

Antietam Battlefield Staff Ride



The Past is Prologue

Union Order of Battle: Army of the Potomac

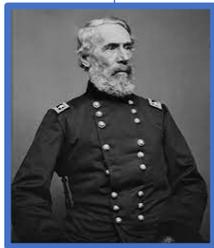


McClellan

Corps



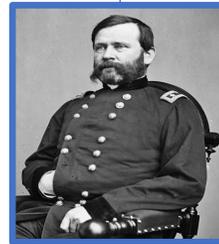
I Corps, Hooker



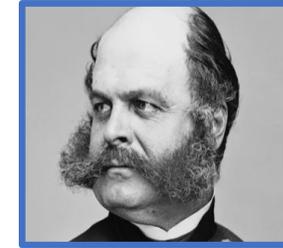
II Corps, Sumner



V Corps, Porter



VI Corps, Franklin

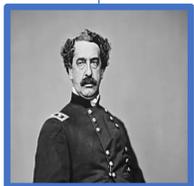


IX Corps, Burnside/Cox

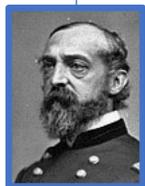


XII Corps, Mansfield

Divisions



Doubleday



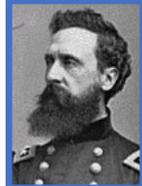
Meade



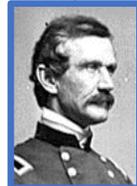
Sedgwick



French



Sykes



Humphries



Slocum



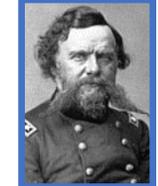
Smith



Wilcox



Sturgis



Williams



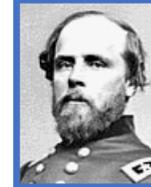
Ricketts



Richardson



Morell



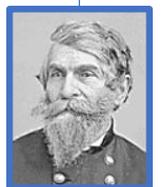
Couch (IV Corps)



Rodman

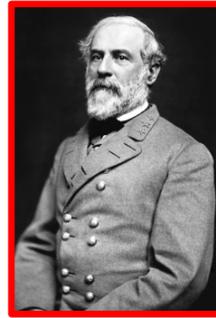


Scammon



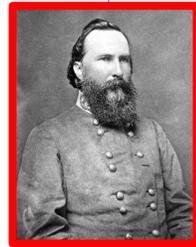
Greene

Confederate Order of Battle: Army of Northern Virginia

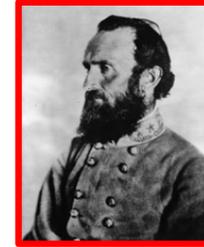


Lee

Wings



Longstreet



Jackson

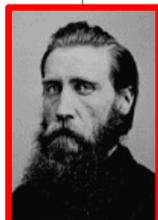
Divisions



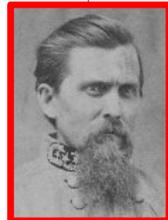
R.H. Anderson



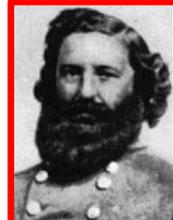
D.R. Jones



Hood



Walker



McLaws



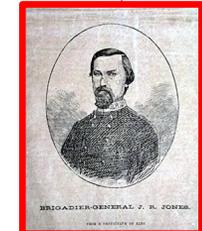
D.H. Hill



A.P. Hill

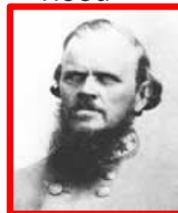


Lawton



J.R. Jones

Independent Brigade



Evans

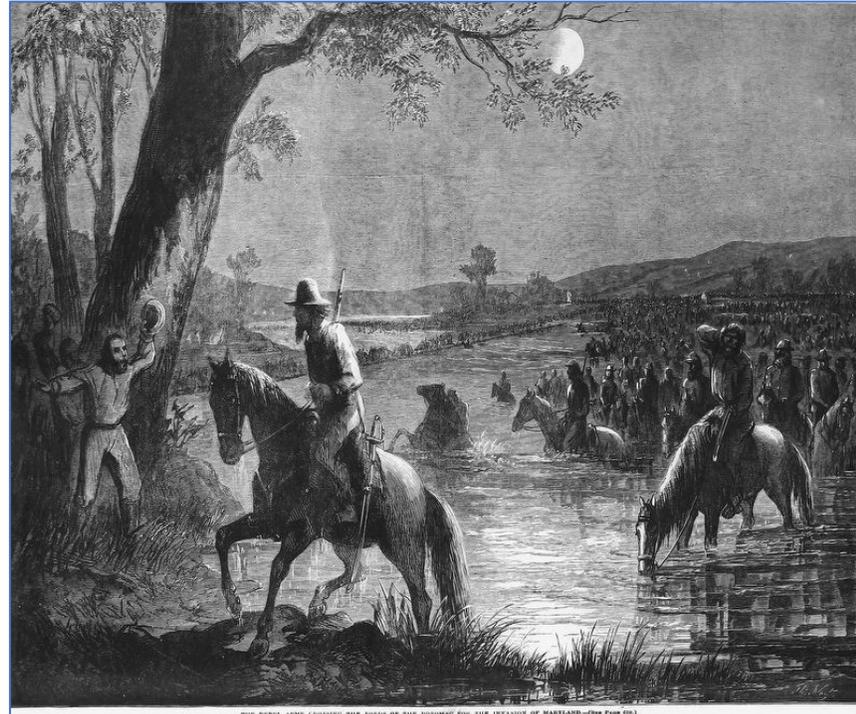
Maryland Campaign Operational Objectives



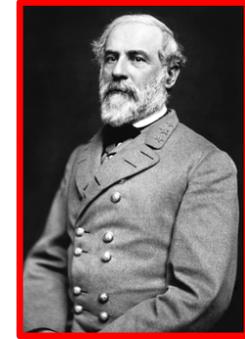
George B. McClellan

Ordered by President Lincoln to:

