Robert E. Lee and His High Command

Part I
Lecture 1: Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia
Lecture 2: The Making of a Confederate General
Lecture 3: Lee’s Year of Fabled Victories
Lecture 4: Lee From Gettysburg to Appomattox
Lecture 5: Was Lee an Old-Fashioned General?
Lecture 6: The Making of the Mighty “Stonewall” Jackson
Lecture 7: Stonewall Jackson as Lee’s “Right Arm”
Lecture 8: James Longstreet’s Road to Prominence
Lecture 9: Longstreet’s Later Confederate Career
Lecture 10: The Rise of Jubal Anderson Early
Lecture 11: Early’s Path to Defeat
Lecture 12: “Jeb” Stuart as Soldier and Showman
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Dr. Gallagher has received numerous awards for his research and writing, including the Lincoln Prize (1998—shared with three other authors), the Fletcher Pratt Award for the best nonfiction book on the Civil War (1999), the Laney Prize for the best book on the Civil War (1998), and the William Woods Hassler Award for contributions to Civil War studies (1998). Additionally, Professor Gallagher serves as editor of two book series for the University of North Carolina Press (Civil War America and Military Campaigns of the Civil War). He has appeared regularly on the Arts and Entertainment Network’s series Civil War Journal and has participated in other television projects. Active in historic preservation, Professor Gallagher was president of the Association for Preservation of Civil War Sites from 1987 through mid-1994, has served on the Board of Directors of the Civil War Trust, and on numerous occasions, has testified before Congress on battlefield preservation.
Table of Contents

Robert E. Lee and His High Command

Part I

Professor Biography ................................................... 1
Course Scope .................................................................. 1
Lecture One Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia .... 3
Lecture Two The Making of a Confederate General .... 6
Lecture Three Lee’s Year of Fabled Victories ......... 9
Lecture Four Lee from Gettysburg to Appomattox ...... 12
Lecture Five Was Lee an Old-Fashioned General? .... 15
Lecture Six The Making of the Mighty “Stonewall” Jackson 18
Lecture Seven Stonewall Jackson as Lee’s “Right Arm” 21
Lecture Eight James Longstreet’s Road to Prominence 24
Lecture Nine Longstreet’s Later Confederate Career 27
Lecture Ten The Rise of Jubal Anderson Early ...... 30
Lecture Eleven Early’s Path to Defeat ........................ 33
Lecture Twelve “Jeb” Stuart as Soldier and Showman 36

Maps ......................................................................... 39
Timeline .................................................................... 41
Glossary ..................................................................... 52
Biographical Notes ..................................................... 55
Bibliography ............................................................... 60

Robert E. Lee and His High Command

Scope:

This course examines Robert E. Lee and the high command of the Army of Northern Virginia. The lectures engage such questions as why Lee and his army are central to an understanding of the Civil War, how their operations influenced the Northern and Southern home fronts, why Lee was so successful as a field commander, and what kinds of officers flourished and failed under his leadership. A principal goal is to explain how and why Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia came to be the most important national institution in the Confederacy. The course explores the careers of Lee and 13 other generals in detail, assessing their contributions to famous military campaigns, highlighting their strengths and weaknesses as officers, and seeking to create a descriptive and analytical portrait of a storied army’s high command. The course departs from its biographical approach with four topical lectures, including one devoted to the ways in which former Confederate generals wrote about their wartime experiences.

Lee receives the fullest attention, with four lectures on his generalship. His three most successful infantry corps commanders—Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson, James Longstreet, and Jubal A. Early—are each the subject of two lectures, and the other 10 generals are either covered in one lecture or share a lecture with another officer. The 14 generals were chosen for their importance and as representatives of types; for example, army commanders Joseph E. Johnston and P. G. T. Beauregard offer revealing contrasts to Lee, and a quartet of younger men—John B. Gordon, Robert E. Rodes, Stephen Dodson Ramseur, and Edward Porter Alexander—serve as case studies of how officers with very different military backgrounds rose through the ranks to positions of considerable authority.

The course breaks down into seven sections of unequal length. The first lecture sets the stage by placing Lee and his army in the larger context of the war. The next four lectures explore Lee’s generalship, with the last of them examining whether Lee should be considered an old-fashioned general caught up in a modern mid-19th-century conflict. The six lectures on Jackson, Longstreet, and Early come next, followed by a quartet on James E. B. “Jeb” Stuart, Ambrose Powell Hill, Richard S. Ewell, and John Bell Hood. Stuart ably commanded Lee’s cavalry for most of the war, neither Hill nor Ewell distinguished himself as a corps commander, and Hood left the army as a superior division commander who would fail at higher levels of responsibility in Georgia and Tennessee. Lectures Sixteen and Seventeen break the biographical pattern. The first looks at Lee’s ability to make hard decisions regarding personnel and the second at the impact of combat attrition on the high command. Lectures Eighteen through Twenty-One shift the spotlight to the four young officers: Rodes, a graduate of the Virginia Military Institute; Ramseur, a West Pointer from the class of 1860;
Gordon, a lawyer with no formal military training; and Alexander, another West Point graduate who, unlike any of the other generals examined in the course, made his principal reputation as an artillerist. Failure of different types forms a strong thread in Lectures Twenty-Two and Twenty-Three, the first of which covers Johnston and Beauregard and the second, John Bankhead Magruder and George E. Pickett. The final lecture explores how postwar writings, especially those of Jubal Early, John B. Gordon, and others of the Lost Cause school of interpretation, helped shape popular perceptions of Lee and several of his most famous lieutenants.

Lecture One

Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia

Scope: Robert E. Lee and his Army of Northern Virginia occupied a central position in Confederate and Civil War history. Myriad connections linked the battlefield and the civilian sector during the conflict, and no military force wielded greater influence on the respective home fronts than Lee’s command. Citizens in the United States came to view it as the principal stumbling block to restoring the Union, while Confederates invested increasingly more emotional capital in it as their best hope for winning independence. The Confederate people looked to Lee and his army much as colonists had looked to George Washington and the Continental Army during the American Revolution. Long before the end of the war, Lee and his army, rather than Jefferson Davis and the Confederate Congress, had become the most important national institution in the Confederacy. The surrender of Lee’s army, at a time when scores of thousands of Southern soldiers remained under arms elsewhere, understandably signaled the end of the war to most observers, North and South. Lee and his subordinate commanders had played a hugely important role in the war that renders them worthy of continuing investigation.

Outline

I. Robert E. Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia occupy a central position in Confederate and Civil War history.
   A. It is important to understand how the home front and the battlefield influenced each other.
      1. Civilian morale depended in large measure on news from the battle fronts.
      2. Civilian expectations in two democracies at war often affected military planning.
      3. Much writing about the Civil War has neglected to examine ties between the military and nonmilitary spheres of the conflict.
   B. No military force on either side wielded more influence on the respective home fronts than Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia.
      1. Lee’s army was the only Confederate force to win a series of major victories.
      2. Citizens of the United States saw Lee and his army as the greatest threat to restoration of the Union.
II. Lee and his army became the most important national institution in the Confederacy.
   A. Confederate citizens came to expect success from the Army of Northern Virginia.
      1. Operations between late June 1862 and mid-June 1863 elevated Lee and his army to a special position.
      2. Lee and his army were more important in terms of Confederate morale than Jefferson Davis and the Confederate government.
   B. Lee and his army functioned in the Confederacy much as George Washington and the Continental Army had for the colonists during the American Revolution.

III. Belief in Lee’s army sustained widespread Confederate optimism long past the point often considered the turning point of the war.
   A. Many historians and other writers have identified the summer of 1863 as the moment when the eventual victory of the United States was assured.
      1. Lee’s defeat at Gettysburg is often portrayed as a watershed.
      2. Ulysses S. Grant’s victory at Vicksburg is described as a similarly pivotal success for the United States.
   B. Confederate morale did not suffer a critical blow in the summer of 1863.
      1. Faith in Lee’s ability to sustain the war effort remained high among Confederates.
      2. U.S. morale bottomed out in the summer of 1864.

IV. Lee’s surrender marked the end of the war for most observers, North and South.
   A. The fact that thousands of other Confederate soldiers remained under arms was less important than Lee’s surrender.
   B. The response to Lee’s surrender underscored the unique position he and his army had occupied.

V. It is highly unlikely that the war could have lasted four years without the presence of Lee and his army.

Questions to Consider:
1. How long would the war have lasted if Lee had not taken control of the Army of Northern Virginia?
2. Was it a sign of weakness in the Confederacy that Lee’s army loomed so large in the national psyche?

Essential Reading:
———, *Lee and His Generals in War and Memory*, chapter 1.
McMurry, *Two Great Rebel Armies*, chapters 1, 8, 9.

Supplementary Reading:
Connelly and Jones, *The Politics of Command*.
Freeman, *Lee’s Lieutenants*.
Lecture Two

The Making of a Confederate General

Scope: Robert E. Lee’s military career prior to his taking command of the Army of Northern Virginia afforded a range of experiences and highlighted disparate talents that would influence his role as the Confederacy’s most famous field commander. He compiled a remarkable record at West Point, worked in important engineering projects in the 1830s, and distinguished himself in the war with Mexico as the most celebrated member of General Winfield Scott’s talented staff. As a reform-minded superintendent at West Point in the 1850s and, later, as the officer who oversaw the mustering of Virginia’s state forces early in the Civil War, Lee honed skills that would make him a superior army administrator. His engineering training had given him a grasp of the importance of fortifications, knowledge he put to good use when, in late 1861, Jefferson Davis assigned him to head a department along the south Atlantic coast. That service, together with an earlier, largely unsuccessful, stint in the mountainous regions of western Virginia, raised doubts among the Confederate people about Lee’s aggressiveness and overall military capacity. By the spring of 1862, many newspapers, citizens, and soldiers who had applauded Lee’s decision to cast his fortunes with the Confederacy in April 1861 derided him as “Granny Lee” and an “old stick-in-the-mud.” Many would not have predicted success when he assumed charge of the army defending Richmond on June 1, 1862.

Outline

I. Robert E. Lee had a varied career as a soldier before the Civil War.
   A. He compiled a distinguished record at West Point and graduated second in his class.
   B. He worked on important engineering projects as a junior officer.
   C. He served on Winfield Scott’s staff during the war with Mexico.
      1. His skills as an engineer and a reconnaissance officer contributed to several U.S. victories in Winfield Scott’s campaign from Vera Cruz to Mexico City.
      2. Scott developed a high opinion of Lee.
      3. Lee earned three brevets for gallantry.
   D. Lee was a successful superintendent at West Point. Many of his cadets would later serve under him as generals.
   E. Lee’s only experience as a field officer came with the Second Cavalry in Texas in the 1850s.

II. Lee oversaw the mustering of Virginia’s state forces in the wake of secession in the spring of 1861.
   A. He proved to be an able administrator in Richmond.
   B. This duty denied him a field command, unlike many of his friends and colleagues.

III. Lee’s first year as a Confederate general yielded mixed results. He ranked third in seniority among full Confederate generals.
   A. Confederates initially hailed his decision to join the new Southern republic.
   B. He mounted an ineffective defense of western Virginia in the summer and autumn of 1861.
      1. He commanded in a region of difficult terrain.
      2. Many of his subordinates were poor soldiers.
      3. He sought to implement overly complex strategic plans.
      4. He was widely considered a failure when he left western Virginia in October 1861.
   C. Able service along the south Atlantic coast in the winter of 1861–1862 did not restore his diminished reputation.
      1. He improved the defensive situation in this theater.
      2. His call for fortifications, together with a lack of battlefield success, promoted a belief that he was a timid officer. He was even called “Granny Lee.”

IV. He completed his first year as a Confederate general as Jefferson Davis’s principal military adviser.
   A. Davis valued Lee’s opinion. Lee argued for a national conscription act, which was adopted in 1862.
   B. Lee would have preferred field command—and his luck soon changed.

V. Lee’s first great opportunity came in June 1862.
   A. Joseph E. Johnston’s wounding at the battle of Seven Pines or Fair Oaks (May 31, 1862) left the army defending Richmond without a commander.
   B. Davis’s selection of Lee to replace Johnston provoked mixed reaction.
      1. Many Confederates predicted that Lee would be a passive army commander poorly fitted to defend the capital.
      2. Some Confederates had retained a high opinion of Lee and predicted success for him.
   C. Lee confronted a critical strategic situation that would largely decide the fate of the Confederacy in the summer of 1862.
Lecture Three

Lee’s Year of Fabled Victories

Scope: Lee’s first year in command of the Army of Northern Virginia catapulted him to a position of unequaled fame and popularity in the Confederacy. He immediately demonstrated his innate aggressiveness during the Seven Days’ battles, during which he blunted George B. McClellan’s powerful drive against Richmond in June–July 1862. Following the Seven Days, which stood as one of the war’s great watershed in terms of impact on the broad strategic situation, Lee maintained the offensive by marching northward and winning a follow-up victory at Second Manassas or Bull Run in late August. His movement into Maryland in September marked the culmination of a seismic strategic reorientation that saw the focus of the war in Virginia shift from the outskirts of Richmond to the Potomac frontier. The invasion of Maryland ended at Antietam, where McClellan forced Lee to retreat to Virginia. Subsequent victories at Fredericksburg in mid-December 1862 and at Chancellorsville in early May 1863 completed the process by which Lee assumed center stage in the Confederate war effort. Chancellorsville also marked the final act in a year-long drama that witnessed a remarkable bonding between Lee and the soldiers in his army. Despite many difficult times over the next two years, that bond remained powerful and helps explain why the army retained its ability to mount a formidable opposition to the U.S. forces arrayed against it.

Outline

1. Lee’s performance during the Seven Days’ campaign set up the rest of his Confederate career.
   A. Confederate prospects were poor on June 1, 1862.
      1. Defeats elsewhere gave greater importance to operations outside Richmond.
      2. Joseph E. Johnston’s retreating had hurt Confederate morale.
   B. Lee’s aggressiveness during the Seven Days turned the strategic tide. Fought from June 26 (Mechanicsville) through July 1 (Malvern Hill), the campaign established a new standard for bloodletting in the eastern theater.
      1. George B. McClellan retreated from Richmond.
      2. Confederate civilian morale shot upward.
      3. The Seven Days must be reckoned one of the military watersheds of the Civil War.
II. Lee maintained strategic momentum through the summer and autumn of 1862.

A. He reorganized the army following the Seven Days.
   1. He eased several officers out of the army, including J. B. Magruder.
   2. He gave James Longstreet and Stonewall Jackson command of the right and left wings, respectively, eventually called corps.

B. The campaign of Second Bull Run or Manassas in late August reoriented the war from Richmond to the Potomac frontier.

C. Lee invaded Maryland in the wake of Second Manassas.
   1. He planned the campaign with logistics and politics in mind: to remove the war from Virginia, to influence the Northern elections, and to attract volunteers in Maryland.
   2. The campaign revealed that Lee had pushed his army to the limit.
   3. The battle of Antietam (September 17, 1862) brought an end to Lee's strategic offensive when he was forced to withdraw.

D. The Maryland campaign marked the end of a remarkable 15-week period for Lee. During this time, the Army of Northern Virginia suffered some 50,000 battle casualties.
   1. The Confederate people gained ever greater faith in Lee and his army.
   2. Lee was in the process of making the army his own.

III. The winter and spring of 1862–1863 completed the process by which Lee and his army gained ascendancy among Confederate institutions.

A. The battle of Fredericksburg in December 1862 marked an easy defensive victory.

B. The Chancellorsville campaign of April–May 1863 provided Lee with his most striking battlefield success.
   1. He overcame huge odds—almost two to one against him—and crushed Joseph Hooker by taking the initiative on May 2 and 3.
   2. He and his soldiers gained unshakable belief in one another.
   3. The Confederate people drew sustenance from a remarkable victory, even though Stonewall Jackson was shot down by his own men.

IV. The campaigns of June 1862–June 1863 created a national expectation of success for Lee and his army that lasted for the rest of the war.

A. Many historians have argued that Lee's aggressive battles in 1862–1863 hurt Confederate chances for independence.
   1. They cost the Confederacy precious manpower—70,000 casualties during the 12-month period.
   2. They never delivered a knockout blow to a U.S. army.

B. Such arguments focus too narrowly on casualties and fail to take into account Lee's impact on national morale.

Essential Reading:
Gallagher, The Confederate War, chapter 3.
———, Lee and His Army in Confederate History, chapters 1–2.
———, ed., Lee the Soldier, essays by Castel, Connelly, Davis, Freeman, Hartwig, Gallagher, Krick, Nolan, Reardon, and Roland.

Supplementary Reading:
———, Taken at the Flood: Robert E. Lee and Confederate Strategy in the Maryland Campaign of 1862.
Nolan, Lee Considered, chapter 4.
Thomas, Robert E. Lee: A Biography, chapters 18–22.

