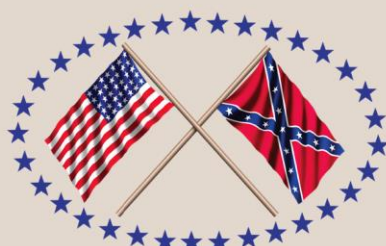


Sumter to Appomattox



American Civil War Round Table of Australia (New South Wales Chapter)

www.americancivilwar.asn.au

Patron: Prof the Hon Bob Carr

President's Message

Dear Round Table members,

I will be an apology for the AGM and meeting on 2 December 2024. Sorry about that. I have to attend a Board meeting for an organisation I am involved with and that has me in Europe at the wrong time of year from a weather perspective.

The Committee met on 7 November 2024 and discussed the program for the next few months. Look elsewhere in this newsletter for a general indication of what the Committee has in mind. I urge all of you to contribute a presentation to any of those general topics, even if only for 5 or 10 minutes. If you want to do a presentation on something that we have not thought of, please tell Program Director John Morrison so that we can work it into the program at an appropriate point.

If you have not yet paid your annual subscription to the Round Table, please do so. Treasurer Wayne would have issued you an invoice through Secretary Dan's magic mailout system.

We are interested in increasing our membership so, if you have a friend or your spouse that might be interested in our meetings, please invite them along to a meeting and make sure they are introduced to a Membership Application Form and also to Peter Zacharatos as our Director for Membership.

Please also note that we now have business cards that we can give to people who express an interest in the American Civil War Round Table. Get some from Dan so that you can spread them around.

Ian McIntyre

Number 127 Oct. – Nov. 2024

Our Next Meeting

Our special Christmas Function and AGM

Monday, 2nd December from 6.00 pm at

The Chatswood Club

11 Help Street, Chatswood

*Christmas buffet - ham, turkey, vegies,
Christmas pudding & pavlova!
Wines included at the tables*

Great value at only \$40 a head

***Your spouse and/or guests very welcome
Free parking on site***

***Bookings required - by 27th November on
this link:***

<https://www.trybooking.com/CXCRD>

TOPIC: Civil War Officer Training

Prior to the Civil War, the US Military was tiny and there were very few professionally trained officers. In addition, the military was not seen as a desirable long-term career.

The massive expansion of the military on both sides altered the model for leadership and leadership training. In this meeting we will have presentations from Life Member **Len Traynor** and **Ian Wolfe** looking at how those who were required to lead during the war discharged their duties.

On our **Website** you will always find the date of our next meeting. www.americancivilwar.asn.au

Club Parking

The club offers free parking, with ample space for up to 50 vehicles. The parking lot provides direct access to the club.

How to Access the Parking:

- The entrance to the parking lot is located at the back of the club, accessible via McIntosh Street.
- For GPS directions, enter '12 McIntosh Street, Chatswood.' This will guide you to the general area.
- Upon arrival, look for the parking complex with signage that reads 'Club Parking' in black lettering. This image should assist you:



12 McIntosh St

There are internal stairs up to the Club.

Life member Bruce Dennett



Our inspirational Life Member Bruce Dennett passed away this year.

Bruce was a greatly admired educator, mentor, historian, author, athlete, adored husband of Jane, and all-round top bloke.

He loved Jane and his family & friends, his work, running and travelling as much as he disapproved of conservative politics.

He was involved in our 2006 Conference (image above), a presentation in 2012 – *The Northern Homefront* - and in 2015 - *What is Abraham Lincoln's contribution to America?*

Our Last Meeting

Treasurer Wayne Morrison began the meeting with an interesting presentation on Lee's lost order.

He was followed by presentations by President Ian McIntyre and Program Organiser John Morrison on The Battle of Antietam.