- Pursue Lee
- Protect Washington and Baltimore
- Destroy Lee's army, if possible



Rebel army crossing the Potomac River into northern territory, 4-6 Sep 1862



Robert E. Lee

Crossed into Maryland with multiple objectives:

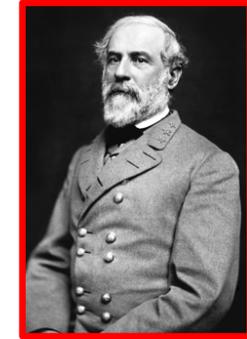
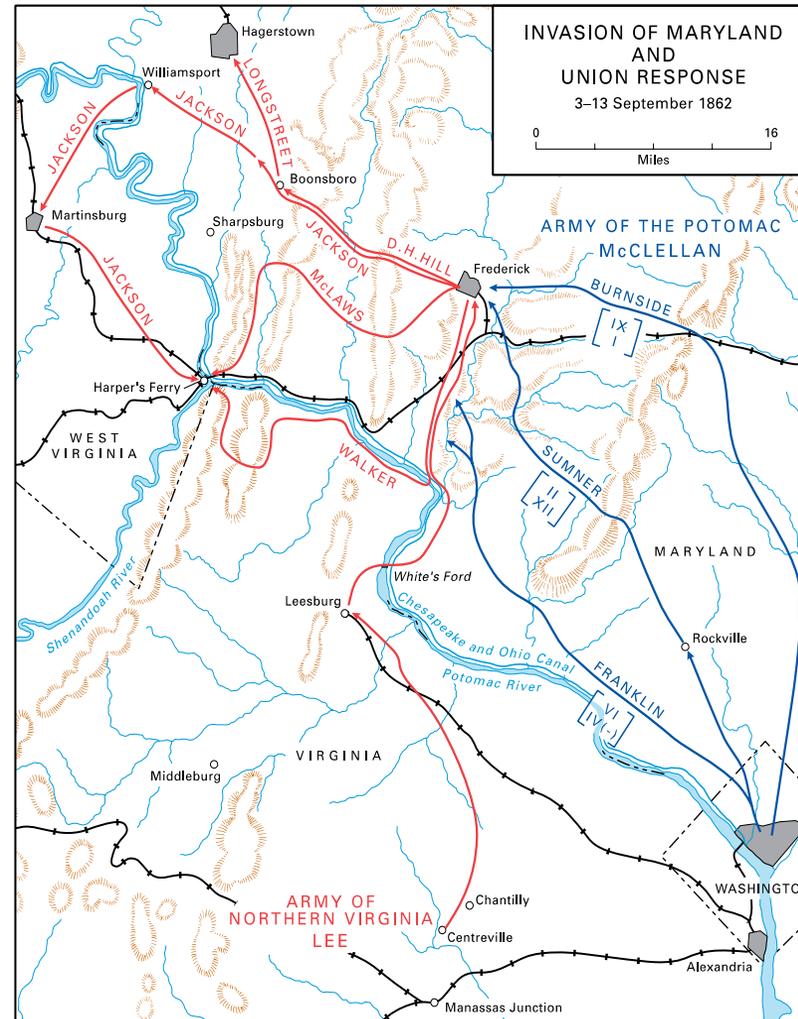
- Move the war out of VA
- Pull demoralized Union army out of Washington and give battle on ground of his choosing
- Find support in MD to strengthen and sustain his army

Lee Invades the North, McClellan Pursues



McClellan

- 7 Sep: Divides his army into three wings and begins pursuit of Lee
- 13 Sep: Advance units arrive in Frederick, MD and find Lee's Special Order 191
- 14 Sep: Orders army to march west and southwest to cut Lee's army in half; results in Battle of South Mountain



Lee

- 4-6 Sep: Crosses Potomac River into MD and consolidates in Frederick
- 10 Sep: Sends more than half his troops under "Stonewall" Jackson to take Harpers Ferry and then consolidate in Hagerstown or Boonsboro. The plan is written in Special Order 191.
- 13 Sep: Jackson's troops surround Harpers Ferry from three directions

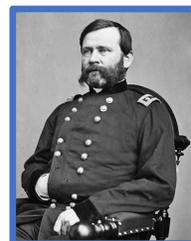
14 Sep: Battle of South Mountain (Lee's Delaying Action)



