, to Richmond, Virginia. By July, some 35,000 northern volunteers were training in Washington, D.C., just 100 miles away. "Forward to Richmond!" urged a headline in the *New York Tribune*. Many Northerners believed that capturing the Confederate capital would bring a quick end to the **Civil War**. No one predicted that this war between the Northern (Union) and Southern (Confederate) states would last from 1861 to 1865.

## The First Battle of Bull Run

General Irvin McDowell, commander of the Union troops, was not yet ready to fight. Most of his troops, however, had volunteered for just 90 days and their term of service was nearly finished. "This is not an army," he told the President. "It will take a long time to make an army." Despite this warning, Lincoln ordered his general into action.

On July 16, McDowell marched his poorly prepared army into Virginia. His objective was the town of Manassas, an important railroad junction southwest of Washington. Opposing him was a smaller Confederate force under General P.G.T. Beauregard, the officer who had captured Fort Sumter. The Confederates were camped along Bull Run, a stream that passed about four miles north of Manassas.

The Union army took nearly four days to march 25 miles to Manassas. The soldiers' lack of training contributed to their slow pace. McDowell later explained, "They stopped every moment to pick blackberries or get water. . . . They would not keep in the ranks, order as much as you pleased."

Beauregard had no trouble keeping track of McDowell's progress. Accompanying the troops was a huge crowd of reporters, politicians, and other civilians from Washington, planning to picnic and watch the battle.

McDowell's delays allowed Beauregard to strengthen his army. Some 11,000 additional Confederate troops were packed into freight cars and sped to the scene. (This was the first



*More than 90 percent of all battle wounds in the Civil War were caused by bullets such as the newer, more accurate type shown here.*



## COMPARING PRIMARY SOURCES

### THE AIMS OF THE CIVIL WAR

Throughout the years of quarreling between North and South, Southerners protested repeatedly that Northerners were trampling on their rights, including the right to own slaves as property.

#### The Aims of the South

"We have vainly endeavored to secure tranquillity and obtain respect for the rights to which we were entitled. . . . If . . . the integrity of our territory and jurisdiction [legal authority] be assailed [attacked], it will but remain for us with firm resolve to appeal to arms."

—President Jefferson Davis,  
Inaugural Address,  
February 18, 1861

#### The Aims of the North

"This war is not waged upon our part in any spirit of oppression, nor for any purpose of conquest or subjugation, nor purpose of overthrowing or interfering with the rights or established institutions of those [seceding] States, but to defend and maintain the supremacy of the Constitution and to preserve the Union."

—House of Representatives,  
Crittenden Resolution,  
July 25, 1861

**ANALYZING VIEWPOINTS** How did the war aims of each side reflect their quarrel, as described above?

time in the history of warfare that troops were moved by train.) When McDowell finally attacked on July 21, he faced a force nearly the size of his own. Beyond the Confederate lines lay the road to Richmond.

After hours of hard fighting, the Union soldiers appeared to be winning. Their slow advance pushed the Southerners back. However, some Virginia soldiers commanded by General Thomas Jackson refused to give up. Seeing this, another Confederate officer rallied his retreating troops, shouting: "Look! There is Jackson standing like a stone wall! Rally behind the Virginians!" The Union advance was stopped, and "Stonewall" Jackson had earned his nickname.

Tired and discouraged, in late afternoon the Union forces began to fall back. Then a trainload of fresh Confederate troops arrived and launched a counterattack. The orderly Union retreat fell apart. Hundreds of soldiers dropped their weapons and started to run north. They stampeded into the sightseers who had followed them to the battlefield.

As the army disintegrated, soldiers and civilians were caught in a tangle of carriages,

wagons, and horses on the narrow road. Terrified that the Confederate troops would catch them, they ran headlong for the safety of Washington. The Confederates, however, were also disorganized and exhausted, and they did not pursue the Union army.

The first major battle of the Civil War thus ended. It became known as the **First Battle of Bull Run**, because the following year another bloody battle occurred at almost exactly the same site.<sup>†</sup>

Compared to what would come, this battle was not a huge action. About 35,000 were involved on each side. The Union suffered about 2,900 **casualties**, the military term for those killed, wounded, captured, or missing in action. Confederate casualties were fewer than 2,000. Later battles would prove much more costly.

