

2

A Long, Difficult Struggle

As
You
Read

Explore These Questions

- What were the military plans of each side?
- Which of its military goals did the Union achieve?
- Why did the Union fail to win major battles in the East?

Identify

- Stonewall Jackson
- Battle of Bull Run
- George McClellan
- *Merrimack*
- *Monitor*
- Battle of Antietam
- Battle of Fredericksburg
- Battle of Chancellorsville
- Ulysses S. Grant
- Battle of Shiloh

SETTING the Scene

In the summer of 1861, the armies of the North and the South marched off to war with flags flying and crowds cheering. Each side expected a quick victory. However, the reality of war soon shattered this dream. Abner Small, a volunteer from Maine, described a scene that would be repeated again and again:

“ I saw... the dead and hurt men lying limp on the ground. From somewhere across the field a battery [heavy guns] pounded us. We wavered, and rallied, and fired blindly; and men fell writhing. ”

It soon became clear that there would be no quick, easy end to the war. Leaders on both sides began to plan for a long, difficult struggle.

Strategies for Victory

The North and South had different strategies for victory. The Union planned to use its naval power to cripple the South's economy. At the same time, Union armies would invade southern territory. The South, meanwhile, planned to defend itself until the North lost the will to fight.



Union infantry drum

Union plans

First, the Union planned to use its navy to blockade southern ports. This would cut off the South's supply of manufactured goods by halting its trade with Europe.

In the East, Union generals wanted to seize Richmond, Virginia, the Confederate capital. They thought that they might end the war quickly by capturing the Confederate government.

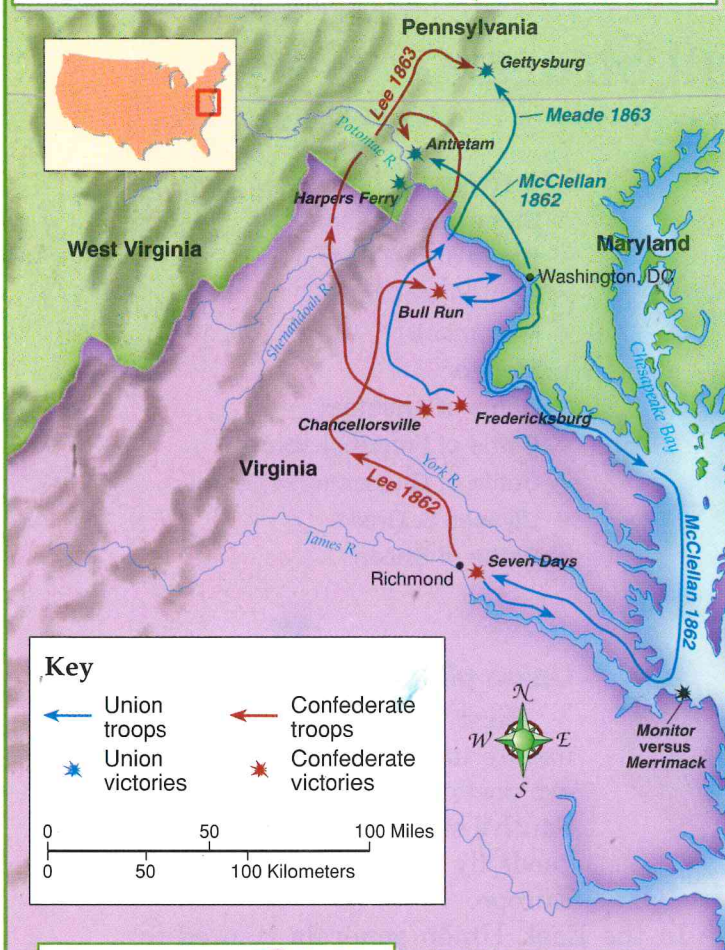
In the West, the Union planned to seize control of the Mississippi River. This would prevent the South from using the river to supply its troops. It would also separate Arkansas, Texas, and Louisiana from the rest of the Confederacy.

Confederate plans

The South's strategy was simpler: The Confederate army would fight a defensive war until northerners tired of the fighting. If the war became unpopular in the North, President Lincoln would have to stop the war and recognize the South's independence.

The Confederacy counted on European money and supplies to help fight the war. Southern cotton was important to the textile mills of England and other countries. Southerners were confident that Europeans would quickly recognize the Confederacy as an

The Civil War in the East, 1861–1863



Geography Skills

Early in the war, Union armies were unsuccessful in their attempt to capture Richmond, the Confederate capital.