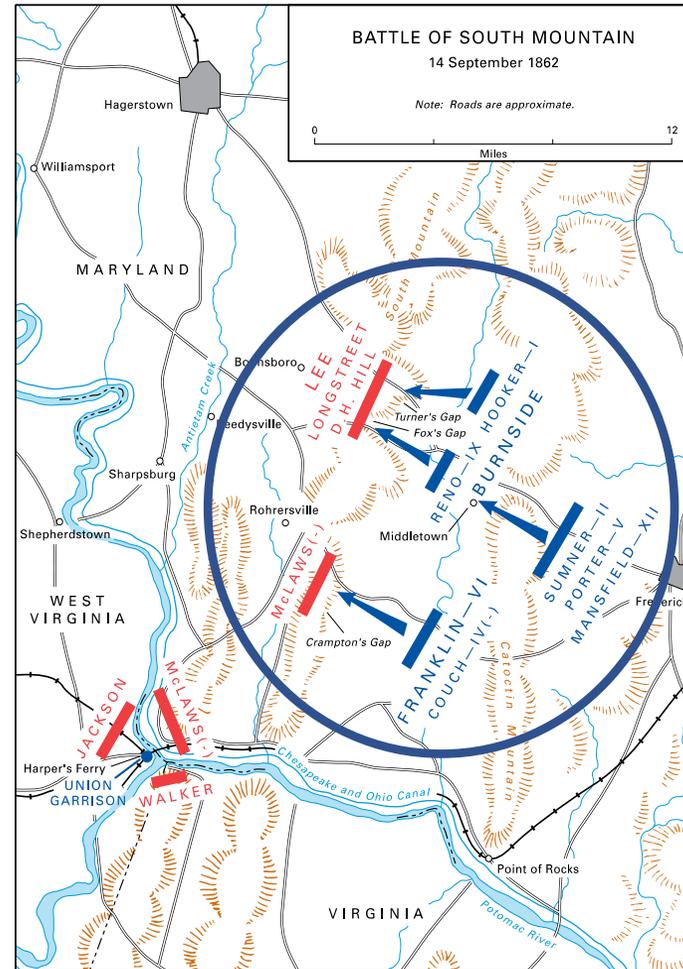
Hooker



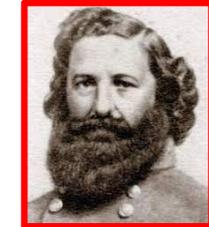
Reno



Franklin



D.H. Hill



McLaws

- I Corps (Hooker), IX Corps (Reno) attack D.H. Hill's division at Fox's and Turner's Gaps on South Mountain to cut Lee's army in half
- I and IX Corps flank Lee's troops when fighting ends shortly after nightfall
- IX Corps Cdr Reno is killed at Fox's Gap
- VI Corps (Franklin) takes Crampton's Gap by late evening and pours into Pleasant Valley with orders to attack McLaws and relieve Harpers Ferry

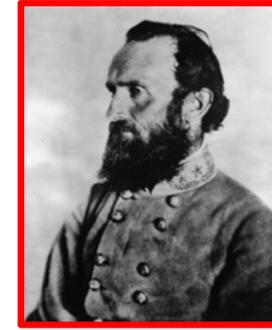
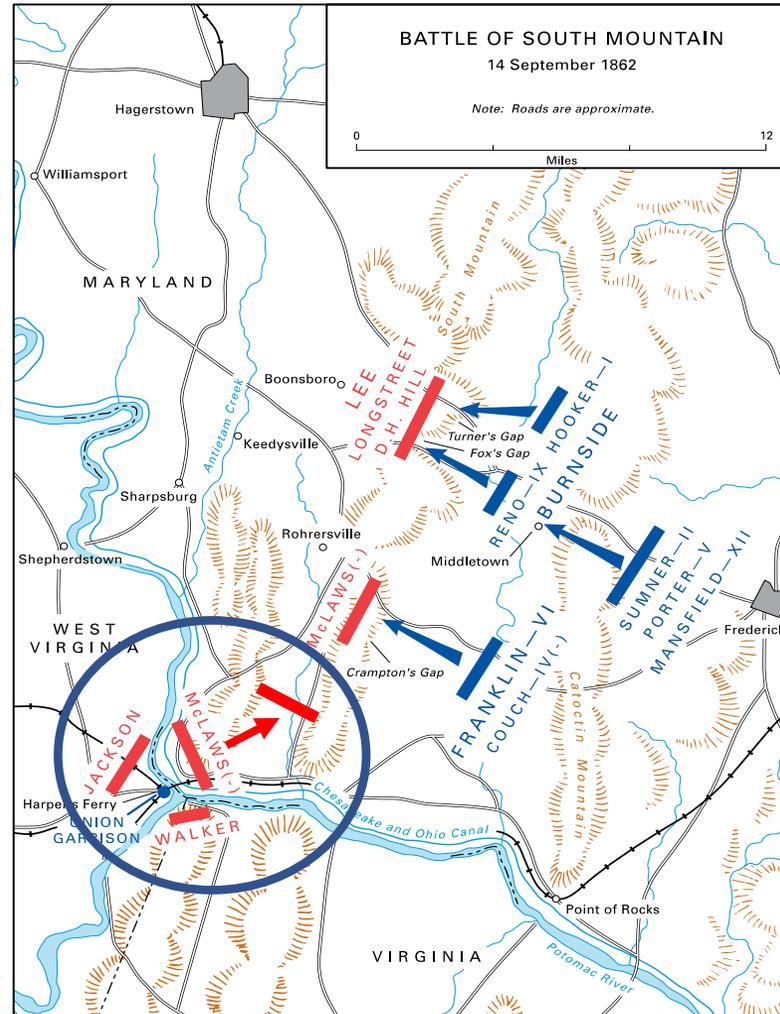
- Barely holding on, Lee withdraws D.H. Hill's division and Longstreet's reinforcements from Turner's and Fox's Gaps toward Sharpsburg after nightfall, intending to retreat to VA
- Farther south, McLaws loses Crampton's Gap to VI Corps while also besieging Harpers Ferry
- McLaws is trapped between the VI Corps and Harpers Ferry

13-15 Sep: Siege of Harpers Ferry and Union Surrender



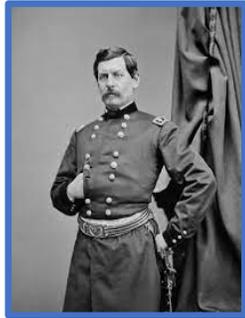
Miles

- Prior to siege: Garrison Cdr Miles was ordered to hold Harpers Ferry “to the last extremity”
- 13 Sep: Loses possession of MD Heights (knows all is lost); sends message to McClellan requesting relief quickly
- Miles’ artillery no match for Jackson’s; position is untenable
- Daring escape of 1,500 cavalrymen
- 15 Sep ~0800, Miles surrenders
- Miles is killed in final moments