### Preparing for War

Bull Run caused some Americans on both sides to suspect that winning the war might not be easy. "The fat is in the fire now," wrote Lincoln's private secretary. "The preparations for the war will be continued with increased vigor by the Government." Congress quickly authorized the President to raise a million three-year volunteers. In Richmond, a clerk in the Confederate War Department began to worry, "We are resting on our oars, while the enemy is drilling and equipping 500,000 or 600,000 men."

**Strengths and Weaknesses** In several respects, the North was much better prepared for war than was the South. For example, the North had more than double the South's miles of railroad track. This made the movement of troops, food, and supplies quicker and easier in the North. More than twice as many factories were in the North as in the South. The North was thus better able to produce the guns, ammunition, shoes, and other items it needed for its army. The North's economy was well balanced between farming and industry, and the North had far more money in its banks than the South. Finally, the North already had a functioning government and, although they were small, an existing army and navy.

<sup>†</sup> Many Civil War battles have two names, one given by the South and the other given by the North. The South tended to connect a battle with the nearest town, the North with some physical feature close by the battlefield.



Most importantly, two thirds of the nation's population lived in Union states. This made more men available to the Union army, but allowed for a sufficient labor force to remain behind for farm and factory work.

The Confederates had some advantages, too. Because seven of the nation's eight military colleges were in the South, a majority of the nation's trained officers were Southerners. When the war began, most of these officers sided with the Confederacy. In addition, the southern army did not need to initiate any military action to win the war. All they needed to do was maintain a defensive position and keep from being beaten. In contrast, to restore unity to the nation the North would have to attack and conquer the South. Southerners had the added advantage of fighting to preserve their way of life and, they believed, their right to self-government.

**Union Military Strategies** After the fall of Fort Sumter, President Lincoln ordered a naval blockade of the seceded states. By shutting down the South's ports along the Atlantic Coast and the Gulf of Mexico, Lincoln hoped to keep the South from shipping its cotton to Europe. He also wanted to prevent Southerners from importing the manufactured goods they needed.

Lincoln's blockade was part of a strategy developed by General Winfield Scott, the hero of the Mexican War and commander of all U.S. troops in 1861. The general realized it would take a long time to raise and train an army that was big enough and strong enough to invade the South successfully. Instead, he proposed to choke off the Confederacy with the blockade and to use troops and gunboats to gain control of the Mississippi River. Scott believed this would pressure the South to seek peace and would restore the nation without a bloody war.

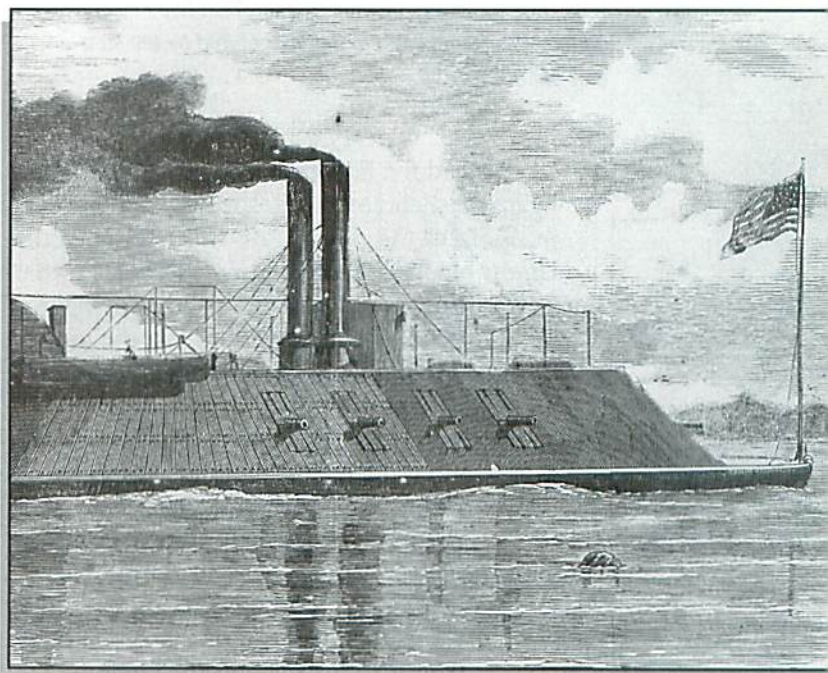
Northern newspapers sneered at Scott's strategy. They scornfully named it the Anaconda Plan, after a type of snake that coils around its victims and crushes them to death. Despite the Union defeat at Bull Run, political pressure for action and a quick victory remained strong in 1861. This public clamor for results led to several more attempts to capture Richmond.

