

Topic Page: [Seven Days' Battle](#)

Summary Article: **Seven Days' Battle**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

During the American Civil War, successful Confederate campaign June–July 1862 to drive back Union forces threatening Richmond, Virginia. The success of the campaign was largely due to the tactical initiatives of General Robert E Lee, a military commander and an adviser to Confederate President Jefferson Davis, and it established his reputation as a military strategist.

Two Union armies were advancing on Richmond: one of about 100,000 troops under General George McClellan had landed at Fort Monroe on the Virginia Peninsula; the second under General Irvin McDowell began moving south from Alexandria, aiming at a junction with McClellan's force. The Confederates abandoned their defensive line at Yorktown and moved back to cover Richmond.

Lee ordered General Thomas 'Stonewall' Jackson to start some activity in the Shenandoah valley, keeping McDowell busy. Lee went out to the Peninsula to find that McClellan's army was split in two by the flood-swollen Chickahominy River, and sent General Joseph Johnston to attack the force lying south of the river. This became known as the **Battle of Seven Pines**, a confused and bloody affair in which Johnston was severely wounded.

Lee was given command of the army and began shuffling troops around in front of McClellan to convince him that he was faced with an enormous force. Lee then moved across the river and attacked the Union forces there; these fell back so that Lee could attack the southern half on its flank, and this, in turn, fell back. Lee continued in this manner, pushing one flank and then the other, McClellan backing away before him, and only the relative inexperience of Lee's staff and army allowed McClellan to escape without total loss. Fighting a series of sound rearguard actions through Mechanicsville, Cold Harbor, Savage's Station, White Oak Swamp, and finally Malvern Hill, McClellan managed to extricate most of his army and concentrate it on the James River, protected by his artillery and the Union navy. By that time the incessant rain had turned all the roads to mud and Lee's troops were exhausted with pursuit and fighting, so the Seven Days' campaign came to an end.

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