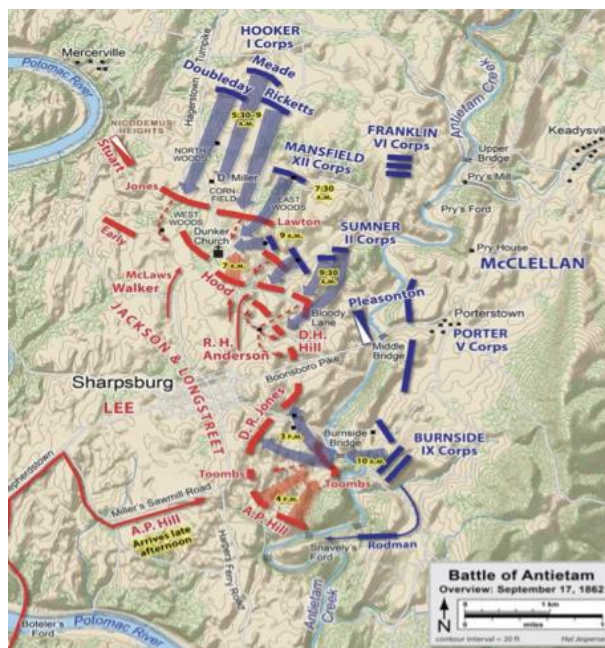
ANTIETAM – BURNSIDE'S BRIDGE

Ian McIntyre



General Burnside was a Corp Commander who reported directly to General McClelland who, at Antietam, commanded the USA forces. On 17 September 1862, Burnside was posted to the Federal left and watched the cornfield battle in the distance on the Federal right from his position opposite a modest stone bridge over Antietam Creek. The bridge is shown on the map of the battlefield published again in this newsletter.

At 10:00 on that morning, he received an order for his forces to cross the bridge and attack the Confederate forces opposite.



Major General Cox reported to Burnside and commanded the troops that attacked the bridge. He was with Burnside observing the battle in the distance on the Northern right when the order to cross the bridge was received from McClelland. This was obviously easier said than done as the Northern troops attacked the bridge in continuous waves for three hours before succeeding at approximately 1300. General Cox recorded in an article about 25 years later that crossing the bridge had cost him 500 men. These very heavy losses are the reason that the bridge is remembered as Burnside's Bridge. In reality, Burnside appears to have been merely a spectator, as was appropriate, although the troops that were involved in attacking the bridge were under his ultimate command.

The Bridge was defended by two diminished Georgian regiments totalling, as recounted by Lieutenant General Longstreet (CSA) 25 years later, only 400 men. Those men were commanded by Brigadier General Toombs and were in a good position and well-hidden on a wooded slope overlooking the bridge. They stoutly defended the bridge until they were somewhat distracted by the Northern troops of Brigadier General Rodman appearing from behind them after crossing the creek at a ford a couple of kilometres from the bridge. The ford had been defended by the troops of Major General John Walker, but they had been moved to an emergency elsewhere on the battlefield before Rodman's troops appeared at the ford, and then crossed it, thereby giving rise to one of the great "What ifs" of history.



There is a signboard on the slope above the bridge recording that the resulting slackening in the fire from the Georgian troops was noticed by the Northern troops sheltering behind the bridge parapets.

They then responded by mounting another rush across the bridge without command or orders, this time with success. The Georgian defenders who were left withdrew to the main Southern line, except for those who were so exhausted that they were taken prisoner. General Rodman was himself killed later in the day.



The Northern troops who had taken the bridge as is shown on the above map. General Longstreet later said that his troops would not have been able to withstand another attack by the Northerners. That reserves were not used to mount another attack gave rise to yet another of the great "What ifs", and controversies, of history.



The troops of both sides stayed in position during the night of 17 September and all of the next day without making an attack. The Confederates left during the night of 18-19 September, and on 19 September, and then went across the Potomac River back to Virginia, thereby ending their invasion of Maryland.

The Burnside Bridge attack was but one episode in a cataclysmic day for America.

THE BATTLE OF ANTIETAM – America's Bloodiest Day 17 September 1862 John Morrison



Antietam, the deadliest one-day battle in American military history, finally showed that the Union could stand against the Confederate army in the Eastern theatre. It also gave President Abraham Lincoln the confidence to issue the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation at a moment of strength rather than desperation.



General Robert E. Lee committed his entire force to the battle while Major General George B. McClellan sent in less than three-quarters of his. With the full commitment of McClellan's troops, which outnumbered the Confederates two to one, the battle might have had a more definitive outcome. Instead, McClellan's half-hearted approach allowed Lee to hold ground by shifting forces from threat to threat.

Background

Lee invaded Maryland in September 1862 with a full agenda. His aim was to move the focus of fighting away from the South and into Federal territory. Also, victory there could lead to the capture of the Federal capital in Washington, D.C. Confederate success could also influence

the pending Congressional elections in the North, as well as persuade European nations to recognise the Confederate States of America. On the other side, President Abraham Lincoln counted on McClellan to bring him the victory he needed to keep Republican control of the Congress *and to issue the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation.*

Opposing Forces - Union

Army of the Potomac - 102,000

Commander - Maj Gen George B McClellan

- I Corps - Maj Gen Joseph Hooker (divisions of Rufus King, James Ricketts, and George Meade).
- II Corps - Maj Gen Edwin V. Sumner (divisions of Israel Richardson, John Sedgwick, and William French).
- V Corps - Maj Gen Fitz John Porter (divisions of George Morell, George Sykes, and Andrew Humphreys).
- VI Corps - Maj Gen William Franklin (divisions of Henry Slocum and William "Baldy" Smith, and from IV Corps division of Darius Couch).
- IX Corps - Maj Gen Ambrose E. Burnside (divisions of Orlando Willcox, Samuel Sturgis, Isaac P. Rodman, and the Kanawha Division, under Jacob D. Cox).
- XII Corps - Maj Gen Joseph Mansfield (divisions of Alpheus Williams and George Greene, and the cavalry division of Alfred Pleasonton).