Questions to Consider:
1. Could Lee have followed a successful nonaggressive strategic blueprint in the summer and autumn of 1862?
2. Was there any strategy that would have conserved Confederate manpower and met public expectations?
Lecture Four

Lee from Gettysburg to Appomattox

Scope: Lee and his army continued to carry the hopes of the Confederacy on their bayonets through the remainder of the war. Just as they supplied the only positive counterpoint to Southern defeats in other geographic theaters in 1862 and early 1863, so, too, did their campaigns in 1864 provide hope to the Confederacy. Even the costly defeat at Gettysburg in July 1863 did little to tarnish Lee’s reputation or that of his army. Lee’s epic confrontation with Ulysses S. Grant during the Overland campaign of May–June 1864 left both armies reeling from horrendous casualties, and the ensuing nine-month siege of Petersburg and Richmond brought a new kind of grinding attrition to the conflict. Lee worked hard to maintain an effective command structure as subordinates failed or fell victim to wounds. Through it all, he remained vastly popular with both soldiers and civilians in the Confederacy. His surrender to Grant at Appomattox on April 9, 1865, stood as the practical end of the war—the moment when the one indispensable national institution in the Confederacy ceased to exist.

Outline

I. The Gettysburg campaign brought to an end Lee’s major strategic initiatives.
   A. Lee invaded Pennsylvania with logistical and political goals in mind.
      1. He successfully provisioned his army in the United States and gave northern Virginia’s farmers a respite from war.
      2. He hoped to exploit the political divisiveness in the United States, which centered on such subjects as emancipation and conscription.
   B. Defeat at Gettysburg ended the campaign sooner than Lee had planned.
      1. The first day’s battle was a Confederate offensive success.
      2. Lee insisted on continuing the tactical offensive on the second and third days of battle.
      3. The Confederates retreated from Gettysburg after the war’s bloodiest three days.
   C. Gettysburg was a Confederate defeat but not a catastrophe.
      1. Casualties were ghastly. At least 23,000 were killed, wounded, and captured, what amounted to roughly a third of Lee’s army.
      2. Lee failed to influence U.S. politics.
      3. He gained a logistical bounty, siphoning Union goods and animals out of Pennsylvania to be used for the Confederate cause.
      4. The Virginia theater was quiet for the next 10 months.
   D. Gettysburg had little effect on Lee’s reputation among his men or in the Confederacy.

II. The confrontation between Lee and Grant in 1864–1865 brought a new kind of war to Virginia.
   A. The Overland campaign of May–June 1864 set a chilling standard for casualties.
   B. Battles such as the Wilderness and Spotsylvania exacted a huge toll but offered no clearcut winner or loser. Grant lost 18,000 and Lee, 12,000 men at each battle. And still more battles were to come.
   C. Lee’s subordinate command structure fractured.
   D. The armies that settled into the siege of Petersburg in June 1864 had been bled nearly beyond recognition.
   E. Confederate faith in Lee remained high, while many in the United States became critical of Grant.

III. Nine months of siege at Richmond and Petersburg set the stage for U.S. triumph.
   A. Lee wrestled with problems of supply and manpower.
   B. He sought to mount a few tactical offensives in the midst of the siege.
   C. The turning of his western flank at Five Forks in April 1865 proved decisive.

IV. The Appomattox campaign ended Lee’s career as a Confederate general and foreclosed any option for Southern independence.
   A. Grant frustrated Lee’s efforts to break free of U.S. pursuit and join Joseph E. Johnston in North Carolina.
   B. The surrender at Appomattox set the tone for future Confederate surrenders.
      1. Lee vetoed guerrilla war as an option.
      2. He embraced Grant’s generous terms, which even allowed Confederates to keep their horses.
   C. The surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia removed what most Confederates looked to as their most important national institution.
      1. Lee towered above other Confederate leaders.
      2. Further national resistance seemed futile.

Essential Reading:
———, *Lee and His Army in Confederate History*, chapters 3–4.
———, *Lee and His Generals in War and Memory*, chapters 3–4.
Lecture Five

Was Lee an Old-Fashioned General?

Scope: Robert E. Lee often appears in writings about the Civil War as a throwback to an earlier style of warfare. Typically contrasted with Grant and William Tecumseh Sherman, who almost always are described as forward-looking practitioners of modern war that engulfed whole societies, Lee seems a quaint remnant from a localist, chivalric past. Many writers, both friendly and hostile to Lee, have suggested that he failed to understand that industrial production, mass railroad transportation, and vast application of national resources were necessary to wage a modern mid-19th-century conflict between two democratic societies. Common notions about him insist that he lacked national vision, thought only about Virginia, failed to understand the connections between politics and military affairs, blindly pursued set-piece battlefield victories without thinking of how each battle fit in the broader sweep of the war, and even failed to grasp the importance of technological advances in weaponry that made frontal assaults a thing of the past. In fact, Lee was an able practitioner of modern warfare in an 1860s context. He understood the connection between politics and military planning in a democratic republic, called for the subordination of state and local interests to national needs, and pursued a military strategy calculated to destroy the civilian North’s will to continue the fight. His ultimate failure should not obscure his clear comprehension of the type of conflict in which he and other Civil War generals found themselves engaged.

Outline

I. Lee is often described as an old-fashioned general in a modern war.
   A. Some admirers portray him as a chivalric anachronism.
      1. They describe him as noble, even likening him to King Arthur.
      2. They contrast him to such soldiers as Grant and William Tecumseh Sherman.
   B. Many critics argue that he did not understand a modern 19th-century war.
      1. He was a localist who concentrated on Virginia and failed to take in the whole strategic picture.
      2. He failed to understand that mobilization of national resources was crucial to victory.
      3. He concentrated on winning set-piece tactical victories with no understanding of the importance of politics and public morale.
4. He failed to understand that modern rifled weaponry made aggressive tactics a thing of the past.

C. There is irony in the fact that both admirers and critics of Lee have nurtured the idea of him as a backward-looking general.

II. Lee, in fact, was an able practitioner of modern war in a mid-19th-century context.

A. He was an ardent Confederate nationalist rather than a localist.
   1. He called for nearly complete national mobilization.
      a. He supported conscription.
      b. He supported impressment of resources, including using slaves in the war effort. He later argued to put slaves in the army by promising them their freedom.
   2. He advised Southern governors to subordinate their state interests to Confederate interests.

B. He had an excellent understanding of the importance of politics and national morale.
   1. He knew better than most of his modern critics the effect his battles had on people behind the lines in the United States and the Confederacy.
   2. He argued from the outset of the war that civilian morale would be crucial to determining which side won.

C. He understood the impact of technology on the battlefield. He fully understood the power of rifled weaponry.

D. He formulated an admittedly risky strategy calculated to undermine morale in the United States before Confederate resources were exhausted. He calculated that only big victories would win the day—and his army suffered for it in the way of casualties.

III. Lee’s ultimate failure should not be taken as evidence that he did not understand what type of war should be fought to achieve Confederate independence.

Essential Reading:
Gallagher, *Lee and His Army in Confederate History*, chapter 5.

Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. Is there a satisfactory definition of modern in assessing Lee’s generalship?
2. Does counting casualties to measure generalship obscure as much as it reveals?
Lecture Six

The Making of the Mighty “Stonewall” Jackson

Scope: With this lecture, we shift the focus from Lee to his most famous subordinate. Thomas Jonathan Jackson entered the Civil War as an obscure teacher at the Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, Virginia, and within two years, crafted a record on the battlefield that won him renown as Lee’s “right arm,” a bugaboo to Northern opponents, and perhaps the Confederacy’s leading military idol. Jackson overcame a poor educational background to do quite well at West Point, won a measure of distinction as an artilleryist in the war with Mexico, and finished his prewar years as a professor at V.M.I. Apart from his service in Mexico, Jackson’s antebellum life seldom rose above the mediocre and was characterized by an inflexibility, lack of imagination, and predilection to quarrel with fellow officers that seemingly augured ill for success as a general. The Civil War provided a stage on which he rose to each challenge. He did well in July 1861 at the battle of First Manassas, where his brigade held a key position and he won his famous nickname. The 1862 Shenandoah Valley campaign offered a grander stage, and Jackson made the most of it with a display of audacity and strength of purpose that yielded a series of small victories against an array of modestly gifted opponents. The Confederate people paid scant attention to the fact that Jackson’s tactical efforts in the Valley lacked distinction; his victories came at a time when Southern fortunes sagged almost everywhere else and caused widespread rejoicing across the Confederacy. Jackson went into the Valley campaign as an officer with a solid record and a superior nickname and emerged from it as the Confederacy’s preeminent military hero.

Outline

I. Jackson’s pre-Civil War career included some high spots but offered scant evidence of future military renown.
   A. He overcame a poor initial education to do quite well at West Point (1846) and graduated 17th out of 59 cadets.
   B. He earned modest fame and brevets for gallantry as an artilleryist with Winfield Scott’s invading U.S. Army in Mexico.
   C. He left the U.S. Army to teach at the Virginia Military Institute in 1851–1861.
   D. Jackson’s antebellum activities foreshadowed some of his traits as a Confederate general.
      1. He quarreled with fellow officers in the U.S. Army.

II. The battle of First Manassas on July 21, 1861, gave Jackson his first opportunity for fame.
   A. His brigade occupied a key position as the Confederate army was crumbling under U.S. offensive pressure.
      1. Jackson kept his head and stood firm on Henry House Hill.
      2. His brigade helped stem the Northern tide and set up a Confederate counteroffensive.
   B. Jackson emerged from First Manassas with plaudits from many quarters and the Civil War’s best nickname.

III. The Shenandoah Valley campaign of March–June 1862 catapulted Jackson to the front rank of Confederate military idols.
   A. The campaign took place at a time of sagging Confederate morale.
      1. Confederate forces west of the Appalachians had suffered a string of defeats.
      2. George B. McClellan’s Army of the Potomac was closing in on Richmond.
   B. Jackson won success in the Valley against a group of mediocre Federal opponents, among them Nathaniel Banks, John C. Frémont, and Irvin McDowell.
      1. He crafted victories at McDowell, Front Royal, First Winchester, Cross Keys, and Port Republic over the course of one month.
         a. The battles were fought on a modest scale—total U.S. casualties were estimated at 5,500; the South lost about half that many.
         b. The Federal high command lacked unified direction.
      2. Jackson displayed daring and decisiveness strategically.
      3. His tactical performances lacked distinction, but in the end, he won.
      4. He achieved the goals assigned to him by Robert E. Lee.
   C. The impact of the campaign was enormous, despite the scale of the fighting.
      1. Confederates welcomed news from the Valley after months of military defeat.
      2. People in the United States saw Jackson as a gifted Rebel general to be feared.
Lecture Seven

Stonewall Jackson as Lee's "Right Arm"

Scope: The 11 months between the close of the 1862 Valley campaign and Jackson's death following the battle of Chancellorsville coincided with the greatest period of success for the Army of Northern Virginia. Lee and Jackson formed a legendary partnership, with Lee developing strategic plans that often placed Jackson in the role of a semi-independent commander. Jackson headed Lee's Left Wing in the summer of 1862 and, following a reorganization of the army the ensuing autumn, the Second Corps. Although Jackson never displayed tactical brilliance, his swift marches and ability to place his soldiers where Lee wanted them helped set the stage for a series of striking victories. He was less successful as a military politician, an area in which Lee excelled. Because he often was at odds with one or more of his subordinates, Jackson almost certainly lacked the managerial skills to command an army. Lee exploited his dour lieutenant's strengths, giving him the crucial maneuvering tasks during the campaigns of Second Manassas, Antietam, and Chancellorsville. A somewhat fumbling tactical performance at Fredericksburg in December 1862 took nothing away from Jackson's overall record of accomplishment. Wounded by some of his own soldiers on May 2 at Chancellorsville, as he sought to maintain momentum generated by the war's most famous flank attack, he died eight days later. Lee and the Confederacy mourned his loss, and no one stepped up to fill his place during the final two years of the war.

Outline

I. Jackson and Robert E. Lee forged a legendary partnership during the period June 1862–May 1863.

A. The partnership got off to a rocky start during the Seven Days.
   1. Jackson was late or lethargic at the battles of Mechanicsville, Gaines's Mill, and White Oak Swamp.
   2. Overall Confederate success masked Jackson's failings.
   3. Lee came away from the Seven Days with some doubts about Jackson.

B. The campaigns of Second Manassas and Antietam showed Jackson at his best in semi-independent command.
   1. He carried out a famous flanking march at Second Manassas.
   2. He captured Harpers Ferry during the 1862 Maryland campaign, then rejoined Lee at Antietam.
C. He anchored Lee’s right at the battle of Fredericksburg in December 1862.

D. He made the most famous flank march of the war at Chancellorsville on May 2, 1863, shattering the 11th Corps of the Army of the Potomac. Later, he was accidentally wounded by one of his own units.

II. Jackson’s strategic maneuvers often outshone his tactical accomplishments.
   A. Lee played to Jackson’s strengths in this regard at Second Manassas, in Maryland in 1862, and at Chancellorsville.
   B. Jackson’s tactical performances often left much to be desired.
      1. He fumbled repeatedly at the Seven Days.
      2. He barely won victories against smaller Union forces at McDowell, Port Republic, and Cedar Mountain.
      3. The Federals temporarily broke his line at Fredericksburg.

III. Jackson had reached his level of competency as a soldier.
   A. He was an excellent subordinate to Lee.
   B. He lacked the political skills necessary to command an army.
      1. He quarreled with and often arrested subordinates.
      2. He was too secretive, confiding very little to subordinates, which often led to confusion.

IV. Jackson’s death delivered a major blow to the Confederate military effort.
   A. Lee never found a replacement of equal skill.
   B. Jackson’s style of generalship had suited the Confederate people.
      1. He was aggressive, which proved a spur to civilian morale.
      2. He won victories, and some of them were exaggerated.
   C. Jackson’s compelling personality had added to his legendary status.
      1. His eccentricities attracted attention.
      2. His deep religious belief inspired many Confederates.

V. Jackson must be reckoned Lee’s greatest lieutenant. Even Abraham Lincoln paid tribute to him as a worthy opponent.

Essential Reading:
Gallagher, *Lee and His Generals in War and Memory*, chapter 5.

Supplementary Reading:
Robertson, *Stonewall Jackson: The Man, the Soldier, the Legend*, chapters 16–25.

Questions to Consider:
1. What did Jackson really accomplish at Chancellorsville?
2. How should we assess Jackson’s and Lee’s relative contributions to Confederate military history during 1862–1863?
Lecture Eight
James Longstreet’s Road to Prominence

Scope: James Longstreet stood next to Jackson as one of Lee’s two premier lieutenants. A West Pointer who spent his entire prewar career in the U.S. Army, Longstreet served under Winfield Scott in the war with Mexico and ended the antebellum period as a staff officer. He entered Confederate service at the war’s outset and, as the title of his post-Civil War memoirs stated, fought, literally, from First Manassas to Appomattox. Longstreet’s first 15 months in command included successes and failures. His soldiers did well at Blackburn’s Ford, a preliminary clash before First Manassas, but he added nothing to his reputation at the battle of Seven Pines or Fair Oaks in May–June 1862. In the aftermath of Seven Pines, he joined Joseph E. Johnston, the army’s commander, in trying to divert attention from their own failings. The Seven Days’ battles, Longstreet’s first under Lee, showed his military gifts at their best. Indomitable in combat and able to deliver powerful offensive blows, he impressed Lee, who called him “the staff of my right hand,” and was soon given charge of the army’s Right Wing, later denominated the First Corps. Always Lee’s senior subordinate, Longstreet, known as “Old Pete” among his soldiers, fought well at Second Manassas, Antietam, and Fredericksburg. Lee’s fondness for Longstreet was unquestioned, and at the end of the day at Antietam, the commanding general greeted his lieutenant warmly as “my old war horse.” At the war’s midpoint in May 1863, with Jackson removed from the scene, Longstreet stood unchallenged as Lee’s most important subordinate and the Confederacy’s best corps commander.

Outline

I. Longstreet compiled a competent but unspectacular pre-Civil War record in the U.S. Army.
   A. He graduated near the bottom of his West Point class in 1842, thus receiving an infantry appointment.
   B. He earned a pair of brevets for gallantry during the war with Mexico.
      1. He fought with the 8th Infantry and was promoted to first lieutenant.
      2. He was wounded at Chapultepec while fighting with Winfield Scott.
   C. He finished the antebellum period as a paymaster at the rank of major.

II. Longstreet participated in several early military operations in Virginia.
   A. He served during the campaign of First Manassas as a brigadier general.

1. His soldiers fought at Blackburn’s Ford on July 18, 1861, where he showed his typical fearlessness in combat.
2. His command missed the main fighting at Manassas on July 21.

B. Longstreet performed poorly at Seven Pines or Fair Oaks in late May 1862.
   1. He joined his commander, Joseph Johnston, in trying to divert attention from their mistakes.
   2. His actions caused no serious harm to his reputation.

