

The Battle of Antietam on September 17, 1862, greatly altered the course of the Civil War. Robert E. Lee's failure to carry the war effort effectively into the North caused Great Britain to postpone recognition of the Confederate Government. Of almost equal importance was the long-awaited opportunity given President Lincoln to issue the Emancipation Proclamation. Five days after the Federal victory, Lincoln issued his preliminary proclamation which warned the South that on January 1, 1863, he would declare free all slaves in territory still in rebellion against the United States. Henceforth, the war would have a dual purpose: To preserve the Union and to end slavery.

Antietam climaxed the first of Lee's two attempts to carry the war into the North. After a great victory at Manassas in August 1862, Lee headed for Maryland, hoping to find vitally needed men and supplies. Some 41,000 Confederates were pitted against 87,000 Federals under George B. McClellan, once more in command of the Army of the Potomac. McClellan followed Lee into Maryland, first to Frederick, then westward to the passes of South Mountain.

Here Lee tried to block the Federal Army, but McClellan forced the gaps. Lee moved on westward. Finding that McClellan was in pursuit, Lee crossed Antietam Creek and consolidated his position on the high ground to the west, with his center near Sharpsburg. By September 15 McClellan had most of his command within a few kilometers of the creek, while half of Lee's army was still in Harpers Ferry.

The battle opened at dawn on the 17th as Hooker's artillery began a murderous fire on "Stonewall" Jackson's troops posted in a cornfield north of town. The battle raged southward all day—from the North Woods, through the Cornfield, the East Woods, the West Woods, past "Bloody Lane" and Burnside Bridge, to the hills below Sharpsburg where at last it ended. The timely arrival of A. P. Hill's division stopped the final Union assault just short of victory. Neither side had gained the upper hand, but Lee was turned back into Virginia. Losses on both sides were staggering: 12,410 Federals were killed or wounded (15 percent of those engaged) and 10,700 Confederates (26 percent of those engaged).

WARTIME PHOTO OF THE DUNKER CHURCH



THE CHARGE ACROSS BURNSIDE BRIDGE.

#### ABOUT YOUR VISIT

The national battlefield site lies north and east of Sharpsburg, along Md. 34 and 65. Both routes intersect either U.S. 40 or 40A and Int. 70. The visitor center is north of town on Md. 65. Please check with the park staff for days and hours of operation, and for information on facilities and the tour route. Schedules of Living History demonstrations and other special events during the year are available at the visitor center.

There are also interpretive markers at Turner's, Fox's, and Crampton Gaps on South Mountain, scenes of preliminary fighting, and at the Shepherdstown (W.Va.) Ford.

Federal regulations prohibit hunting and removing or disturbing any relics. Fishing is permitted in Antietam Creek. There is a picnic area but camping or fires are not allowed in the park. A walk-in tent campground is available on the C & O Canal, 8 kilometers (5 miles) away.

#### WE'RE JOINING THE METRIC WORLD

The National Park Service is introducing metric measurements in its publications to help Americans become acquainted with the metric system and to make interpretation more meaningful for park visitors from other nations.

#### FOR SAFETY'S SAKE

Motorists are asked to use caution while driving the tour route. Be aware of one-way roads, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Drivers should stop vehicles while reading interpretive signs. To insure proper control, bicyclists should exercise caution while descending hills.

#### ADMINISTRATION

Antietam National Battlefield Site and Cemetery are administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Box 158, Sharpsburg, MD 21782, is in immediate charge.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

National Park Service  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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# Antietam

NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD SITE, MARYLAND

## TOURING THE BATTLEFIELD

The Battle of Antietam was fought over an area of 31 square kilometers (12 square miles). The site today consists of 328 hectares (810 acres) of land and some 13 kilometers (8 miles) of paved tour road. Exhibits and an 18-minute slide program at the visitor center help tell the story of the Antietam Campaign; you should view these before starting your tour. Tour stops 4, 5, 6, and 7 have tape players with information about the battle.

Follow the tour outlined below and on the map for an unhurried visit to the main points of interest. Please keep in mind the three principal phases of the battle: the Union morning attack at the Cornfield; the Union midday attack at the Sunken Road (Bloody Lane); and the Union afternoon attack at Burnside Bridge. Starting at the visitor center, your first stop is the Dunker Church, just across Hagerstown Pike. The tour ends at the National Cemetery.

### MORNING PHASE (6:00 to 9:00)

- 1. Dunker Church.** This church, reconstructed on the original site, was the scene of repeated clashes as both armies sought to hold the high ground.
- 2. Joseph Poffenberger Farm.** Hooker launched the initial Union attack from this point, behind the North Woods. At dawn, 8,000 men of the I Corps swept forward—and were stopped by Jackson's troops in the Cornfield, 0.8 kilometer (0.5 mile) south.
- 3. East Woods.** Here, Gen. Joseph Mansfield was fatally wounded as he led the XII Corps into battle. One division moved to Hooker's aid in the Cornfield; the other met determined Confederates in the woods at the Dunker Church.
- 4. The Cornfield.** More fighting took place here in the Miller cornfield than anywhere else at Antietam. Early that morning, four Union divisions attacked, and four Confederate divisions counter-attacked—without pause. The line of battle swept back and forth across this field 15 times.
- 5. West Woods.** General John Sedgwick's division lost more than 2,200 men in one-half hour in an ill-fated charge into these woods. Arriving at the same time, two of Jackson's divisions cut them down with a withering crossfire.

### MIDDAY PHASE (9:30 to 1:00)

- 6. Sunken Road (Bloody Lane).** For 3 hours, D.H. Hill's Confederate infantry contested this sunken country roadway pointblank with French's and Richardson's Union divisions resulting in 4,000 casualties. That is why the road is known as Bloody Lane.

### AFTERNOON PHASE (1:00 to 5:30)

- 7. Burnside Bridge.** The fighting at this bridge, named after the Union General whose four divisions were held off most of the day by a few hundred Georgia riflemen, was a key factor in McClellan's lack of success at Antietam. Burnside failed to capture the bridge until early in the afternoon; and then it was another 3 hours before his troops advanced to the slope beyond only to be halted again by A. P. Hill's Confederates. This 1836 stone bridge is the battlefield's best known landmark.
- 8. Hawkins Zouaves Monument.** Reached only by foot, this monument marks the place where the battle ended at dusk. Here A. P. Hill's division battered Burnside's final drive to a standstill. A splendid view of the pastoral Antietam valley awaits visitors who come here now.
- 9. Antietam National Cemetery.** The remains of 4,776 Federal soldiers, including 1,836 unknown, are buried in this hilltop cemetery near town. Most of the Confederate dead were buried at Hagerstown, Md., and Shepherdstown, W. Va.