Opposing Commanders

Union Forces



George B McClellan



Joseph Hooker



Edwin V Sumner



Fitz John Porter



William B Franklin



Ambrose Burnside



Joseph Mansfield

Opposing Forces - Confederate

Army of Northern Virginia - 55,000

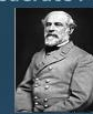
Commander - Gen. Robert E. Lee

- I Corps - Maj. Gen. James Longstreet (divisions of Lafayette McLaws, Richard Anderson, David Jones, John Walker, John Bell Hood, and an independent brigade under Nathan Evans)
- II Corps - Maj. Gen. Thomas J. Jackson (divisions of Alexander Lawton, A.P. Hill (the Light Division), John Jones, and D.H. Hill.)
- Cavalry Corps, - Maj. Gen. J.E.B. Stuart
- Reserve Artillery - Brig. Gen. William Pendleton.

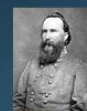
Severely understrength, poorly fed and uniformed, long sick lists, lax discipline. Combined with chronically short and poor rations, this encouraged massive straggling. Leaked thousands of stragglers as it moved across Maryland

Opposing Commanders

Confederate Forces



Robert E Lee



James Longstreet



Thomas J Jackson

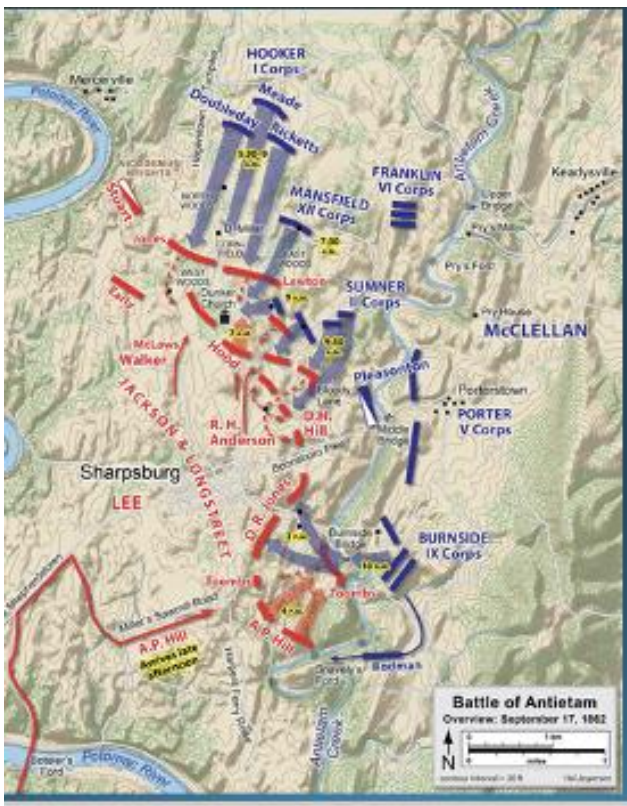


J.E.B. Stuart

Preliminaries

The first Confederate invasion of Union-held territory did not go as planned. After a Union victory at the Battle of South Mountain and a Confederate victory at the Battle of Harpers Ferry, Robert E. Lee opted to make one last stand in the hopes of salvaging his Maryland Campaign. With Federal forces closing in from the east, Lee selected strategic ground near Antietam Creek and ordered his army to converge there. A mile east of the town of Sharpsburg, the creek meanders through the hilly but open countryside, good for long-range artillery and moving infantry. In addition, the water is deep, swift, and fordable only at three stone bridges, making it a natural defensible location. On 15th September, Lee positioned his men behind the creek and waited for McClellan to arrive.

On the afternoon of 16th September, Union general McClellan set his army in motion, sending Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker's First Corps across Antietam Creek to find Lee's left flank. At dusk, Hooker encountered Confederate general John Bell Hood's division and the two forces skirmished until dark. The following morning, McClellan attacked.