- 1. Location** On the map, locate: (a) Washington, DC, (b) Richmond, (c) Bull Run, (d) Chancellorsville, (e) Potomac River.
- 2. Movement** Describe the route that General McClellan took when he tried to capture Richmond in 1862.
- 3. Critical Thinking** Do you think the Confederacy made a wise decision in locating its capital at Richmond? Explain.

independent nation and continue to buy southern cotton for their factories.

Forward to Richmond!

“Forward to Richmond! Forward to Richmond!” Every day for more than a month, the influential *New York Tribune* blazed this “Nation’s War Cry” across its front page. Re-

sponding to popular pressure for a quick victory, President Lincoln ordered the attack.

Battle of Bull Run

In July 1861, Union troops set out from Washington, D.C., for Richmond, about 100 miles (160 km) away. They met with Confederate soldiers soon after they left. The battle that followed took place near a small stream called Bull Run, in Virginia.

July 21, 1861, was a lovely summer day. Hundreds of Washingtonians rode out to watch their army crush the Confederates. Many carried picnic baskets. In a holiday mood, they spread out on a grassy hilltop overlooking Bull Run and awaited the battle.

The spectators, however, were shocked. Southern troops did not turn and run as expected. Inspired by the example of General Thomas Jackson, they held their ground. A Confederate officer remarked that Jackson stood his ground “like a stone wall.” From that day on, the general was known as “Stonewall” Jackson.

In the end, it was Union troops who panicked and ran. A congressman who witnessed the retreat reported,

“Off they went... across fields, toward the woods, anywhere, everywhere, to escape... To enable them better to run, they threw away their blankets, knapsacks, canteens, and finally muskets, cartridge-boxes, and everything else.”

The Confederates did not pursue the fleeing Union army. Had they done so, they might even have captured Washington, D.C. Instead, they remained behind to gather the gear thrown away by the Union troops.

The **Battle of Bull Run** showed both the Union and the Confederacy that their soldiers needed training. It also showed that the war would be long and bloody.

Caution, delay, and retreat

After the shocking disaster at Bull Run, President Lincoln appointed General **George McClellan** as commander of the Union army of the East, known as the Army of the Potomac. McClellan, a superb



Biography

Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson

Robert E. Lee (left) was perhaps the greatest general of the Civil War. Earlier, he had served admirably in the Mexican War and as superintendent of the United States Military Academy. Stonewall Jackson (right) was one of Lee's most skillful generals. Jackson's clever tactics and swift troop movements contributed to many victories.

★ **How did Jackson earn the nickname of "Stonewall" Jackson?**

organizer, transformed inexperienced recruits into an army of trained soldiers prepared for battle.

McClellan, however, was very cautious. He delayed leading his troops into battle. Newspapers reported "all quiet along the Potomac" so often that the phrase became a national joke. Finally, President Lincoln lost patience. "If McClellan is not using the army," the President snapped, "I should like to borrow it."

Finally, in March 1862, McClellan was ready to move. He and most of his troops left Washington by steamboat and sailed down the Potomac River for Richmond. The rest of the army stayed in Washington.

Landing south of Richmond, McClellan began inching slowly toward the Confederate capital. General Robert E. Lee launched a series of brilliant counterattacks. Lee also sent General Stonewall Jackson north to threaten Washington. Lincoln was thus prevented from sending the rest of the Union army to help McClellan. Cautious as usual, McClellan abandoned the attack and retreated. Once again, there was a lull in the war in the East.

Naval Action

Early in the war, Union ships blockaded southern ports. At first, some small, fast

