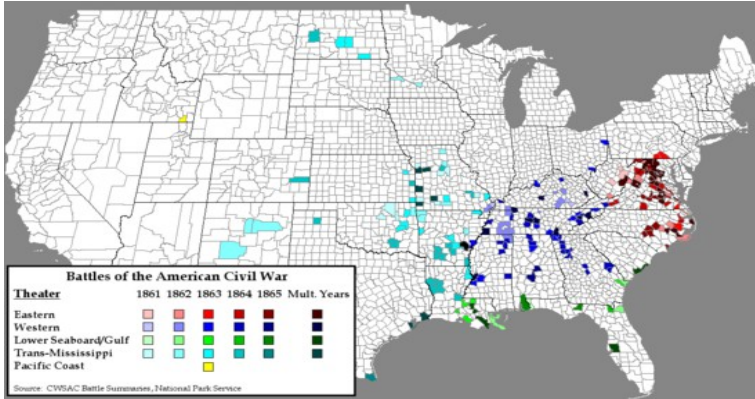


## Battle of Fredericksburg 1862

There were hundreds of Civil War Battles. They were fought between 1861 and 1865 in 24 states.



The first battle in the war was 12-13 April 1861 Battle of Fort Sumter, South Carolina, and was a Confederate Victory.

The last battle was 12-13 May 1865 Battle of Palmito Ranch, Texas, the southernmost battle fought on land, also a Confederate Victory.

Many American and Native Indian Wars also occurred during the Civil War between Union or Confederate forces and Apache, Arapaho, Cheyenne, Comanche, Dakota, Kiowa, Navajo and Shoshone. After the Civil War, all of the Indians were assigned to reservations, under the control of the Interior Department.

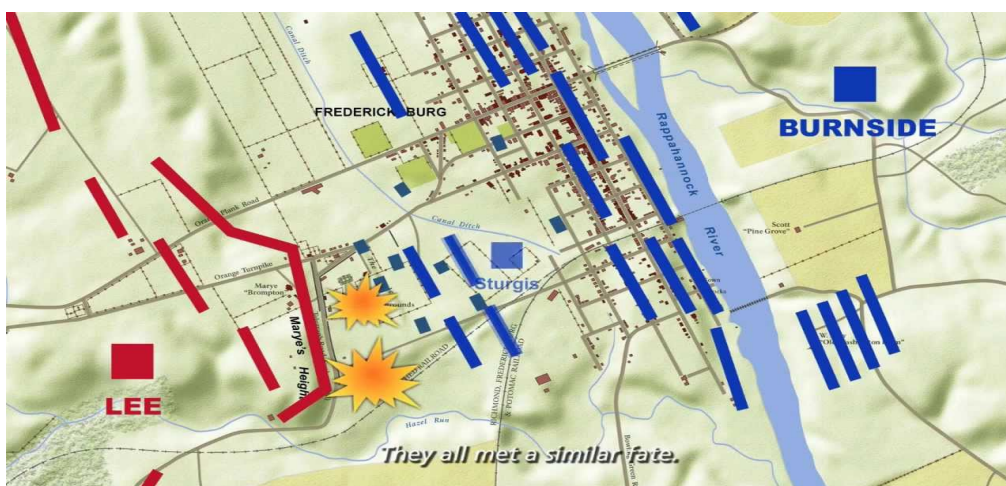
### **The Battle of Fredericksburg 11th-15<sup>th</sup> December 1862**

The Battle of Fredericksburg was fought between 11<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> December 1862, in and around Fredericksburg, Virginia. The combat, between the Union Army of the Potomac commanded by [Maj. Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside](#) and the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia under [Gen. Robert E. Lee](#), included futile frontal attacks by the Union Army on December 13 against entrenched Confederate defenders on the heights behind the city. It is

remembered as one of the most one-sided battles of the war, with Union casualties more than twice as heavy as those suffered by the Confederates.



The Battle of Fredericksburg involved nearly 200,000 combatants, the largest concentration of troops in any Civil War battle. [Ambrose Burnside of the Union Army](#), the newly appointed commander of the Army of the Potomac, had ordered his more than 120,000 troops to cross the Rappahannock River, where they made a two-pronged attack on the right and left flanks of [on the Confederate side Robert E. Lee's](#) 80,000-strong Army of Northern Virginia at Fredericksburg. On both ends, Lee's rebel defenders turned back the Union assault with heavy casualties (nearly 13,000), particularly from their high position at the top of Marye's Heights. The results of the battle sent Union morale plummeting and lent much-needed new energy to the Confederate cause.



**Burnside** may have doubted his own qualifications to command the Army of the Potomac, but he nonetheless acted quickly to move the large force into Virginia in an advance toward the Confederate capital of Richmond. By mid-November, he had moved two advance corps to Falmouth, located on the north bank of the Rappahannock River across from Fredericksburg. In response, Lee rushed his troops to dig in positions in the hills south of the Rappahannock before the bulk of Burnside's army could arrive.

Unfortunately for Burnside, the section of the Rappahannock near Falmouth was too deep to ford, so he was forced to wait for pontoon bridges to arrive in order to cross the river. Due to a miscommunication between **Burnside** and Henry Halleck, general in chief of all Union armies, the pontoons were delayed in arriving, and **James Longstreet's** Confederate corps had ample time to occupy a strong position on Marye's Heights in Fredericksburg. On December 11, as Burnside crossed the Rappahannock with more than 120,000 Union troops, Lee offered only a token resistance in order to give **Stonewall Jackson's** corps time to connect with Longstreet's, stretching out the Confederate line by some three miles.