C. He fought effectively during the Seven Days’ battles.
   1. He demonstrated his ability to deliver powerful offensive tactical blows.
   2. He impressed Robert E. Lee, who was looking for an able offensive tactical fighter.
   3. He became Lee’s senior subordinate in the aftermath of the Seven Days.

III. Longstreet commanded Lee’s Right Wing, then the First Corps through the remainder of 1862.
   A. His soldiers mounted an impressive tactical offensive at Second Manassas on August 30, using 30,000 Confederate troops.
   B. He stood at Lee’s side through most of the Maryland campaign.
      1. He offered hands-on leadership during the battle of Antietam.
      2. Lee greeted him warmly after the battle as “my old war horse.”
   C. He oversaw the Confederate defense of high ground at Fredericksburg on December 13.

IV. Longstreet stood as Lee’s principal lieutenant and the Confederacy’s best corps commander on the eve of the Gettysburg campaign.
   A. He missed the battle of Chancellorsville while conducting operations near Suffolk, Virginia.
      1. This episode demonstrated that Longstreet possessed little flair for independent command.
      2. Longstreet nonetheless believed he had the talent for higher responsibility.
   B. Stonewall Jackson’s death in early May left Longstreet with no peer among Lee’s subordinates.
   C. Longstreet and Lee had developed a close relationship.
      1. Lee understood Longstreet’s strengths—a good administrator and commander—and he used him to his best effect.
      2. Lee liked Longstreet.
      3. Longstreet admired Lee but probably considered Joseph E. Johnston a better commander.
Lecture Nine

Longstreet's Later Confederate Career

Scope: The last two years of Longstreet's Confederate career included more negative than positive experiences. He and Lee differed about how to fight the battle of Gettysburg in July 1863, with Longstreet arguing for a more defensive posture and Lee insisting on an aggressive one. Longstreet did not "lose" the battle, but at times, he dragged his feet. Deployed to the western theater in the late summer of 1863, he helped win the battle of Chickamauga. After a series of quarrels with General Braxton Bragg, who commanded the Confederate Army of Tennessee, Longstreet conducted a remarkably mismanaged siege of Knoxville, Tennessee, during which he ordered unimaginative frontal attacks, preferred charges against key subordinates, and conclusively showed his unfitness for army command. Back with the Army of Northern Virginia in April 1864, he fought brilliantly at the battle of the Wilderness on May 6. A severe wound, delivered by fire from one of his own regiments just a short distance from the spot where Jackson had been similarly struck down at Chancellorsville, caused Longstreet to miss the rest of the Overland campaign. He rejoined the army in October, remaining at his post through Appomattox, where he helped oversee the final surrender of the army. At the time of surrender, none of Lee's senior subordinates could claim longer or better service, and none stood higher in Lee's estimation.

Outline

I. Longstreet's conduct at Gettysburg has generated enormous debate.
   A. Lost Cause writers and many others have accused him of insubordination that brought Confederate defeat.
   B. His defenders have insisted that he knew better than Lee how to fight the battle.
   C. His actions on July 1–3, 1863, include positive and negative elements.
      1. He properly stated his views on how to fight the battle when asked by Lee.
      2. He clearly disagreed with Lee's decision to pursue the tactical offensive on July 2.
         a. He took a great deal of time to get his divisions into position to attack on July 2.
         b. He dissembled when he claimed to have no authority to improvise on the ground.
c. His divisions fought exceedingly well in the Wheat Field, the Peach Orchard, Devil’s Den, and Little Round Top once they went into action.

3. He opposed the Pickett-Pettigrew assault on July 3 but carried out his orders diligently.

II. Longstreet spent an unhappy period in Georgia and Tennessee between September 1863 and April 1864.

A. His initial enthusiasm for reinforcing Confederate forces in the west wilted after a short time under Braxton Bragg in the Army of Tennessee.
   1. His divisions played a key role in the victory at Chickamauga.
   2. Longstreet left Bragg’s army during the siege of Chattanooga.

B. He conducted a remarkably ineffective siege of Knoxville in November–December 1863.
   1. He ordered an unimaginative attack against Union Fort Sanders on November 29.
   2. He quarreled with key subordinates after the siege.

III. Longstreet returned to Virginia in April 1864 and served the rest of the war under Lee.

A. He fought brilliantly at the battle of the Wilderness on May 6.
   1. He stopped a major Union assault that seemed certain to break Lee’s army.
   2. He launched a successful flank attack.
   3. He was badly wounded by fire from some of his own soldiers.

B. He rejoined the army after recuperating from his wounds and participated in the siege of Richmond and Petersburg.

C. He was at Lee’s side from Petersburg to Appomattox.

IV. Was Longstreet a modern soldier who understood better than Lee the power of the tactical defensive?

A. Historians who support this view point to Longstreet’s actions at Fredericksburg and Gettysburg.

B. Michael Shaara’s novel The Killer Angels and the film Gettysburg support this interpretation of Longstreet.

C. Longstreet’s behavior at Knoxville and elsewhere suggests that he was not far-seeing as a tactician.

D. His record stands on its own merits as that of a gifted 19th-century soldier.
Lecture Ten
The Rise of Jubal Anderson Early

Scope: Ranking behind Jackson and Longstreet as Lee’s third effective corps commander, Jubal A. Early followed a different path to that level of responsibility. A West Pointer who served only briefly in the U.S. Army before resigning to pursue a career in law, Early left civilian life to participate in the war with Mexico and later opposed secession as a member of the Virginia state convention in 1861. Once his home state departed from the Union, he immediately offered his sword to Virginia, then to the Confederacy, and fought in every major battle in the eastern theater, from First Manassas through Gettysburg. Progressing more slowly than either Jackson or Longstreet, he nonetheless rendered solid performances on many occasions and often found himself entrusted by Lee with difficult assignments. His ability to function in a semiautonomous manner during the Chancellorsville campaign impressed Lee and set him apart from most of his peers in the army. A profane and acerbic individual, Early admired Lee deeply and won his chief’s affection in turn. Lee called the younger Early “my bad old man” and had, by the aftermath of Gettysburg, concluded that “Old Jube” possessed the skills requisite to lead an infantry corps.

Outline

I. Early’s pre-Civil War career did not center on military service.
   A. He graduated from West Point in the class of 1837 but soon left the army to practice law.
   B. He served with the First Virginia Infantry volunteers in the war with Mexico.
      1. He saw no battlefield action.
      2. He acted for a time as military governor of Monterey.
   C. He returned to the law after the end of the war with Mexico.
   D. He won election to the Virginia secession convention in 1861.
      1. An old Whig, he opposed secession.
      2. He cast his lot with his native state as soon as it left the Union.
      3. He accepted a commission as colonel in the Confederate army.

II. Early rose from colonel to major general between the summer of 1861 and the spring of 1863.
   A. He commanded a brigade that contributed significantly to the Confederate victory at First Manassas in July 1861.
   B. He suffered a wound at the battle of Williamsburg in May 1862 but returned to the army in time to fight at Malvern Hill on July 1.

C. His performances during the campaigns of Second Manassas, Antietam, and Fredericksburg enhanced his reputation.
   1. Though a brigadier general, he more than once held temporary division command during this period.
   2. His command helped seal the break in Stonewall Jackson’s line at the battle of Fredericksburg.

III. He headed a division at Chancellorsville and Gettysburg.
   A. Lee gave Early an important semi-independent command at Chancellorsville.
      1. Early held the Fredericksburg front while Lee and Jackson marched west to deal with Joseph Hooker’s flanking movement.
      2. Early impressed Lee with his aggressiveness at the battle of Salem Church on May 4.
   B. Early’s actions at Gettysburg triggered later debate.
      1. Critics argued that he should have been more aggressive on the afternoon of July 1.
      2. A close reading of the evidence suggests the Early acted reasonably on the first day of battle.
      3. His division attacked impressively on July 2.

IV. Early and Lee respected each other despite vast differences in personality.
   A. Lee affectionately called the younger Early “my bad old man.”
   B. Early idolized Lee from the beginning days of the war.
   C. Early little resembled Lee as a man.
      1. He was exceedingly profane.
      2. He evidenced scant interest in religion.
      3. He flouted Southern marital conventions.
   D. Early’s self-reliance and aggressiveness on the battlefield suited Lee well.

Essential Reading:
Freeman, Lee’s Lieutenants, vol. 2, chapters 2, 35.
Gallagher, Lee and His Army in Confederate History, chapter 7.

Supplementary Reading:
Early, Autobiographical Sketch and Narrative of the War between the States, chapters 1–26.
Questions to Consider:

1. What does Lee's relationship with Early reveal about the commanding general's willingness to embrace subordinates of vastly different temperaments?

2. What does Early's case indicate about possible connections between prewar politics and allegiance to the Confederacy?

Lecture Eleven
Early's Path to Defeat

Scope: The second of our lectures on Jubal Early traces his trajectory in the operations in 1864–1865, a period during which he justified Lee's confidence in his abilities yet suffered a series of defeats that eventually brought his removal from command. He stood in for both A. P. Hill and Richard S. Ewell at different times during the Overland campaign before receiving permanent charge of Ewell's Second Corps in late May. Soon deployed to the Shenandoah Valley, he crafted a series of successes in June and July that opened a second front in the Virginia theater, brought him to the gates of Washington, and compared favorably to Stonewall Jackson's accomplishments in the Valley during the spring of 1862. The second phase of the 1864 Valley campaign, during which Early faced a far more powerful U.S. Army led by the talented and confident Philip H. Sheridan, closed with three disasters in the battles of Third Winchester, Fisher's Hill, and Cedar Creek in September and October. Left with a skeleton force in the Valley after Cedar Creek, Early lingered in command until early March 1865, when Lee, with gentle reassurances of his continued admiration, removed him. Although he ended the war on a distinctly sour note, Early had demonstrated a capacity for independent command superior to that of Longstreet and in some ways equal to that of Jackson. No former Confederate would be more active as a postwar controversialist than Early, who did much to shape the Lost Cause interpretation of the conflict.

Outline

I. Lee judged Early's capacity for higher responsibility between the autumn of 1863 and the summer of 1864.

A. Early stood in for Richard S. Ewell at the head of Jackson's old Second Corps during the Mine Run campaign of late 1863.

B. Early led the Third Corps at Spotsylvania when A. P. Hill fell ill.

C. Early permanently replaced Ewell in charge of the Second Corps in late May 1864.

1. Ewell bitterly resented losing his command and held a grudge against Early.

2. Early denied any role in ousting Ewell but clearly believed himself competent to lead a corps.

D. Early commanded the Second Corps at Cold Harbor.
II. Early’s most important Civil War service began with the first phase of the 1864 Shenandoah Valley campaign in June–July.
   A. Lee detached Early from the Army of Northern Virginia and gave him a range of goals.
      1. He was to defeat a Union army closing in on Lynchburg.
      2. He was to clear the Shenandoah Valley of U.S. forces.
      3. He was to cross the Potomac River and threaten Washington if possible.
   B. Early accomplished all Lee asked.
      1. He bested a group of minimally talented Federal opponents.
      2. He won the battle of the Monocacy on July 9, 1864, and marched to within cannon range of the U.S. capital.
      3. His successes depressed morale in the United States.
      4. Ulysses S. Grant had weakened his army to reinforce Washington’s defenders at Lincoln’s request.
      5. Early had done about as well as had Jackson in 1862.

III. A second phase of the 1864 Valley campaign ended with Early’s shattering defeat.
   A. Grant placed Philip Sheridan in command of an army of more than 40,000 with which to defeat Early’s 15,000-man Army of the Valley and destroy the logistical bounty of the Shenandoah.
   B. Early maneuvered successfully in the lower Valley from mid-July to mid-September.
   C. The climactic phase of the fighting in the Valley unfolded between September 19 and October 19.
      1. Early lost the battle of Third Winchester on September 19.
      2. Early lost the battle of Fisher’s Hill on September 22.
      3. Sheridan systematically wrecked much of the Valley’s economy after Fisher’s Hill.
      4. Early’s dazzling surprise attack gained initial success at the battle of Cedar Creek on October 19, but Sheridan mounted a smashing counterattack.
      5. In 1864, Sheridan took more than 15,000 casualties; there were approximately 12,000 in Early’s army.
   D. Lee recalled most of Early’s small army to the Richmond front before the end of 1864.
   E. A final defeat at Waynesboro during the first week in March 1865 prompted Lee to remove Early from command.

IV. Early’s record as a corps commander in Lee’s army was exceeded only by Jackson’s and Longstreet’s, and only Stonewall outshone Early in independent operations.

Essential Reading:
———, *Lee and His Generals in War and Memory*, chapters 9–10.

Supplementary Reading:
Early, *Autobiographical Sketch and Narrative of the War between the States*, chapters 27–50.

Questions to Consider:
1. Where should Early’s Valley campaign rank among accomplishments by Lee’s subordinates?
2. Should Lee have removed Early from command sooner?
Lecture Twelve-
"Jeb" Stuart as Soldier and Showman

Scope: James Ewell Brown “Jeb” Stuart earned fame as a general in Lee’s army exceeded only by that of Jackson and Longstreet. Just 28 years old when the war began, Stuart was a West Point graduate who had been wounded in action on the western frontier in 1857 and had participated in the action at Harpers Ferry in October 1859 that resulted in the capture of John Brown. A cavalryman throughout his Confederate career, Stuart affected a flashy uniform that included a scarlet-lined cape, a bright yellow sash, and an ostrich plume in his hat. Those gaudy trappings should not obscure his superior record as a cavalryman whose skills at reconnaissance and screening, the crucial tasks of Civil War cavalry forces, were unexcelled on either side. He also carried out headline-catching raids in 1862 that helped boost Confederate morale at crucial times, and he led the Second Corps effectively at Chancellorsville in the wake of Stonewall Jackson’s wounding. A near reverse in June 1863 at Brandy Station, the largest cavalry battle of the war, and a sub-par performance during the ensuing Gettysburg campaign stand as the only major blemishes on an otherwise fine career. When informed that Stuart had been mortally wounded at the battle of Yellow Tavern in May 1864, Lee remarked that his young lieutenant had “never brought me a piece of false information”—a high tribute for any cavalryman.

Outline

I. Stuart spent his entire pre-Civil War career in the U.S. Army.
   A. He graduated from West Point in 1854, 13th in his class.
   B. He served in the cavalry on the western frontier in 1855–1861 and was wounded in Kansas in 1857.
   C. He participated in the suppression of John Brown’s raid on Harpers Ferry in October 1859.

II. Stuart joined the Confederacy in May 1861 and made his mark in the first 15 months of the war.
   A. His First Virginia Cavalry regiment launched a flashy charge at the battle of First Manassas.
   B. He impressed Joseph E. Johnston with his skill at reconnaissance and screening during the period after First Manassas.
   C. He achieved national prominence in mid-June 1862 with his first “ride around McClellan” during the Peninsula campaign.

III. Stuart achieved a number of successes between July 1862 and May 1863.
   A. He honed his skills at reconnaissance and screening during the campaigns of Second Manassas and Antietam.
   B. His horse artillery under John Pelham played conspicuous roles in the battles of Antietam and Fredericksburg.
   C. He rode around McClellan’s army a second time in October 1862, this time in Pennsylvania.
   D. He led the Second Corps on May 3–4 at Chancellorsville after Jackson’s wounding.
      1. He proved to be an aggressive, effective infantry commander.
      2. Some officers in the army believed he should replace Jackson.
      3. Lee believed that Stuart was too valuable as head of the cavalry to be given command of Jackson’s corps.

IV. Stuart’s last year in the army combined successes and failures.
   A. His darkest period came in June and July 1863.
      1. He almost lost the battle of Brandy Station on June 9, 1863, when he was surprised by Federal cavalry, though in the end, his men held the field.
      2. The battle followed a round of celebrations and grand reviews.
      3. Stuart suffered at the hands of some editors in Richmond.
   B. During yet another attempted ride around the Union army, he lost contact with Lee’s army as it marched toward Pennsylvania during the Gettysburg campaign.
      1. His Confederate comrades and later historians have disagreed about Stuart’s conduct during the campaign.
      2. There is no doubt Lee was disappointed in Stuart, the only time Stuart failed him during the war.
   C. Stuart fought well in the initial stage of the Overland campaign.
      1. Confederate cavalry did especially well at Spotsylvania.
      2. It was clear that Stuart had built a talented subordinate command.
   D. Stuart died of wounds received at the battle of Yellow Tavern, about five miles north of Richmond, during the second week of May 1864.
      1. Lee deeply lamented his death.
2. Confederates across the South mourned the greatest loss of a commander in Lee’s army since Jackson’s death one year earlier.

V. Stuart combined personal dash and magnetism and solid military skills.
   A. He was visually the most colorful general in Lee’s army.
   B. No cavalry commander on either side outstripped Stuart in the crucial tasks of gathering information and screening his army.

Essential Reading:
Freeman, Lee’s Lieutenants, vol. 1, chapters 20, 40; vol. 2, chapters 3, 18, 25, 34; vol. 3, chapters 1, 4, 11, 14, 19, 21.

