



SHILOH, SHILOH Union

General Henry Halleck wanted to unite Ulysses S. Grant's army with General Don Carlos Buell's 35,000 troops out of Nashville. With the combined forces, Halleck hoped to move south and smash the Rebels at Corinth, Mississippi. Corinth was a key rail link between Memphis and the rest of the South.

CLOSING IN. Confederate commander Albert Sidney Johnston knew his 40,000 troops couldn't stand against Halleck's combined force of 75,000. He decided to act first and surprise Grant before Buell arrived from Nashville. On the evening of April 5, 1862, Johnston's Army of the Mississippi crept close to the Union camp at Pittsburg Landing, about two miles from the Tennessee River. Grant's men were scattered around the rural church named "Shiloh"—the Hebrew word for peace.

TAKEN BY SURPRISE. Yankee soldiers were boiling coffee and frying bacon for breakfast near a peach orchard when a wave of Confederate infantry rolled over their camps.

Screaming their high-pitched battle cry, the Confederates drove the stricken Yankees back toward the Tennessee River. Breaking one Yankee line after another, the Rebel attack seemed unstoppable.

The year before, at Manassas, such green troops had run away in terror when the battle had gone against them.

Some would run here—one officer was found curled up in a hollow log with two of his men. Some made for the river, swimming frantically to the other side. One private, caught in a fury of fire, shot his finger off so he could stand down.

Many, though, stayed and fought the Rebels. Thousands fell through the grim morning, raining blood on fallen peach petals.

THE HORNET'S NEST. By afternoon the Union soldiers had their backs to the river and could not retreat. Headlong Confederate charges continued to slam into their lines; the defenders were slashed with rifle fire from front and sides. If the bullets could not break the lines, screaming Rebels came charging with bayonets.

The Confederates fought bravely all morning, but now their courage was about to cost them. A stubborn Yankee division was using a sunken dirt road as a trench and could only be attacked across open ground. General Johnston urged his men on, thinking they could shove these stubborn Yankees out of the way, just as they had all morning. But the Union line would not budge. Grant had insisted that they hold the position "at all cost."

Finally the Confederates trained sixty-two cannons at point-blank range on the trench they called the Hornet's Nest. The position exploded, trees and men broken and thrown into the air in a "mighty hurricane."

Johnston, in the midst of a charge, was hit behind the knee by one of the thousands of bullets buzzing through the battle smoke. Helped from his horse by his staff, he bled to death before a surgeon could help him.

NIGHT TERROR. The Union division holding the Hornet's Nest was eventually surrounded. They finally surrendered

CHILD WARRIORS



Both sides needed males of fighting age to fill the ranks during a long war. The legal age of enlistment was eighteen, but many boys, excited by the idea of combat, enlisted as well.

Some young men got their parents' permission. Others ran off and lied about their age to the recruiters. A few preteens joined their home-state regiments as musicians, mostly drummer boys. The bands played on the march and in camp. After the battles, they carried the stretchers of the dead and wounded.

One drummer boy who became famous during the war was John Clem from Michigan. Reportedly, Clem was just ten years old when he was caught up in the terrible battle at Shiloh. A Rebel artillery

shell smashed Clem's drum, and the newspapers made him famous as "Johnny Shiloh."

A year later, in the chaos of retreat from Chickamauga, Clem carried a shortened rifle as well as his drum. A Confederate colonel called for his surrender at one point. John shot and wounded him and then took the colonel prisoner, becoming the "Drummer Boy of Chickamauga."

Clem was taken prisoner himself shortly after the incident. He spent two months in prison. But the experience didn't put him off fighting. He returned for the Battle for Atlanta and was wounded twice.

John Clem went on to make the army his career. He retired as a major general just before World War I.

These young Confederates were typical of the inexperienced troops who fought at Shiloh. The battle left thousands of them—as well as their Yankee opponents—in their graves.



before dusk. The brave stand stopped the Rebel advance for six hours and probably saved Grant's army.

As evening drew on, though, the Union situation was still desperate. Pushed back against the Tennessee River by the headlong Confederate attacks, Grant's tired men tried to bolster themselves for another assault. But it never came. The Confederates were spent. General P. G. T. Beauregard, who had replaced Johnston, decided he would finish off Grant's army in the morning.

"Some cried for water... God heard them, for the heavens opened and the rains came."

—A Union soldier at Shiloh, 1862

Darkness brought no peace. Union gunboats shelled the Rebel camps. Broken and dying, men cried out for water. General Grant could not bear the screams from the wounded and slept off in the damp woods under a tree.