**Confederate War Strategies** The South's basic war plan was to prepare and wait. Many Southerners hoped that Lincoln would let them go in peace. "All we ask is to be let

alone," announced Confederate president Jefferson Davis, shortly after secession. He planned for a defensive war.

Southern strategy called for a **war of attrition**. In this type of war, one side inflicts continuous losses on the enemy in order to wear down its strength. Southerners counted on their forces being able to turn back Union attacks until Northerners lost the will to fight. However, this strategy did not take into account the North's tremendous advantage in the resources needed to fight a long war. In the end, it was the North that waged a war of attrition against the South.

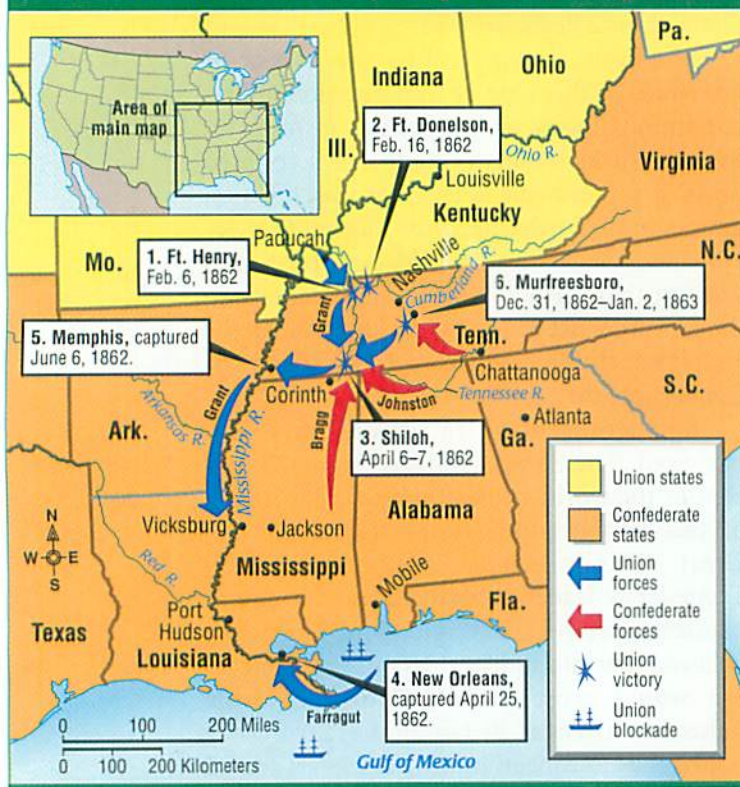
Southern strategy in another area also backfired. The South produced some 75 percent of the world's cotton. Historically, much of this cotton supplied the textile mills of Great Britain and France. However, Confederate leaders convinced most southern planters to stop exporting cotton. The South believed that the sudden loss of southern cotton would cause problems for the textile industries in Great Britain and France. They hoped that European industrial leaders would then pressure their governments to help the South gain its independence in exchange for restoring the flow of cotton.



Gunboats gave Union forces a great advantage in river warfare. One Union naval commander was reported to have preached a Sunday sermon to his sailors in which he said, "Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God; believe also in gunboats." *Geography* Why did the Union want to control the Mississippi River?



## Civil War in the West, July 1861–May 1863



Union generals in the West focused their attention on the Mississippi River. "That Mississippi ruins us, if lost," worried southern observer

Mary Boykin Chesnut in 1862. **Place** What two key cities on the Mississippi had the Union captured by the summer of 1862?

Instead the Europeans turned to India and Egypt for their cotton. By the time Southerners recognized the failure of this strategy, the Union blockade had become so effective that little cotton could get out. With no income from cotton exports, the South lost the money it needed to buy guns and maintain its armies.

**Tactics and Technology** For generations, European commanders had fought battles by concentrating their forces, assaulting a position, and driving the enemy away. Cannons and muskets in early times were neither accurate nor capable of repeating fire very rapidly.

Generals relied on masses of charging troops to overwhelm the enemy.

