

First Battle of Bull Run (First Battle of Manassas)

The First Battle of Bull Run was also called the First Battle of Manassas. It was the first major land battle during the Civil War. General Irvin McDowell was chosen to train troops and command those near Washington, D.C.

Jefferson Davis was the president of the Confederate States of America, which had its capital in Richmond, Virginia. Jefferson Davis chose General Pierre G. T. Beauregard to command the army at Manassas, Virginia, which was located between Washington, D.C., and Richmond. He chose General Joseph E. Johnston to command an army that was to defend the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia. A railroad connected these two areas so troops could move from one area to another as needed.

General McDowell thought his troops could quickly win a battle with General Beauregard's troops, as they outnumbered the Confederate troops. He planned to have General Robert Patterson take part of the troops to stop General Johnston's army from helping General Beauregard. General McDowell began marching his troops toward the Confederate troops under General Beauregard at Manassas on July 16, 1861. General Patterson left with his troops to block General Johnston the same day, but he decided his troops were outnumbered and retreated. This gave General Johnston time to send reinforcements to General Beauregard before the battle started.

Early on July 21, 1861, General McDowell sent his troops to attack the Confederate troops. One part of the army was to attack at a stone bridge at Bull Run. Most of his army marched on and crossed Bull Run so they could turn back and attack the flank of General Beauregard's troops.

The Confederate soldiers slowed the advance of the Union troops while the reinforcements were coming. Then, they retreated to higher ground located at Henry House Hill. At Henry House Hill, General Thomas Jackson of the Confederacy waited for the Union troops to move in. He stood firmly against the Union troops, and the battle continued until about four in the afternoon. At that point, the Confederate troops counterattacked, and the Union troops withdrew in a panic. This ended the battle with a Confederate victory. Because of his stand, General Jackson was given the nickname "Stonewall" after this battle.

Vocabulary

Flank: the side of an army farthest to the right or left

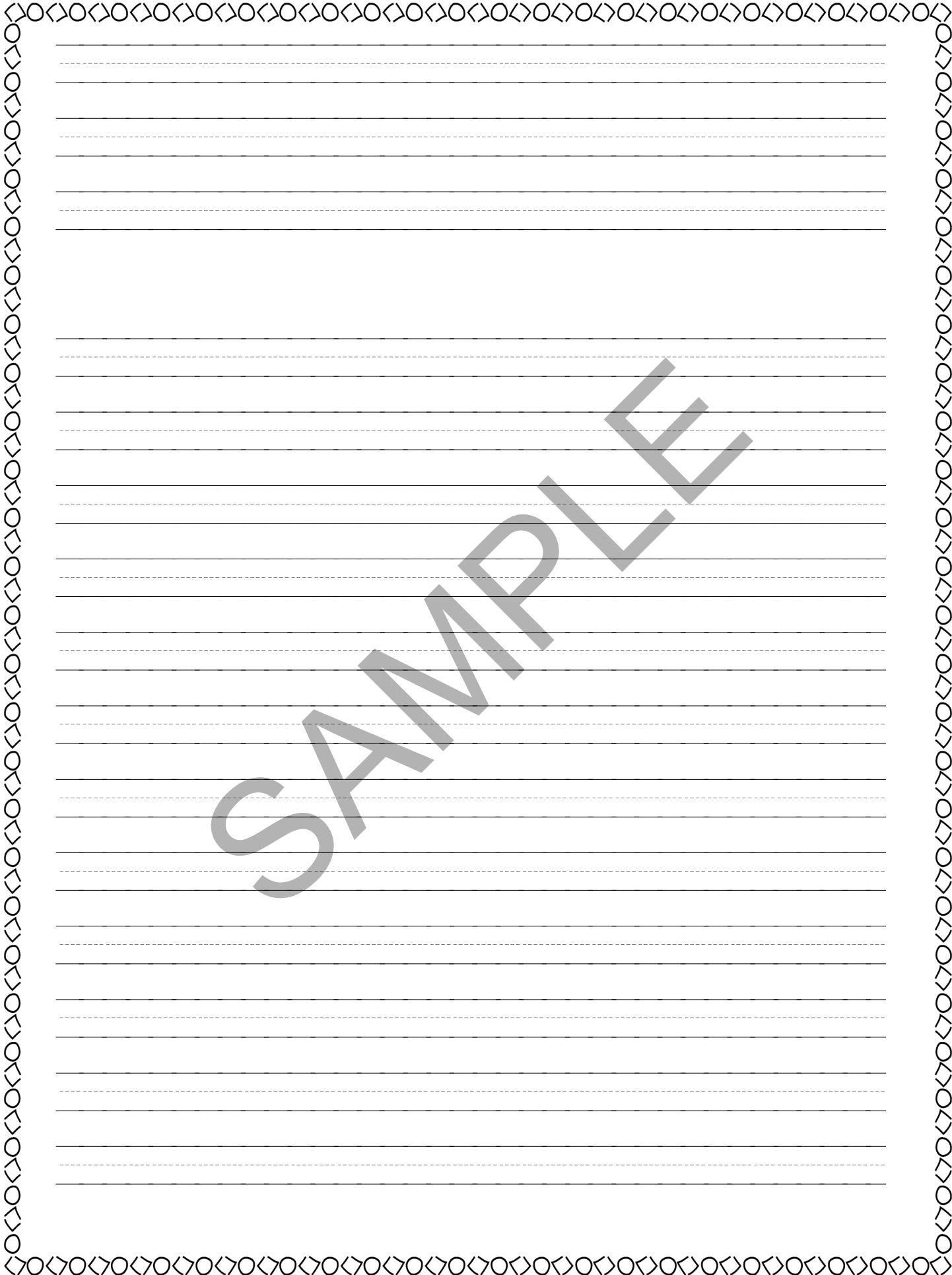
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Facts

1. Date: July 21, 1861
2. Place: Manassas, Virginia
3. Union leaders: Generals Irvin McDowell, Robert Patterson
4. Confederate leaders:
Generals Pierre G. T. Beauregard, Joseph E. Johnston, Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson
5. Defeated: Union
6. Victory: Confederacy
7. First major land battle



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