

# CIVIL WAR EDUCATION



by the CIVIL WAR TRUST | [Civilwar.org/education](http://Civilwar.org/education)

ANTIETAM ANIMATED MAP | HIGH SCHOOL LESSON PLAN

## Educator's Guide

**THE CIVIL WAR CURRICULUM:** Goals 3 and 4

**NCSS GOALS:** I, II, IV, V, VI, X

**GRADES:** High School/Advanced Placement

**APPROXIMATE LENGTH OF TIME:** 4 days

**GOAL:** By studying the Battle of Antietam students will gain an appreciation for the responsibility and influence of those in leadership roles.

### OBJECTIVES:

Upon viewing the Civil War Trust's Animated Map of the Battle of Antietam:

1. Students will be able to verbally discuss key leadership moments throughout the battle, identifying a leader's influence and analyzing the decisions that were made.
2. Students will be able to identify and list characteristics of good leadership.

### MATERIALS:

Robert E. Lee's Biography  
George McClellan's Biography  
AP Hill's Biography  
Ambrose Burnside's Biography  
Military Rank and Organization chart  
Discussion sheet

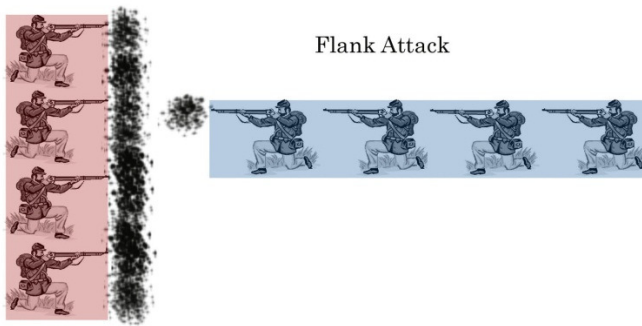
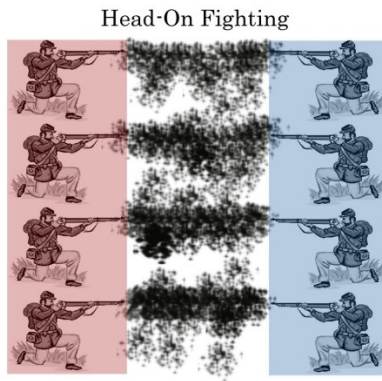
### PROCEDURE:

Step 1:

Hand out a copy of the Military Rank and Organization chart to each student. Have the students review this document, it is going to come in handy throughout the animated map.

Go over the maneuver of "flanking"

“Flanking” an enemy unit was another word for attacking it from the side. Since tactics of the time demanded that soldiers fight in long lines to maximize firepower to their front, a flank attack would put the maximum amount of firepower from the attacking unit against a minimal amount of firepower from the defending unit. Finding and striking the enemy’s flank was the core of Civil War strategy.



Hand out and have students read the bios of Robert E. Lee, George McClellan, A.P. Hill, and Ambrose Burnside. This will provide them with background on a few of the major leaders in the Battle of Antietam.

Discuss the Anticipatory Set Discussion Questions on the Discussion sheet.

Step 2:

Begin the Battle of Antietam Animated Map. After each section, stop and discussion the related questions on the Discussion sheet.

#### **CLOSURE:**

Have students complete the sentence:

By studying the Battle of Antietam, it is clear that leadership...

#### **ASSESSMENT:**

Essay -

Choose a key moment in the Battle of Antietam

1. Explain why this is a key moment in the battle
2. Discuss three ways in which leaders on either side influenced this portion of the battle

**FOR ADVANCED STUDENTS:**

Pick one of the four: A.P. Hill, Robert E. Lee, George McClellan, Ambrose Burnside. Analyze their actions during the battle, identifying those you agree with as well as proposing alternatives to those you disagree with. Give special consideration to the knowledge your chosen officer had or didn't have that day.

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## ANTIETAM ANIMATED MAP

### Discussion

#### ANTICIPATORY SET:

What leadership experiences have you had in the past?

How many people did you lead?

Were you effective? Why or why not?

If you were a military leader, what would you expect from your subordinates?

If you were a subordinate, what would you expect from your leader?

#### INTRODUCTION:

*Confederate General, Robert E. Lee “seeks to maintain his hard earned initiative.” Up to this point the war has been fought entirely on Confederate soil and is said to be fought only for the purpose of protecting the Confederacy; however, as a leader, Lee decides to invade the North or Union territory.*

Why do you think he made this decision? Why did his men and the Confederacy follow him?

