

The Western and Eastern Theatres - 1862

The Western Theatre

Both the N and S will put two major armies into the war. One in the East, and one in the West. The Appalachian Mts. will be the dividing line between the two fronts. These two large armies will determine the outcome of the war.

Union

- Eastern – Army of the Potomac: major fighting army in the East
- Western – Army of the Tennessee: major fighting army in the West (named after the river)

Confederacy

- Eastern – Army of Northern Virginia (will be Lee's army) major fighting army in East.
- Western – Army of Tennessee: major fighting army in West,(named after the state).

Civil War in the Eastern Theatre will be in one small concentrated area, such as Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Maryland. The Western Theatre will be over a large area, Tennessee, Kentucky, Georgia, Mississippi, and Louisiana.

1861: After 1st Bull Run, there's no major acts or battles for the next year.

1862: Union forces move against Forts Henry and Donelson, which guarded the rivers that flowed into the interior of the Confederacy Heartland. As long as the S held these rivers, the N could not use them as an invasion route. Ulysses S. Grant (Union) goes up against first Ft. Henry, wins, then Ft. Donelson. Grant demands surrender. The S. asks for terms, Grant said "no – unconditional surrender only, who we will bomb the heck out of you." The confederates surrender immediately.

Important for 3 reasons

1. N captures 12,000 men (parole system, which Grant gets rid of in '64), and S. can't afford to lose men
2. 1st major Union victories of the war
3. Opens entire Southern heartland to Yankee traffic and invasion, and pretty hard to defend when you don't know what river they'll be using.

With the Tenn. River now open, Grant heads up to attack the Rebels.

Battle of Shiloh (Pittsburg Landing)

Grant had not set up strong defenses b/c he was told the army he was looking for was 20-25 miles away. He was wrong. (Grant always learned from his mistakes.) Union is attacked in early morning. Able to hold all day with help of Gen. Sherman. At night, reinforcements. Day 2 – a total rout of the Confederate army, and turns into a major Union victory.

Important – Union continue to move into heartland. Their threat has not been stopped. Also, it's a demoralizing defeat for the S.

Capture of New Orleans

A minor battle, but of very great importance, because

- It was the Confederates largest city (sense of pride)
- Commercial and Financial capitol of S.
- South's busiest port, now in hands of N. Which means the N. blockade can move elsewhere now.

In the end, 1862 is a very, very successful year for the Union in the West.

The Eastern War

Following the disaster at 1st Bull Run, Lincoln replaces the commander of the Union army with George B. McClellan – proved to be a major disappointment. Every time he did well training troops, bringing them up to fighting standards, and would position troops, but lacked the nerve to engage the enemy. (Always thought he was outnumbered, always wanting more men, exact opposite of Grant or Lee). He considered himself the Savior of the Country, always knocking Lincoln. He also possessed a tremendous ego, loved to dress the role of General, and was just a real pompous jerk.

Lincoln once said "If General McClellan does not want to use the army, I would like to borrow it for a time."

1862 – The Peninsular Campaign: A spectacular disappointment

McClellan trains his men near Washington. Has a plan to capture the S. capitol of Richmond. Decides to transport 100,000 men down the Potomac, to a peninsula between the York and James river, march 75 miles up the peninsula, and capture Richmond.

Problem: If you send 100,000 men by sea, & march between two rivers, you have no room to maneuver. Trapped between two rivers. This plan will only work with speed. Must move very fast.

A good army could go 10-15 miles a day. McClellan moved at a snails pace – lost element of surprise. Especially with "Quaker guns" by the S., and other tactics to slow down McClellan. It took MC 8-10 weeks to get near Richmond, instead of a week.

And they see Gen. Johnston (in charge before Lee) waiting for them. S. attacks N. (Battle of Fair Oaks/ 7 Pines) Johnston is wounded, out of war, replaced by Lee. General Robert E. Lee will not waste time pushing the Union off the peninsula.

Important

- Major victories for S.
- Lee placed in command of S. army for rest of war
- S. protects Richmond.

George McClellan relieved of his command, replaced by Gen. Pope. Pope will fail spectacularly at 2nd Bull Run (2nd Manassas), and allow the Confederates to be on the doorstep of D.C. Lincoln relieves Pope, sends him to fight the native Americans in Minnesota.

Lincoln has no one to turn to, and so he has no choice (the Confederates are an immediate threat, no time to look), he selects McClellan again.

McClellan wrote to his wife after given command for the 2nd time “*Again, I have been called on to save the country.*”

After 2nd Bull Run, the S is no longer satisfied to fight a defensive war. Lee decides its time to invade the N. (hit them while they’re down) If the S can beat the N in Northern territory, it might end the war.

The confederate army invades the North and meets a Union army on Sept. 17, 1862, at a place called Antietam, Maryland.

Antietam (Sharpsburg): single bloodiest day battle in American history

Lee had split his army, with ½ (27,000 men) led by Stonewall Jackson heading towards Harpers Ferry (get rid of a small Union army that would be behind Lee otherwise), and the other ½ heading into Maryland. Stonewall to quickly capture Harpers, then rush back to meet Lee in Maryland. Stonewall if flawless, hardly a shot fired, and his quick.

Then the N. is blessed with incredible luck. A union scout discovers a few cigars wrapped with the Confederate battle plans detailing the split of the army. With this knowledge, the N. could leave DC, destroy Lee, then turn and do same to Stonewall. (Classic divide and conquer, and they enemy has already done the dividing). This plan also hinges on speed! McClellan, with an army of 70,000, heading towards Lee’s 27,000, and Lee doesn’t know he’s coming.

McClellan moved like a snail, again.

By time McClellan got to Sharpsburg, the Confeds had mostly been reunited. Union attacks, pushes back S. until at night, when A.P. Hill arrives from Harpers Ferry, with his cavalry, and saves Lee’s army. (Lee’s last words after the war will be “Has Hill come up yet?”). The next day, McClellan does nothing, and Lee, thinking if you won’t attack me, I’m outta here, retreats from Maryland to Virginia.

In a similar situation, Grant would have probably destroyed Lee.

Antietam is a Union victory, if only because they instilled large losses to Lee’s army, and he can’t afford to lose many men.