



THE SEVEN DAYS

THE WEEK THAT LASTED THREE YEARS JUNE 25 – JULY 1, 1862



General Robert E. Lee,
Army of Northern Virginia



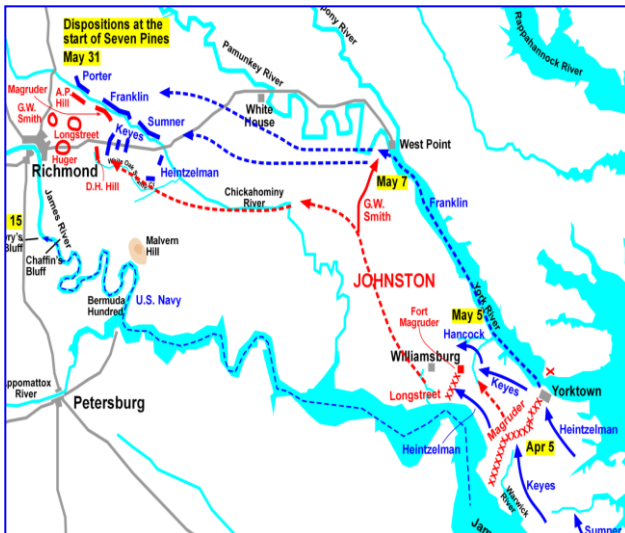
Maj. Gen. George McClellan,
Army of the Potomac

Confederate Army
Strength: 92,000
Casualties: 20,200

Union Army
Strength: 104,100
Casualties: 15,850

PENINSULAR CAMPAIGN, MARCH – JUNE

- In the Spring of 1862 the Union was poised to win the war. In the East and West, powerful forces had gathered.
- Union **Gen. McClellan**, under pressure to advance against Richmond, decided to avoid a direct march south by advancing against **Gen. Johnston** up the Virginia Peninsula
- Tricked by the Confederates into thinking that his 121,000 men were outnumbered by the 13,000 men actually in front of him, McClellan inched his way up the Peninsula.
- As McClellan neared Richmond, he reached out on his right, waiting for the arrival of reinforcements from the North.
- During a battle on May 31, Gen. Johnston was wounded and **Gen. Lee** took command. It was expected to be a temporary appointment, till Johnston recovered.