What might the consequences be for Lee if this *is not* a successful endeavor? What might the consequences be for Lee and the war as a whole if this *is* a successful endeavor?

Even before the Battle of Antietam, what obstacles or challenges does Lee face in taking this action?

#### OPENING ACTION:

*After pushing through the passes of South Mountain, Union General George McClellan, receives intelligence that he is outnumbered. McClellan spends the next two days investigating Lee’s defensive position and formulating a plan of attack.*

Why do you think McClellan waited? Do you think this was a good decision?

What happened as a result of his delay?

*McClellan’s delay gives Stonewall Jackson enough time to march from Harper’s Ferry to Sharpsburg to reinforce Lee’s army. Jackson’s men are vital in holding Lee’s left flank at the beginning of the battle.*

Even with Jackson’s men, Lee is outnumbered nearly two to one. Why do you think he decides to stay?

How do you think Lee's men feel about staying and fighting, knowing they are outnumbered?

*The Union attack around the Dunker Church fails after the killing or wounding of most of the commanding officers leading the attack.*

Why do you think their replacements are not able to continue as the previous commanders had?

#### **ATTACK AT THE SUNKEN ROAD:**

*Seven of the ten Union regiments that launch the opening attack on the Bloody Lane have never before been in a battle.*

If you were a soldier, what would you be most scared of in your first battle?

If you were a leader, how would you prepare your men for their first battle?

*In the defense of the Piper Orchard Confederate General James Longstreet joins a cannon crew while General D.H. Hill takes up a musket and fights like a private soldier.*

How do you think these commanders' men feel about their actions?

When should a leader forget his rank and pitch in with everybody else? On the other hand, when should the distinction of rank and duty be important?

Why do you think such a large Union force was able to be pushed back by the greatly outnumbered Confederates?

#### **BURNSIDE BRIDGE:**

*After the battle General McClellan accused General Burnside of undue delay in moving his men across the bridge. Burnside maintained that his orders were unclear.*

Should an officer ever act on his own initiative or without orders?

Which is preferable: an army in which orders are ignored at will based on a subordinate's perception of the tactical situation, or an army in which subordinates do not act at all without orders?

#### **FINAL ATTACK:**

*A.P. Hill's march from Harper's Ferry to Sharpsburg, culminating in the counterattack, is one of the most famous marches in military history.*

Why do you think A.P. Hill's counterattack is successful?

Keep in mind that the Confederates were *still* outnumbered and that Hill's men had just marched *17 miles*. What might this tell you about A.P. Hill as a leader?

*Following the battle, Lee rests his men before retreating for Virginia, giving McClellan a window to attach and "finish" the battle. However, McClellan does not attack and the Army of Northern Virginia escapes.*

Should McClellan have attacked?

How do you think the people of the Union felt about his actions?

How do you think McClellan's soldier's felt about his actions?

Can McClellan be considered successful at the Battle of Antietam, even though he did not destroy Lee and his army; leaving them to fight another day?

Should Lee have held his position rather than retreat to Virginia?

How do you think the Confederacy felt about his actions?

How do you think Lee's soldier's felt about his actions?

## **CONCLUSION:**

*President Lincoln uses the 'victory' at Antietam to announce the Emancipation Proclamation. This document changes the conflict from a war to protect the Union to a war to end slavery. Emancipation is a radical idea for most Northerners and an idea that Lincoln has thought about seriously for many year. For months leading up to this point, Lincoln has been writing the Proclamation, working to make it Constitutional and relatively 'comfortable' for the Union population.*

As a leader, do you think Lincoln made the right decision to announce such a radical change at this time?

What is he displaying both to the Union people and to the Confederacy?

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ANTIETAM ANIMATED MAP

## Military Rank and Organization



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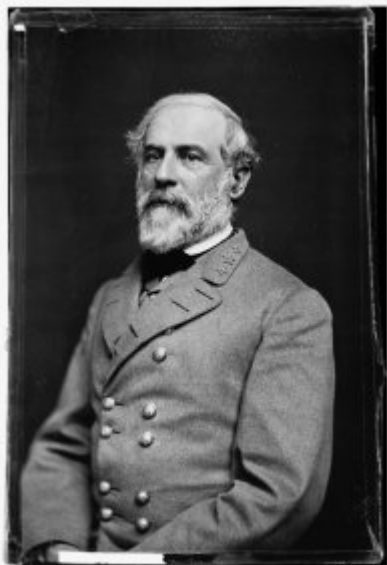
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## Robert E. Lee