Jackson

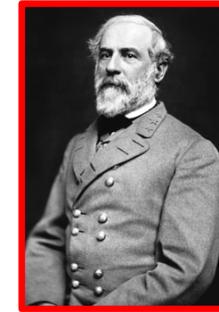
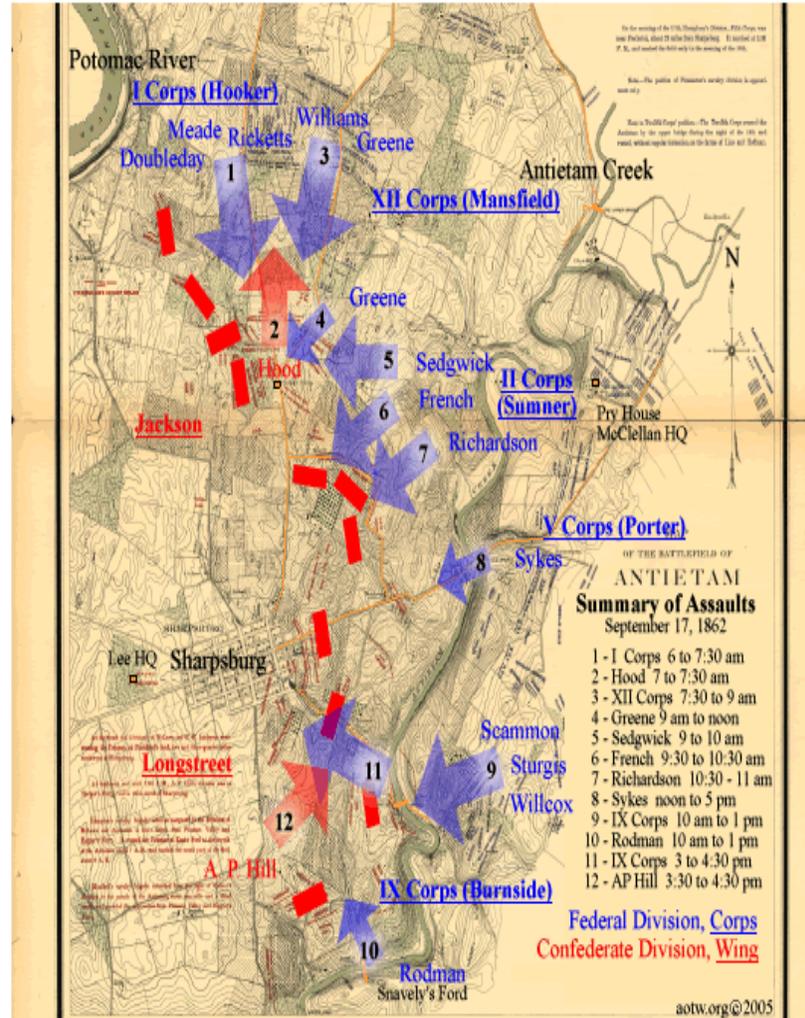
- 13 Sep: Confederates take high ground around Harpers Ferry
- 14 Sep: Begin artillery barrage
- 14 Sep, evening: McLaws leaves small force on MD Heights and turns north to face Union VI Corps
- 14-15 Sep: Jackson sends A.P. Hill's division to flank main Union defensive line on Bolivar Heights
- 15-17 Sep: After the surrender, Jackson rushes troops to join Lee at Sharpsburg



McClellan

“...attack the enemy’s left with the corps of Hooker and Mansfield, supported by Sumner’s and, if necessary, by Franklin’s; and as matters look favorably there, to move the corps of Burnside against the enemy’s extreme right, upon the ridge running to the south and rear of Sharpsburg, and having carried their position, to press along the crest towards our right; and whenever either of these flank movements should be successful, to advance our center with all the forces then disposable.”

Antietam Battle Plans



Lee

Lee’s plan of attacking McClellan on ground of his choosing is thwarted – now McClellan is “forcing” battle on him at Sharpsburg. Lee’s best hope is to win the coming battle and win it in such a way that he could recapture the offensive when it was over.

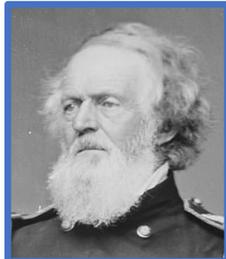
- Hartwig, *Taken at the Flood*

Lee has limited escape options: Hagerstown Pike (north) and Boteler’s Ford (retreat to VA)

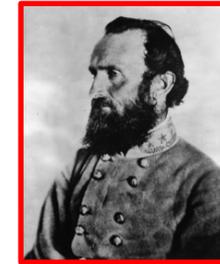
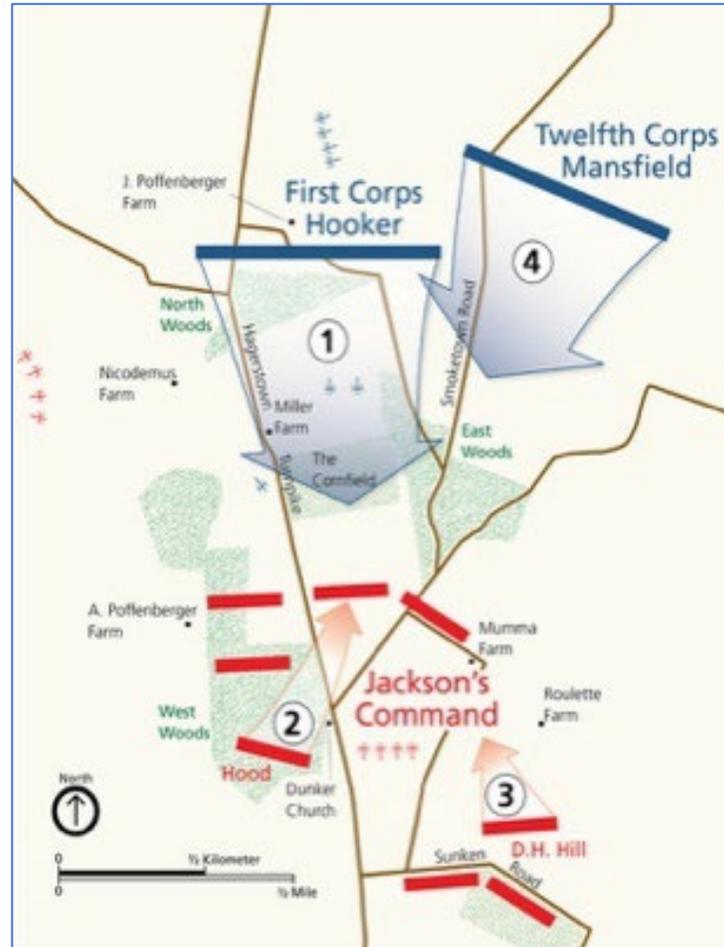
Cornfield Stand: 17 Sep: Battle Opens as Hooker Attacks Jackson; ~0530-0930