Most generals in the Civil War had been trained in these methods. Many on both sides had seen such tactics work well in the Mexican War. However, the technology that soldiers faced in the 1860s was much

improved over what these officers had faced on the battlefields of the 1840s.

By the Civil War, gun makers knew that bullet-shaped ammunition drifted less as it flew through the air than a round ball, the older type of ammunition. They had also learned that rifling, a spiral groove cut on the inside of a gun barrel, would make a fired bullet pick up spin, causing it to travel farther and straighter.

Older muskets, which had no rifling, were accurate only to about 40 yards. Bullets fired from rifles, as the new guns were called, hit targets at 500 yards and more. In addition, they could be reloaded and fired much faster.

Improvements in artillery were just as deadly. Instead of relying only on iron cannon balls, gunners could also fire **shells**, devices that exploded in the air or when they hit something. Artillery often fired **canister**, a special type of shell filled with bullets. This turned cannons into giant shotguns.

Thousands of soldiers went to their deaths by following orders to cross open fields against such weapons. Commanders on both sides, however, were slow to recognize that traditional methods exposed their troops to slaughter.

## War in the West

After the disaster at Bull Run, President Lincoln named General George McClellan to build and command a new army. While McClellan was involved with this task, Union forces in the west invaded the Confederacy.

The states of Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee held the key to control of the Mississippi River. Although some battles did take place farther west, the fighting in these four states is generally referred to as the "war in the West."

The most successful Union forces in the West were led by General Ulysses S. Grant. A graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, Grant had left the military after serving in the Mexican War. Over the next several years he tried and failed at a number of civilian jobs. After the fall of Fort Sumter, Grant organized a group of Illinois volunteers and became a colonel. His success at organizing and training troops caused Lincoln to promote him to general. He was assigned to command the Union forces based in Paducah, Kentucky, where the Ohio and Tennessee rivers meet.

## Main Idea CONNECTIONS

Why did Civil War generals use outdated tactics?



**Forts Henry and Donelson** In February 1862, Grant advanced south along the Tennessee River with more than 15,000 troops and several gunboats. Powered by steam and built to navigate shallow bodies of water, these gunboats were basically small floating forts fitted with cannons.

Grant's objectives were Fort Henry and Fort Donelson, located just over the border in the Confederate state of Tennessee. The forts protected the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers, important water routes into the western Confederacy.

On February 6 the Union gunboats pounded Fort Henry into surrender before Grant's troops arrived. The general then marched his army east and attacked Fort Donelson on the Cumberland River. Following three days of shelling by the gunboats, Fort Donelson also gave up.

The battles caused a sensation in both North and South. Northerners rejoiced that at last the Union had an important victory. Southerners worried that loss of the forts exposed much of the region to attack. Indeed Nashville soon fell to another Union army. Meanwhile, Grant and some 42,000 soldiers pushed farther south along the Tennessee River to threaten Mississippi and Alabama.

**The Battle of Shiloh** In late March, Grant's army neared Corinth, Mississippi, an important railroad center near the Tennessee-Mississippi border. Confederate general Albert Sidney Johnston gathered troops from throughout the region to halt the Union advance. As Grant's forces approached, Johnston had assembled an army of about 40,000 to oppose them.

Grant, however, stopped at Pittsburg Landing, Tennessee, a small river town about 20 miles north of Corinth. Here he waited for more Union troops that General Don Carlos Buell was bringing from Nashville. Johnston decided to launch an attack against Grant's army before it got any larger.

On April 6, 1862, Johnston's Confederates surprised some of Grant's troops, who were camped at Shiloh Church outside Pittsburg Landing. Fighting quickly spread along a battle line six miles long. By the end of the first day of the **Battle of Shiloh**, the Southerners had driven the Union forces back, nearly into the Tennessee River. That night, some of Grant's officers advised a retreat before the Confederates could renew their attack the next

day. "Retreat?" Grant scoffed. "No. I propose to attack at daylight and whip them."

Fortunately for Grant, Buell's troops arrived during the night. The next day, Union forces counter-attacked and defeated Johnston's army. However, the cost to both sides was high. The Union suffered more than 13,000 casualties, the Confederates nearly 11,000. Johnston was among the Confederate dead.

Shiloh was the bloodiest single battle that had taken place on the North American continent to that time. It shattered on both sides any remaining illusions about the glory of war and destroyed northern hopes that the Confederacy would be soon defeated.

