



ALL OUT WAR



*General George B. McClellan and Staff
(Library of Congress)*

1862 opened with both sides struggling to prepare themselves for total war. In January, Abraham Lincoln used his power as commander-in-chief to issue General War Orders Number One, mandating an offensive on all fronts.

In the East, General George McClellan did not rush to follow orders. He said the army needed more time to train in its camps around Washington, D.C. In private, he called himself "the supreme power in the land" and called President Lincoln "the original gorilla."

In the West, Union generals took Lincoln's orders more seriously. General George Thomas reclaimed southern Kentucky with a victory at Mill Springs. General Ulysses S. Grant subdued Forts Henry and Donelson, opening central Tennessee to naval incursion and capturing the state capital of Nashville. He then turned his attention to making further progress down the Mississippi River.

Across the Big Muddy, a Confederate force failed to cross the southwestern desert and capture southern California. The final repulse at the Battle of Glorieta Pass, New Mexico doomed Confederate commerce to the strengthening blockade on the Atlantic seaboard. A defeat at the Battle of Pea Ridge sent Confederate soldiers tumbling out of Arkansas and Missouri.

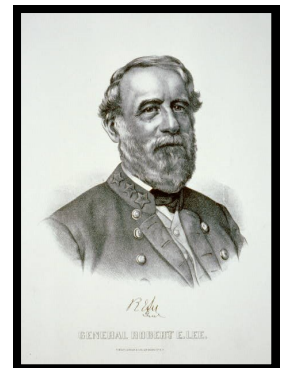
By March, General McClellan was finally ready to move. He bickered with Lincoln over strategic planning, eventually settling on a massive amphibious troop transport to the Virginia Peninsula. Advancing overland towards Richmond, the army made slow progress largely due to a series of failures of military intelligence.

The bloodshed at the Battle of Shiloh, a Union victory near the Mississippi River, shocked the nation in April. President Lincoln defended Grant's methods: "I can't spare this man--he fights."

LEE MOVES NORTH

Robert E. Lee rose to command of the Confederate forces around Richmond in late May. In late June, he drove McClellan away from the capital and then wheeled north to defeat another Union army on the old Bull Run battlefield before the end of August. Confederate spirits were never higher.

General Lee decided to invade Maryland and try to win the state for the Confederacy. He was stopped, however, after General McClellan's soldiers found a forgotten copy of his secret orders to the Confederate army. Trapped in southern Maryland, Lee repelled a force nearly twice his size over the course of a day-long struggle. The Confederate army was in no shape to continue the campaign, however, and soon withdrew back into Virginia. The Battle of Antietam is still the bloodiest day of battle in American history.



*Robert E. Lee
(Library of Congress)*

EMANCIPATION

President Lincoln used the strategic success at Antietam to underwrite his issuance of a document that he had been preparing throughout the summer: the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. This nation-changing edict promised to free nearly all of the slaves in the rebellious states on January 1, 1863.

The proclamation was not met with universal acclaim in the North, but it did much to emphasize the slavery issue at a time when the Confederacy was desperately seeking support from abolitionist European nations.

In October, a Confederate invasion of Kentucky was turned back at the Battle of Perryville. A Confederate counter-offensive in Mississippi broke up against Union fortifications at Corinth. With his opponents staggering, Abraham Lincoln renewed his orders for a grand offensive. Ulysses S. Grant sent General William T. Sherman on a mission down the Mississippi River, but Sherman's men were defeated at Chickasaw Bayou, in front of the river fortress at Vicksburg in December.



Confederate dead at Antietam (Library of Congress)



The first reading of the Emancipation Proclamation (Library of Congress)

The Union Army in Virginia surged across the Rappahannock River and sacked Fredericksburg, but suffered extremely heavy losses while attempting to break General Lee's fortified line south of the town. Northern morale sank to its lowest levels of the war.

From December 31-January 2, Union forces secured a bloody victory near Murfreesboro, Tennessee. President Lincoln thanked the soldiers for a win at a time in which defeat the nation could have scarcely lived over."

1862 contained many shifts of fortune, but the Union army nevertheless closed the year having made significant gains in every theater of the war. The Confederacy remained defiant, especially in the bellwether Virginia theater, but military, economic, and diplomatic setbacks made its future look bleak.

VOICES FROM THE STORM

PRESIDENT ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Shortly after the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation, Abraham Lincoln offered these words of caution to a White House visitor:

"I do not agree with those who say that slavery is dead. We are like whalers who have long been on a chase—we have at last got the harpoon in the monster, but we must now look to how we steer, or, with one flop of his tail, he will yet send us all into eternity!"

⇒ What kind of "steering" do you think needed to be done to finish off "the monster" of slavery?

⇒ Can you think of any current issues in which "the harpoon is in the monster"?