Hooker



Mansfield

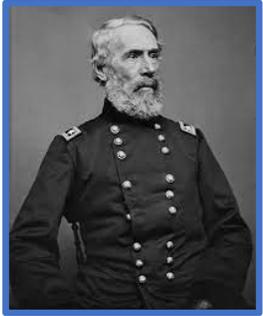


“Stonewall” Jackson

- McClellan’s orders: “Attack Lee’s left”
- Hooker’s objective: Dunker Church plateau
- Two-division attack (Ricketts and Doubleday); Meade in reserve
- Ricketts and Doubleday defeat Jackson’s divisions of Lawton and Jones
- Meade’s reserve division defeats a counterattack by Hood
- Hooker calls up XII Corps in time to repel a counterattack by D.H. Hill
- XII Corps reaches Dunker Church plateau
- To the south: McClellan orders IX Corps to cross Antietam Creek and attack Lee’s right

- J.E.B. Stuart’s artillery on Nicodemus Heights harasses Hooker’s right
- Lawton’s and Jones’ troops open fire when Union troops reach southern boundary of Cornfield; they are eventually defeated
- Jackson sends Hood to counterattack as Lawton and Jones withdraw
- Hood is defeated by Meade
- Jackson orders one more counterattack from D.H. Hill’s troops near Sunken Road; attack fails as Union XII Corps deploys

West Woods Stand: II Corps Attempt to Crush Lee's Left is Routed; ~0930-1030

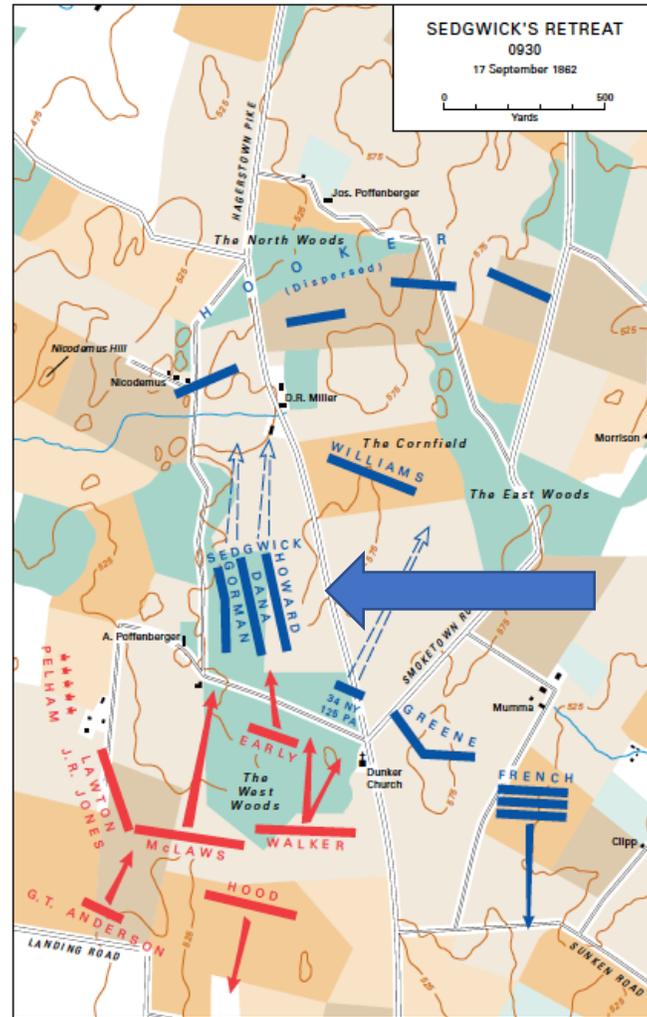


Sumner

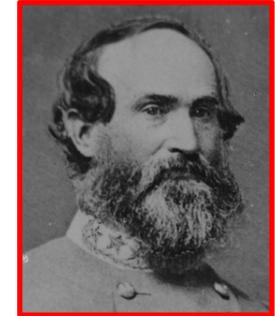


Sedgwick

- McClellan sends Sumner's II Corps east to west to push past Lee's left
- Sumner deploys his three divisions one at a time. Sedgwick's division, 15 minutes in the lead, marches toward the West Woods
- Sedgwick is hit in the front and left flank by McLaws in West Woods and routed; flees north with McLaws in hot pursuit
- Meanwhile, Sumner's next division (French) attacks the Sunken Road....