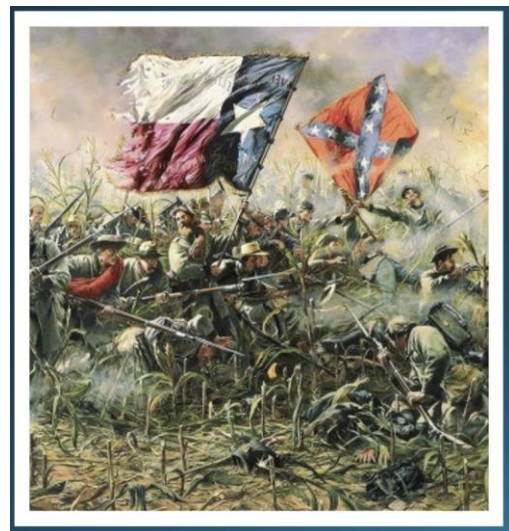
During the Battle

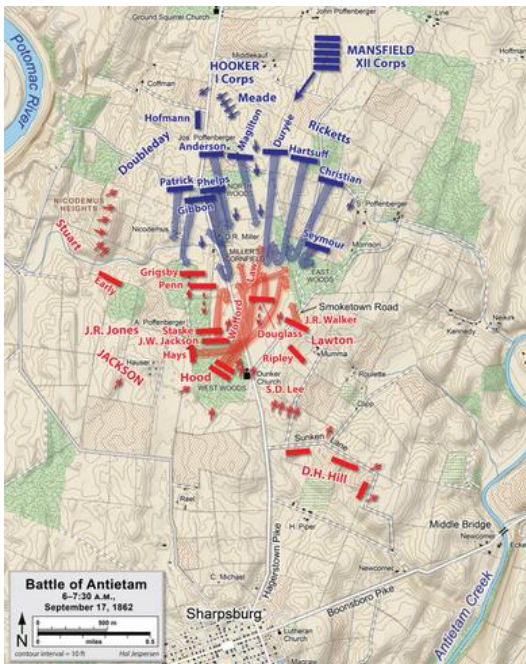
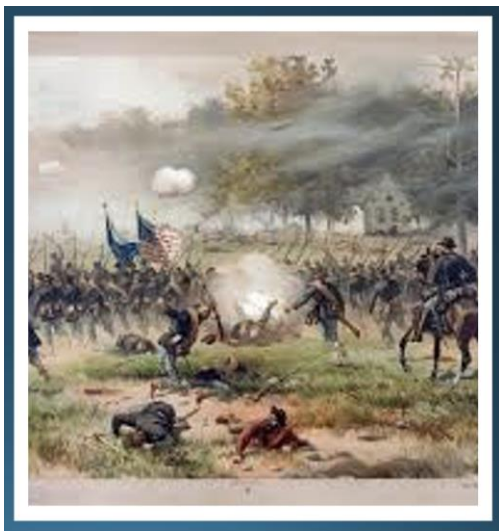
The Battle of Antietam began at dawn when Hooker's corps assaulted Lee's left flank. Repeated Union attacks and equally vicious Confederate counterattacks swept back and forth across Miller's cornfield and the West Woods. Thousands of Hooker's troops fell in the corn rows where *"every stalk of corn in the northern and greater part of the field was cut as closely as could have been done with a knife, and the slain lay in rows precisely as they had stood in their ranks a few moments before"*. Despite the Union numerical advantage, Gen. Stonewall Jackson's troops held their ground near the Dunker Church.

Meanwhile, towards the centre of the battlefield, Union assaults against the Sunken Road pierced the Confederate centre after a terrible struggle for this key defensive position. Unfortunately, this advantage was not followed up with further advances and eventually the Union defenders abandoned their position.

In the afternoon, the third and final major assault by Gen. Ambrose Burnside's Ninth Corps pushed over a stone bridge at Antietam Creek (today called *Burnside Bridge*). Just as Burnside's forces began to collapse the Confederate right, Gen. A.P. Hill's division charged into battle after a long march from Harpers Ferry, helping to drive back the assault and saving the Army of Northern Virginia.

PART I Hooker and Hood attack





Assaults by Hooker's I Corps, 5:30 to 7:30 a.m.

Battle commenced at dawn (about 5:30 a.m.) on 17th September with an attack down the Hagerstown Turnpike by the Hooker's I Corps. His objective was the plateau on which sat a modest whitewashed building belonging to a congregation of German Baptist Brethren, the Dunker Church. Hooker had approximately 8,600 men, and Jackson had 7,700 defenders; the slight disparity was offset by the Confederates' strong defensive positions.

Doubleday's division moved on Hooker's right, Ricketts's division moved on the left into the East Woods, and George Meade's Pennsylvania Reserves division deployed in the centre slightly to the rear. Jackson's defence consisted of divisions under Alexander Lawton and John R. Jones in line from the West Woods, across the Turnpike, and along the southern end of Miller's Cornfield. Four

brigades were held in reserve inside the West Woods.