During the night Buell's troops from Nashville began to arrive. In the early morning of April 7, Grant—now reinforced—counterattacked. Now outnumbered, the Rebels tried to strike back. In the face of fresh Federal troops, though, they were sent crashing back over ground taken at such terrible cost the day before.

The wounded and dead lay everywhere. A Union officer came across a blood-soaked Rebel lying across yet another shattered body. "Why did you come down here?" the dying man asked the Northerner. "We would have never gone up there."

BEGINNING OF A NIGHTMARE. The Confederates simply could not hold on anymore. They retreated to Corinth; but that city's key rail depot was doomed. Within two months, it would fall. With it would go Memphis and Tennessee's resources: its industry, people, and supplies. These were losses the South could scarcely afford.

Shiloh's violence shocked North and South alike. Grant's army of 62,000 had lost over 13,000 men—wounded, killed, or missing. The Rebels had lost fewer men, but a larger percentage of their total: nearly 12,000 casualties out of an army of 44,000. No one had dreamed that the "little war" would come to this.

The fighting at Shiloh was the closest and most brutal yet seen in the Civil War. The wild savagery turned one writer into a dark prophet of the nuclear age. Just a few days after the bloodshed ended, Henry Adams wrote:

"I firmly believe that before many centuries more, science will be the master of man. The engines he will have invented will be beyond his strength to control. Someday science shall have the existence of mankind in its power, and the human race commit suicide by blowing up the world."



DEFENDING RICHMOND

While the Western

armies mauled each other at bloody Shiloh, Union forces in the East moved out under a new commander. He was thirty-six-year-old General George B. McClellan, the hero of several small victories in western Virginia. McClellan, a master organizer, had quickly built his army of recruits into a powerful, well-trained force—the Army of the Potomac, more than 100,000 strong.

ON TO RICHMOND. Prodded into action by Lincoln, McClellan set his sights on Richmond, Virginia, the Confederate capital. He loaded his new army aboard ships in late March 1862 and came ashore on the Virginia peninsula. The Rebels, under General Joseph E. Johnston (no relation to the Albert Johnston killed at Shiloh), marched quickly from northern Virginia to block McClellan's move toward Richmond.

The Union army outmanned Johnston's force: 100,000 against 56,000. McClellan, though, was cautious by nature, and his inept spies convinced him that the Confederates really outnumbered the Yankees.

The Union general, advancing at a crawl, took a month to surround the Rebel defenses at Yorktown. By the time McClellan was ready to attack, the Rebels had escaped from his trap and pulled back to Richmond. There Johnston would try to scrape together a force big enough to face McClellan on more equal terms.

JACKSON'S PLOY. A hundred miles northwest of Richmond, Confederate General Stonewall Jackson was

thinking of ways to pull Yankee pressure away from Richmond. He hoped to lure a chunk of McClellan's troops west into the Shenandoah Valley. His first attack, in March 1862, got McClellan's and Lincoln's attention. By early spring, 40,000 Union soldiers slated for the Richmond campaign were off chasing Stonewall's army in the valley.

Leading a wild goose chase, though, wasn't enough for Jackson. With his 16,000 men, he whirled around to meet his Union pursuers, winning five of six battles in the Shenandoah. Jackson's turnaround victories earned him a place as one of the ablest field generals in military history.

In mid-June, Jackson broke away from his pursuers and headed for the peninsula. Now he would help the Rebels take on the Army of the Potomac.

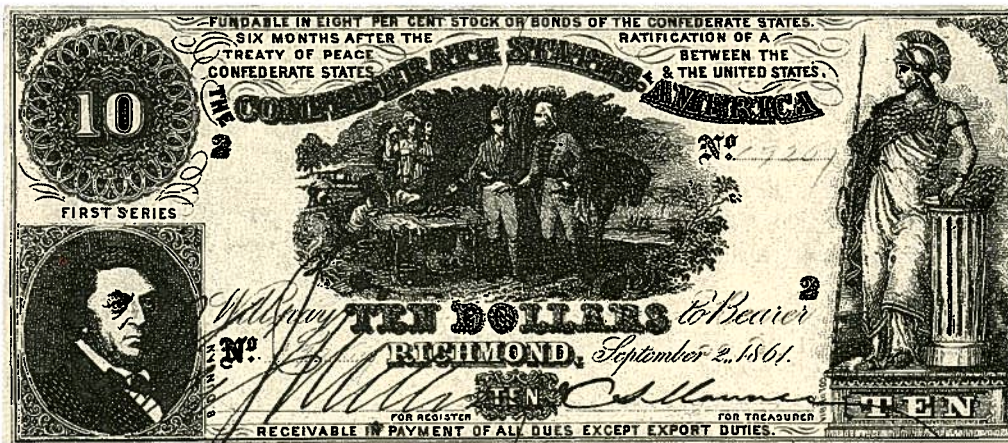
FAIR OAKS/SEVEN PINES. By late May 1862, McClellan's army had forced General Johnston's Confederates back into Richmond. Union soldiers could see the capital's steeples and rooftops. Sixty thousand Rebels faced McClellan's 100,000, but the Union general still believed he was outnumbered. As McClellan inched forward, he divided his army on either side of the rain-swollen Chickahominy River. Johnston saw his chance. On May 31, he moved to destroy the Union army's southern wing.