McLaws



Early

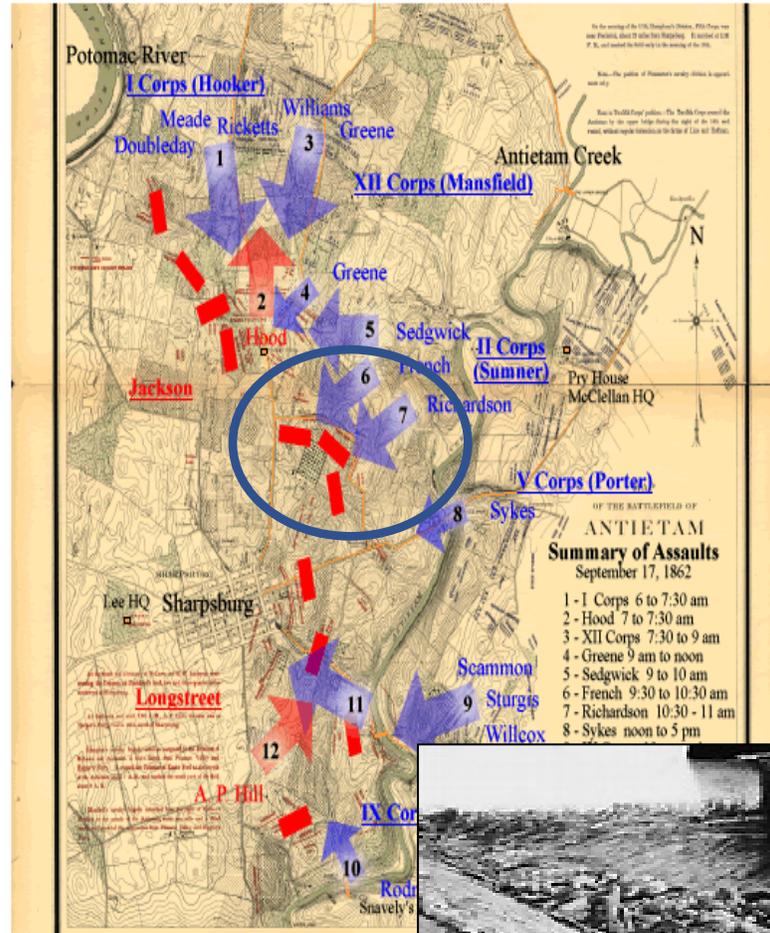
- Lee sends McLaws' division to stop Union advance into West Woods & pulls Walker's division from southern end of battlefield
- Early and McLaws hit Sedgwick's front & left flank, causing a rout
- McLaws pursues Sedgwick as far as D.R. Miller farm; then is turned back by Union artillery from three corps
- Walker arrives in West Woods, attempts counterattack, which fails

Sunken Road Stand (A): II Corps Attacks Lee's Left Center; ~0930-1100



French

- ~0930, Sumner orders French's division to "Press the attack" against D.H. Hill in the Sunken Road to "take the pressure off Sedgwick"
- Two-thirds of French's troops are green
- French is checked by Confederates in the road; casualties mount on both sides
- ~1030, French is reinforced by Richardson's division (II Corps)



D.H. Hill

- Hill's division uses Sunken Road as a natural rifle pit
- The Sunken Road becomes a death trap as French's troops adjust tactics
- ~1030, Lee commits R.H. Anderson's division, Lee's last reserve
- Anderson's deployment becomes piecemeal & ineffective due to key leader casualties by Union artillery

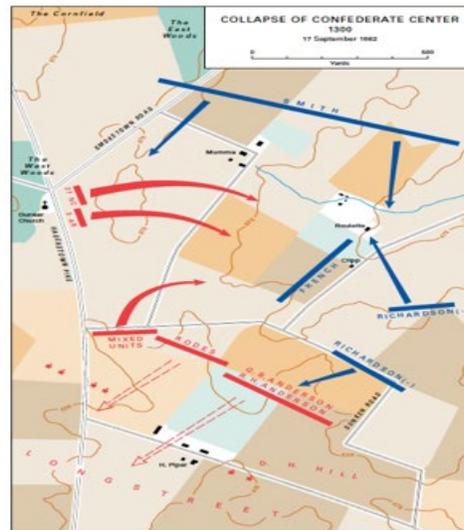
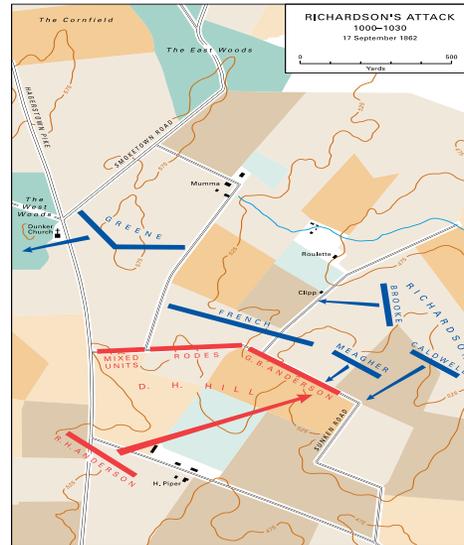
Sunken Road Stand (B): II Corps Attacks Lee's Left Center; ~1100-1300



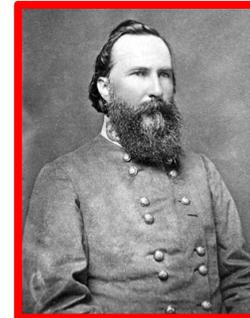
Richardson



Barlow



Map 12



Longstreet



D.H. Hill

- Richardson's division is ordered to reinforce French; one brigade deploys to the left (east)
- Col. Barlow (commanding two regiments) flanks the Sunken Road; captures over 300 Confederates
- Richardson's troops advance toward Piper farm, but are slowed by counterattacks and checked by Confederate artillery; Richardson is mortally wounded
- Union troops withdraw toward Sunken Road