### General

**January 19, 1807 – October 12, 1870**



Robert E. Lee (Library of Congress)

Born to Revolutionary War hero Henry "Light-Horse Harry" Lee in Stratford Hall, Virginia, Robert Edward Lee seemed destined for military greatness. Despite financial hardship that caused his father to depart to the West Indies, young Robert secured an appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point, where he graduated second in the class of 1829. Two years later, he married Mary Anna Randolph Custis, a descendant of George Washington. Yet with for all his military pedigree, Lee had yet to set foot on a battlefield. Instead, he served seventeen years as an officer in the Corps of Engineers, supervising and inspecting the construction of the nation's coastal defenses. Service during the 1846 war with Mexico, however, changed that. As a member of General Winfield Scott's staff, Lee distinguished himself, earning three brevets for gallantry, and emerging from the conflict with the rank of colonel.

From 1852 to 1855, Lee served as superintendent of West Point, and was therefore responsible for educating many of the men who would later serve under him - and those who would oppose him - on the battlefields of the Civil War. In 1855 he left the academy to take a position in the cavalry and in 1859 was called upon to put down abolitionist John Brown's raid at Harpers Ferry.



Because of his reputation as one of the finest officers in the United States Army, [Abraham Lincoln](#) offered Lee the command of the Federal forces in April 1861. Lee declined and tendered his resignation from the army when the state of Virginia seceded on April 17, arguing that he could not fight against his own people. Instead, he accepted a general's commission in the newly formed Confederate Army. His first military engagement of the Civil War occurred at Cheat Mountain, Virginia (now West Virginia) on September 11, 1861. It was a Union victory but Lee's reputation withstood the public criticism that followed. He served as military advisor to President [Jefferson Davis](#) until June 1862 when he was given command of the wounded General [Joseph E. Johnston](#)'s embattled army on the Virginia peninsula.

Lee renamed his command the Army of Northern Virginia, and under his direction it would become the most famous and successful of the Confederate armies. This same organization also boasted some of the Confederacy's most inspiring military figures, including [James Longstreet](#), [Stonewall Jackson](#) and the flamboyant cavalier [Jeb Stuart](#). With these trusted subordinates, Lee commanded troops that continually manhandled their blue-clad adversaries and embarrassed their generals no matter what the odds.

Yet despite foiling several attempts to seize the Confederate capital, Lee recognized that the key to ultimate success was a victory on Northern soil. In September 1862, he launched an invasion into Maryland with the hope of shifting the war's focus away from Virginia. But when a misplaced dispatch outlining the invasion plan was discovered by Union commander [George McClellan](#) the element of surprise was lost, and the two armies faced off at the battle of [Antietam](#). Though his plans were no longer a secret, Lee nevertheless managed to force McClellan into a stalemate. Following the bloodiest one-day battle of the war, heavy casualties compelled Lee to withdraw under the cover of darkness. The remainder of 1862 was spent on the defensive, parrying Union thrusts at [Fredericksburg](#) and, in May of the following year, [Chancellorsville](#).

The masterful victory at Chancellorsville gave Lee great confidence in his army, and the Rebel chief was inspired once again to take the fight to enemy soil. In late June of 1863, he began another invasion of the North, culminating at the crossroads town of [Gettysburg](#), Pennsylvania. For three days the two armies faced off in what would become the most famous battle of the entire war. Accustomed to seeing the Yankees run in the face of his aggressive troops, Lee attacked strong Union positions on high ground. This time, however, the Federals wouldn't budge. The Confederate war effort reached its high water mark on July 3, 1863 when Lee ordered Virginians under Maj. Gen. [George E. Pickett](#) to assault the Union center. The attack was a failure and Lee, recognizing that the battle was lost, ordered his army to retreat. Taking full responsibility for the defeat, he wrote Jefferson Davis offering his resignation, which Davis refused to accept.