As the first Union troops emerged from the North Woods into the Cornfield, an artillery duel erupted. Heavy casualties resulted on both sides, described by Colonel Lee as "artillery Hell." Noting the glint of Confederate bayonets in the Cornfield, Hooker halted his infantry and brought up artillery, which fired shell and canister into the field over the heads of the Federal infantry. A battle began, with considerable melee action due to short visibility in the corn.

Meade's 1st Brigade, under Brigadier General Truman Seymour, began advancing through the East Woods and exchanged fire with Colonel James Walker's brigade of Alabama, Georgia, and North Carolina troops. As Walker's men forced Seymour's men back, aided by Lee's artillery fire, Ricketts's division entered the Cornfield, also to be torn up by artillery. Brigadier General Abram Duryée's Zouave brigade marched directly into volleys from Colonel Marcellus Douglass's Georgia brigade. Enduring heavy fire from a range of 250 yards (230 m) and gaining no advantage because of a lack of reinforcements, Duryée ordered a withdrawal.

The reinforcements that Duryée had expected – the brigades of Hartsuff and Christian – had difficulties reaching the scene. Hartsuff was wounded by a shell, and Christian dismounted and fled to the rear in terror. When the men were rallied and advanced into the Cornfield, they met the same artillery and infantry fire as their predecessors. As the superior Union numbers began to tell, the Louisiana "Tiger" Brigade under Harry Hays entered the fray, pushing the Union forces back to the East Woods. The casualties received by the 12th Massachusetts Infantry, 67%, were the highest of any unit that day. The Tigers were beaten back eventually when the Federals deployed an artillery battery in the Cornfield. Point-blank fire slaughtered the Tigers, who suffered 323 casualties out of their 500 men.

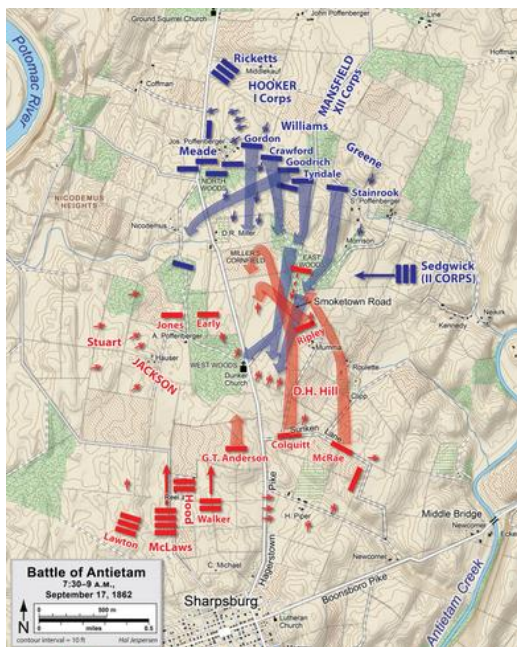
The Cornfield remained a bloody stalemate, but Union advances a few hundred yards to the west were more successful. Brigadier General John Gibbon's 4th Brigade of Doubleday's division – recently named the **Iron Brigade** – began advancing down and astride the turnpike, into the cornfield, and in the West Woods, pushing aside Jackson's men. They were halted by a charge of 1,150 men from Starke's brigade, leveling heavy fire from 30 yards (30 m) away. The Confederate brigade withdrew after being exposed to fierce return

fire from the Iron Brigade, and Starke was mortally wounded. The Union advance on the Dunker Church resumed and cut a large gap in Jackson's defensive line, which teetered near collapse. Despite heavy casualties, Hooker's corps was making steady progress.

Confederate reinforcements – the divisions of McLaws and Richard H. Anderson -arrived just after 7 a.m. following a night march from Harpers Ferry. Around 7:15, Lee moved George T. Anderson's Georgia brigade from the right flank of the army to aid Jackson. At 7 a.m., Hood's division of 2,300 men advanced through the West Woods and pushed the Union troops back through the Cornfield again. They were aided by three brigades of D.H. Hill's division arriving from the Mumma Farm, southeast of the Cornfield, and by Jubal Early's brigade, pushing through the West Woods from the Nicodemus Farm, where they had been supporting Jeb Stuart's horse artillery.

Some officers of the Iron Brigade rallied men around the artillery pieces of Battery B, 4th U.S. Artillery, and Gibbon himself saw to it that his previous unit did not lose a single caisson. Hood's men bore the brunt of the fighting and paid a heavy price – 60% casualties – but they prevented the defensive line from crumbling and held off the Union I Corps. Asked by a fellow officer where his division was, Hood gave his famous response; *"Dead on the field"*.

Mansfield and Sedgwick



Assaults by Mansfield's XII Corps, 7:30 to 9:00 a.m.