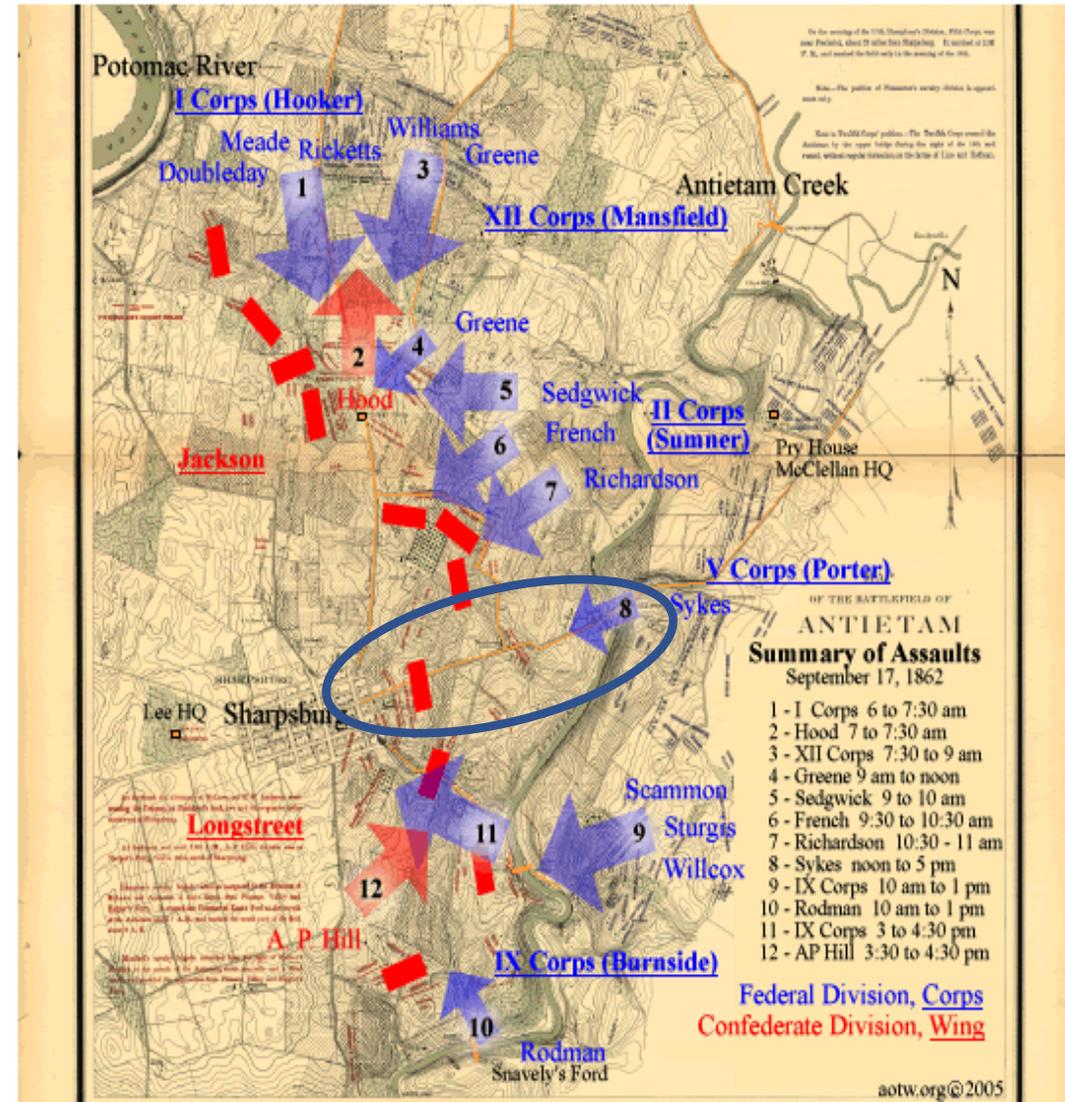
- Misunderstood orders cause Confederates to retreat from the Sunken Road after Barlow flanks their right
- Longstreet and Hill slow the Union advance with desperate counterattacks
- Confederate artillery checks the Union pursuit as it nears the Piper Farm
- ~1300, as Lee's defenses nearly dissolve on his left center, he receives word that the Union IX Corps to the south has taken the Lower Bridge and is threatening his right flank

Middle Bridge Stand: Union V Corps Stands By to Attack Lee's Center

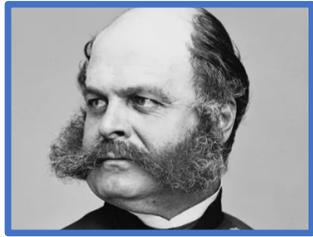


Porter

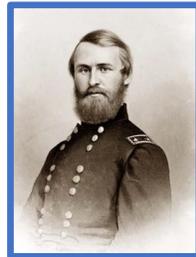
- Federal "Guns of Position" behind V Corps (Porter) interdict Confederate positions throughout the day
- McClellan orders Porter to attack Lee's heavily-defended center once success is achieved against both of Lee's flanks
- Though IX Corps nearly succeeds against Lee's right, Confederate reinforcements arrive from Harpers Ferry in time to check the IX Corps attack
- Porter attempts an attack on Lee's center late afternoon, but is unsuccessful
- After Lee's retreat during the night of 18 Sep, McClellan sends the V Corps in pursuit; results in the Battle of Shepherdstown, 19-20 Sep



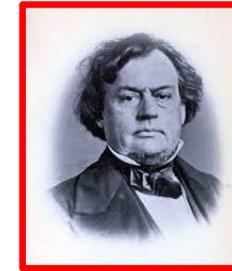
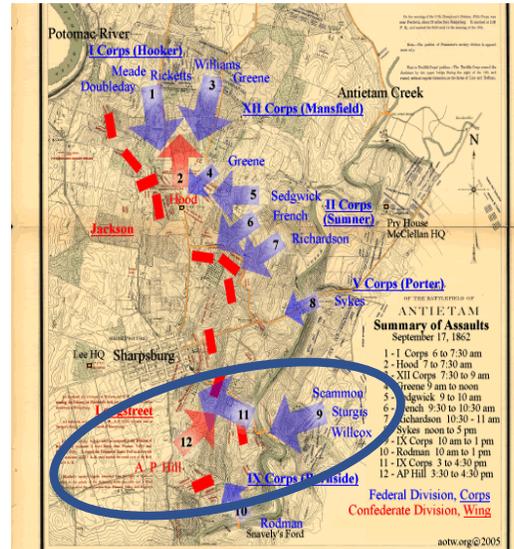
Burnside Bridge Stand: Lee Buys Time Against Union IX Corps; ~1000-1300



