

# 57 *Stonewall Jackson* *Top 100 Americans*

Thomas Jonathan "Stonewall" Jackson (January 21, 1824 – May 10, 1863) was a Confederate general during the American Civil War, and the best-known Confederate commander after General Robert E. Lee. His military career includes the Valley Campaign of 1862 and his service as a corps commander in the Army of Northern Virginia under Robert E. Lee. Confederate pickets accidentally shot him at the Battle of Chancellorsville on May 2, 1863. The general survived with the loss of an arm to amputation, but died of complications from pneumonia eight days later. His death was a severe setback for the Confederacy, affecting not only its military prospects, but also the morale of its army and of the general public. Jackson in death became an icon of Southern heroism and commitment, becoming a mainstay in the pantheon of the "Lost Cause".

Military historians consider Jackson to be one of the most gifted tactical commanders in U.S. history. His Valley Campaign and his envelopment of the Union Army right wing at Chancellorsville are studied worldwide even today as examples of innovative and bold leadership. He excelled as well in other battles; the First Battle of Bull Run (First Manassas) where he received his famous nickname "Stonewall", Second Bull Run (Second Manassas), Antietam, and Fredericksburg. Jackson was not universally successful as a commander, however, as displayed by his late arrival and confused efforts during the Seven Days Battles around Richmond in 1862.

In 1861, as the American Civil War broke out, Jackson became a drill master for some of the many new recruits in the Confederate Army. On April 27, 1861, Virginia Governor John Letcher ordered Colonel Jackson to take command at Harpers Ferry, where he would assemble and command the famous "Stonewall Brigade", consisting of the 2nd, 4th, 5th, 27th, and 33rd Virginia Infantry regiments. All of these units were from the Shenandoah Valley region of Virginia, where Jackson located his headquarters throughout the first two years of the war. Jackson became known for his relentless drilling of his troops; he believed discipline was vital to success on the battlefield. Following raids on the B&O Railroad on May 24, he was promoted to brigadier general on June 17.

Jackson rose to prominence and earned his most famous nickname at the First Battle of Bull Run (First Manassas) on July 21, 1861. As the Confederate lines began to crumble under heavy Union assault, Jackson's brigade provided crucial reinforcements on Henry House Hill, demonstrating the discipline he instilled in his men. Brig. Gen. Barnard Elliott Bee, Jr., exhorted his own troops to re-form by shouting, "There is Jackson standing like a stone wall. Let us determine to die here, and we will conquer. Rally behind the Virginians!"