The attack, though, was a disaster. Johnston's confusing orders and the inexperience of his generals left his soldiers in chaos. A Rebel private recalled: "Men screamed.... The officers shouted out unmeaning cries. The flag went down."

In just five minutes, seventy-four soldiers of the Virginia 17th Regiment fell. Johnston, too, was stricken. Just before dark, he was wounded in the chest and shoulder.

By the next morning, the shaken Rebels were back inside their own lines near Richmond. But, amazingly, the fierce attack had once again convinced McClellan that he was outnumbered.

McClellan did have something real to worry about, though. The Rebel forces were about to get a new commander. Confederate President Jefferson Davis was



Confederate currency printed by various states replaced U.S. money in the South. Toward the end of the war, however, it was practically worthless.



Union troops guard a key bridge over the Potomac River at Washington, D.C. Lee's army soon threatened the capital.

about to replace the wounded Johnston with his personal military adviser, a general whose dazzling skills on the battlefield would make him a legend—Robert E. Lee.

LEE AND THE SEVEN DAYS. Lee acted quickly—he reorganized the Confederate troops into the new Army of Northern Virginia. He sent his dashing young cavalry commander, “Jeb” Stuart, on a daring ride around the Union army. Stuart’s horsemen discovered that McClellan’s right flank north of the Chickahominy was unprotected. With help from Stonewall Jackson’s hard-marching troops, Lee planned to surprise the Union right flank and crush it.

“It was not war, it was murder.”

*—Confederate General
D. H. Hill on the attack
at Malvern Hill*

On June 26, Lee launched three divisions into the jaws of the strong Union line at Beaver Dam Creek. But the Yankees, under General Porter, drove off the attacks, inflicting severe casualties on some Rebel regiments.

BREACHING THE LINE. Though he had won the battle, McClellan was still worried. He pulled some of his men back to Gaines’ Mill. There, on the afternoon of June 27, the Confederates attacked again, losing heavily. Try as they might, they could not budge the Union line.

Finally, though, Stonewall Jackson appeared. His extra troops gave Lee the strength he needed to plow through General Porter’s line. With General John Bell Hood’s Texans charging the center, the Yankee barricade was breached.

Lee’s victory at Gaines’ Mill was dear: 8,000 Confederates were killed or wounded in the attack, while the Union defenders lost 4,000.

McClellan, however, was now truly rattled. He abandoned the advance on Richmond, thinking only of getting his army safely to a new base on the James River.

MALVERN HILL. Lee had other plans. He came after McClellan, determined to destroy the Yankee army before it could reach the James. Pulling up atop the low crest of Malvern Hill, the Army of the Potomac turned to make a stand against the Rebels.

From the hilltop, the Union cannoners stood to their guns, waiting for the gray lines to come within range. The result was a slaughter. The Union guns loosed a terrible rain of “canister” ammunition—tin cans full of lead balls that ripped open just after leaving the guns’ muzzles. Each cannon was like a giant sawed-off shotgun, spraying death down the slopes into the packed ranks of infantry.

In the assault, Lee lost over 5,300 men, against 3,200 Union killed, wounded, and missing. The Seven Days battles were now over. McClellan’s Army of the Potomac was safe, but so was Richmond, thanks to Lee. But the cost to the Confederates was staggering. Lee had lost one fourth of his army—over 20,000 men—trying to destroy McClellan’s Army of the Potomac.



SECOND MANASSAS/ BULL RUN

McClellan kept asking

President Lincoln for massive reinforcements before facing Lee again. But the president was determined not to leave Washington, D.C., unguarded. Instead of sending more troops south to the cautious McClellan, he created a new army of 45,000, the Army of Virginia. The new commander, General John Pope, was a somewhat skilled officer but believed he was even better. Pope quickly marched south from Manassas, aiming to destroy Richmond's supply lines.

