

## **Battles of Second Manassas and Chantilly**

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The last days of August 1862 saw yet another Union defeat in the eastern theater of the war as Confederate forces under Robert E. Lee routed John Pope's Army of Virginia in the battle of Second Manassas. After this Confederate victory Lee determined to mount an invasion of the north which culminated the following month in the battle of Antietam, which led to the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation and the transformation of the war.

Following the Seven Days Battle on the Virginia peninsula, Lee had sent Stonewall Jackson's Corps northward towards Gordonsville, to guard against the movement of Pope's newly-organized army. Jackson had clashed with a portion of Pope's command under Nathaniel Banks at Cedar Mountain on August 9. After it became obvious that George McClellan's Union Army was withdrawing from the peninsula, Lee moved with James Longstreet's Corps to reinforce Jackson. After about a week of inconclusive maneuvering, Lee sent Jackson on a long march around Pope's right flank in order to cut the Federal supply line and hopefully force the Union general to withdraw towards Washington. By August 26 Jackson had captured the supply base at Manassas Depot, forcing Pope to abandon his positions along the Rappahannock River and move against the rebel force in his rear. Knowing that Lee had divided his army, Pope hoped to crush Jackson's Corps before it could be reinforced by Lee. Jackson, meanwhile, had taken a defensive position near the old battlefield of First Manassas, awaiting either the arrival of Lee or of Pope.

On August 28, Jackson attacked a Union brigade under General John Gibbon that was moving across his front, resulting in bloody fighting at Brawner Farm. The next day the Union Corps commanded by General Franz Sigel launched a series of attacks against Jackson's strong

position. The Federals were soon joined by other corps and divisions, and the resulting attacks threatened to overwhelm Jackson's men. The Confederate line held, though the defenders were at one point reduced to throwing rocks at the advancing Yankees. By the end of the day Longstreet's Corps had arrived on Jackson's right, and had launched a limited attack against the Federal left flank. Pope believed the Confederates were preparing to retreat, and though he was aware that at least a portion of Longstreet's force had reached the field, he did not comprehend the danger facing his army.

Still fixated on Jackson, at mid-afternoon on August 30, Pope launched his largest attack on the southern position. Fitz John Porter's assault was repulsed, and in the aftermath Lee unleashed Longstreet in a devastating flank attack that soon drove the Federals from the field. Union forces on Chinn Ridge and Henry House Hill managed to slow the advance long enough to allow the remainder of Pope's army to withdraw in the direction of Washington. Union casualties in the fighting numbered more than 16,000, including nearly 6,000 missing or captured, while the Confederates lost more than 9,000. Two days later Jackson met up with the retreating Federals at Ox Hill or Chantilly. In a driving rainstorm on the late afternoon of September 1 elements of the two armies again clashed, with Union generals Isaac Stevens and Philip Kearny both falling dead in the confused fighting. By early evening the conflict had wound down and Pope continued his withdrawal to Washington.

After the battle Pope was relieved of command and sent west. The Army of Virginia went out of existence with the bulk of its forces merged into the Army of the Potomac. Lincoln reluctantly turned once again to George McClellan, who he hoped could reverse the fortunes of war as Robert E. Lee moved his Confederate army into Maryland.

