

Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson

1824–1863



WHY HE MADE HISTORY Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson was one of the most loved Confederate leaders during the Civil War. His war strategies enabled him to lead his troops to victory in several important battles.



As you read the biography below, think about how Thomas Jackson’s determination earned him the nickname “Stonewall.”

The Civil War brought out the best and the worst in people. It was up to those who commanded troops on both sides to try to end what became the bloodiest war in the nation’s history. One of these commanders was Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson.

Jackson had served in the Mexican War and had taught at Virginia Military Institute before he began his career in the Confederate army. He was not well liked as a professor. It was written that Jackson “was no teacher...His genius was in the Science and Art of War.”

At the beginning of the Civil War, Jackson was a colonel. Then in 1861, he was made a brigadier general. It was in this role as leader of this **brigade** that Jackson earned the nickname “Stonewall.” At the First Battle of Bull Run, Jackson was described by Confederate General Barnard Bee as standing “like a stone wall” in the face of the enemy.

After his promotion to major general, Jackson and his men were involved in what became known as the Valley campaign. During these battles, Jackson’s troops prevented the Union armies from linking together and reinforcing their weakened troops. In 1862 Jackson and his men forced Union



VOCABULARY

brigade large body of troops

commander Nathaniel Banks and his troops across the Potomac River. Union commander John C. Frémont and his men attempted to prevent Jackson from marching into Washington, D.C. Jackson and his men fell back and defeated Frémont at Cross Keys and Port Republic.

Following this successful campaign, Jackson joined General Robert E. Lee at the Seven Days' Battles. He did not perform as well as he had in Shenandoah, but he quickly made up for it by helping to win the Second Battle of Bull Run, followed by the Antietam campaign. Lee promoted Jackson to lieutenant general.

Lee and Jackson were successful at the battle of Fredericksburg in December 1862, and also at the battle of Chancellorsville in May 1863. In this battle, Jackson used the same strategy that had made him successful at the Second Battle of Bull Run. Unfortunately, Jackson was accidentally shot in the left arm at night by one of his own men following the battle. His arm was amputated and Jackson died eight days later on May 10, 1863. Lee said, "He has lost his left arm, but I have lost my right arm."

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

- 1. Draw Conclusions** What is meant by Robert E. Lee's quote, "He has lost his left arm, but I have lost my right arm?"

- 2. Expressing and Supporting a Point of View** Why do you think strategy is important in trying to win a war, especially during the time of the Civil War?

ACTIVITY

- 3.** Use what you know about generals Lee and Jackson to write a conversation that could have happened between the two men. Be sure to include historical details.