Hooker's men had paid heavily but without achieving their objectives – after two hours and 2,500 casualties, they were back where they started. The Cornfield, an area only about 250 yards (230 m) deep and 400 yards (400 m) wide, was a scene of total destruction. It was

estimated that the Cornfield changed hands at least 15 times during the morning. Maj. Rufus Dawes, who assumed command of Iron Brigade's 6th Wisconsin Regiment during the battle, later compared the fighting around the Hagerstown Turnpike with the stone wall at Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania's "Bloody Angle", and the slaughter pen of Cold Harbor, but insisted that *"the Antietam Turnpike surpassed them all in manifest evidence of slaughter."*

Hooker was reinforced by the 7,200 men of Mansfield's XII Corps, which had been held in reserve. Although Mansfield was a veteran of 40 years' service, he had never led large numbers of soldiers in combat and had taken command only two days before. Concerned that his men would bolt under fire (more than half of Mansfield's men were raw recruits), he marched them in a formation known as "column of companies, closed in mass". Regiments were bunched-up and arrayed ten ranks deep instead of the normal two. Entering the East Woods, Mansfield's corps presented an artillery target *"almost as good as a barn."* Mansfield himself was shot in the chest and died the next day. Alpheus Williams assumed temporary command of the XII Corps.

Mansfield's 1st Division made no progress against Hood's line, which was reinforced by brigades of D. H. Hill's division under Colquitt and McRae. However, his 2nd Division, under George Sears Greene, broke through McRae's men, who fled under the mistaken belief that they were about to be trapped by a flanking attack. This breach of the line forced Hood and his men, outnumbered, to regroup in the West Woods, where they had started the day. Greene reached the vicinity of Dunker Church and drove off Stephen Lee's batteries. *"... every stalk of corn in the northern and greater part of the field was cut as closely as could have been done with a knife, and the [Confederates] slain lay in rows precisely as they had stood in their ranks a few moments before."* (Major General Joseph Hooker, Commander of I Corps (Union Army))



Dead Confederate soldiers from Starke's Louisiana Brigade, on the Hagerstown Turnpike, north of the Dunker Church. (Photograph by Alexander Gardner)

Attempting to coordinate the assault, a Confederate sharpshooter spotted Hooker and his white horse and shot him through the foot. Hooker assigned command of I Corps to Meade. But with Hooker removed from the field, there was no general left with the authority to coordinate the remaining troops on the field.

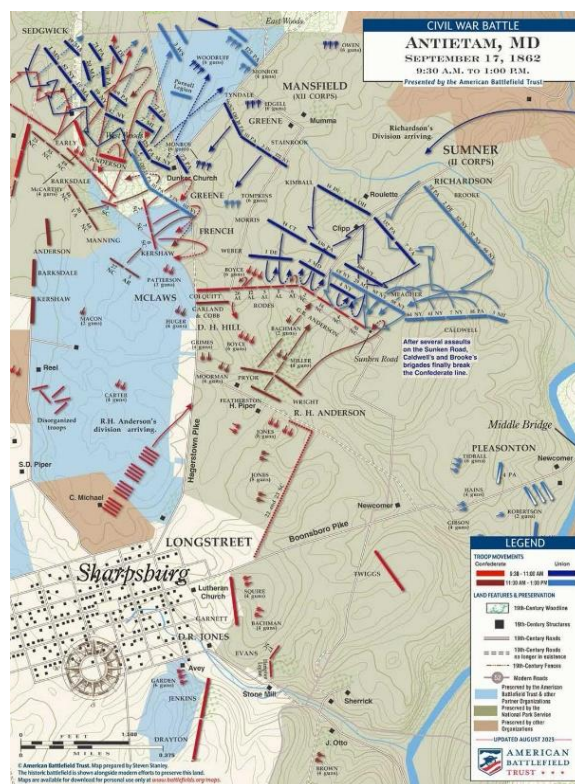
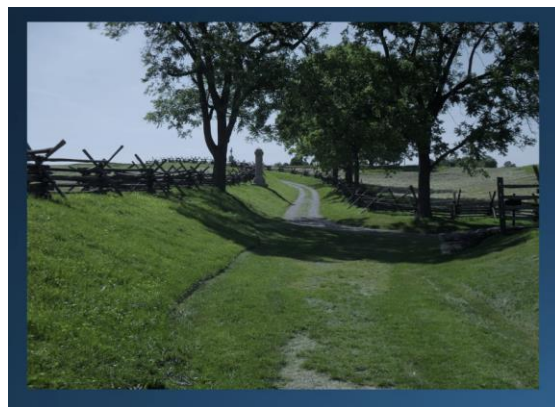
At 7:20 a.m., in an effort to turn the Confederate left flank and relieve the pressure on Mansfield, Sumner's II Corps was ordered to send two divisions into battle. Sedgwick's division of 5,400 men was the first to ford the Antietam, and they entered the East Woods with the intention of turning left and forcing the Confederates south into the assault of Burnside's IX Corps. But the plan went awry. They became separated from French's division, and at 9 a.m. Sumner, who was accompanying Sedgwick's division, launched the attack with again an unusual battle formation – three brigades in three long lines, men side-by-side, with only 50 to 70 yards (60 m) separating the lines. They were assaulted first by Confederate artillery and then from three sides by the divisions of Early, Walker, and McLaws. In less than half an hour Sedgwick's men were forced to retreat in great disorder to their starting point, having taken more than 2,200 casualties, including Sedgwick himself who was seriously wounded and taken out of action for several months.