After the simultaneous Union victories at Gettysburg and [Vicksburg](#), Mississippi, [Ulysses S. Grant](#) assumed command of the Federal armies. Rather than making Richmond the aim of his campaign, Grant chose to focus the myriad resources at his disposal on destroying Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. In a relentless and bloody campaign, the Federal juggernaut bludgeoned the under-supplied Rebel band. In spite of his ability to make Grant pay in blood for his aggressive tactics, Lee had been forced to yield the initiative to his adversary, and he recognized that the

end of the Confederacy was only a matter of time. By the summer of 1864, the Confederates had been forced into waging trench warfare outside of [Petersburg](#). Though President Davis named the Virginian General-in-Chief of all Confederate forces in February 1865, only two months later, on April 9, 1865, Lee was forced to surrender his weary and depleted army to Grant at [Appomattox Court House](#), effectively ending the Civil War.

Lee returned home on parole and eventually became the president of Washington College in Virginia (now known as Washington and Lee University). He remained in this position until his death on October 12, 1870 in Lexington, Virginia.

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## George B. McClellan

**Major General**

**December 3, 1826 – October 29, 1885**



Major General George B. McClellan (National Archives)

George Brinton McClellan is often remembered as the great organizer of the Union Army of the Potomac. Nicknamed "Young Napoleon," "Little Mac" was immensely popular with the men who served under his command. His military command style, however, put him at odds with President [Abraham Lincoln](#), and would ultimately upset his military and political fortunes.

McClellan began his military career after entering the United States Military Academy in 1842. He graduated second in a class of 59 in 1846, along with 20 others who would become full rank generals during the Civil War. He was appointed as a brevet second lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers and served under General Winfield Scott during the Mexican-American War, helping to construct roads and bridges for the army. The recipient of brevet promotions to both first lieutenant and captain, he returned to West Point as an instructor after the war, and helped translate a French manual on bayonet tactics. Other duties included service as an engineer at Fort Delaware, expeditions to explore the Red River, and the exploration possible routes for the transcontinental railroad. He was also a military observer during the Crimean War. In 1857, McClellan resigned from the military to take a position with the Illinois Central Railroad.

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Upon the outbreak of the Civil War, Ohio governor William Dennison appointed McClellan major general of Ohio Volunteers on April 23, 1861. This promotion, along with the support of Governor Denison, encouraged Lincoln to commission McClellan a major general in the Regular Army, making him one of the highest ranked individuals in the service under only Winfield Scott. McClellan began his work swiftly, ensuring that Kentucky would not secede from the Union. He then commanded forces during the Rich Mountain campaign in what is now West Virginia to ensure that the portion of the state would not be fully taken by Confederates. This success, combined with the defeat of General [Irvin McDowell](#) at the battle of [First Bull Run](#), led McClellan to become commander of the Army of the Potomac, and later General-in-Chief of all Federal armies upon the retirement of General Winfield Scott's in November 1861.

It was during this time that McClellan cemented his bond with the men of the Union army. Although many politicians and generals harbored resentment toward McClellan, he was largely revered by his men. After the defeat at Manassas, much of the Army of the Potomac was unorganized, and its new commander set to work providing the men proper military training and instilling in them a remarkable *esprit de corps*. As he built his army, however, McClellan also became wary of Confederate forces, fearing that he faced numbers many times his own.

In the spring of 1862, McClellan was removed as General-in-Chief, though he retained command of the Potomac Army. Facing great pressure from Lincoln, he launched a campaign against the Confederate capital along the Virginia Peninsula, known as the Peninsula Campaign. Continually tricked by Confederate commander General [Joseph E. Johnston](#) that he was facing a large force, McClellan frequently delayed his attacks, allowing his opponent ample time to retreat slowly toward the Richmond defenses. A surprise attack by Rebels at the battle of [Seven Pines](#) (or Fair Oaks) blunted the already sluggish Federal advance. Although the Union army repulsed the attacks, McClellan to again delayed any further movement, hoping for more reinforcements to come from Washington. Seven Pines had another adverse impact on the campaign. During the battle, Confederate General Johnston was wounded, and [Robert E. Lee](#) was appointed to replace him. Taking advantage of McClellan's cautious streak, Lee hammered at the inert Army of the Potomac in a series of fierce and unrelenting assaults. Over the course of the bloody Seven Days' Battles, McClellan's mighty host was forced to abandon its bid to seize Richmond and retreat to the safety of Washington. As a result of the failed campaign, Lincoln named [Henry Halleck](#) as General-in-Chief of the army, and the Army of the Potomac was given to General [John Pope](#).