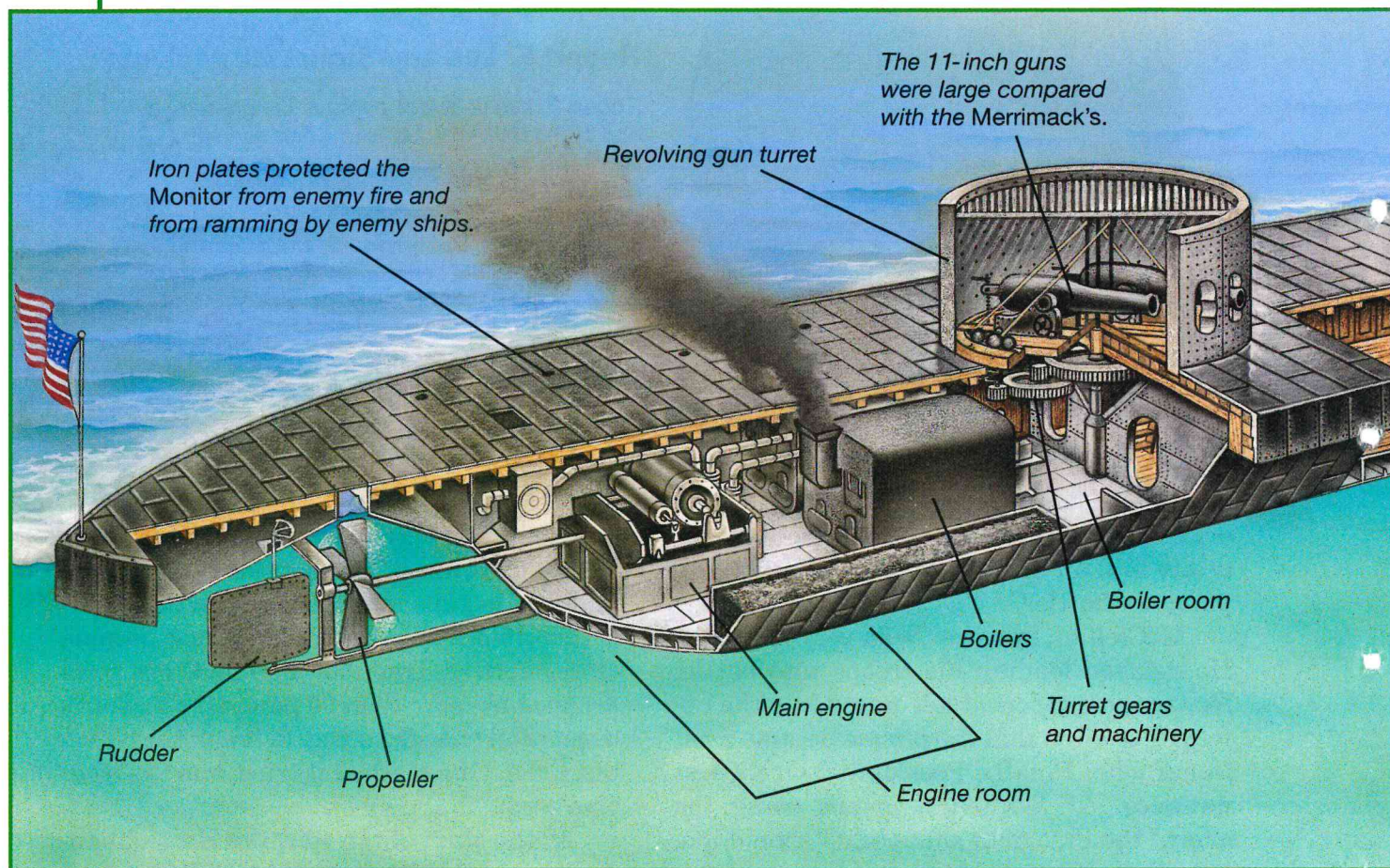
ships slipped through the blockade. These "blockade runners" brought everything from matches to guns into the Confederacy.

In time, however, the blockade became more effective. Trade through southern ports dropped by more than 90 percent. The South desperately needed a way to break the Union blockade. One method it tried was the iron-clad ship.

At the start of the war, the Union abandoned a warship named the *Merrimack* near Portsmouth, Virginia. Confederates covered the ship with iron plates 4 inches (10.2 cm) thick and sent it into battle against the Union navy. On March 8, 1862, the *Merrimack* sank one Union ship, drove another aground, and forced a third to surrender. The Union vessels' cannonballs bounced harmlessly off the *Merrimack's* metal skin.

The Union countered with its own iron-clads. One of these, the *Monitor*, battled the *Merrimack* in the waters off Hampton Roads, Virginia. The Confederate ship had more firepower, but the *Monitor* maneuvered more easily. In the end, neither ship seriously damaged the other, and both withdrew.

Ironclad ships changed naval warfare. Both sides rushed to build more of them. However, the South never mounted a serious attack against the Union navy. The Union blockade held throughout the war.



Antietam

In September 1862, General Lee took the offensive and marched his troops north into Maryland. He believed that a southern victory on northern soil would be a great blow to northern morale.

Luck was against Lee, however. A Confederate messenger lost Lee's battle plans. Two Union soldiers found them and turned them over to General McClellan.