### Action on the Mississippi

While Grant advanced into the Confederacy from the north, Union forces were also moving up the Mississippi River from the Gulf of Mexico. In late April 1862, a naval squadron commanded by David Farragut fought its way past two forts in the Louisiana swamps to force the surrender of New Orleans. Pushing upriver, Farragut soon captured Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and Natchez, Mississippi. In her diary, Southerner Mary Chesnut voiced her concerns about the Confederate losses:



"Battle after battle—disaster after disaster. How can I sleep? The power they are bringing to bear against our country is tremendous. . . . Are we not cut in two? . . . The reality is hideous."

—Mary Chesnut

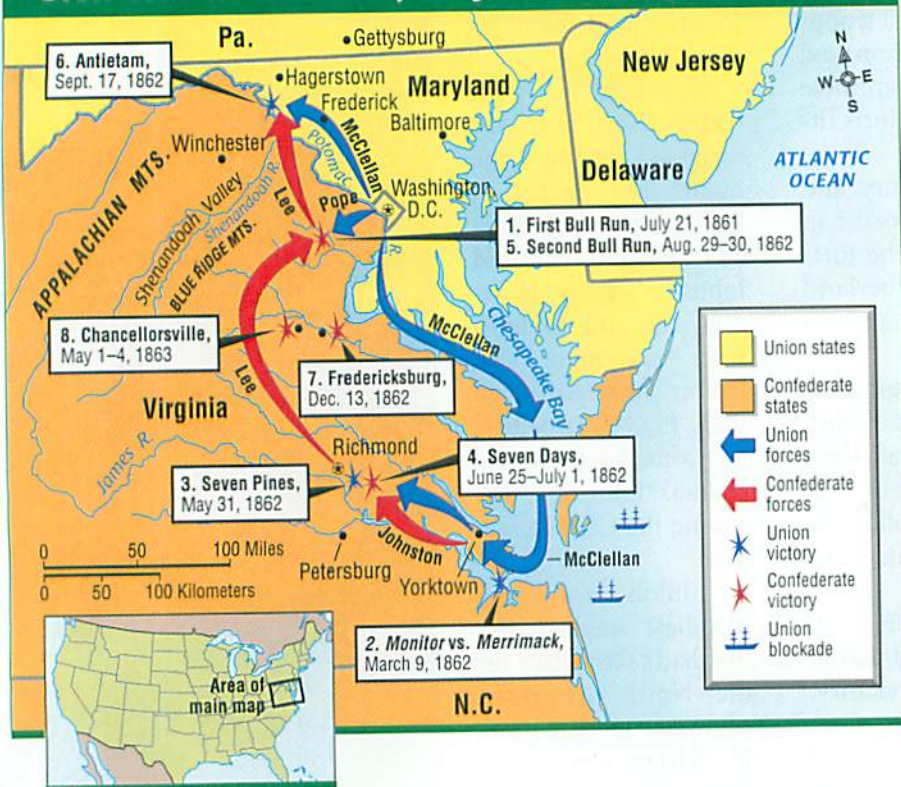
On June 6, the Union navy seized Memphis, Tennessee. Only two major posts on the Mississippi River now remained in



*U.S. Grant demanded "unconditional and immediate surrender" of Fort Donelson, earning himself the nickname "Unconditional Surrender Grant."*



## Civil War in the East, July 1861–May 1863



McClellan's extreme caution was his own worst enemy. "No one but McClellan would have hesitated to attack," said Confederate general Joseph Johnston during McClellan's slow advance toward Richmond before the Seven Days' Battles. **Movement** What action did Lee take following the Seven Days' Battles?

Confederate hands. These were Vicksburg, Mississippi, and Port Hudson, Louisiana. If northern forces could find some way to capture them, the entire Mississippi River valley would finally be under Union control. The Confederacy would be split into two parts.

### War in the East

While the Union army marched through the western Confederate states, Union warships maintained the blockade of Virginia's coast. The Confederates, however, had developed a secret weapon with which to fight the blockade. In early March 1862, a Confederate ship that resembled a floating barn roof steamed out of the James River. When the Union warships guarding the mouth of the river opened fire on the strange-looking vessel, their cannon shots bounced off it like rubber balls. In hours, the Confederate vessel destroyed or heavily damaged three of the most powerful ships in the Union navy.