On December 13, **Burnside** ordered his left wing (led by **General William B. Franklin**) in an attack on Lee's right, commanded by **Jackson**, while the rest of his army attempted to assault Longstreet's First Corps at Marye's Heights. Though a division led by General George Meade managed to temporarily break Jackson's line, Franklin failed to send 50,000 more troops forward when given the opportunity, and Jackson was able to launch a successful counterattack. Meanwhile, Longstreet's artillery mowed down ranks of attacking Union soldiers from their strong position on high ground. By the time darkness fell, there had been no change in position. The Union had suffered nearly 13,000 casualties, most of them in front of Marye's Heights, while the Confederates counted fewer than 5,000.

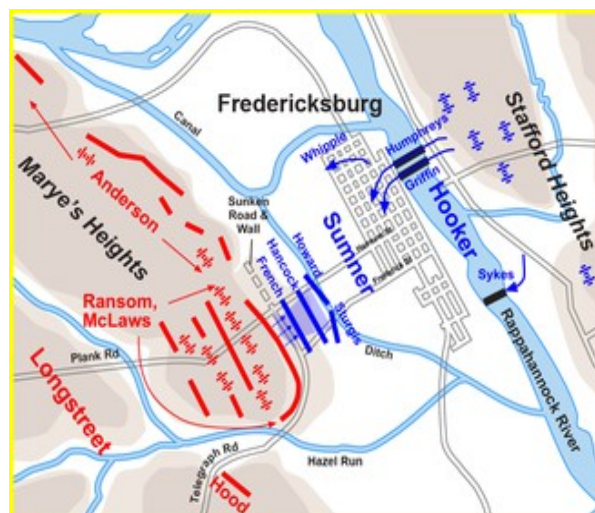
The Battle of Fredericksburg was a crushing defeat for the Union, whose soldiers fought courageously and well but fell victim to mismanagement by their generals, including confused orders from **Burnside to Franklin**. Burnside accepted responsibility for the defeat, though many blamed Lincoln for pressuring him to go ahead with an impossible offensive. In the rush of political recriminations that followed, a majority of Republican senators voted to remove Secretary of State William Seward who had become the primary target for their frustrations over the administration's conduct of the war. Led by Secretary of the Treasury Salmon Chase, the senators pressed Lincoln to reorganize his cabinet, and when he refused, Chase offered his resignation. Seward had also offered to resign, but Lincoln refused in both cases, smoothing over the cabinet crisis and deftly limiting the political repercussions of the defeat at Fredericksburg. In January 1863, the president named

**Joseph Hooker** to replace Burnside as commander of the Army of the Potomac.

On the Confederate side, the victory at Fredericksburg restored Confederate morale after Lee's unsuccessful campaign into Maryland in the autumn. At the head of a rejuvenated Army of Northern Virginia, Lee would follow up with an even more smashing success over a numerically superior Union force at **Chancellorsville** in May 1863 before launching a second invasion of the North through Pennsylvania. In July, Lee's army would again meet the Army of the Potomac—by that time under the command of **George Meade**, who replaced Hooker after Chancellorsville—in the decisive Battle of Gettysburg.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of Fredericksburg 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1863

Confederate **General Robert E. Lee** left Major General **Jubai A. Early** to hold Fredericksburg on May 1, while he marched west with the rest of the Army of Northern Virginia to deal with Union Major General **Joseph Hooker's** main thrust at Chancellorsville. **Early** had his own division and with other brigades he then had 12,000 men with 45 cannons. Most of the Confederate force was deployed south of Fredericksburg.



**Early** was ordered by Lee to watch the remaining Union force near Fredericksburg; if he was attacked and defeated, he was to retreat southward to protect the Confederate supply lines. If the Union force moved to reinforce Hooker, then Early was to leave a covering force and rejoin Lee with the remainder of his troops. On May 2, misunderstanding his orders, Early left one brigade at Fredericksburg and started the rest of his force towards

Chancellorsville; **Lee** corrected the misunderstanding and Early then returned to his position that night before **Sedgwick** discovered the Confederate retreat.

Maj. Gen. **John Sedgwick** was left near Fredericksburg with three divisions of troops. **Hooker's** plan called for Sedgwick to demonstrate near the city in order to deceive Lee about the Union plan. Several crossings were seized, laying down pontoon bridges and the divisions of William T. H. Brooks and James S. Wadsworth crossed the river. The I Corps was ordered to reinforce the main army at Chancellorsville during the night of May 1. During the evening of May 2, **Sedgwick** received orders to attack **Early** with his remaining forces.

**Sedgwick** moved his forces into Fredericksburg during dawn on May 3, uniting with Gibbon's division which had crossed the river just before dawn. Sedgwick originally planned to attack the ends of Marye's Heights but a canal and a stream blocked the Union forces. He then decided to launch an attack on the Confederate centre on the heights, which was manned by **Barksdale's** brigade, with John Newton's division; this attack was defeated. **Colonel Thomas M. Griffin** of the 18th Mississippi Infantry granted the Union forces a truce in order to gather in their wounded. During this truce, the Union commanders noticed that the flank of **Barksdale's** left regiment was unprotected.

**Sedgwick** launched another attack against this flank and Barksdale's three divisions pushed the Confederate forces off the ridge, capturing some artillery. **Barksdale** retreated to Lee's Hill, where he attempted to make another stand but was again forced to retreat southward.

Confederate casualties totalled **700** men. **Early** withdrew with his division two miles to the south, while Wilcox withdrew westward, slowing **Sedgwick's** advance. When he learned of the Confederate defeat, Lee started moving two divisions east to stop Sedgwick.

**Sedgwick** had lost **1,100** men during the engagement. At first he started to pursue **Early's** division but then followed orders to start west towards **Hooker's** army at Chancellorsville. **John Gibbon's** division was left in Fredericksburg to guard the city.