Supplementary Reading:
Thomas, Bold Dragoon: The Life of J. E. B. Stuart.
Thomason, Jeb Stuart.

Questions to Consider:
1. Should Lee have given command of the Second Corps to Stuart after Chancellorsville?
2. Is it possible Lee’s army would have achieved its great successes in 1862–1863 without Stuart’s participation?
1846–1848. War between the United States and Mexico gives many Civil War generals their only real experience in field operations.

1859. John Brown’s raid on Harpers Ferry intensifies sectional tensions; Robert E. Lee and Jeb Stuart both present when Brown and his followers are captured.

Nov. 1860. Abraham Lincoln elected as the first Republican president.

Dec. 20, 1860. South Carolina secedes from the Union.

1861

Jan. 9–Feb. 1. The remaining six states of the Lower South secede (Mississippi, Jan. 9; Florida, Jan. 10; Alabama, Jan. 11; Georgia, Jan. 19; Louisiana, Jan. 26; Texas, Feb. 1).

Feb. 4–March 11. A convention of delegates from the seven seceded states meeting in Montgomery, Alabama, writes a constitution and selects Jefferson Davis and Alexander H. Stephens as provisional president and vice president of a new slave-holding republic called the Confederate States of America.


April 12–13. Confederate bombardment overseen by P. G. T. Beauregard results in the surrender of Fort Sumter.

April 15. Lincoln calls for 75,000 volunteers to suppress the rebellion.

April 17–June 8. Four states of the Upper South secede in response to Lincoln’s call for volunteers (Virginia, April 17; Arkansas, May 6; North Carolina, May 20; Tennessee, June 8).

May 20. Confederate Congress votes to move the national government from Montgomery to Richmond.

June 10. Confederates under John Bankhead Magruder win a small engagement at Big Bethel on the
Virginia peninsula between Yorktown and Fort Monroe.

July 18.......................... Engagement at Blackburn’s Ford serves as a preliminary to First Manassas or Bull Run.

July 21.......................... P. G. T. Beauregard and Joseph E. Johnston share command in the Battle of First Manassas or Bull Run, which yields a flashy Confederate victory that builds confidence in the South and convinces many Northerners that the war will be longer and harder than first thought.

Oct. 21.......................... Union forces suffer a debacle at Ball’s Bluff, near Leesburg, Virginia.

Nov. 1.......................... George B. McClellan replaces Winfield Scott as general-in-chief of the U.S. Army.

1862

Feb. 6–16.......................... Ulysses S. Grant captures Forts Henry and Donelson on the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers.

March 7–8.......................... Union victory at Pea Ridge, Arkansas, deals a blow to Confederates in the trans-Mississippi theater.

March 9.......................... The Monitor and the Virginia fight the first naval engagement between ironclad vessels.

March 23.......................... Stonewall Jackson defeated at the First Battle of Kernstown near Winchester; this action nevertheless aids the Confederacy by persuading Federals to keep strength in the Shenandoah Valley that could have helped McClellan in his drive against Richmond.

April 5.......................... George B. McClellan begins a month-long siege of Yorktown, Virginia, marking the first important event in his Peninsula campaign.

April 6–7.......................... Ulysses S. Grant wins the battle of Shiloh in southwestern Tennessee.

April 16.......................... C.S. Congress passes the first national conscription act in American history; acts passed on Sept. 27, 1862, and Feb. 17, 1864, supplement the original legislation.

May 3.......................... Confederates abandon Yorktown.

May 5.......................... Battle of Williamsburg a delaying action for Confederates retreating up the peninsula toward Richmond.

May 8.......................... Stonewall Jackson wins the battle of McDowell, the first of several victories in his Shenandoah Valley campaign.

May 23.......................... Jackson’s advance guard wins a small engagement at Front Royal and captures nearly 1,000 Federal prisoners.

May 25.......................... First Battle of Winchester gives Jackson his third victory of the Valley campaign.

May 29–30......................... P. G. T. Beauregard withdraws from the vital rail center of Corinth, Mississippi.

May 31–June 1.................... The battle of Seven Pines or Fair Oaks is fought near Richmond; Joseph E. Johnston is wounded on the first day of action and command of the Confederate army defending Richmond against George B. McClellan’s Army of the Potomac passes to Robert E. Lee.

June 12–15....................... Jeb Stuart’s cavalry makes its first “ride around McClellan.”

June 25–July 1.................... The Seven Days’ battles reverse a tide of U.S. military success as Robert E. Lee drives George B. McClellan away from Richmond.

June 26.......................... The first big battle of the Seven Days takes place at Mechanicsville.

June 27.......................... Gaines’s Mill marks the second and bloodiest of the Seven Days’ battles.

June 29.......................... Confederates fail to inflict serious damage on McClellan’s retreating Federals in the battle of Savage’s Station.

June 30.......................... Confederates launch heavy but indecisive assaults against McClellan in the battle of Glendale or Frayser’s Farm.

July 1........................... Lee mounts a final series of attacks against McClellan in the battle of Malvern Hill, the final clash of the Seven Days’ campaign.
Aug. 9.............................. Stonewall Jackson defeats part of John Pope's Army of Virginia at the battle of Cedar Mountain near Culpeper.

Aug. 26–27.......................... Jackson completes a flanking march around Pope’s Army and destroys the Federal supply base at Manassas Junction.

Aug. 28.............................. Battle of Groveton opens fighting at Second Manassas; Richard S. Ewell receives a wound that requires amputation of his leg.

Aug. 29–30......................... Robert E. Lee wins a victory over Pope’s Army at the battle of Second Manassas.

Sept. 14............................. Battle of South Mountain circumscribes Lee’s options during the Maryland campaign.

Sept. 15............................. Stonewall Jackson captures Harpers Ferry.

Sept. 17............................. Union victory at the battle of Antietam or Sharpsburg ends Robert E. Lee’s first invasion of the North.

Sept. 22............................. Lincoln issues his preliminary Emancipation Proclamation.

Oct. 9–12........................... Jeb Stuart rides around McClellan’s army a second time.

Nov. 5............................... Lincoln replaces George B. McClellan with Ambrose E. Burnside as commander of the Army of the Potomac.

Dec. 13............................. Robert E. Lee defeats Burnside at the battle of Fredericksburg.

Dec. 31............................. First day of the battle of Murfreesboro or Stones River, Tennessee.

1863

Jan. 1............................... Lincoln issues his Emancipation Proclamation.

Jan. 2............................... Battle of Stones River concludes with Braxton Bragg’s retreat.

Jan. 25............................. Lincoln replaces Burnside with Joseph Hooker as commander of the Army of the Potomac.

April 11–May 4..................... James Longstreet conducts his largely unsuccessful Suffolk campaign and, as a result, misses the battle of Chancellorsville.

May 1–4............................. Robert E. Lee defeats Joseph Hooker in the battle of Chancellorsville; Stonewall Jackson is badly wounded on May 2 and has his left arm amputated.

May 1–17......................... Ulysses S. Grant wins battles at Port Gibson (May 1), Raymond (May 12), Jackson (May 14), Champion Hill (May 16), and the Big Black River (May 17) en route to bottling up John C. Pemberton’s army in the Vicksburg defenses.

May 10............................. Stonewall Jackson dies at Guiney’s Station, Virginia.

June 9............................... Jeb Stuart’s cavalry wins a hard-fought victory over Alfred Pleasonton’s Federal cavalry at the battle of Brandy Station.

June 14–15....................... Richard S. Ewell wins the battle of Second Winchester en route to Pennsylvania.

June 20............................. West Virginia joins the Union as a new state.

June 23–July 3.................... William S. Rosecrans’s Tullahoma campaign compels Braxton Bragg’s Army of Tennessee to withdraw from middle Tennessee.

July 1–3........................... Lee’s defeat in the battle of Gettysburg ends his second invasion of the United States.

July 4............................... Pemberton’s Confederate army at Vicksburg surrenders to Grant.

July 8............................... Confederate garrison at Port Hudson, Louisiana, surrenders, opening the Mississippi River to full Union control.

July 13............................. Anti-draft riots begin in New York City and rage for several days.

July 18............................. 54th Massachusetts Infantry attacks Battery Wagner near Charleston, South Carolina.

Sept. 2............................. Union forces under Ambrose E. Burnside occupy Knoxville, Tennessee.

Sept. 9............................. Union forces under William S. Rosecrans occupy Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Sept. 19–20....................... Battle of Chickamauga just south of Chattanooga gives the Confederacy its greatest tactical victory in the western theater and compels William S.
Rosecrans's Army of the Cumberland to retreat to Chattanooga; James Longstreet's two divisions from the Army of Northern Virginia assist in the victory.

Oct. 14 A. P. Hill attacks rashly in engagement at Bristoe Station.

Nov. 4–Dec. 3 Longstreet conducts unsuccessful operations against Burnside's Federal force at Knoxville; low point for the Confederates comes with their assault against Fort Sanders on Nov. 29.

Nov. 7 Engagement at Rappahannock Station part of a series of clashes that preceded Lee's withdrawal from the Rappahannock River to positions below the Rapidan River.

Nov. 19 Abraham Lincoln delivers his Gettysburg Address.

Nov. 23–25 Union victory at the Battle of Chattanooga lifts Confederate siege and opens the way for a campaign against Atlanta.


Dec. 8 Lincoln issues his Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction as a blueprint for restoring the Union; this first presented the president's “10 Per Cent Plan” for Reconstruction.

Dec. 16 Joseph E. Johnston assigned to command the Army of Tennessee.

1864

Jan. 2 Confederate General Patrick R. Cleburne circulates a proposal that would free large numbers of slaves and enroll thousands of them in the Confederate Army; his proposal meets with staunch opposition.

March 12 U. S. Grant named general-in-chief of Union forces; plans simultaneous offensives designed to pressure Confederate military forces on a broad front.

April 8–9 Battles of Mansfield or Sabine Crossroads and Pleasant Hill, fought near Shreveport, Louisiana, mark the climax of Nathaniel P. Banks's unsuccessful Red River campaign.

April 12 Confederates under Nathan Bedford Forrest capture Fort Pillow, Tennessee, killing a number of black and white Unionist troops who try to surrender.

May 5–6 Battle of the Wilderness opens the Overland campaign between Robert E. Lee and U. S. Grant; James Longstreet severely wounded during the second day of fighting.

May 7 William Tecumseh Sherman begins his Atlanta campaign against Joseph E. Johnston's Army of Tennessee.

May 8–20 Battles around Spotsylvania Court House continue the struggle between Grant and Lee; heaviest fighting occurs on May 12 in the Confederate salient known as the Mule Shoe.

May 11 Jeb Stuart mortally wounded in the battle of Yellow Tavern and dies the following day.

May 15 Battle of New Market blunts Franz Sigel's Union campaign in the Shenandoah Valley.

May 16 Battle of Drewry's Bluff, with P. G. T. Beauregard and George E. Pickett playing key roles on the Confederate side, stops progress toward Richmond of Benjamin F. Butler's Union Army of the James; Butler retreats to Bermuda Hundred.

May 23–26 Lee and Grant face each other at the North Anna River; A. P. Hill launches precipitate attack on May 23; Lee later too ill to take advantage of possible opening.

June 1–3 Battles at Cold Harbor between Lee and Grant include massive and unsuccessful Union assaults (the heaviest attacks occurred on June 3).

June 12–18 Grant orchestrates a brilliant crossing of the James River but fails to capture Petersburg; his troops begin what will become a nine-month siege.
June 13 ............................ Jubal Early and the Second Corps leave Lee’s army for what will become the 1864 Shenandoah Valley campaign.

June 17–18 ................. Early’s force turns back a Federal advance under David Hunter at Lynchburg.

June 27 ................. Union attacks bloodily repulsed at Kennesaw Mountain, Georgia, after which Sherman resumes his campaign of maneuver.

July 2 ................. The Wade-Davis Bill passes the U.S. Senate, presenting an alternative to President Lincoln’s 10 Per Cent Plan for Reconstruction; Lincoln kills it with a pocket veto on July 4, and supporters of the bill answer with the “Wade-Davis Manifesto” criticizing the president’s actions.

July 9 ................. Jubal Early wins the battle of the Monocacy just south of Frederick, Maryland, and over the next three days, advances to the outskirts of Washington and skirmishes with Federals in the capital’s defensive works.

July 17 ................. Jefferson Davis replaces Joseph E. Johnston with John Bell Hood as commander of the Confederate army defending Atlanta; Hood launches unsuccessful offensives against Sherman’s invading forces in the battles of Peachtree Creek (July 20), Atlanta (July 22), and Ezra Church (July 28) before the two armies settle into a siege.

July 20 ................. Stephen Dodson Ramseur is defeated in a small battle at Stephenson’s Depot, just north of Winchester.

July 24 ................. Jubal Early wins a victory in the Shenandoah Valley at the Second Battle of Kernstown.

July 30 ................. Lee’s victory at the battle of the Crater costs Grant a good opportunity to break the stalemate at Petersburg.

Aug. 5 ................. David G. Farragut’s Union fleet wins the battle of Mobile Bay, closing the last major Confederate port on the Gulf of Mexico.

Aug. 18–19 ................. Battle of the Weldon Railroad on the Richmond/Petersburg front.

Aug. 25 ................. Battle of Ream’s Station on the Richmond/Petersburg front.

Sept. 2 ................. Sherman’s Union forces enter Atlanta, providing a critical Union victory that virtually guaranteed President Lincoln’s reelection in November.

Sept. 19 ................. Climactic phase of the 1864 Shenandoah Valley campaign opens with Philip H. Sheridan’s victory over Early’s Confederate army in the battle of Third Winchester; Robert E. Rodes mortally wounded and dies on the battlefield.

Sept. 22 ................. Sheridan defeats Early for a second time in the battle of Fisher’s Hill.

Sept. 26–Oct. 7 ................. Sheridan’s army destroys much of the logistical capacity of the Shenandoah Valley between Strasburg and Harrisonburg.

Sept. 29–Oct. 2 ................. Fighting at Peeble’s Farm and Fort Harrison on the Richmond/Petersburg front.

Oct. 10 ................. Cavalry battle of Tom’s Brook gives Federals in the Shenandoah Valley another victory.

Oct. 19 ................. Jubal Early’s defeat at the battle of Cedar Creek ends large-scale operations in the Shenandoah Valley; Stephen Dodson Ramseur mortally wounded and dies the next day.

Nov. 1 ................. New Maryland state constitution abolishing slavery takes effect.

Nov. 7 ................. Jefferson Davis proposes enrolling slaves in the Confederate military and freeing all who serve faithfully; this touches off an acrimonious debate that continues for several months.

Nov. 8 ................. Abraham Lincoln reelected, and Republicans gain large majorities in both houses of Congress and do well in Northern state races.

Nov. 16–Dec. 21 ................. Sherman’s army makes its famous “March to the Sea” from Atlanta to Savannah, leaving a wide path of destruction in its wake.
Nov. 30 John M. Schofield wins a Union victory over John Bell Hood’s Army of Tennessee at the Battle of Franklin, a short distance south of Nashville.

Dec. 15–16 George H. Thomas routs Hood’s Army of Tennessee in the battle of Nashville, the final significant engagement in Tennessee.

1865

Jan. 11 Missouri state constitutional convention abolishes slavery.

Jan. 13 John Bell Hood resigns as commander of the Army of Tennessee.

Jan. 19 William Tecumseh Sherman begins his march from Savannah into the Carolinas.

Jan. 31 Robert E. Lee is named general-in-chief of all Confederate armies.


Feb. 3 Peace conference at Hampton Roads leads to no agreement.

Feb. 5–7 Fighting at Hatcher’s Run on the Richmond/Petersburg front.

Feb. 17 Columbia, South Carolina, falls to Sherman’s army; fires sweep through the city.

Feb. 17 Charleston, South Carolina, evacuated by Confederate military forces.

Feb. 22 Joseph E. Johnston receives command of Confederate forces defending the Carolinas.

March 2 Jubal Early defeated at Waynesboro in the final engagement in the Shenandoah Valley; Lee removes him from command shortly thereafter.

March 4 Abraham Lincoln delivers his second inaugural address.

March 13 C.S. Congress authorizes President Davis to recruit slaves as soldiers (but not to offer them freedom if they serve).

March 19, 21 Battle of Bentonville near Raleigh, North Carolina, marks the end of significant fighting on Johnston’s and Sherman’s front.

March 25 John B. Gordon leads Lee’s last major tactical offensive of the war at Fort Stedman.

March 31 Fighting at White Oak Road and Dinwiddie Court House on the Richmond/Petersburg front

April 1 Union victory in the battle of Five Forks, where George E. Pickett performs poorly, sets the stage for the Union capture of Richmond and Petersburg.

April 2 Confederate government abandons Richmond; Robert E. Lee’s army evacuates Richmond-Petersburg lines and begins retreat westward; A. P. Hill killed in fighting west of Boydton Plank Road.

April 3 U.S. forces occupy Petersburg and Richmond.

