**Stonewall Jackson**

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"Stonewall" Jackson was one of the South's greatest generals during the Civil War. Pious and uncommunicative, he possessed an uncanny, almost intuitive grasp of Gen. Robert E. Lee's orders. His untimely death in 1863 undoubtedly hastened the Confederacy's downfall.

Thomas Jonathan Jackson was born on January 21, 1824 in Clarkesburg, Virginia (present-day West Virginia) into a life of poverty. Orphaned at an early age, he was raised by his uncle and in 1842, gained admission to West Point. Jackson possessed a rudimentary education and was unprepared for the academic rigors he encountered. Nevertheless, he strove diligently and graduated 17th out of a class of 59. Jackson joined the army of Gen. Winfield Scott as a second lieutenant of artillery in 1847 for the final months of the Mexican-American War. He secured promotion to major for gallantry at the battles of Veracruz, Cerro Gordo, and Chapultepec. After the war, Jackson performed routine garrison duty in New York and Florida but resigned from the army on February 29, 1852 to teach artillery tactics and natural philosophy at the Virginia Military Institute (VMI).

Uninspiring as a teacher, Jackson's stern, inflexible, and methodical nature made him unpopular and reinforced his reputation as an eccentric. Known for his almost fanatical religious devotion, he married Eleanor "Ellie" Junkin, the daughter of a Presbyterian minister, on August 4, 1853. Ellie's large, boisterous family embraced Jackson, giving him the warm family life that had eluded him as a child. Jackson was devoted to Ellie and enormously admired his wife's religious piety and intellectual abilities. Ellie's death in childbirth on October 22, 1854 devastated Jackson (the child was stillborn). Jackson embarked on a long trip to Europe, and after he returned in 1856, he courted Mary Anna Morrison, also the daughter of a Presbyterian minister. He had known Anna before his first marriage, and the courtship progressed swiftly. They were married on July 16, 1857.

Throughout the 1850s, Jackson devoted himself to his teaching and the Presbyterian church, studiously avoiding the debate over slavery and the growing sectional crisis between the North and South. He disdained politics and was horrified by the prospect of civil war, although he owned a few slaves himself. In December 1859, he commanded the VMI Cadet Corps at the hanging of abolitionist John Brown. When the Civil War broke out in April 1861, Jackson, who did not support secession, sided with his state and was appointed a colonel in the Confederate Army.

In June 1861, Jackson was promoted to brigadier general in the Army of Northern Virginia and the following month, distinguished himself at the First Battle of Bull Run. His staunch defense of the Henry House occasioned Gen. Bernard E. Bee to remark "There is Jackson standing like a stonewall!" The moniker stuck, and ever since, he has been known by the nickname "Stonewall." He became an invaluable resource for the Confederate Army. A demanding leader, his men came to revere him and take special pride in his exploits on the battlefield. His penchant for hard, forced marches—coupled with the loyalty he inspired among his troops—meant that he could move his forces quickly. He was a decisive commander, whose determination and fortitude saved the Confederate Army many times. Lee came to value him as his most trusted subordinate and routinely gave Jackson difficult tasks, which he always successfully completed. Lee's faith in Jackson meant that Jackson was granted a semi-autonomous command within the Army of Northern Virginia. Lee could give him an assignment and be assured that it would be done.

Promoted to major general in October, Jackson assumed command of troops in the Shenandoah Valley and conducted one of the most brilliant campaigns of the entire war. His assignment was to create havoc in the Shenandoah Valley, thus compelling the Federals to divert troops from their planned assault on Richmond to deal with Jackson in the valley. Some Union troops were even held in Washington, D.C. in case Jackson ventured that far. During March-June 1862, Jackson's 17,000 bedraggled men, out-marched, out-foxed, and out-fought a combined Union force of 60,000. Three Union generals—James Shields, Nathaniel P. Banks, and John C. Frémont—were defeated in a succession of battles that prevented reinforcements to Gen. George B. McClellan in the Richmond campaign.

Having captured the arsenal at Harpers Ferry and driven Federal troops out of the valley, Jackson was then ordered to join Lee at Richmond. Fatigue and unfamiliarity with the terrain resulted in Jackson's lackluster performance at White Oak Swamp in June 1862, although he recovered his step in time to fight brilliantly against Union general John Pope at the Second Battle of Bull Run in late August. At Second Bull Run, Lee once again gave Jackson a difficult assignment. Jackson and his men completed a 51-mile march in only two days to reach Pope's forces (earning Jackson's command the nickname "Jackson's foot cavalry"). While Jackson engaged Pope's forces in a frontal assault, Lee sent the rest of his army to attack Pope's flank. The maneuver was successful and resulted in the near annihilation of Pope's troops.

In September 1862, Jackson again distinguished himself at the Battle of Antietam and the following month, received promotion to lieutenant general and command of II Corps, half of Lee's army. In this capacity, he commanded the left wing of the Army of Northern Virginia at Fredericksburg in December 1862 and assisted in the bloody repulse of Union general Ambrose Burnside. On many a far-flung field, Lee and Jackson proved to be an unbeatable combination.

Jackson's military reputation was solidified in the Chancellorsville campaign of May 1863, although he would not survive the engagement. Confederates were outnumbered two to one by the Union forces and faced a dismal prospect for survival, let alone victory over the federal troops. Having lured the army of Union general Joseph Hooker into a false sense of security, Lee divided his army and sent Jackson and his men around the Union right flank. On May 2, Jackson fell like a thunderbolt upon Union general Oliver O. Howard's forces and routed them. Jackson's victory brought a temporary reprieve for the Confederates, although hard fighting remained before victory could be secured.

After the fighting had ceased on the night of May 2, Jackson was mistakenly shot by his own sentries as he returned from a scouting foray. His arm was amputated that night, but pneumonia overtook the wounded general. He lingered for eight days before dying on May 10, 1863. His loss was a great tragedy to both Lee and the Confederate cause. "I do not know how to replace him," bemoaned Lee, "I have lost my good right arm." Lee never found a commander whom he could trust and rely on as he had on Jackson. In addition, Jackson's death coincided with the beginning of the Confederacy's defeat on the battlefield. Thus, Southerners came increasingly to associate him with military victory and survival of the Confederate cause. His reputation quickly took on mythical qualities, as Southerners saw their dreams for an independent nation disintegrate without the fallen general.