Following Pope's failure to capture Richmond the subsequent Union defeat at the battle of [Second Manassas](#), McClellan was once again leading the army that had such strong affection for him. With Little Mac at its head, the Army of the Potomac moved to counter Lee's 1862 invasion of Maryland. The Union chief molded his campaign around a captured a [document](#) outlining Lee's invasion plan. After a series of skirmishes along the Blue Ridge mountains, the two armies met in an epic contest at [Antietam](#) on September 17, 1862, the single bloodiest day of the war. Battle weary and bloodied, the Confederate Army retreated back into Virginia under the cover of darkness.

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Though he had managed to thwart the Lee's plan to invade the North, McClellan's trademark caution once again denied the Northern cause a decisive victory, and the once-cordial relationship between the army commander and his Commander-in-Chief had been badly damaged by the former's lack of success and excessive trepidation. After the battle, a disappointed Lincoln visited McClellan in camp to express his frustration at the general's inability to capitalize on this most recent success. The general countered by saying the army needed time to rest and refit. In November of that year McClellan was relieved of command for the last time and ordered back to Trenton, New Jersey to await further orders, though none ever came.

In 1864, McClellan became involved in politics when he was nominated to be the Democratic candidate for president against his former boss, Abraham Lincoln. McClellan ran on an anti-war platform, promising that he would negotiate peace terms with the Confederacy to help end the war as soon as possible. But by November of 1864, a string of Union successes had convinced many that the war was in its final phase. McClellan resigned his army commission on Election Day, but ultimately Lincoln was elected to a second term.

After the war, McClellan served as an administrator for a number of engineering firms and in 1878 was elected Governor of New Jersey. In his final years, the former general penned a defense of his tenure as commander of the Army of the Potomac, but died before he could see it published. George McClellan is buried in Trenton, NJ.

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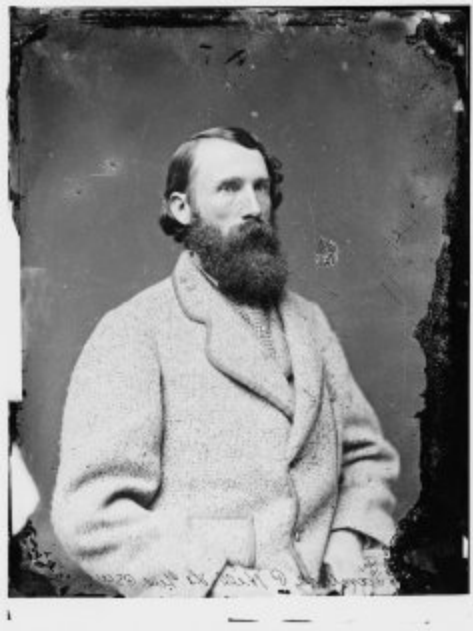


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**A. P. Hill** 

**Lieutenant General**

**November 9, 1825 – April 2, 1865**



A. P. Hill (Library of Congress)

Ambrose Powell Hill began his military career after graduating 15th out of 38 from the United States Military Academy in 1847. After graduation he served with an artillery unit during the Mexican-American War as well as the Seminole War.

On March 1, 1861, Hill resigned from the United States Army and became a colonel of the 13th Virginia, commanding a unit at the Battle of First Manassas. On February 26, 1863, Hill received a promotion to brigadier general. Following the promotion, Hill served gallantly at the Battle of Williamsburg and during the Peninsula Campaign. As a result of his leadership, Hill was promoted to major general on May 26, 1862. Hill commanded well during the Seven Days Battles, becoming a very important component to General [Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson](#)’s army. Hill fought well at the Battle of Cedar Mountain, the Second Battle of Bull Run, served a crucial role at the Battle of Antietam, and fought well at the Battle of Fredericksburg. At the Battle of Chancellorsville, Hill took over for General Jackson after he was mortally wounded, but was later wounded himself. After the battle, Hill received the rank of lieutenant general on May 24, 1863, and became commander of the 3rd corps in General [Robert E. Lee](#)’s army. Hill commanded the corps during the Battle of Gettysburg, where he received criticism for some of

his command decisions. During the Battle of Gettysburg, Hill's decisions and actions on the first day of the battle led to engaging the Union army before the entire Confederate army had arrived. After Gettysburg, Hill went on to serve during the Wilderness Campaign, as well as the Siege of Petersburg. On April 2, 1865, while riding along the defensive lines at Petersburg, Hill was shot and killed by a Federal soldier. Although he received criticism for some of his command decisions after his promotion to lieutenant general, General Robert E. Lee still considered A.P. Hill to be one of the Confederate armies' finest commanders.