April 6 Battle of Sailor’s Creek a disaster for Lee’s retreating army; Richard S. Ewell taken prisoner.

April 9 Lee surrenders the Army of Northern Virginia to U. S. Grant at Appomattox Court House.

April 14 Abraham Lincoln shot in Ford’s Theater; he dies the next morning.

April 26 Joseph E. Johnston surrenders his army to Sherman at Durham Station, North Carolina.

May 4 Richard Taylor surrenders Confederate forces in the department of Alabama, Mississippi, and East Louisiana to E. R. S. Canby at Citronelle, Alabama.

May 10 Jefferson Davis is captured near Irwinville, Georgia.

May 12–13 The final land battle of the war takes place at Palmito Ranch, near Brownsville, Texas.

May 26 Confederate forces in the trans-Mississippi theater surrender in an agreement signed in New Orleans.

Dec. 18 The Thirteenth Amendment is ratified; it abolishes slavery throughout the United States.
Glossary

Abatis: A tangle of felled trees or brush in front of an entrenched position, with branches facing the enemy’s lines, to retard an attacking force.

Blockade: A force of naval vessels placed to intercept shipping into or out of an enemy’s ports.

Bounty: A cash payment by the national, state, or local government designed to attract volunteers to the armed forces.

Breastworks: A barricade of dirt, logs, sandbags, or other materials designed to protect soldiers fighting on the defensive.

Breechloader: A shoulder weapon that is loaded at the breech, or rear of the barrel.

Brevet rank: An honorary promotion of a military officer to a rank above his regular rank, given to reward exceptional service but conveying no increase in authority.

Cavalry screen: A body of cavalrmen charged with protecting the front and flanks of an army from probes by the enemy’s cavalry.

Commissary: The military department dealing with the supply of food.

Company-grade officers: Those who hold the commissioned ranks of captain or lower.

Contraband: Material belonging to an enemy subject to seizure by a belligerent power in time of war. During the Civil War, the term most often applied to slaves in the Confederacy who made their way to Union lines.

Demonstration: A military term for a maneuver intended to hold the enemy’s attention while a major assault or movement is made elsewhere.

Earthworks: Fortifications constructed of dirt, sand, and similar materials (a term often used interchangeably with breastworks or field works).

Enfilade: To fire against an enemy’s position from the side or flank. Such fire is especially effective because the defenders are unable to bring a large volume of counter-fire to bear.

Entrenchments: Defensive works prepared either in the field or as part of more permanent fortifications around cities or other crucial positions (also often called, simply, trenches).

Envelop: To move around an enemy’s flank, placing troops in position to render a defensive posture untenable.

Feint: A movement intended to hold the enemy’s attention while a larger attack or maneuver is carried out on another part of the field (a term often used interchangeably with demonstration).

Field-grade officers: Those who hold the commissioned ranks of colonel, lieutenant colonel, or major.

Fire-eaters: Outspoken advocates of Southern rights who took extreme positions regarding the protection of slavery. Many of them played a prominent role in the secession movement.

Flank: The end of a line of troops on the field of battle or in a fortified position. To flank an enemy’s position involves placing troops on its side or rear. A flanking march is the maneuver designed to give the troops in motion either a tactical or strategic advantage.

Fleet: A group of naval warships and support vessels operating as a unified force.

Flotilla: Similar to a fleet but usually consisting of a smaller number of vessels.

Forage: The feed for horses and mules. As a verb, to forage means the procurement of hay, grains, or grass necessary to feed an army’s animals. The verb also applied to soldiers’ search for food to feed themselves.

Forced march: A movement made at a rapid pace to meet a dire threat (either real or perceived).

Guerrilla: A combatant who operates in small units or bands beyond the control of major organized military forces. These men often carried out raids and small attacks behind enemy lines.

Logistics: Military activity dealing with the physical support, maintenance, and supply of an army.

Martial law: Temporary government of civilians by military authorities, typically involving the suspension of some civil liberties.

Minié ball: More properly called a minié bullet, this hollow-base lead projectile of cylindro-conoidal shape was the standard round for Union and Confederate infantrymen armed with rifled shoulder weapons.

Mortar: An artillery piece designed to fire projectiles in a high arc that could strike targets behind fortifications. Mortar boats deployed this type of artillery piece in naval actions.

Muzzleloader: A shoulder weapon that is loaded at the muzzle, or front of the barrel.

Non-commissioned officers: Those who hold the ranks of sergeant and corporal.
Ordnance: The military department responsible for the supply of arms and ammunition.

Parole: An oath taken by a captured soldier, given in return for release from captivity, not to bear arms again until formally exchanged for one of the captor’s soldiers. As a verb, to parole means to obtain such an oath from a prisoner as a condition of releasing him.

Partisan: A combatant operating in small groups beyond the control of major military forces. The term is sometimes used interchangeably with guerrilla, but during the Civil War, partisans often were viewed as better disciplined and less likely to commit outrages against civilians or enemy soldiers.

Picket: A soldier assigned to the perimeter of an army camp or position to give warning of enemy movements.

Prisoner cartel: An agreement between the warring governments to exchange captured soldiers rather than sending them to prisoner-of-war camps. If one side had a surplus of prisoners, they typically would be paroled until a sufficient number of the enemy’s troops were captured to make an exchange.

Quartermaster: The military department responsible for the supply of clothing, shoes, and other equipment.

Reconnaissance in force: A probing movement by a large body of troops intended to reveal the enemy’s position and likely intentions.

Repeating firearm: A weapon that can be fired more than once without reloading.

Salient: A portion of a defensive line that protrudes toward the enemy and is, thus, potentially vulnerable on three sides.

Strategy: The branch of warfare involving the movement of armies to (a) bring about combat with an enemy under favorable circumstances or (b) force the retreat of an enemy.

Tactics: The branch of warfare involving actual combat between attackers and defenders.

Trains: The wagons accompanying armies that carried food, forage, ammunition, and other supplies (not to be confused with railroad rolling stock).

Trooper: A cavalryman.

Volley: The simultaneous firing of their weapons by a number of soldiers in one unit.

Works: A generic term applied to defensive fortifications of all types.

Biographical Notes

Alexander, Edward Porter (1835–1910). One of the most versatile officers in the Confederate army, he served brilliantly on the staffs of P. G. T. Beauregard, Joseph E. Johnston, and Robert E. Lee before transferring to the artillery. He proved himself the most able artilleryist in Confederate service, fighting in most of the great battles of the Army of Northern Virginia and writing a pair of classic memoirs after the war.

Banks, Nathaniel Prentice (1816–1894). One of the most prominent Union political generals, he served throughout the war without achieving any distinction on the battlefield. No match for Stonewall Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley in 1862, he similarly came to grief during the 1864 Red River campaign.

Beauregard, Pierre Gustave Toutant (1818–1893). One of the ranking officers in the Confederacy, he presided over the bombardment of Fort Sumter in April 1861, led the Southern army at the opening of the battle of First Bull Run or Manassas, and later held various commands in Mississippi, at Charleston, and at Petersburg, Virginia.

Bragg, Braxton (1817–1876). A controversial military figure who led the Confederate Army of Tennessee at Stones River, Chickamauga, and Chattanooga. Intensely unpopular with many of his soldiers and subordinates, including James Longstreet during the Chattanooga campaign in 1863, he finished the war as an advisor to Jefferson Davis in Richmond.

Breckinridge, John Cabell (1821–1875). Vice president of the United States under James Buchanan and the Southern Democratic candidate for president in 1860, he served the Confederacy as a general and secretary of war. He fought in the eastern and western theaters, winning the battle of New Market in May 1864.

Burnside, Ambrose Everett (1824–1881). Union general best known for commanding the Army of the Potomac at the battle of Fredericksburg in December 1862. His wartime career also included early service along the North Carolina coast and later action with Grant’s army during the Overland campaign. After the war, he served Rhode Island as governor and U.S. senator.

Butler, Benjamin Franklin (1818–1893). Union general who coined the term contraband for runaway slaves in 1861 and commanded the army that approached Richmond by moving up the James River during U. S. Grant’s grand offensive of May 1864. A prewar Democrat who supported John C. Breckinridge in 1860, he became a Radical Republican during the war.

Davis, Jefferson (1808–1889). Colonel during the war with Mexico, secretary of war under Franklin Pierce, and prominent senator from Mississippi in the 1840s and 1850s, he served as the Confederacy’s only president. He and his nationalist policies triggered great political debate among Confederates.
Early, Jubal Anderson (1816–1894). Confederate general who compiled a solid record as an officer in the Army of Northern Virginia between First Manassas and the 1864 Overland campaign. He ended the war a disgraced figure in the Confederacy because of his defeats in the 1864 Shenandoah Valley campaign. After the war, he became one of the leading architects of the Lost Cause interpretation of the conflict.

Ewell, Richard Stodert (1817–1872). Confederate general who made his name as a division commander under Stonewall Jackson in 1862 but never achieved distinction after being promoted to replace Jackson at the head of the Second Corps in the Army of Northern Virginia. He suffered the indignity of being eased out of corps command during the Overland campaign but remained in service to the end of the war.

Frémont, John Charles (1813–1890). Famous as an antebellum western explorer, he ran as the first Republican candidate for president in 1856 and served as a Union general in Missouri and Virginia during the war. While commanding in Missouri in 1861, he attempted to free the state’s slaves by issuing a proclamation that abolitionists applauded, but Lincoln ordered him to rescind. He was among the U.S. generals who opposed Stonewall Jackson in the 1862 Shenandoah Valley campaign.

Gordon, John Brown (1832–1904). Although lacking formal military training, Gordon rose to become a Confederate corps commander on the basis of hard fighting between 1862 and 1864. He participated in most of the battles of the Army of Northern Virginia, playing important roles at Spotsylvania, in the Shenandoah Valley campaign of 1864, and during the siege of Petersburg. A prominent politician after the war in his native Georgia, he also ranked among the most influential Lost Cause writers.

Grant, Ulysses S. (1822–1885). The most successful Union military commander, serving as general-in-chief for the last 14 months of the war and twice winning election as president during the postwar years.

Hill, Ambrose Powell (1825–1865). Confederate general whose record in 1862–1863 as the head of the “Light Division” in Lee’s army was impressive. He struggled after being promoted to corps command just before the Gettysburg campaign, was frequently ill, and was killed in battle just before the retreat to Appomattox.

Hood, John Bell (1831–1879). Confederate commander who fought effectively in the Army of Northern Virginia in 1862–1863 but is best known for his unsuccessful defense of Atlanta against Sherman’s army and the disastrous campaign in Tennessee that culminated in the battle of Nashville in mid-December 1864.

Hooker, Joseph (1814–1879). Union general nicknamed “Fighting Joe” who commanded the Army of the Potomac at the battle of Chancellorsville. Replaced by George G. Meade during the Gettysburg campaign, he later fought at Chattanooga and in the opening phase of the 1864 Atlanta campaign.

Hunter, David (1802–1886). A Union general who, as commander along the south Atlantic coast in May 1862, tried to free all slaves in his department, only to see Lincoln revoke his order. He later led an army in the Shenandoah Valley in 1864 and was defeated by Jubal Early at Lynchburg.

Jackson, Thomas Jonathan (1824–1863). Nicknamed “Stonewall” and second only to Lee as a popular Confederate hero, he was celebrated for his 1862 Shenandoah Valley campaign and his achievements as Lee’s trusted subordinate. He died at the peak of his fame, succumbing to pneumonia after being wounded at the battle of Chancellorsville.

Johnston, Albert Sidney (1803–1862). A prominent antebellum military figure from whom much was expected as a Confederate general. He compiled a mixed record in the western theater before being mortally wounded on April 6, 1862, at the battle of Shiloh.

Johnston, Joseph Eggleston (1807–1891). A Confederate army commander who served in both Virginia and the western theater. Notoriously prickly about rank and privileges, he feuded with Jefferson Davis and compiled a record demonstrating his preference for defensive over offensive operations. His wound at the battle of Seven Pines in May 1862 opened the way for R. E. Lee to assume field command. (He and A. S. Johnston were not related.)

Lee, Robert Edward (1807–1870). Southern military officer who commanded the Army of Northern Virginia for most of the war. His successes in 1862–1863 made him the most admired Confederate public figure and his army, the most important national institution in the Confederacy.

Lincoln, Abraham (1809–1865). Elected in 1860 as the first Republican to hold the presidency, he provided superior leadership for the Northern war effort and was reelected in 1864 before being assassinated at Ford’s Theater on the eve of complete Union victory.

Longstreet, James (1821–1904). Lee’s senior subordinate from 1862 until the end of the war, he compiled a generally excellent record while under Lee’s eye but proved unequal to the demands of independent command during the East Tennessee campaign of 1863–1864. He became a controversial figure in the South after the war because he refused to embrace Lost Cause ideas.

Magruder, John Bankhead (1807–1871). Confederate military officer who achieved considerable success defending the Virginia peninsula in early 1862 but suffered a loss of reputation during the Seven Days’ battles. Transferred to the trans-Mississippi theater, he spent the remainder of the war far removed from the arenas of important military campaigning.
McClellan, George Brinton (1826–1885). One of the most important military figures of the war, he built the Army of the Potomac into a formidable force and led it during the Peninsula campaign, the Seven Days' battles, and at Antietam. Often at odds with Lincoln because of his unwillingness to press the enemy, he was relieved of command in November 1862 and ran as the Democratic candidate for president in 1864.

McDowell, Irvin (1818–1885). Military officer who commanded the Union army at the battle of First Bull Run or Manassas. The remainder of his wartime career, which included roles during the 1862 Shenandoah Valley campaign and the battle of Second Manassas, was anticlimactic.

Meade, George Gordon (1815–1872). Union general who fought throughout the war in the eastern theater, commanding the Army of the Potomac at Gettysburg and for the rest of the war. U. S. Grant’s presence with the army after April 1864 placed Meade in a difficult position.

Pickett, George Edward (1825–1875). Perhaps the most famous of the Confederacy’s major generals because of the grand attack on the third day at Gettysburg that bears his name, Pickett compiled a spotty record at best during the Civil War. He was relieved of command shortly after his defeat at the battle of Five Forks but remained with the army until the surrender at Appomattox shortly thereafter.

Pope, John (1822–1892). Union general who won several small successes in the western theater before being transferred to the eastern theater in the summer of 1862 to command the Army of Virginia. His defeat at the battle of Second Bull Run or Manassas in August 1862 ended his important service during the war.

Ramseur, Stephen Dodson (1837–1864). A talented young officer who fit the aggressive mold of successful combat leaders in the Army of Northern Virginia. After a sterling record as the head of a brigade at Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, and Spotsylvania, he commanded a division under Jubal Early in the 1864 Shenandoah Valley campaign. He was mortally wounded trying to rally Confederate soldiers at the battle of Cedar Creek.

Rodes, Robert Emmett (1829–1864). One of the best young generals in the Army of Northern Virginia, Rodes did well as a brigade commander before taking charge of a division at Chancellorsville. He rendered his best service at Spotsylvania during the 1864 Shenandoah Valley campaign, falling mortally wounded at the battle of Third Winchester.

Scott, Winfield (1786–1866). One of the great soldiers in U.S. history, he performed brilliantly in the war with Mexico, influenced nearly all the men who held major U.S. or Confederate commands during the Civil War, and remained the ranking officer in the army until the autumn of 1861. He devised the “Anaconda Plan” in the spring of 1861, a strategy that anticipated the way the United States would win the conflict.

Sheridan, Philip Henry (1831–1888). Ranked behind only Grant and Sherman as a Union war hero, Sheridan fought in both the western and eastern theaters. His most famous victories came in the 1864 Shenandoah Valley campaign; at the battle of Five Forks on April 1, 1865; and during the Appomattox campaign.

Sherman, William Tecumseh (1820–1891). Union military officer who overcame early-war difficulties to become Grant’s primary subordinate. An advocate of “hard” war, he is best known for his capture of Atlanta and “March to the Sea” in 1864.

Sigel, Franz (1824–1902). German-born Union general who was popular among German-speaking troops but ineffective as a field commander. His most famous service came in the Shenandoah Valley in 1864, ending in defeat at the battle of New Market on May 15.

Stephens, Alexander Hamilton (1812–1883). A moderate Democrat from Georgia who supported Stephen A. Douglas in the 1860 presidential campaign and embraced secession reluctantly, he served throughout the war as vice president of the Confederacy. Increasingly at odds with Jefferson Davis over issues related to growing central power, he became an embittered public critic of the president and his policies.

Stuart, James Ewell Brown (1833–1864). Known as “Jeb,” he commanded the cavalry in the Army of Northern Virginia from June 1862 until his death following the battle of Yellow Tavern in May 1864. His role in the Gettysburg campaign generated a great deal of controversy, but overall, he compiled a superb record as the “eyes and ears” of Lee’s army.
Bibliography

Essential Reading:


Freeman, Douglas Southall. _Lee's Lieutenants: A Study in Command_. 3 vols. New York: Scribner's, 1942–1945. Reprinted in paperback. These compellingly written volumes are the classic treatment of the Army of Northern Virginia’s high command. Few studies have exerted as much influence on the military history of the Civil War. (Note: This set is also recommended as supplementary reading.)