Burnside



Cox



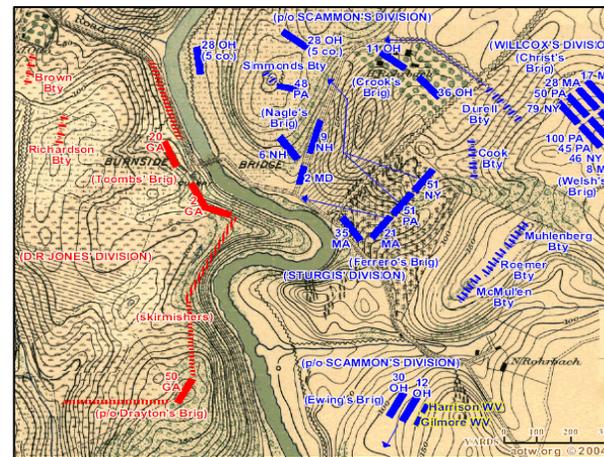
Toombs



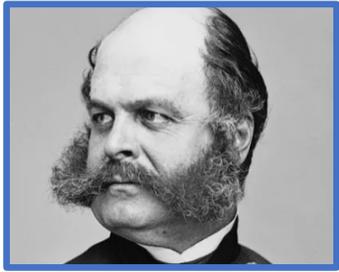
Benning

- ~0930, McClellan orders IX Corps to take the bridge and attack Lee's Right
- IX Corps Cdr Cox is unclear about his role, since Wing Cdr Burnside is co-located
- Sturgis's division launches two failed attacks on the bridge while Rodman's division searches for a ford to the south
- Sturgis's third attack takes the bridge ~1300 as Rodman's division crosses at Snavelly's Ford
- Attack on Lee's right is delayed ~two hours as IX Corps crosses the narrow bridge

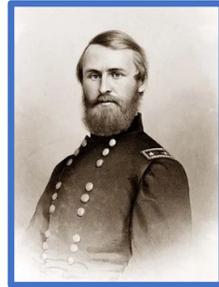
- Lee diverts Walker's division to the West Woods ~1000, leaving only D.R. Jones' division on his right flank
- Brigade Cdr Toombs orders Benning to defend the Lower Bridge with ~400 troops
- With terrain advantage, Benning's men hold for over two hours, until low on ammo and threatened on their right by Rodman
- Benning's men fall back to join the rest of Jones' division and prepare for IX Corps' attack



Final Attack Stand: IX Corps Attack on Lee's Right is Thwarted by A.P. Hill

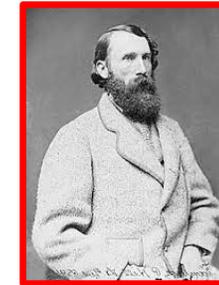
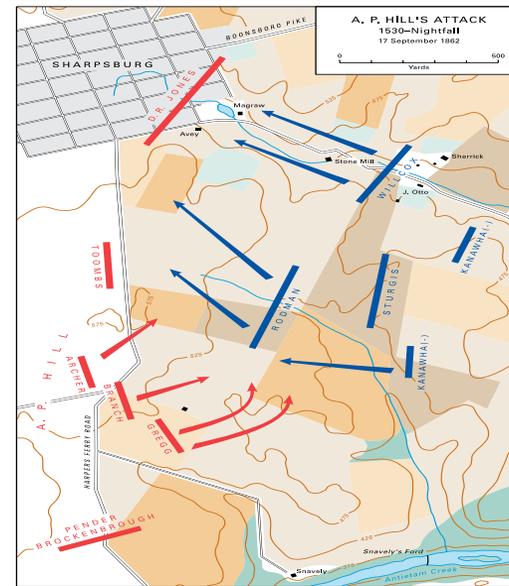
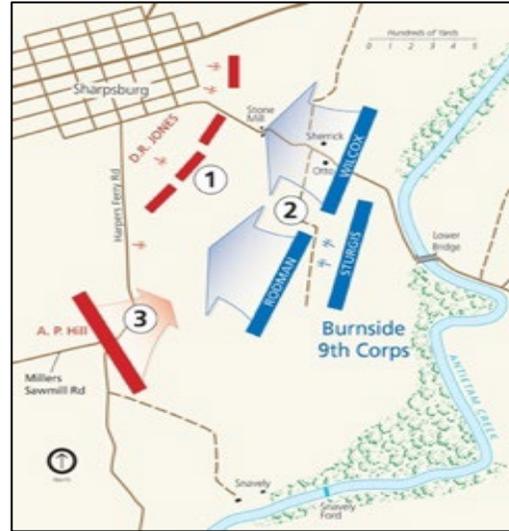


Burnside



Cox

- McClellan orders Burnside to take ridge along Harpers Ferry Rd, then wheel north to press Lee's right and cut off his escape route to Boteler's Ford, the only Potomac River crossing within miles
- Attack begins ~1500
- Battle line becomes disjointed as veteran units outpace green troops on the IX Corps' far left
- Left flank is rolled up when hit by A.P. Hill ~1630; momentum shifts to Lee
- IX Corps retreats toward bridge as sun goes down



A.P. Hill

- Hill's division leaves Harpers Ferry ~0700 for forced march to Sharpsburg
- ~1430, Hill rides ahead to seek orders from Lee; Lee orders him to bring his division in on his right
- ~1630, Hill's division smashes into the IX Corps' left flank
- Joined by Jones' division, Hill's troops check and reverse the IX Corps' advance
- ~1800, darkness ends the fighting; Lee's escape route to Boteler's Ford remains open
- Night of 18-19 Sep, Lee retreats across the Potomac and back into VA