**The Monitor and the Merrimack** Southerners had created the strange-looking vessel by bolting iron plates to an old wooden steamship called the *Merrimack*. (Although the ship was renamed the *Virginia*, it is still called the *Merrimack* in most historical accounts.) The Union's wooden navy was no match for this powerful ironclad warship. Northern leaders feared the new weapon might soon break apart the entire blockade.

Fortunately for the Union, early reports of the Confederates' work on the *Merrimack* had reached the North. Reacting to the threat of a powerful weapon, President Lincoln had ordered construction of a similar Union warship. It was made entirely of iron and was rushed to completion in about 100 days. Named the *Monitor*, it looked like a tin can on a raft.

On March 9, the *Monitor* arrived off the Virginia coast to confront the Confederate ironclad. Neither ship was able to do serious damage to the other. After several hours of fighting, the *Merrimack* finally withdrew.

The two ships never met again. The Confederates blew up the *Merrimack* at its base in Norfolk, Virginia, in May 1862. The following December the *Monitor* sank in a storm. Their one encounter, however, changed the history of warfare. In a single day, the wooden navies of the world became obsolete.

**The Peninsular Campaign** The Confederates destroyed the *Merrimack* because they feared it would fall into Union hands. They knew that Union general George McClellan had landed troops nearby, launching the North's second attempt to capture Richmond.

At 36 years old, McClellan was young for a commanding general. However, he was an outstanding organizer and an excellent strategist. In addition, he was well liked by his troops. McClellan's great weakness was that he was very cautious and never seemed quite ready to fight. This irritated Lincoln and other northern leaders, who were impatient to avenge the Union's defeat at Bull Run.



In March 1862, McClellan finally ordered the Army of the Potomac out of Washington. Because he thought that marching to Manassas again would be a mistake, he transported some 100,000 soldiers by boat to a peninsula south-east of Richmond. As the Union troops moved up the peninsula, they encountered some 15,000 Southerners at Yorktown, Virginia, about 60 miles from the Confederate capital.

Although the enemy force was much smaller than his own, McClellan asked for more troops. Lincoln dispatched a stern message to his general:

#### AMERICAN VOICES

**“It is indispensable to you that you strike a blow. . . . The country will not fail to note—and is now noting—that the present hesitation to move upon an entrenched enemy is but the story of Manassas repeated. . . . I have never written you . . . in greater kindness of feeling than now. . . . But you must act.”**

—President Lincoln

McClellan, however, waited outside Yorktown for about a month. When he was finally ready to advance, the defenders abandoned their positions and retreated toward Richmond.

On May 31, as they neared the capital, the Southerners suddenly turned and attacked McClellan’s army. Neither side won a clear victory at the Battle of Seven Pines, but both North and South suffered heavy casualties. Among the wounded was the Confederate commander, General Joseph Johnston. Command of his army fell to Robert E. Lee.

### Robert E. Lee

#### AMERICAN BIOGRAPHY

A warm and charming southern gentleman, Robert E. Lee came from an old, distinguished Virginia family. Among his relatives were two signers of the Declaration of Independence. His father, Henry Lee, was a hero of the American Revolution. After falling into debt, however, his father fled the country, leaving Robert to be raised by his mother.

In 1829 Lee graduated second in his class from West Point. During the next 17 years, he became expert in designing defensive military fortifications. His outstanding service in the Mexican War caught the attention of the army’s top officers, and in the early 1850s he served a short time as the head of West Point.

As the southern states seceded, Lincoln offered Lee command of Union forces. Although he was opposed to slavery and secession, Lee refused, explaining “I cannot raise my hand against my birthplace, my home, my children.” Instead, he resigned from the army and became the top military advisor to Confederate president Jefferson Davis. In May 1862 he took command of the Army of Northern Virginia, a post he held for the rest of the war. After the war Lee served as president of what is now Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia, until his death in 1870 at age 63.

As a commander, Lee earned the loyalty and trust of his troops. “I would follow him onto the battlefield blindfolded,” Stonewall Jackson said. Like all great generals, Lee believed in good training and planning. However, he also understood that victory sometimes depends on the willingness to take chances. ■



Robert E. Lee  
(1807–1870)

## The South Attacks

With McClellan’s forces still threatening Richmond, Lee had his opportunity to take a chance. In early June he divided his 55,000-man army, sending several thousand troops to strengthen Stonewall Jackson’s forces in western Virginia. The Seven Pines battle had reduced McClellan’s army to about 80,000 soldiers. Lee was gambling that the overly cautious McClellan, who was awaiting reinforcements, would not attack Richmond while the Confederate army was weakened.