———. _R. E. Lee: A Biography_. 4 vols. New York: Scribner's, 1934–1935. Easily the most famous biography of Lee, which won a Pulitzer Prize and has influenced all subsequent work on the topic. (Note: This set is also recommended as supplementary reading.)


———, ed. _The Richmond Campaign of 1862: The Peninsula and the Seven Days_. Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2000. The essays by Peter S. Carmichael on John Bankhead Magruder and by Gallagher on the campaign as a military watershed are most useful for this course.


McMurry, Richard M. _John Bell Hood and the War for Southern Independence_. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1982. Reprinted in paperback. The best biography of the hard-fighting soldier who performed well under Lee but found himself promoted beyond his abilities during the last two years of the war.


Thomas, Emory M. _Robert E. Lee: A Biography_. New York: Norton, 1995. Reprinted in paperback. This excellent one-volume treatment allocates a good deal of attention to Lee the man, as well as to Lee the soldier. (Note: This is also recommended as supplementary reading.)

Woodworth, Steven E., ed. _Leadership and Command in the American Civil War_. Campbell, Calif.: Savas-White, 1995. The essays by Lesley J. Gordon on George E. Pickett and by Richard M. McMurry on Joseph E. Johnston are most pertinent to this course.
Supplementary Reading:


Early, Jubal A. *Autobiographical Sketch and Narrative of the War between the States*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1912. Reprinted in paperback. This detailed, posthumously published account is far more restrained than might be expected from a leading Lost Cause warrior such as Early.


Hassler, William W. A. P. *Hill: Lee’s Forgotten General*. Richmond: Garrett and Massie, 1957. A straightforward, careful biography that makes the most of a limited array of sources on Hill.

Hood, John Bell. *Advance and Retreat: Personal Experiences in the United States and Confederate States Armies*. New Orleans: Hood Orphan Memorial Fund, 1880. Reprinted in paperback. The early chapters on Hood’s service in Virginia offer a rich lode of quotable material, while the later chapters, which deal with his mostly unhappy service in the western theater, attempt to even scores with Joseph Johnston and place Hood’s own actions in the best possible light.


———. *Stonewall Jackson: The Man, the Soldier, the Legend*. New York: Macmillan, 1997. Reprinted in paperback. Exhaustive and well-written, this biography concludes that Jackson was a great soldier.

paperback. Extremely detailed and sometimes tedious, this set, though attributed to Alfred Roman, should be considered Beauregard’s personal memoirs.


Thomason, John W. *Jeb Stuart*. New York: Scribner’s, 1930. A classic biography that captures the spirit of Stuart and his troopers but glosses over “Jeb’s” failures while lavishing attention on his more successful exploits.


Welsh, Jack D. *Medical Histories of Confederate Generals*. Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1995. This useful reference work includes detailed information about the wounds—in many cases the multiple wounds—and illnesses of all the men who served as Confederate generals.


Robert E. Lee and His High Command

Part II
Lecture 13: One Promotion Too Many—A. P. Hill
Lecture 14: Forced from Center Stage—Richard S. Ewell
Lecture 15: A Straight-Ahead Fighter—John Bell Hood
Lecture 16: Could Robert E. Lee Make Hard Decisions?
Lecture 17: The Problem of Attrition
Lecture 18: Younger Officers I—Robert Emmett Rodes
Lecture 19: Younger Officers II—Stephen Dodson Ramseur
Lecture 20: Younger Officers III—John Brown Gordon
Lecture 21: Younger Officers IV—Edward Porter Alexander
Lecture 22: Gifted but Flawed—J. E. Johnston and Beauregard
Lecture 23: Drama and Failure—Magruder and Pickett
Lecture 24: Before the Bar of History—The Lost Cause
Robert E. Lee and His High Command

Scope:
This course examines Robert E. Lee and the high command of the Army of Northern Virginia. The lectures engage such questions as why Lee and his army are central to an understanding of the Civil War, how their operations influenced the Northern and Southern home fronts, why Lee was so successful as a field commander, and what kinds of officers flourished and failed under his leadership. A principal goal is to explain how and why Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia came to be the most important national institution in the Confederacy. The course explores the careers of Lee and 13 other generals in detail, assessing their contributions to famous military campaigns, highlighting their strengths and weaknesses as officers, and seeking to create a descriptive and analytical portrait of a storied army’s high command. The course departs from its biographical approach with four topical lectures, including one devoted to the ways in which former Confederate generals wrote about their wartime experiences.

Lee receives the fullest attention, with four lectures on his generalship. His three most successful infantry corps commanders—Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson, James Longstreet, and Jubal A. Early—are each the subject of two lectures, and the other 10 generals are either covered in one lecture or share a lecture with another officer. The 14 generals were chosen for their importance and as representatives of types; for example, army commanders Joseph E. Johnston and P. G. T. Beauregard offer revealing contrasts to Lee, and a quartet of younger men—John B. Gordon, Robert E. Rodes, Stephen Dodson Ramseur, and Edward Porter Alexander—serve as case studies of how officers with very different military backgrounds rose through the ranks to positions of considerable authority.

The course breaks down into seven sections of unequal length. The first lecture sets the stage by placing Lee and his army in the larger context of the war. The next four lectures explore Lee’s generalship, with the last of them examining whether Lee should be considered an old-fashioned general caught up in a modern mid-19th-century conflict. The six lectures on Jackson, Longstreet, and Early come next, followed by a quartet on James E. B. “Jeb” Stuart, Ambrose Powell Hill, Richard S. Ewell, and John Bell Hood. Stuart ably commanded Lee’s cavalry for most of the war, neither Hill nor Ewell distinguished himself as a corps commander, and Hood left the army as a superior division commander who would fail at higher levels of responsibility in Georgia and Tennessee. Lectures Sixteen and Seventeen break the biographical pattern. The first looks at Lee’s ability to make hard decisions regarding personnel and the second at the impact of combat attrition on the high command. Lectures Eighteen through Twenty-One shift the spotlight to the four young officers: Rodes, a graduate of the Virginia Military Institute; Ramseur, a West Pointer from the class of 1860;
Lecture Thirteen

One Promotion Too Many—A. P. Hill

Scope: The focus in this lecture shifts to the first of two famous corps commanders who never fulfilled their early promise and stand as examples of soldiers promoted beyond their levels of competency. West Pointer Ambrose Powell Hill figured prominently in all the campaigns directed by Robert E. Lee. As the leader of the “Light Division” in the Seven Days, he showed an aggressive demeanor that sometimes bordered on the rash but often yielded rich dividends. His division mounted a memorable defense at Second Manassas and made a forced march from Harpers Ferry to the battlefield at Antietam that literally saved the day for Lee’s army. Two more solid performances at the battles of Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville made Hill an obvious candidate for promotion to corps command following Jackson’s death in May 1863. Lee pronounced Hill the best major general in the army and rewarded him with the new Third Corps. Hill’s record at that level contained more disappointment than distinction. Often ill at critical times, he played a minor role at Gettysburg, attacked without proper preparation at Bristoe Station, and failed at the battle of the Wilderness. Lee soon discerned that he could not rely on Hill, as he had on Jackson or Longstreet, though he retained the often-fiery Virginian in command. Hill was killed in action on April 2, 1865, just a week before the surrender at Appomattox, with his glory days as a division commander in the distant past.

Outline

I. Hill’s antebellum career followed a typical trajectory for junior officers.

A. He graduated in the top third of his class at West Point in 1847.
   1. He had been held back a year because of illness.
   2. The delay in graduation prevented his seeing significant action in the war with Mexico.

B. He received various postings as a lieutenant of artillery.

C. He transferred to the U.S. Coastal Survey Service.

II. Hill resigned from the U.S. Army before the secession of his native Virginia and rose rapidly in the Confederate army.

A. He entered Confederate service as colonel of the 13th Virginia Infantry.

B. His highly professional demeanor and skill at drill and organization brought promotion to brigadier general before he fought in a battle.

C. He achieved conspicuous success at the battle of Williamsburg on May 5, 1862.
1. He was promoted to major general the same month.
2. He was given command of the “Light Division,” the largest division in the army defending Richmond.

III. Hill’s actions between the Seven Days’ battles and Chancellorsville won him renown as the best division commander in Lee’s army.
   A. His actions at the Seven Days combined aggressiveness and impetuosity.
      1. He attacked precipitately at Mechanicsville on June 26.
      2. His soldiers suffered heavy casualties at Gaines’s Mill and Frayser’s Farm.
   B. His division fought a notable defensive battle at Second Manassas.
   C. A brilliant march from Harpers Ferry to Antietam on September 17, 1862, probably saved Lee’s army.
   D. His division suffered a temporary reverse at Fredericksburg.
      1. Hill’s defensive line was poorly drawn.
      2. The episode had no effect on Hill’s reputation.
   E. His division took part in Stonewall Jackson’s flank attack at Chancellorsville, but a minor wound prevented his replacing Jackson on that battlefield.

IV. Hill experienced problems with fellow generals during his time as a division commander.
   A. He quarreled with James Longstreet in the aftermath of the Seven Days.
   B. He quarreled with Jackson during the Maryland campaign.
      1. Jackson arrested Hill at one point.
      2. Lee intervened to try to diffuse the situation; only Jackson’s death avoided the trial that Hill wanted.

V. Hill advanced to corps command when Lee reorganized the army following Jackson’s death.
   A. Lee considered him the most talented major general in the army.
   B. Hill led a new Third Corps made up of elements from the First and Second Corps and units previously not with Lee’s army.

VI. Hill compiled a disappointing record as a corps commander.
   A. He fumbled at Gettysburg.
      1. His decisions helped precipitate the battle on July 1.
      2. Illness caused him to disappear from action on July 2–3.
   B. He presided over a ghastly failure at Bristoe Station in October 1863.
      1. He again attacked precipitately.
      2. Lee expressed great disappointment with Hill’s actions.
   C. He contributed little to the Overland campaign.
      1. His command gave way on May 6 at the Wilderness.

2. Lee was forced to do Hill’s job, as well as his own.
3. Hill fell ill on several occasions.

D. He suffered another rebuke from Lee at the North Anna in late May 1864.
E. He rendered his best service as a corps commander during the siege of Petersburg and was killed just as the army began its retreat toward Appomattox.

Essential Reading:
Gallagher, Lee and His Army in Confederate History, chapter 6.
———, Lee and His Generals in War and Memory, chapters 4, 8.

Supplementary Reading:
Hassler, A. P. Hill: Lee’s Forgotten General.
Robertson, General A. P. Hill: The Story of a Confederate Soldier.

Questions to Consider:
1. What does Hill’s career reveal about Lee’s pool of possible corps commanders?
2. Should Hill be remembered most for his corps or division leadership?
Lecture Fourteen
Forced from Center Stage—Richard S. Ewell

Scope: Richard Stoddert Ewell’s record, like that of A. P. Hill, marked him as one who could not make the transition from division to corps command. Ewell came to the Confederate army as a West Pointer who had led dragoons on the prewar western frontier. He commanded a division with some success under Stonewall Jackson in the 1862 Shenandoah Valley campaign and in the Seven Days’ battles. A severe wound in late-August 1862 at Groveton, a preliminary to the battle of Second Manassas, cost him a leg and kept him away from the army until the reorganization following Jackson’s death. Although Lee had not directed Ewell except for a short period, he selected him to replace Jackson as head of the Second Corps. This decision seemed sound when Ewell performed well in the preliminary phase of the 1863 Pennsylvania campaign, but Lee rapidly lost faith in Ewell because of what he perceived, whether fairly or not, to be indecisiveness on the first day at Gettysburg. Further problems at the Wilderness and Spotsylvania convinced Lee that Ewell had to go, a difficult decision made all the harder by Ewell’s insistence that he be retained in command. Exiled to command troops guarding Richmond’s defenses, Ewell joined the general retreat toward Appomattox in April 1865 and was captured at the battle of Sailor’s Creek.

Outline

I. Ewell can be accurately described as a soldier’s soldier.
   A. He graduated in the top third of his class of 1840 at West Point.
   B. He won a brevet for gallantry in the war with Mexico.
   C. He spent the bulk of his antebellum military career on the western frontier.
      1. He won a reputation as an effective frontier officer and was wounded in 1859 in a skirmish with Apaches.
      2. The Arizona constitutional convention acknowledged Ewell’s contributions by naming a territorial county for him (the name was changed when Ewell joined the Confederate cause).

II. Ewell achieved early success in Confederate service.
   A. He commanded a brigade that saw limited action at First Manassas.
   B. He was promoted to major general in early 1862 and assigned to Stonewall Jackson’s command in the Shenandoah Valley.
   C. Ewell and his division played a prominent role in the Valley campaign.

III. Ewell became a division commander under Jackson.
   A. They fought at Front Royal, First Winchester, Cross Keys, and Port Republic.
   B. Ewell experienced decidedly mixed feelings about Jackson.
   C. Ewell’s division remained under Jackson during the Seven Days and the campaign of Second Manassas.
      1. It fought at Gaines’s Mill but otherwise was lightly engaged during the Seven Days.
      2. It fought at Cedar Mountain on August 9.
   D. Ewell received a serious wound at the battle of Groveton on August 28.
      1. His left leg was amputated.
      2. His career as a division commander was over.

III. Corps command and eventual frustration marked the remainder of Ewell’s Confederate career.
   A. He was assigned a revamped Second Corps in the reorganization following Jackson’s death.
      1. Lee did not know Ewell well and had some doubts about him.
      2. Knowledge of Jackson’s high opinion of Ewell probably played a role in Lee’s decision to advance Ewell.
   B. Ewell disappointed Lee in the Gettysburg campaign.
      1. He began well on the march northward and won the battle of Second Winchester in mid-June 1863.
      2. His decision not to attack Cemetery Hill and Culp’s Hill on the evening of July 1 at Gettysburg proved to be controversial.
         a. Many comrades and later writers criticized him.
         b. Ewell had good reasons for not attacking, knowing that he lacked support on his right.
         c. Lee saw the failure as evidence of Ewell’s tendency to vacillate at moments of crisis.
         d. Ewell suffered from invidious comparisons to Jackson.
   C. Ewell fell ill during the winter of 1863–1864.
   D. Lee removed Ewell from the army during the Overland campaign.
      1. He believed Ewell lost his composure twice at Spotsylvania, on May 12 and May 19.
      2. He tried to ease Ewell out of the army because of his fragile health.
      3. Ewell forced Lee to be more blunt and tell him that he was no longer capable of field command.
      4. Ewell did not fit Lee’s model of an aggressive, self-reliant corps commander.

IV. Ewell remained in service to the end of the war.
   A. He commanded the Richmond defenses by leading the local home guard.
B. He was captured at the battle of Sailor’s Creek during the retreat to Appomattox.

Essential Reading:
Freeman, *Lee’s Lieutenants*, vol. 1, chapter 23; vol. 2, chapter 6; vol. 3, chapters 2, 6, 9, 20, 22, 35.
———, *Lee and His Generals in War and Memory*, chapters 4, 8.

Supplementary Reading:
Pfanz, *Richard S. Ewell: A Soldier’s Life*.

Questions to Consider:
1. Did Ewell make a substantial contribution to the success of Lee’s army?
2. Did Ewell make reasonable decisions on the first day at Gettysburg?

Lecture Fifteen
A Straight-Ahead Fighter—John Bell Hood

Scope: John Bell Hood personified the type of offensive spirit Lee sought to inculcate in the Army of Northern Virginia’s officer corps, leading first a brigade, then a division with dash and considerable success between the Seven Days and Gettysburg. More than six feet tall, blond, and a West Pointer whose undistinguished record in the classroom prompted friendly gibes from his peers, Hood made his name with a powerful assault at Gaines’s Mill and superior leadership at Second Manassas and Antietam. Promoted to major general in the autumn of 1862, he played a minor role at Fredericksburg, missed Chancellorsville when his division was deployed to southeast Virginia with James Longstreet, sustained a serious wound on the second day at Gettysburg, and was wounded even more grievously at the battle of Chickamauga in September 1863. Hood never returned to the Army of Northern Virginia. Despite his wounds, he was promoted first to corps and later to army command in the western theater, gaining no distinction in either case. Few division commanders on either side in the Civil War matched Hood’s ability to lead men in combat, and his actions in 1862 formed a notable element in the success of the Army of Northern Virginia. His last two promotions, however, revealed a man sadly lacking in the requisite administrative and political skills for higher command and thrust him into situations that made failure, rather than aggressive achievement, the dominant feature of his Confederate record.

Outline

I. Hood brought experience with Robert E. Lee to his service in the Army of Northern Virginia.
   A. He attended West Point while Lee was superintendent.
      1. He graduated in the bottom quarter of the class of 1853.
      2. Though he would have preferred the cavalry, he entered the infantry because his class rank was low.
   B. He served in the infantry and cavalry in the 1850s.
      1. He suffered a wound fighting Native Americans in Texas in 1857.
      2. He served with Lee in the Second Cavalry in Texas, which deepened his admiration for the older man.