CEDAR MOUNTAIN. Robert E. Lee was determined to keep the Yankees out of his homeland of northern Virginia. Pope "must be suppressed," he told his staff. With one eye on McClellan, Lee sent Stonewall Jackson with 12,000 men to block Pope's advance. Jackson, being Jackson, was anxious to attack, but the Yankees struck first. At Cedar Mountain 8,000 Union troops sent Jackson's left flank reeling back in confusion. But Stonewall rallied his men, personally leading them in a counterattack that drove the Federals from the field. It was clearly Jackson's victory, but the fighting tipped off Pope that he'd stuck his neck out too far. Before Lee could trap him, the Union general retreated skillfully north across the Rapidan River.

JACKSON BECOMES THE BAIT. Lincoln was worried about Pope's exposed army. He ordered the Army of the Potomac back north to help. McClellan, though, was jealous of Pope's command and was in no hurry to rush to his aid. Lee sensed a chance to smash Pope before McClellan could arrive. With General James Longstreet and the rest of the Rebel army, he rushed to join Jackson.

On August 25, 1862, Lee sent Jackson circling to Pope's rear, aiming to cut him off. Despite the summer heat, Jackson's "foot cavalry" marched fifty-four miles in two days. Dead tired and covered with dust, they arrived squarely behind the Yankees. Jackson captured Pope's supply dump, even bagging the Union general's dress uniform.

The real treat for the Rebel soldiers, however, was all the food. For a whole day, Jackson let his weary soldiers feast on the mountains of provisions—canned peaches, fine wines, lobster salad. His refreshed troops grabbed all they could carry, including pairs of new shoes, then marched away with bulging haversacks.

Pope, though surprised, thought he could still trap and destroy Jackson. He ordered his army north to Manassas to surround Stonewall's three small divisions. When the Federals converged on the smoking ruins of their depot, though, the Rebels were gone. Stonewall Jackson had vanished, hiding his army in a nearby woods.

THE FOX TURNS. Pope couldn't find Jackson, but he was sure the Confederates were fleeing, trying to rejoin Lee's army. In fact, Jackson was doing anything but retreating. Knowing that Lee would join him the next day, Stonewall no longer needed to hide. Near sunset on August 28, Jackson moved to attack, ambushing a Yankee division near Brawner Farm. The Yankees, though outnumbered three to one, refused to run. These Union troops were just as brave as Jackson's men.

For the next hour and a half, the two battle lines slugged it out, firing into each other from a distance of

THE FIRST IRONCLADS

When Union forces abandoned the Norfolk, Virginia, naval base in 1861, they burned and sank their powerful wooden warship, the USS *Merrimack*. Confederate Navy Secretary Stephen Mallory saw an opportunity. He had the ship raised and refitted as a ten-gun ironclad, and rechristened her the CSS *Virginia*.

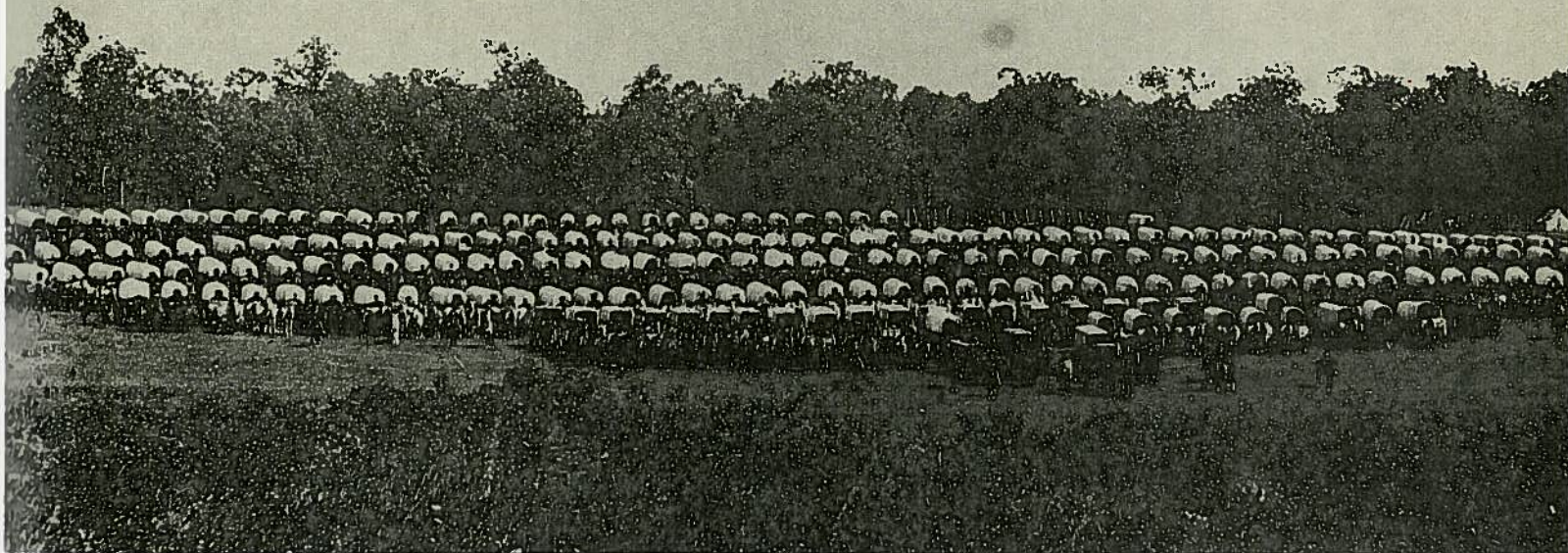
The ship had a slanting fortress on its deck. It was wrapped in sheet iron so thick it could deflect the largest naval cannon shells. The