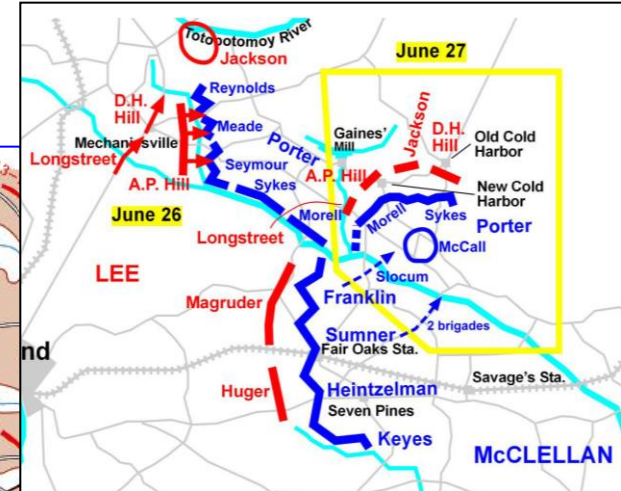
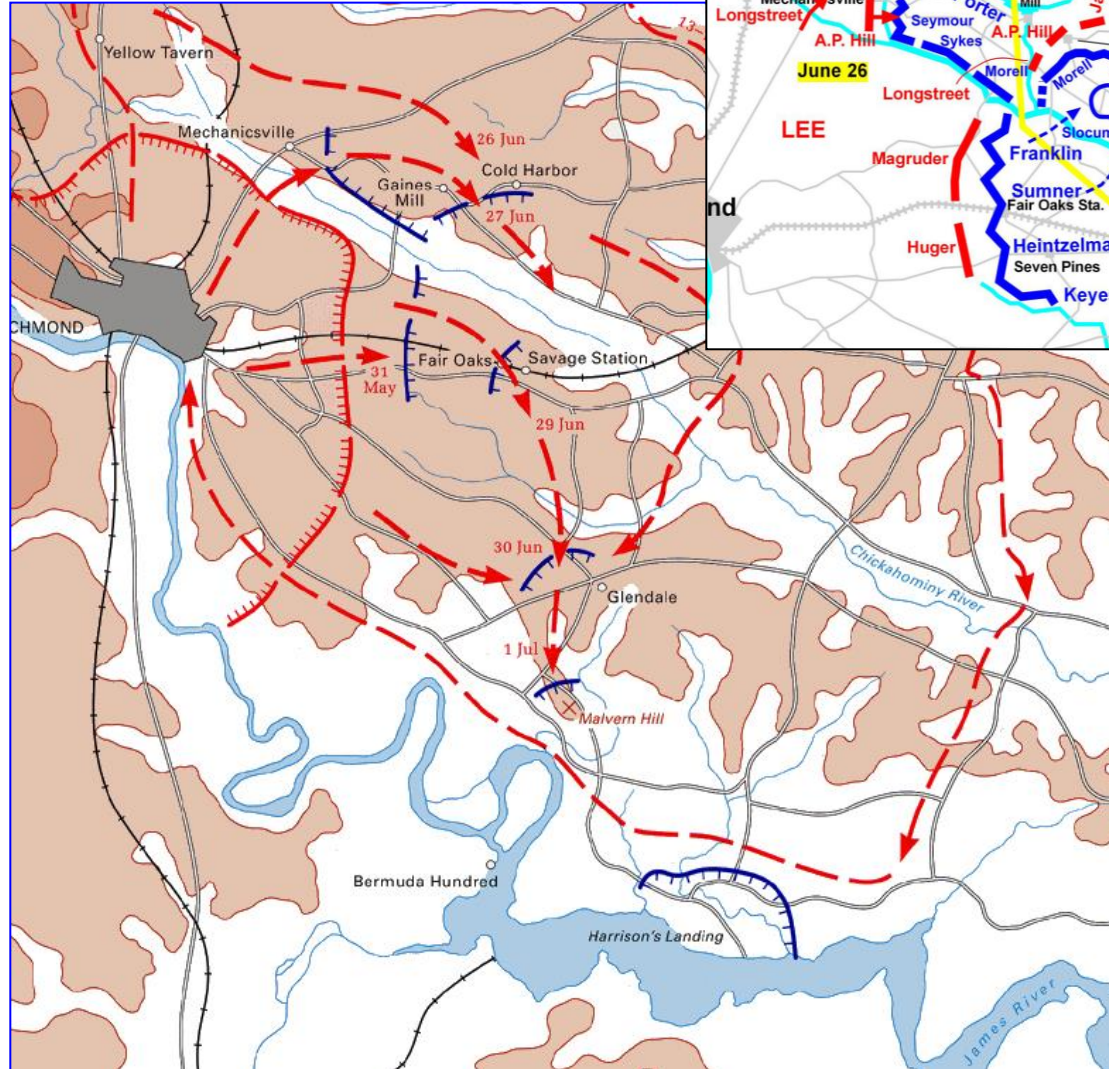


June 25/26: The Seven Days Begin

- This was Lee's first combat command, and he had his men dig defensive trenches to halt McClellan -- an activity that his men ridiculed, calling him "Granny Lee". McClellan said that Lee was "too cautious". They soon learned differently.
- With the arrival of Gen. Stonewall Jackson's divisions, Lee moved to attack McClellan's right flank -- the V Corps under Brig. Gen. John Fitz Porter, separated from the rest of the Union army by the rain-swollen Chickahominy River.
- Lee's plan was to have Jackson attack the northern edge of the Union line, while Gen.'s Hill and Longstreet attacked the front.
- In an action on June 25, Union soldiers attacked Confederate pickets.
- On June 26, though Jackson was late, the Confederates attacked and pushed the Union soldiers back

June 27: Gaines Mill

- The next day Lee launched an attack with 57,000 men against the 37,000-strong V Corps, but it was not coordinated and again Jackson was late.
- The V Corps held fast during the day but at dusk Lee's men finally opened a gap in the Union line.
- The Union troops retreated at night over the Chickahominy.
- Gaines Mill, the largest battle in the Seven Days, caused an anxious McClellan to abandon his thoughts of the siege of Richmond.