Even with Lee's battle plan before him, however, McClellan was slow to act. After waiting a few days, he finally attacked Lee's main force at Antietam (an TEE tuhm) on September 17. In the day-long battle that fol-

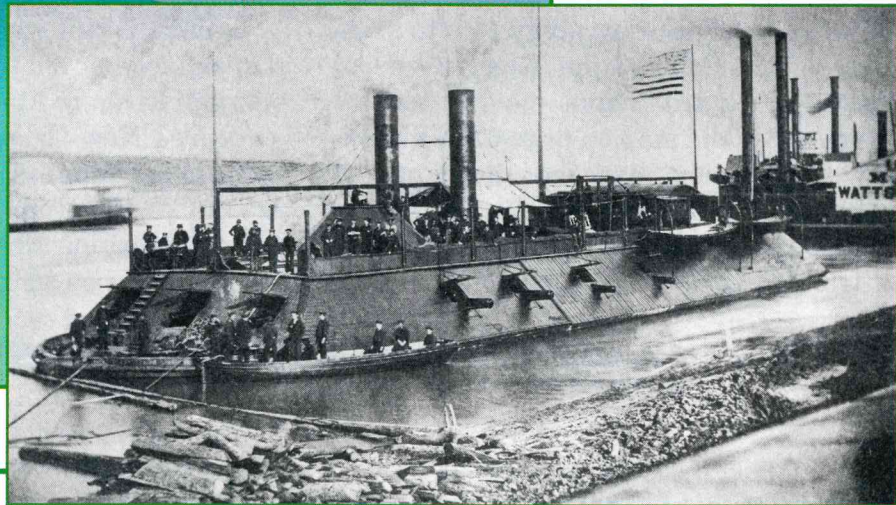
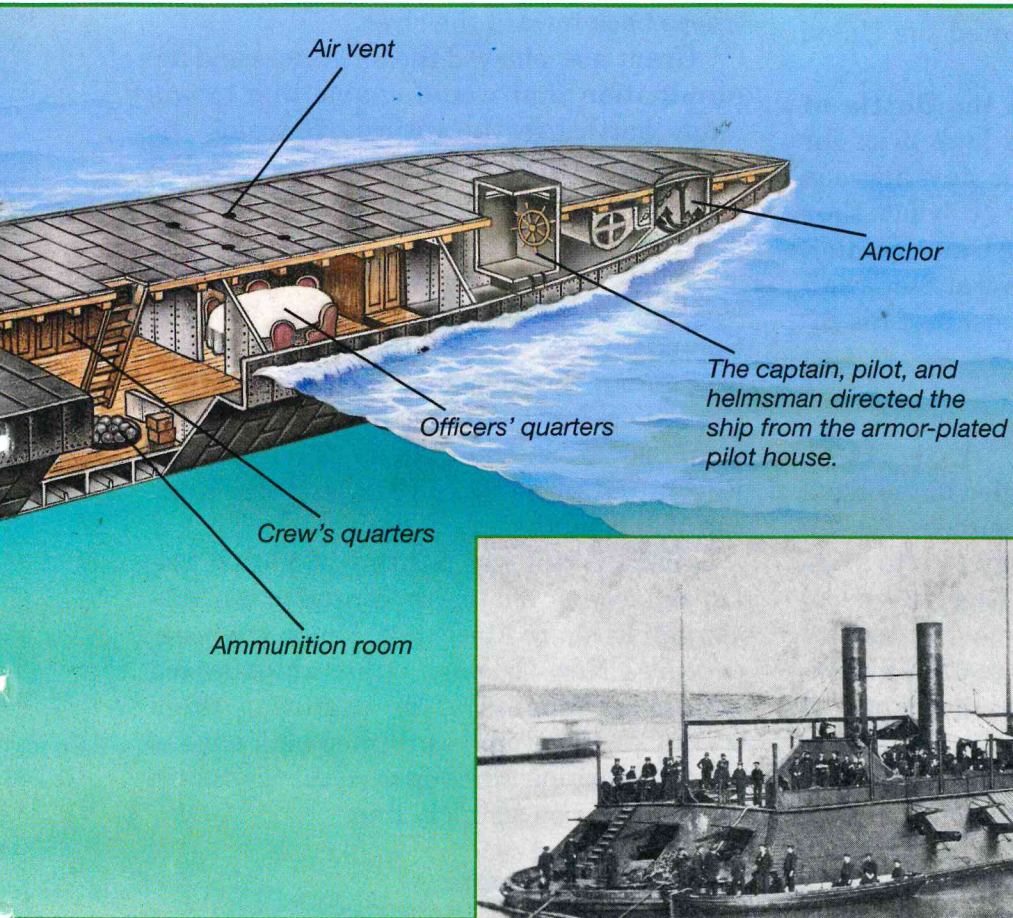
lowed, more than 23,000 Union and Confederate soldiers were killed or wounded.

On the night of September 18, Lee ordered his troops to slip back into Virginia. The Confederates breathed a sigh of relief when they saw that McClellan was not pursuing them.