(Sumner is often condemned for his "reckless" attack, his lack of coordination with I and XII Corps, losing control of French's division when he accompanied Sedgwick's, failing to perform adequate reconnaissance prior to launching his attack, and selecting a battle formation that was so effectively flanked by the Confederate counterattack. However recent analysis has determined that Sumner's reconnaissance was appropriate and his decision to attack where he did was justified by the available information.)

At around 9:45 a.m., Williams was tasked with reinforcing Sumner and sent two regiments from XII Corps towards the Hagerstown Turnpike. They were confronted by the division of John G. Walker, newly arrived from the Confederate right. Walker's men repulsed the two Union regiments. One of the Confederate brigades, commanded by Colonel Van H. Manning attacked Greene's position near the Dunker Church around 10 a.m. After repulsing Manning's brigade, Greene's soldiers counterattacked into the West Woods. The fighting died down around the Dunker Church and shifted towards Lee's centre. The morning phase ended with casualties on both sides of almost 13,000, including two Union corps commanders.

PART II

The Sunken Road "Bloody Lane"



The remaining II Corps divisions of William French and Israel Richardson moved forward to support Sedgwick's left. General Greene's division from XII Corps still held the open ground near the Dunker Church, so French and

Richardson advanced on Greene's left. There, they met Confederate Gen. D. H. Hill's division taking cover in a fence-lined sunken farm road. Laying low behind fence rails, Hill's men inflicted hundreds of casualties on the Union troops as they advanced over open ground in front of the road. Confederate artillery around the Piper farm also caused heavy casualties, including mortally wounding Richardson. The Irish Brigade under Gen. Thomas F. Meagher led Richardson's charge on the sunken lane, suffering 540 casualties. Confederate brigade commander George B. Anderson was wounded defending the "Bloody Lane", dying later following an amputation.