June 29: Savage's Station



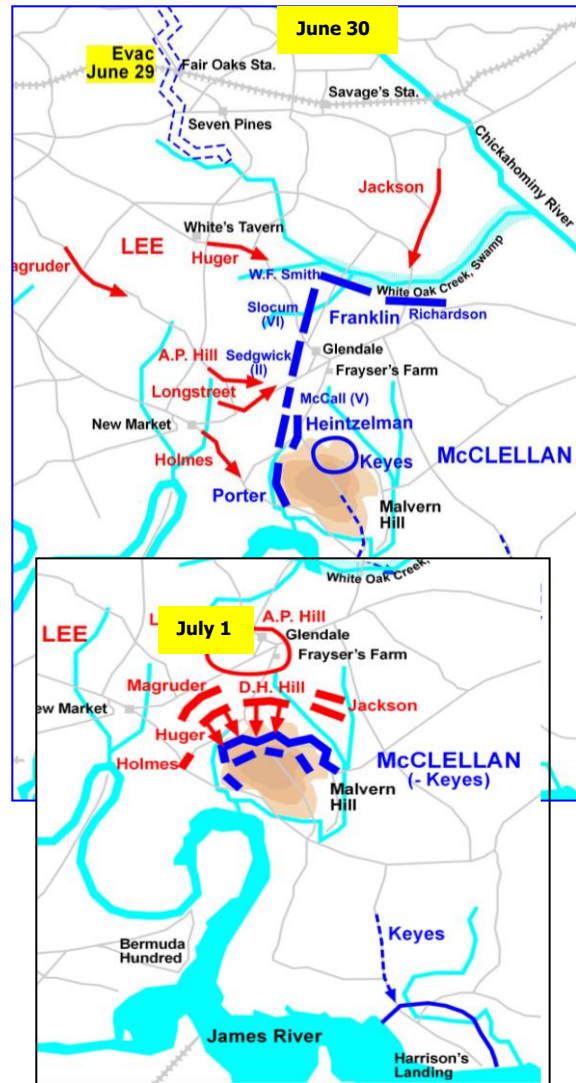
- ➔ On June 27 and 28 the Confederates made a small sortie south of the Chickahominy, to tap the federal lines and check the position of the retreating army. It convinced McClellan that he was facing an all-out attack from all Southern armies.
- ➔ On the 29th the Battle of **Savage's Station** erupted as the main Union army began its retreat to the James River. Confederate Gen. Magruder pursued and hit the rearguard.
- ➔ Magruder attacked with only a portion of the 14,000 men in his command. His rival Gen. Sumner also failed to make use of all his troops, despite an overall 2:1 superiority.
- ➔ The two sides thus fought on par to a stalemate as darkness and rain ended the fighting.
- ➔ The battle was notable for the first use of an armoured railway battery - the Confederate's "Land Merrimack".
- ➔ The Union army escaped, but left behind supplies and 2,500 wounded.



Field hospital at Savage's Station

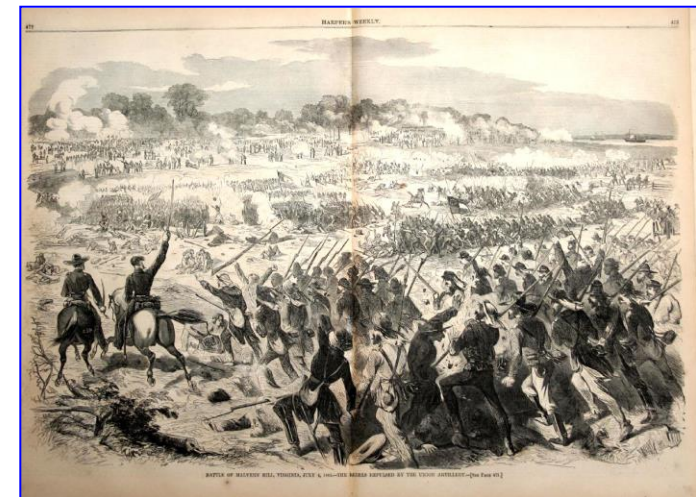
June 30, July 1: Glendale & Malvern Hill

- ➔ The Union army struggled towards the safety of Harrison's Landing without a clear overall plan from McClellan.
- ➔ Lee's troubles were the opposite: he had a clear plan but his commanders did not execute his orders well.
- ➔ At the little crossroads of **Glendale**, the Confederates were ordered to converge on the fleeing Federal forces.
- ➔ Once again, Jackson failed to attack from the north, and Longstreet sent his men in piecemeal. The federal line held despite heavy fighting.
- ➔ **Malvern Hill**, on July 1st, was Lee's last opportunity to destroy the Union army.
- ➔ The entire Union army occupied the heights of Malvern Hill. At 1:00 p.m. their gunners unleashed one of the most crushing barrages of the war. When Lee's attack went in, it was repulsed.



U.S. Navy gunboats cover Malvern Hill

- ➔ The Seven Days battles bought the Confederacy three more years of existence.
- ➔ The battles set a pattern for Federal commanders fighting Gen. Lee. All but one of the Seven Days battles were Federal victories, but McClellan treated them as defeats.
- ➔ Overawed by Lee, McClellan's army was pulled back to Washington, where McClellan was replaced by John Pope.
- ➔ In time, Lee's disjointed chain of command would function smoothly, turning his army into a military force of legendary prowess.



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