II. Hood commanded what became the most famous brigade in the Army of Northern Virginia.
   A. He led the 4th Texas Infantry as a colonel in the first part of the war.
B. He subsequently commanded a brigade that included all of the Texas soldiers in the Virginia army.
   1. This unit became known as Hood’s Texas brigade.
   2. The brigade distinguished itself at the battle of Eltham’s Landing and, especially, at Gaines’s Mill during the Seven Days’ campaign.
   3. Hood won a reputation for fearless and aggressive leadership in combat.

III. Hood’s record between July 1862 and September 1863 boasted some of the finest accomplishments in Lee’s army.
   A. His division helped break the Union lines at Second Manassas.
   B. His division fought steadfastly at Antietam.
   C. His division held the Confederate center at Fredericksburg.
   D. His division missed Chancellorsville while with Longstreet at Suffolk.
   E. His division gained distinction during fighting on the second day at Gettysburg.
      1. Hood opposed making the assault as Longstreet ordered.
      2. Hood was grievously wounded, suffering permanent loss of the use of his left arm.
   F. His division helped break the Union lines at Chickamauga.
      1. Hood exercised his typical style of leadership at the place of danger.
      2. He suffered a wound that cost him his right leg.

IV. Hood’s style of generalship at the brigade and division levels perfectly suited the military culture Lee created in the Army of Northern Virginia.
   A. Hood was aggressive in tactical offensive fighting.
   B. He produced positive results but often at the price of enormous casualties.
   C. His Texas brigade was widely considered the best shock troops in the army.

V. Hood achieved no further distinction after he left Lee’s army.
   A. He compiled a mixed record as a corps commander in the western theater under Joseph E. Johnston.
   B. He engaged in political maneuvering regarding command of the Army of Tennessee during the Atlanta campaign.
   C. He failed as an army commander during the later stage of the Atlanta campaign and in Tennessee in 1864.
      1. He has been unfairly criticized for his activities at Atlanta.
      2. He lacked crucial skills necessary to lead an army.
   D. Hood’s example underscored the danger of promoting officers beyond their level of competence.

Essential Reading:
McMurry, John Bell Hood and the Southern War for Independence.

Supplementary Reading:
Hood, Advance and Retreat: Personal Experiences in the United States and Confederate States Armies.

Questions to Consider:
1. Was promotion beyond the level of competency inevitable in such cases as Hood’s?
2. How could the Confederacy have made the best of Hood’s talents?
Lecture Sixteen

Could Robert E. Lee Make Hard Decisions?

Scope: Many of Robert E. Lee’s contemporaries, as well as numerous historians from the late 19th century onward, suggested that he was too much of a gentleman to make hard decisions regarding personnel. The historical record suggests otherwise. Lee possessed well-developed skills as a military politician, and he found ways to ease generals who had disappointed him out of the Army of Northern Virginia with minimal disruption. He replaced a number of division commanders during the reorganization following the Seven Days, adeptly juggling officers among commands to find combinations that would best serve the needs of the army, and when necessary, directly confronted generals who had disappointed him. The first month of the Overland campaign, when both Richard S. Ewell and A. P. Hill failed on the battlefield, affords excellent insights into Lee’s method of dealing with such occurrences. It also reveals Lee’s clear understanding of the special challenges posed by fighting a massive war with officers and men who were not trained as professional soldiers.

Outline

I. Lee has been criticized as a gentleman who lacked the hard edge necessary to weed out failures among his subordinate command.
   A. Critics argue that he allowed senior subordinates too much authority even when they failed to exercise effective leadership.
   B. Critics also insist that his personality was such that he could not confront those who disappointed him.

II. In fact, Lee demonstrated superior management skills in shaping his high command in the face of changing circumstances.
   A. He brought fundamental change to the upper echelons of the army in the aftermath of the Seven Days’ campaign.
      1. A number of senior division commanders left the army.
      2. Lee divided his infantry between Stonewall Jackson and James Longstreet.
   B. He implemented a second major reorganization after Chancellorsville and Jackson’s death.
      1. He created a Third Infantry Corps.
      2. He kept Longstreet in charge of the First Corps and advanced successful division commanders to head the Second and Third Corps.

III. The first month of the Overland campaign affords numerous insights into Lee’s ability as a military politician and manager.
   A. He coped with mounting evidence that Richard S. Ewell and A. P. Hill lacked the capacity for corps command.
      1. He intervened personally during crises on Ewell’s and Hill’s fronts at the Wilderness and Spotsylvania.
      2. He replaced Ewell with Jubal A. Early when Ewell’s loss of control on the battlefield became evident.
      3. He retained Hill because no capable replacement was at hand.
   B. Longstreet’s wounding at the Wilderness forced Lee to rely on Richard H. Anderson as a replacement.
      1. Lee knew Anderson did not possess first-rate skills but had no obvious alternative candidate.
      2. Lee kept a much closer eye on Anderson than had been necessary with Longstreet.
   C. After Hill publicly berated an officer, Lee explained to Hill why professional soldiers had to be somewhat tolerant of failures on the part of volunteer officers.
      1. They were engaged in a massive war and had to do the best with the material at hand.
      2. They must try to teach the nonprofessionals how to be effective officers.
      3. Political considerations demanded that volunteer officers not be humiliated or summarily removed.

IV. Lee demonstrated admirable flexibility in handling subordinates and problems of command.
   A. He allowed wide latitude to deserving officers.
   B. He kept a closer eye on those less talented, such as Ewell and Hill.
   C. He removed officers if a capable replacement, such as Early, was available.
   D. He coped with a series of crises brought on by attrition among his subordinates.

Essential Reading:
Gallagher, Lee and His Army in Confederate History, chapter 6.

Supplementary Reading:
Questions to Consider:
1. Are administrative and political skills as important in a field commander as a sound grasp of strategy and tactics?
2. Can any army that contains a large proportion of volunteer officers achieve real stability of command?

Lecture Seventeen
The Problem of Attrition

Scope: One factor Lee could not control was the loss of able subordinates to wounds on the battlefield. Attrition among generals in the Army of Northern Virginia sometimes exceeded 25-30 percent in a single campaign, and the search to replace officers who fell in battle forms a leitmotif through the history of the army. This lecture focuses on three periods—the aftermath of Chancellorsville, when Lee sought to fill Stonewall Jackson's place; the aftermath of Gettysburg, a battle in which roughly one-third of the army's generals were killed, wounded, or captured; and the first six weeks of the confrontation between Lee and Ulysses S. Grant, when James Longstreet, Jeb Stuart, and a number of less famous generals were killed or severely wounded. The ghastly toll of generals in the army, which began early and continued until the very last scenes in the drama, illuminates the fragile structure of the army's high command.

Outline

I. Generals faced enormous dangers on Civil War battlefields.
   A. Officers commanding brigades were expected to lead from the front.
      1. Soldiers demanded heroic leadership from their brigadier generals.
      2. Such leadership exacted a heavy toll among promising officers.
         Two dozen brigadier generals were killed in the C.S.A. alone.
   B. Division and corps commanders also often exposed themselves to danger.
      1. Four corps commanders in the Army of Northern Virginia were killed or badly wounded in battle: Jackson, Stuart, Longstreet, and Hill.
      2. One-third of the army's division commanders were wounded at Gettysburg.
   C. Some campaigns exacted a particularly high price in officers.
      1. Roughly one-third of the army's generals became casualties during the Gettysburg campaign.
      2. The Overland campaign proved equally costly.

II. Lee reshuffled his high command because of Jackson's death after Chancellorsville.
   A. Lee wrestled with the question of whether to have two or three corps.
      1. His decision to add a third corps required promoting two major generals.
      2. He had to choose from among several prominent officers:
Questions to Consider:
1. Did Confederate attitudes toward the need for personal courage guarantee a devastating rate of attrition among general officers?
2. Why was attrition higher among Confederate generals than among their U.S. counterparts?

Essential Reading:

Supplementary Reading:
Welsh, *Medical Histories of Confederate Generals*. 
Lecture Eighteen
Younger Officers I—Robert Emmett Rodes

Scope: The development of younger officers provided the best means of replacing generals lost in battle. This is the first of four lectures that will examine a group of talented commanders who began the war as junior officers, climbed rapidly on the basis of excellent performances to positions of considerable authority, and directly controlled much of the most successful fighting in the army’s history. Robert Emmett Rodes, 32 years old and a graduate of the Virginia Military Institute when the war opened, earned distinction as a brigade commander during the 1862 Maryland campaign and made his debut as a division leader at Chancellorsville. After a lackluster performance at Gettysburg, he hit his stride during the Overland campaign, where his aggressiveness, alertness, and powerful counterattacks at Spotsylvania helped avert disaster on May 12. Twice wounded in 1862, he was killed in the Shenandoah Valley at the battle of Third Winchester in September 1864. A perceptive member of Jubal Early’s staff remarked that the army “never suffered a greater loss save in the Great Jackson.”

Outline

I. Rodes entered Confederate service without West Point training or experience in the U.S. Army.
   A. He graduated from the Virginia Military Institute in 1848 at the age of 19. V.M.I. contributed hundreds of officers to the Army of Northern Virginia, which became a distinct advantage for Lee’s army.
   B. Rodes pursued various activities before the Civil War.
      1. He taught at V.M.I. for two years.
      2. He worked as an engineer on railroad projects in several states.

II. Rodes spent the war’s first year commanding a regiment or a brigade.
   A. He served as colonel of the 5th Alabama Infantry.
      1. The regiment stood on the periphery of the battle of First Manassas.
      2. Although lacking combat experience, Rodes was promoted to brigadier general in October 1861.
   B. He earned a strong reputation as a brigade commander.
      1. His brigade was present at the battle of Williamsburg.
      2. Rodes was badly wounded at the battle of Seven Pines.
      3. He played key roles at the battles of South Mountain and Antietam during the 1862 Maryland campaign.

III. Chancellorsville and Gettysburg marked Rodes’s first two battles in division command.
   A. He fought as a temporary replacement for Daniel Harvey Hill at Chancellorsville.
      1. His division spearheaded Jackson’s flank attack on May 2.
      2. He was promoted to permanent command of the division on the basis of his actions.
   B. Rodes added nothing to his reputation at Gettysburg.
      1. Two of his brigades were wrecked in fighting on July 1.
      2. His division nonetheless helped Lee win a decisive tactical triumph that day.
      3. He played a secondary role for the rest of the battle.

IV. Rodes forged an enviable record as a division commander during 1864.
   A. He ranked among the Confederate heroes at Spotsylvania.
      1. His division helped restore Lee’s lines in the Mule Shoe salient on May 12.
      2. His activities stood in stark contrast to those of his corps chief, Richard S. Ewell.
   B. He accompanied Jubal Early and the Second Corps to the Shenandoah Valley in June 1864.
      1. He participated in the successful first phase of the campaign that approached the outskirts of Washington.
      2. He fought well at Third Winchester on September 19.
      3. A mortal wound at Third Winchester, his fourth during the war, ended a promising career.

V. Rodes typified many successful younger officers in Lee’s army.
   A. He led by example and was wounded three times before being mortally wounded.
   B. He demonstrated initiative and manifested a strong predilection for the offensive.
   C. He was killed before the close of the conflict.
Lecture Nineteen
Younger Officers II—Stephen Dodson Ramseur

Scope: Stephen Dodson Ramseur, a staunch advocate of the South’s slaveholding society and a West Pointer from the class of 1860, first fought under, then alongside Robert Rodes in the Second Corps. He shared a number of characteristics with Rodes and other successful young officers, including aggressiveness on the battlefield, conspicuous bravery—some might say recklessness—that inspired his soldiers, and a habit of getting wounded. His record as a brigadier general included superior days at Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, and Spotsylvania that earned strong commendation from his superiors and brought him promotion to major general on June 1, 1864, just one day past his 27th birthday. He subsequently went to the Shenandoah Valley under Jubal Early, where he fought well at Third Winchester and Cedar Creek. Wounded three times before the Valley campaign, he was shot through the lungs at Cedar Creek and died the day after the battle. A subordinate noted that Ramseur’s fearlessness, the trait that cost him his life, had become “conspicuous throughout the army.”

Outline
I. Ramseur brought sound training and strongly held political views to his service as a Confederate officer.
   A. He graduated near the top third of his class of 1860 at West Point.
      1. He excelled in military topics at West Point.
      2. He served as a captain in the battalion of cadets.
   B. He held strong proslavery views.
      1. He prophesied possible conflict between the North and South.
      2. His allegiance to the South was more important than his allegiance to the United States.
      3. He resigned from the U.S. Army well before his home state of North Carolina seceded.
   C. Like many young Confederates of his class and generation, he developed into a Confederate nationalist.
II. Ramseur proved successful from the outset of the war.
   A. He commanded artillery units during the early phase of the Peninsula campaign of 1862.
   B. He commanded the 49th North Carolina Infantry at Malvern Hill.
      1. His regiment participated in the Confederate assaults at Malvern Hill.
      2. Ramseur was seriously wounded in the right arm.
3. He was promoted to brigadier general while convalescing from his wound.

C. His leadership of a brigade of North Carolinians marked him for greater responsibility.
   1. The brigade made a famous and costly attack at Chancellorsville on May 3, 1863. He lost 800 of 1,500 soldiers.
   2. Ramseur was wounded a second time.
   3. His superiors, including Jackson and Stuart, applauded his work.

D. Ramseur's brigade helped break the Union First Corps line on July 1 at Gettysburg.

E. His greatest day as a brigadier came on May 12, 1864, at Spotsylvania.
   1. His soldiers played a crucial role in repairing the break in Lee's lines.
   2. Ramseur was wounded for a third time.
   3. His superiors lavished praise on him.
   4. Promotion to major general followed on June 1, 1864.
      a. Ramseur replaced Jubal Early, who had been raised to corps command.
      b. One day past his 27th birthday, Ramseur was the youngest West Pointer to be made a major general in the Confederate army.

III. Ramseur demonstrated considerable talent as a division commander between June and October 1864.
   A. He made a fumbling debut at Bethesda Church but performed competently at Cold Harbor.
   B. He accompanied Early and the Second Corps to the Shenandoah Valley in June.
   C. His most prominent service came in the second phase of the 1864 Valley campaign.
      1. He was surprised at Stephenson's Depot on July 20.
      2. He anchored Early's defense at Third Winchester on September 19.
      3. He held the Confederate left at Fisher's Hill on September 22.
      4. He distinguished himself at Cedar Creek on October 19.
         a. His were the last of the Confederate infantry to give way.
         b. He received his fourth and final wound and died on October 20.

IV. Ramseur shared key traits with other successful young officers in Lee's army.
   A. He was aggressive.
   B. He led by example and suffered multiple wounds.
   C. He exhibited an especially strong strain of Confederate nationalism.

Essential Reading:

Supplementary Reading:
Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, vol. 2, chapter 34; vol. 3, chapters 20, 30.

Question to Consider:
1. What could explain Ramseur's willingness to continue to exert leadership on the firing line despite being wounded several times?
2. How should we judge the overall effect of aggressive leadership that brought results on the battlefield yet often led to the death of key officers?
Lecture Twenty
Younger Officers III—John Brown Gordon

Scope: John Brown Gordon, a 29-year-old with no formal military training, entered Confederate service as a captain in the 6th Alabama Infantry. Four years later, he commanded Stonewall Jackson’s old Second Corps when Lee’s army surrendered at Appomattox. In between those dates, he played a noteworthy part as a regimental, brigade, and division commander on numerous battlefields and fit the same mold as Rodes and Ramseur—hard-hitting, oblivious to personal danger, and often wounded. Other nonprofessionals proved to be able officers, but none surpassed Gordon’s contributions. He shone at Antietam and Gettysburg and, especially, in the operations of 1864–1865—from the Overland campaign, through the 1864 Valley campaign, to the siege of Petersburg and Richmond. By the last winter of the conflict, he stood alongside James Longstreet among Lee’s most trusted subordinates. Although his postwar writings, which proved widely influential among students of Lee’s army, often indulged in extravagant claims, Gordon’s record compares favorably to those of all but a handful of the most accomplished Confederate generals in the eastern theater.

Outline

I. Gordon’s pre-Civil War career included nothing that hinted at his later skill as a Confederate soldier.
   A. He was successful at the University of Georgia but did not graduate.
   B. He became a lawyer but practiced only a short time.
   C. He worked in his father’s coal-mining business.
   D. He manifested a strong interest in Democratic politics and developed strongly sectional pro-Southern attitudes.