PART III Burnside's Bridge

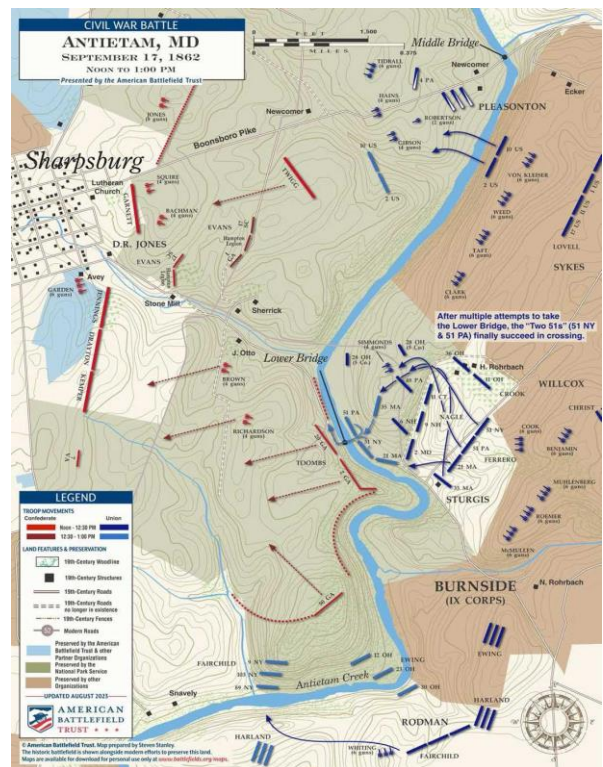


12:00-1:00 pm

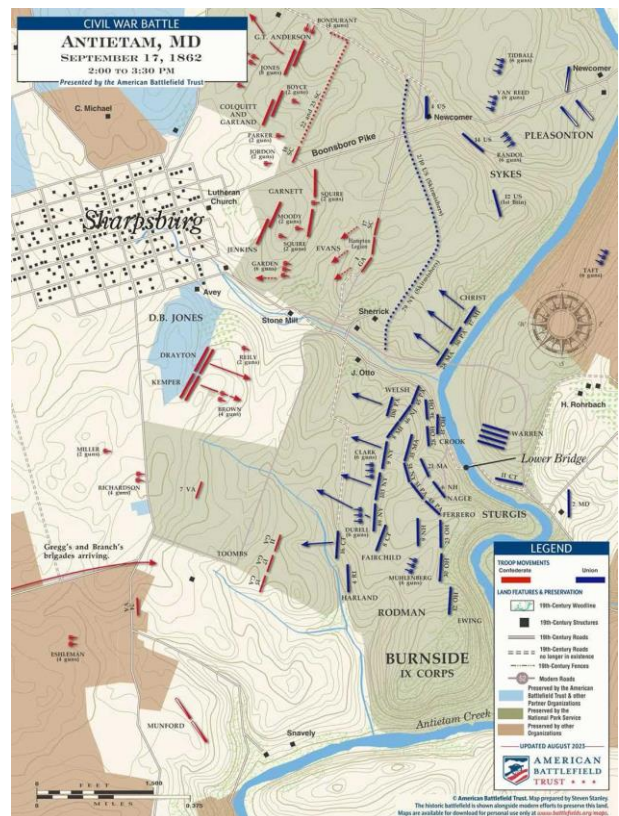


2.30-3.00pm

When Walker's division was moved north to bolster the Confederate defence of the West Woods, only five small brigades under Gen. David R. Jones were left to cover Lee's right flank. Their position was good – facing open, rolling ground that was difficult to attack across.



9.30am



1.00pm

Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside's IX Corps was intended to demonstrate against the Confederate right when the main attack further north began. However, McClellan's orders for Burnside to move forward were not written until 9:00 am and were not received until 10:00 am.

Instead of a single headlong assault against the lower bridge, Burnside first attempted to flank the Confederates with a movement south by Gen. Isaac Rodman's division. Rodman could not locate a suitable creek crossing until well after noon. By then, two uncoordinated attempts to capture the bridge had failed.

Around 1:00 pm, the 51st Pennsylvania and 51st New York finally charged across the bridge. For four hours, about 500 Confederates under Brig. Gen. Robert Toombs held off Burnside's corps, suffering about 120 casualties. Once Burnside's Corps captured the lower bridge (today known as the Burnside Bridge), his men took nearly two hours to cross it and form for an attack against the final Confederate line.

Finally, at about 3:00 pm, a mile-wide battle line of Union soldiers swept forward across the rolling terrain. About 2,500 Confederate soldiers with artillery waited on the high ridge south of Sharpsburg. The fighting was intense as Burnside's men neared the road to Boteler's Ford in Lee's rear. The 9th New York Infantry, also known as "Hawkins' Zouaves," suffered 63% casualties on the outskirts of Sharpsburg. At the last minute, exhausted after marching 17 miles (27 km) from Harpers Ferry, Gen. A.P. Hill's Confederate "Light Division" slammed into the exposed Union left flank and drove the Federals back. The 16th Connecticut Infantry, barely two weeks old, bore the brunt of Hill's attack. Divisions of the V Corps remained in reserve and were not moved forward to support Burnside.

The timely arrival of Hill, and the failure of McClellan to support Burnside's final assault ultimately saved Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia.

Aftermath

Estimated Casualties

	Union	Confederate
Killed	2,108	1,546
Wounded	9,540	7,752
Missing & Captured	753	1,018
TOTAL	12,401	10,316

Total casualties 22,717

There were more than 22,000 casualties at the Battle of Antietam. Doctors at the scene were overwhelmed. Badly needed supplies were brought in by nurse Clara Barton, known as the

"Angel of the Battlefield". During the night, both armies tended their wounded and consolidated their lines.

Despite his diminished ranks, Lee continued to skirmish with McClellan on 18th September, while moving his wounded south of the Potomac River. Late that evening and on 19th September, after realising that McClellan was not going to mount further attacks, Lee withdrew and slipped back across the Potomac into Virginia. McClellan sent Gen. Fitz John Porter to mount a cautious pursuit – which was repulsed at the Battle of Shepherdstown.

The Battle of Antietam is usually considered a tactical draw, but President Lincoln and the Union claimed a strategic victory. Lincoln had been waiting for a military success to issue his preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. He took this opportunity on 22nd September. The Proclamation, which vowed to free the slaves of all states still in rebellion as of 1st January 1863, changed the course of the war and the nation forever by marrying the Union cause with an attack on the institution of slavery. Hesitant to support a pro-slavery regime, England and France declined to form an alliance with the Confederate States of America.

After McClellan failed to pursue Lee on his retreat south, Lincoln finally lost faith in him and relieved him of command. A few weeks later, he named Burnside as the new commander of the Army of the Potomac.

If anyone has another brief (5 min) talk on a particular topic they would like to present, please contact Program Director John Morrison. We are keen to hear from our membership so please consider it.