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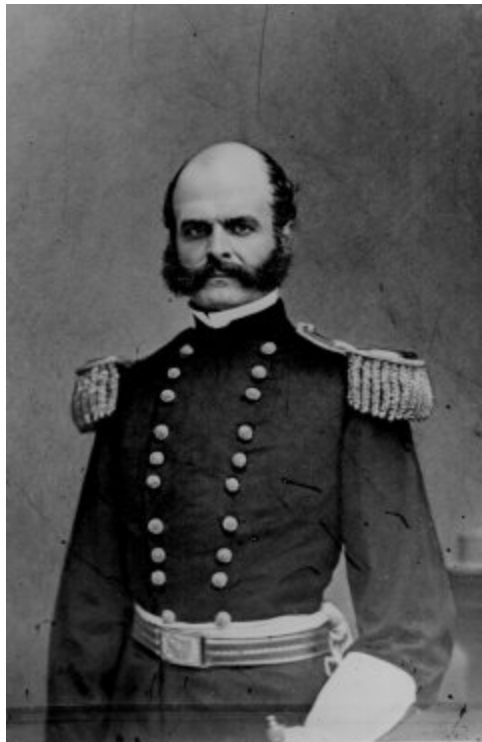
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## Ambrose E. Burnside



**Major General**

**May 23, 1824 – September 13, 1881**



Major General Ambrose E. Burnside (National Archives)

Ambrose Everett Burnside began his military career of varied success after graduating 18th in a class of 47 from the United States Military Academy in 1847. He received a brevet second lieutenant position in the 2nd Artillery, and served during the Mexican-American War mostly on garrison duty in Mexico City. After the war, he briefly served in garrison duty in the southwestern United States, and resigned his commission in 1853. He set to work on a breech-loading rifle, which eventually failed, was appointed as a major general of the Rhode Island militia, and received a nomination to Congress.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Burnside organized the 1st Rhode Island Infantry, which was one of the first units to arrive in Washington and offer the capitol protection. At the battle of First Manassas, Burnside commanded a brigade of infantry, and was appointed a brigadier general of volunteers on August 6, 1861 for his actions.



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In September of 1861, Burnside was given command of three brigades known as the North Carolina Expeditionary Force, and launched an attack against the North Carolina coast. His force was successful in achieving a foothold in North Carolina, resulting in Burnside's promotion to major general of volunteers on March 18, 1862. At the battle of Antietam, Union General [George B. McClellan](#) gave Burnside command of the IX Corps as well as the I Corps. During the battle, however, while in charge of the X Corps, Burnside's overly precise orders caused confusion and delays, which led to great difficulties in capturing what became known as "Burnside's Bridge."

After McClellan's failure to follow General [Robert E. Lee](#) following the battle of Antietam, Burnside was made commander of the Army of the Potomac on November 10, 1862. Burnside decided to attempt a rapid approach to Richmond, leading to a very costly Union defeat on December 13 at the Battle of Fredericksburg, during which the Union army received 13,000 casualties after making numerous assaults against impregnable Confederate positions. This Union debacle, combined with a second failed attempt which became known as the "Mud March," caused Burnside to be relieved of command, and Joseph Hooker was given command of the Army of the Potomac.

In March of 1863, Burnside was given command of the Department of the Ohio. During his command, he arrested ex-Congressman Clement L. Vallandigham for making seditious comments, an act which drew Burnside some criticism. In autumn of 1863, Burnside successfully commanded his troops against Confederate General [James L. Longstreet](#). Burnside was able to outmaneuver Longstreet, and successfully held on to the city of Knoxville until Union reinforcements under [William T. Sherman](#) arrived and forced Longstreet to retreat.

After his successful defense of Knoxville, Burnside was ordered to take command of the XI Corps in support of the Army of the Potomac. He participated in much of the Overland Campaign under the direction of General [Ulysses S. Grant](#), including the battles of the Wilderness, Spotsylvania Court House, North Anna, and Cold Harbor. During the siege of Petersburg, Burnside commanded troops in the battle of the Crater, during which a Union mine dug under Confederate positions was filled with explosives and detonated, creating a fifty yard gap in the Confederate lines. Burnside failed to exploit the gap in time, which resulted in the loss of Union soldiers. After this failure, Burnside resigned his commission on April 15, 1865.

After the war, Burnside briefly served as Senator from the state of Rhode Island. The distinctive facial hair he wore throughout most of his life led to the identification of that form of facial hair by the modern name, sideburns, created from his last name.