II. Gordon rose from captain to brigadier general in rapid fashion.
   A. He commanded the 6th Alabama Infantry early in the Peninsula campaign.
   B. He temporarily led Robert Rodes’s brigade after Rodes was wounded at Seven Pines.
      1. The brigade fought at Gaines’s Mill and Malvern Hill.
      2. Gordon was temporarily blinded from dirt thrown by an artillery explosion at Malvern Hill.
      3. His personal bravery and coolness in battle impressed his soldiers and his superiors.
   C. He led the 6th Alabama at South Mountain and Antietam, receiving five wounds in the Sunken Road on September 17.
   D. His reward for excellence was promotion to brigadier general.

III. He compiled a good record as a brigadier in Jubal Early’s division.
   A. He fought at Second Fredericksburg and Salem Church during the Chancellorville campaign.
   B. He assisted in breaking the Union 11th Corps line on July 1 at Gettysburg.
   C. He orchestrated a successful flank attack on the second day of the battle of the Wilderness.
      1. He had to overcome opposition from Jubal Early.
      2. Lee noted Gordon’s initiative and gave him temporary division command.
   D. He distinguished himself, along with Rodes and Ramseur, in the Mule Shoe at Spotsylvania on May 12, 1864, and was promoted to major general.

IV. The remainder of Gordon’s career highlighted his growth and abilities.
   A. He served in the Shenandoah Valley with Jubal Early in 1864.
      1. He did well at the battle of the Monocacy on July 9.
      2. He was largely responsible for the initial Confederate success at Cedar Creek on October 19.
         a. His soldiers were also among the first to give way at Cedar Creek.
         b. Gordon and Early quarreled about the battle for many years.
   B. Gordon left the Valley to rejoin the Army of Northern Virginia in the trenches at Petersburg.
   C. He commanded the Second Corps but never received promotion to lieutenant general.
      1. Lee assigned to him numerous important tasks.
      2. He led the last major attack mounted by Lee’s army—at Fort Stedman on March 25, 1865—and received his seventh wound of the war.
      3. He performed well during the retreat to Appomattox.

V. Gordon’s widely read and self-serving postwar memoirs should not detract from his unique record as a nonprofessional soldier who reached the highest echelon of Lee’s subordinate command.

Essential Reading:

Supplementary Reading:
Gordon, Reminiscences of the Civil War.
Questions to Consider:
1. Should Gordon’s unreliable postwar reminiscences color assessments of his wartime career?
2. Can you imagine any situation on a battlefield in which Gordon’s lack of formal military training might be an advantage?

Lecture Twenty-One
Younger Officers IV—Edward Porter Alexander

Scope: Although artillers made up the smallest of the three branches of Lee’s army, behind the infantry and the cavalry, they often occupied central positions on the battlefield. By far the best Confederate artillerist, and the fourth of the young officers we will examine in detail, was Edward Porter Alexander. Alexander graduated third in the West Point class of 1857 and left a promising career in the U.S. Army to join the Confederacy. He quickly came to the attention of ranking Confederate officers, serving in turn, on the staffs of P. G. T. Beauregard, Joseph E. Johnston, and Robert E. Lee. Shifting from staff to line in the autumn of 1862, he took charge of an artillery battalion in James Longstreet’s First Corps and immediately distinguished himself as a gunner. His eye for ground, grasp of artillery tactics, and overall brilliance placed him in a position to affect the battles of Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg. In the spring of 1864, Joseph E. Johnston requested that Alexander be promoted and transferred to the western theater, but Lee refused to let him go. Jefferson Davis remarked that Alexander was “one of a very few whom Gen. Lee would not give to anybody.” Alexander fought for the remainder of the war in Virginia, commanding a good part of the army’s artillery during the siege of Richmond and Petersburg and drawing the Army of Northern Virginia’s last battle line at Appomattox. His postwar writings set a standard for clarity and scrupulous analysis unmatched by those of any other officer who served under Lee.

Outline

I. Alexander was a strikingly successful officer from the outset of his career.
   A. From a prominent Georgian family, he graduated third in the class of 1857 at West Point.
   B. He taught engineering at the academy.
   C. He assisted in the development of the wig-wag system of motion telegraphy, sending messages by signal flags.

II. He impressed a number of important Confederate officers during the first fifteen months of the war.
   A. He served on P. G. T. Beauregard’s staff at First Manassas.
   B. He served on Joseph E. Johnston’s staff during 1861–1862.
   C. He served on Robert E. Lee’s staff from the Seven Days through the 1862 Maryland campaign.
   D. Alexander demonstrated aptitude in several areas.
1. He performed effectively as an ordnance officer.
2. He understood the theory and practical applications of artillery.
3. He excelled at engineering and reconnaissance.

III. Alexander took command of a battalion of artillery in Longstreet’s command after the battle of Antietam and quickly made his mark in several battles.

A. He helped place the Confederate artillery on Marye’s Heights before the battle of Fredericksburg.

B. He commanded the crucial part of the Confederate artillery at Chancellorsville.
   1. He recognized the importance of high ground at Hazel Grove.
   2. Confederates achieved rare superiority over their opponents during action on May 3.

C. He oversaw the bombardment that preceded the Pickett-Pettigrew assault on the third day at Gettysburg.
   1. Alexander was chosen for this duty though he was not the senior artillerist in Longstreet’s corps.
   2. He bridled at interference from Lee’s chief of artillery, William Nelson Pendleton.

D. He participated in the sieges at Chattanooga and Knoxville in the autumn of 1863.

IV. Alexander was promoted to brigadier general in March 1864.

A. Joseph E. Johnston had requested that Alexander be made head of all artillery in the Army of Tennessee.

B. But Lee refused to allow Alexander to leave the Army of Northern Virginia.

V. Alexander participated in the Overland campaign and the siege of Richmond and Petersburg.

A. He helped lay out defensive works during the siege.

B. He eventually commanded most of the Confederate artillery between the James and Appomattox Rivers.

C. He retreated with the army to Appomattox.
   1. He discussed guerrilla warfare with Lee just before the surrender.
   2. He drew the last battle line of the Army of Northern Virginia.

VI. Alexander provides a singular example of how a bright, multitalented young officer influenced Lee’s military operations in numerous ways.

Essential Reading:

Supplementary Reading:

Question to Consider:
1. Should students of the Civil War be surprised that Alexander’s two sets of memoirs are the most perceptive by any former Confederate?
2. Did service in the artillery make the best use of Alexander’s manifest talents?
Lecture Twenty-Two
Gifted but Flawed—J. E. Johnston and Beauregard

Scope: Our next two lectures examine four officers whose careers provide a useful counterpoint to the successes of most of those we have discussed thus far. Joseph E. Johnston and P. G. T. Beauregard considered themselves Lee’s peers, if not his superiors, as field commanders, but their records reveal an absence of key attributes that helped fuel Lee’s accomplishments. An almost exact contemporary of Lee’s, Johnston served with distinction in the war with Mexico, shared command of the Confederate forces at First Manassas with Beauregard, and opposed the Union advance toward Richmond under General George B. McClellan in the spring of 1862. Badly wounded in the battle of Seven Pines (or Fair Oaks) in late May, he watched as Lee took charge of the army outside Richmond and led it to a series of failed victories. Envious of his old friend, Johnston bitterly insisted that luck, rather than superior talent, explained Lee’s triumphs. In fact, Johnston lacked Lee’s breadth of vision; usually played it safe rather than taking risks; retreated in almost every campaign he directed; and never understood that in a democratic republic, he must defer to civilian superiors and take into account the expectations of the citizenry.

For his part, Beauregard obliquely criticized Jefferson Davis in print following First Manassas, quarreled with the secretary of war and a variety of other officials in Richmond, and opposed any assignment that left him subordinate to Lee or other generals. In sum, neither man possessed the qualities necessary in a general who led a major field army in the Civil War. Unhappy to the end about their relative lack of fame compared to Lee’s, both men wrote long postwar memoirs filled with special pleading (Beauregard’s was attributed to Alfred Roman).

Outline
I. Johnston and Beauregard never worked well with Jefferson Davis.
   A. Johnston refused to keep the president informed about his plans.
      1. The pattern began during Johnston’s service in Virginia in 1861–1862.
      2. It reached a climax during the 1864 Atlanta campaign, when Johnston was perceived as giving up too much ground.
   B. Johnston fought bitterly with the president about rank.
      1. Johnston railed at being ranked fourth in seniority among Confederate generals.
      2. Davis adamantly refused to concede anything to Johnston.
   C. Beauregard also experienced poisonous relations with the president.

II. Johnston and Beauregard pursued flawed strategic plans.
   A. Johnston engaged in retreats that hurt Confederate national morale.
      1. He executed a clumsy withdrawal from Manassas in early 1862.
      2. His withdrawal up the peninsula in the spring of 1862 seemed to give up too much ground without a fight.
      3. His retreat across north Georgia in the Atlantic campaign similarly upset many Confederates.
   B. Beauregard tended to formulate grandiose strategic blueprints with little chance of success.

III. Johnston’s and Beauregard’s weak points offset substantial talents.
   A. Both were highly intelligent.
      1. Johnston impressed a number of able officers.
      2. Beauregard’s record at West Point, in the war with Mexico, and in concentrating Confederate forces at Shiloh, for example, was impressive.
   B. Johnston won the affection of many of his soldiers.
   C. Beauregard rendered useful service at Charleston and at the outset of the siege of Petersburg.

IV. Johnston’s and Beauregard’s Confederate careers underscore the fact that few officers possessed all the requisite skills to achieve sustained success as field commanders.

Essential Reading:
Freeman, Lee’s Lieutenants, vol. 1, chapters 1, 4–17; vol. 3, chapters 23–24.
Gallagher, ed., Lee the Soldier, essay by Davis.
Woodworth, Leadership and Command in the American Civil War, essay by McMurry.
Supplementary Reading:
Johnston, Narrative of Military Operations, Directed during the Late War between the States.
Symonds, Joseph E. Johnston: A Civil War Biography.
Williams, P. G. T. Beauregard: Napoleon in Gray.

Questions to Consider:
1. How do you think the war in the eastern theater would have unfolded if either Beauregard or Johnston had been in Lee’s place in 1862–1865?
2. What might explain Johnston’s substantial reputation as a field commander?

Lecture Twenty-Three
Drama and Failure—Magruder and Pickett

Scope: John Bankhead Magruder graduated in the class of 1830 at West Point, won brevets for gallantry in the war with Mexico, and led Confederate forces to victory early in the war in Virginia. Known as “Prince John” in the antebellum army because of his flair for colorful uniforms and his dramatic personality, he waged an effective defense of the peninsula in April and May 1862. He clashed with Joseph E. Johnston as the contending armies drew closer to Richmond and fought as a division commander under Lee during the Seven Days’ battles. Rumors about drunkenness arose after the battle of Malvern Hill, and Lee made no attempt to retain Magruder with the Army of Northern Virginia. The difference in attitude Lee displayed toward Magruder and Stonewall Jackson, neither of whom distinguished himself during the Seven Days, reveals much about what Lee would and would not accept in a subordinate. Magruder spent the remainder of the war in the trans-Mississippi theater, a backwater that offered almost no opportunity to regain his substantial early-war reputation.

Pickett offers a more troubling portrait of an officer woefully incapable of mature leadership. He did well as a brigade commander during the fighting around Richmond in 1862, suffering a wound that kept him out of service for several months. Returning to the army as a major general in October, he and his division played a minor role at Fredericksburg and missed Chancellorsville. At Gettysburg, Pickett enthusiastically mounted his part of the famous assault on July 3 that ever after carried his name. He completely broke down in the immediate aftermath of the attack; subsequently oversaw a bungled operation at New Bern, North Carolina; and played no further part in Lee’s operations until May 1864. He won a minor success at Bermuda Hundred but ended his Confederate service with a spectacular failure at Five Forks on April 1, 1865. There is much irony in the fact that Pickett is without question the most famous Confederate major general who never achieved higher rank.

Outline
I. Magruder’s early Confederate career included considerable success.
   A. He won fame in June 1861 with a victory in the small clash at Big Bethel.
   B. He conducted an effective defense of the peninsula in the spring of 1862.
1. He slowed the advance of George B. McClellan's much larger force.
2. He employed his dramatic flair to mask his small army's disadvantage in numbers.

C. He achieved less success when placed under Joseph E. Johnston's command.
   1. Magruder clearly operated best in independent command.
   2. Johnston criticized Magruder in a way that undermined confidence in "Prince John" among civilian and military leaders.

II. The Seven Days' campaign marked the end of Magruder's service in Virginia.
   A. He did well at the outset in mounting a diversion south of the Chickahominy River on June 26–27.
   B. He failed to meet Lee's expectations at the battles of Savage's Station and Malvern Hill on June 29 and July 1.
      1. Lee believed Magruder lacked aggressiveness.
      2. Rumors that Magruder had been drunk at Malvern Hill circulated soon after the battle.
   C. Lee made no effort to retain Magruder in the army after the Seven Days.
      1. Lee's attitude may have stemmed in part from Magruder's reputation as a bon vivant.
      2. Lee was far more forgiving of Stonewall Jackson's failures during the Seven Days.
   D. Magruder departed for the trans-Mississippi theater in October 1862.

III. George E. Pickett's Confederate record contained few triumphs.
   A. The high points came as a brigade commander at Seven Pines and Gaines's Mill in 1862 and as a division commander at Bermuda Hundred in May 1864.
   B. His low points were far more numerous.
      1. He lost control of his division at Gettysburg.
      2. He failed to capture New Bern, North Carolina, in February 1864.
      3. He often left his headquarters to carry out romantic liaisons.
      4. He was absent from his command when it was routed at the battle of Five Forks on April 1, 1865.
   C. Pickett's conduct at the time of Five Forks prompted Lee to remove him from command.

IV. Pickett nursed a long postwar bitterness toward Lee and likely failed to appreciate how the assault that wrecked his command at Gettysburg also guaranteed his own personal fame.

Essential Reading:
Gallagher, Lee and His Generals in War and Memory, chapter 6.
——, ed., The 1862 Richmond Campaign, essay by Carmichael.
Woodworth, Leadership and Command in the American Civil War, essay by Gordon.

Supplementary Reading:
Casdorph, Prince John Magruder: His Life and Campaigns.
Gordon, General George E. Pickett in Life and Legend.

Questions to Consider:
1. Why was an officer of Pickett's limited ability able to retain relatively important positions for so long?
2. What does Magruder's example reveal about how some officers react differently when operating semi-independently or under the command of superiors?
II. Robert E. Lee and his army served as an important focus for the Lost Cause writers.
   A. Lee and his army stood as the most attractive element of Confederate experience.
      1. Lee had many admirable qualities; he was modest, religious, courtly, restrained.
      2. His army won famous victories against long odds.
      3. Lee and his army could be discussed without addressing the issue of slavery or divisive Confederate political history.
   B. This Lost Cause focus represented a continuation of the wartime importance of Lee and his army in the Confederacy.

III. Lost Cause writers engaged in heated debates about Gettysburg.
   A. They argued that a victory at Gettysburg would have brought independence.
   B. They insisted that Lee had not been responsible for the defeat.
      1. They said that Richard Ewell lacked aggressiveness on July 1.
      2. They also asserted that Jeb Stuart's absence early in the campaign doomed Lee's effort.
   C. They soon settled on James Longstreet as their principal villain.
   D. Jubal Early and Longstreet became great antagonists in the 1870s.
      1. Early proved far more able as a controversialist.
      2. Longstreet's politics and criticisms of Lee hurt his case.
      3. Longstreet suffered from invidious comparisons with Stonewall Jackson.
   E. John B. Gordon represented a later generation of Lost Cause writers.
      1. He also attacked Longstreet.
      2. He urged reconciliation with the North on many points.
   F. Some former Confederates remained largely aloof from the arguments.
      1. E. P. Alexander admired both Lee and Longstreet.
      2. He wrote the best critical analysis of Lee's campaigns.

IV. The Lost Cause remains influential in popular conceptions of the Civil War.
   A. Lee is more popular than Grant.
   B. Lee and his army remain the most written-about elements of Confederate history.
   C. There is evidence that Lost Cause arguments are losing ground—debates over Confederate flags on license plates and on state flags suggest as much.

Outline

I. Many ex-Confederates sought to establish a written record of the war that placed the Confederacy and their actions in the best possible light.
   A. They hoped to find something honorable in their failed bid for independence.
   B. They hoped to influence future generations.
      1. They understood that there would be a debate over the meaning of the war.
      2. They knew historians and other writers would draw on participants' accounts.
   C. Their arguments eventually became known as the Lost Cause school of interpretation.
      1. There was no formal body of Lost Cause dogma.
      2. Most Lost Cause writers did agree on several points.
         a. Slavery had not been central to secession or the war.
         b. U.S. manpower and material might have been crucial in bringing Confederate defeat.
         c. The Confederate people had waged a steadfast effort to win independence.
Essential Reading:

Supplementary Reading:
Connelly and Bellows, *God and General Longstreet: The Lost Cause and the Southern Mind*.
Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South*.

Questions to Consider:
1. Did former Confederates win the war of popular memory regarding the Civil War?
2. Is it remarkable that a general and an army that inflicted great damage on the United States have received so much favorable treatment?