Neither side was a clear winner at the **Battle of Antietam**. The North was able to claim victory, though, because Lee had ordered his forces to withdraw. As a result, northern morale increased. Still, President Lincoln was keenly disappointed. The Union army had suffered huge numbers of dead and wounded. Furthermore, General McClellan had failed to follow up his victory by pursuing

Ironclad Warship

The Monitor, the first Union ironclad ship, looked like a "tin can on a raft." Its most unusual feature was the revolving gun turret, which made it possible to fire at the enemy from any angle without having to turn the ship around. The Union added more ironclads to its fleet, such as the one in the photograph below. ★ How did the Union navy hurt the Confederate economy?



the Confederates. In November, Lincoln appointed General Ambrose Burnside to replace McClellan as commander of the Army of the Potomac.

Confederate Victories

Two stunning victories for the Confederacy came in late 1862 and 1863. (See the map on page 454.) General Robert E. Lee won by outsmarting the Union generals who fought against him.

Fredericksburg

In December 1862, Union forces set out once again toward Richmond. This time, they were led by General Ambrose Burnside.

Meeting Lee's army outside Fredericksburg, Virginia, Burnside ordered his troops to attack. Lee pulled back and left the town to Burnside. The Confederates dug in at the crest of a treeless hill above Fredericksburg. There, in a strong defensive position, they waited for the Union attack.

As the Union soldiers advanced, Confederate guns mowed them down by the thousands. Six times Burnside ordered his men to charge. Six times the rebels drove them back. "We forgot they were fighting us," one southerner wrote, "and cheer after cheer at their fearlessness went up along our lines." The **Battle of Fredericksburg** was one of the Union's worst defeats.

Chancellorsville

In May 1863, Lee, aided by Stonewall Jackson, again outwitted the Union army. This time, the battle took place on thickly wooded ground near Chancellorsville, Virginia. Lee and Jackson defeated the Union troops in three days.

Although the South won the **Battle of Chancellorsville**, it paid a high price for the victory. At the end of one day, nervous Confederate sentries fired at what they thought was an approaching Union soldier. The “Union soldier” was General Stonewall Jackson. Jackson died as a result of his injuries several days later.

The War in the West

While Union forces struggled in the East, those in the West met with success. As you have read, the Union strategy was to seize control of the Mississippi River. General **Ulysses S. Grant** began moving toward that goal. (See the map on page 470.) In February 1862, Grant attacked and captured Fort Henry and Fort Donelson in Tennessee. These Confederate forts guarded two important tributaries of the Mississippi.

Grant now pushed south to Shiloh, a village on the Tennessee River. At Shiloh, on April 6, he was surprised by Confederate forces. The Confederates won the first day of the **Battle of Shiloh**. They drove the Union troops back toward the river.

Grant now showed the toughness and determination that would enable him to win many battles in the future. “Retreat?” he replied to his doubting officers after that first day. “No. I propose to attack at daylight and whip them.”

With the aid of reinforcements, Grant was able to win his victory and beat back the Confederates. However, the Battle of Shiloh was one of the bloodiest encounters of the Civil War. More Americans were killed or wounded at Shiloh than in the American Revolution, the War of 1812, and the Mexican War combined.

While Grant was fighting at Shiloh, the Union navy moved to gain control of the Mississippi River. In April 1862, Union gunboats captured New Orleans. Other ships seized Memphis, Tennessee. By capturing these two cities, the Union controlled both ends of the Mississippi. No longer could the South use the river as a supply line.

★ Section 2 Review ★

Recall

1. **Locate** (a) Richmond, (b) Washington, D.C., (c) Potomac River, (d) Fort Henry, (e) Fort Donelson, (f) New Orleans, (g) Memphis.
2. **Identify** (a) Stonewall Jackson, (b) Battle of Bull Run, (c) George McClellan, (d) *Merrimack*, (e) *Monitor*, (f) Battle of Antietam, (g) Battle of Fredericksburg, (h) Battle of Chancellorsville, (i) Ulysses S. Grant, (j) Battle of Shiloh.

Comprehension

3. (a) Describe the North’s three-part plan for defeating the South. (b) Which part of the plan did the North achieve first?

4. Why was President Lincoln unhappy with General McClellan’s performance as commander of the Union armies?
5. How did the loss of New Orleans and Memphis affect the South?

Critical Thinking and Writing

6. **Analyzing Primary Sources** In response to Stonewall Jackson’s death, General Lee said, “I have lost my right arm.” What did Lee mean by this statement?
7. **Analyzing Visual Evidence** Study the iron-clad ships on pages 456–457. Explain how such ships were superior to wooden sailing ships.



Activity Making a Map You are the chief cartographer for the Union army. Your assignment is to make a map illustrating the Union’s three-part plan for defeating the South.