General Jackson then began to act as though he intended to attack Washington. This tactic caused Lincoln to cancel the order for McClellan’s additional troops, keeping them in Washington to protect the Union capital. Jackson then slipped away to join Lee outside Richmond. In late June their combined forces attacked McClellan’s larger army in a series of encounters called the Seven Days’ Battles. Although the Confederates lost more than 20,000 soldiers, to the Union’s nearly 16,000, McClellan decided to retreat.

**The Second Battle of Bull Run** With McClellan having failed, Lincoln turned to General John Pope, who was organizing a new army outside Washington. The President



ordered McClellan's troops back to Washington and put Pope in overall command. Lee knew that he must draw Pope's army into battle before McClellan's soldiers joined it. Otherwise, the size of the Union force would be overwhelming.

Lee again divided his army. In late August he sent Jackson's troops north in a sweeping movement around Pope's position. After marching 50 miles in two days, they struck behind Pope's army and destroyed some of his supplies, which were stored at Manassas. Enraged, Pope ordered his 62,000 soldiers into action to smash Jackson. On August 29, while Pope's force was engaged, Lee also attacked it with the main body of the Confederate army.

The battle was fought on virtually the same ground where McDowell had been defeated the year before. Pope met the same fate at this Second Battle of Bull Run. After Pope's defeat, McClellan was returned to command. "We must use what tools we have," Lincoln said in defense of his decision. "If he can't fight himself, he excels in making others ready to fight."

**The Battle of Antietam** With Richmond no longer threatened, Lee decided that the time had come to invade the North. Lee hoped that a victory on Union soil would arouse support in Europe for the South and turn northern public opinion against the war.

In early September 1862, Lee's army bypassed the Union troops guarding Washington and slipped into western Maryland.

McClellan had no idea where the Confederates were. Then one of his soldiers found a copy of Lee's orders wrapped around some cigars near an abandoned Confederate camp. Now that he knew the enemy's strategy, McClellan crowed, "If I cannot whip Bobbie Lee, I will be willing to go home."

True to his nature, however, McClellan delayed some 16 hours before ordering his troops after Lee. This gave the Confederate general, who had learned that his plans were in enemy hands, time to prepare for the Union attack. The two armies met at Antietam Creek near Sharpsburg, Maryland, on September 17. Lee had about 40,000 troops, McClellan over 75,000, with nearly 25,000 more in reserve.

Union troops attacked throughout the day, suffering heavy losses. In the first three hours of fighting, some 12,000 soldiers from both sides were killed or wounded. By day's end Union casualties had grown to over 12,000. Lee's nearly 14,000 casualties amounted to more than a third of his army.

The next day the battered Confederates retreated back into Virginia. Lincoln telegraphed McClellan, "Destroy the rebel army if possible." But the ever-cautious general did not take advantage of his opportunity to destroy the Army of Northern Virginia.

The **Battle of Antietam** became the bloodiest day of the Civil War. "God grant these things may soon end and peace be restored," wrote a Pennsylvania soldier after the battle. "Of this war I am heartily sick and tired."

## SECTION 1 REVIEW

### Comprehension

- 1. Key Terms** Define: (a) Civil War; (b) First Battle of Bull Run; (c) casualty; (d) war of attrition; (e) shell; (f) canister; (g) Battle of Shiloh; (h) Battle of Antietam.
- 2. Summarizing the Main Idea** Why was it clear by the end of 1862 that the Civil War would be a long and bloody struggle?
- 3. Organizing Information** Write the following column headings on a piece of paper: *Union Strategies*, *Confederate Strategies*, *Union Victories*, *Confederate Victories*. Then fill in details from the text in the appropriate column.

### Critical Thinking

- 4. Analyzing Time Lines** Review the time line at the start of the section. Choose one battle that you think would have been encouraging for the Confederacy. Explain why you chose that event.
- 5. Recognizing Cause and Effect** How did the development of new military technologies affect the Civil War?

### Writing Activity

- 6. Writing a Persuasive Essay** In your view, was the North or the South more prepared to fight a war? Write an essay explaining your opinion. Support your ideas with specific examples.