Virginia soon made her name at sea. She rammed and sank the USS *Cumberland*, burned and sank the USS *Congress*, and forced the USS *Minnesota* aground.

The *Virginia* planned to finish off the *Minnesota* the next day. But the following morning, a surprise awaited the Confederate ship. Standing by the crippled *Minnesota* was a strange, flat-decked vessel with a round turret amidships. It was the USS *Monitor*, a new Union ironclad. Built in just four months, the

Monitor housed two powerful cannons in her rotating iron turret.

The *Monitor* was nimbler and used her turret guns to hit the *Virginia* at will. But she could only crack, not pierce, the Rebel warship's thick armor. One lucky shot from the *Virginia*, however, struck the *Monitor*'s pilothouse. The explosion blinded the *Monitor*'s captain, but the ship continued to fight. The "cheesebox on a raft" fought the *Virginia* to a draw.



A wagon park at Brandy Station, Virginia. Supplying their huge armies was the first order of battle for North and South.

no more than seventy-five yards. The impact of this concentrated rifle fire was terrible. One Confederate private, fighting behind an old fence, remembered the wooden rails splintering into fragments. Men, more fragile than wood, were knocked out of line by the dozens. Still the survivors continued to stand and fire into the clouds of flickering battle smoke. The fight sputtered out in the darkness, neither side gaining the upper hand.

“Some were struck in the act of eating. One poor fellow still held a potato in his grasp.”

—A nurse at Cedar Mountain

SECOND BULL RUN. Next morning, Pope threw his arriving troops across fields and wooded lots on the old Bull Run battlefield, certain of catching Jackson’s “retreating” men. Far from running, the Rebels were actually ready and waiting, crouching behind an unfinished railroad bed nearly two miles long. Pope foolishly attacked one brigade at a time. His tactics did nothing but waste brave soldiers against stiff Rebel defenses, even though, at points, the Yankees did manage to punch through.

In the heat of the afternoon Lee arrived with Longstreet’s men. While Jackson hung on, Lee told Longstreet to get ready for a counterpunch on Jackson’s right flank. The next day, August 30, still believing that Jackson was pulling out, Pope attacked Stonewall’s lines again, unaware of what Lee had in store.

When the Confederates opened fire on one charging Union column, the first line of Federal soldiers “looked as if it had been struck by a blast from a tempest.” One Union soldier remembered the slope being “swept by a hurricane of death, and each minute seemed twenty hours long.”

REBEL TIDAL WAVE. At 4 P.M. on August 30, Lee unleashed Longstreet’s 30,000 fresh men against Pope’s weak left flank. A Union private remembered the sound of the bullets as a “continual hiss and sluck,” the last sound telling that the bullet had gone into some man’s body. The 5th New York Regiment was virtually wiped out—the fleeing survivors shot down as they ran into the ravine of a little creek called Young’s Branch.

One Rebel private later wrote: “Young’s Branch ran blood. The Federals completely dammed it up with their dead and dying bodies.”

The Confederate success brought such disorder among the attacking brigades and divisions that Longstreet had to pause to regroup. Pope managed to hold off Jackson’s attack on his right, while shifting men to the left for a last-ditch defense on Henry House Hill. As darkness fell, a patched-together Yankee line on the hillcrest turned back Lee’s final attack.

Pope retreated toward Washington, lucky to have escaped at all. His army’s losses were almost 16,000, including more than 4,000 taken prisoner. The Rebels had lost fewer than 10,000. Lee had left the sluggish McClellan behind and whirled north, thoroughly trouncing Pope. With two victories under his belt, Lee decided to carry the war into the North, across the Potomac.