LEQ: What battle in the East is known as the “turning point” of the Civil War?

This image is titled “Battle of Gettysburg.” It depicts Pickett’s Charge on July 3, 1863 when Confederates led by Brigadier General Lewis Armistead attempt to reach some cannon in the Union line on Cemetery Ridge. This image was created in 1887 by Thure de Thulstrup (1848-1930) for Louis Prang & Company, Boston, Massachusetts. This image was restored by Adam Cuerden. This image is courtesy of Wikimedia Commons and the Library of Congress.
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This image shows United States soldiers attempting to build a pontoon bridge across the Rappahannock River at Fredericksburg, Virginia. Confederates from Barksdale's Mississippi Brigade are in the buildings on the other side of the river and are firing at the Union soldiers building the bridge. This image is titled “Battle of Fredericksburg: The Army of the Potomac crossing the Rappahannock in the morning of December 13, 1862 under the command of Generals Burnside, Sumner, Hooker & Franklin.” This event actually took place on December 11, 1862. This image was created by Kurz & Allison in 1888. This image is courtesy the Library of Congress.
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The “victory” at Antietam helped President Lincoln to issue the Emancipation Proclamation.

The Confederate states seceded mainly because they feared that Lincoln would interfere with the institution of slavery. This image is the first page of the Emancipation Proclamation, which was a five page document. This image is courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration.
The North had entered the war only to reunite the Union, not to end slavery.

Lincoln made this clear when he stated in a letter to newspaper editor Horace Greeley on August 22, 1862, “If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it…” This image shows the 7th New York State Militia in New York City marching off to war on April 19, 1861. This painting is titled “The Departure of the Seventh Regiment to the War.” It was created in 1869 by Thomas Nast. This image is courtesy of the New York State Military Museum.
By the middle of 1862, Lincoln came to believe that he needed to broaden the goals of the war. Because the war was not going well for the Union in the East, Lincoln realized he needed the full support of antislavery groups in order to continue the war. Lincoln made a decision to end slavery. One of the most read newspapers in the country was the antislavery *New York Tribune*. Lincoln knew he needed the support of its readers, and of its editor, Horace Greeley. This image is titled “The Press Room of the New York Tribune.” This image was created for the July 20, 1861 edition of *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*. This image is courtesy of skyscraper.org.
Lincoln chose to wait until Union armies won a major battle to announce his decision. Lincoln thought if he made his announcement after a defeat, it might look he was trying to start a slave insurrection and be a desperate attempt to get support. He wanted to speak from strength, not from weakness. This image is titled “The Battle of Antietam—Army of the Potomac.” It was created by Kurz & Allison in 1888. This image is courtesy of the Library of Congress.
After the news of the Battle of Antietam reached Lincoln, he called his cabinet together.

Lincoln told his cabinet, that Antietam wasn’t a decisive victory, but the Confederates had been driven out of Maryland. This was the closest that the Union armies in the East were to having a victory. This painting is titled “First Reading of the Emancipation Proclamation of President Lincoln.” This event took place on July 22, 1862 when Secretary of State William Seward told Lincoln to wait to issue it until after he had a victory. This painting was created in 1864 by Francis Bicknell Carpenter (1830-1900). Shown from left to right are: Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase, President Abraham Lincoln, Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Interior Caleb B. Smith, Secretary of State William H. Seward (seated), Postmaster General Montgomery Blair, Attorney General Edward Bates. This image is courtesy of senate.gov.
On September 22, 1862 Lincoln issued a preliminary proclamation, or public announcement. It declared all slaves in seceded states “forever free” unless the states returned to the Union by January 1, 1863.
The new year came and went and no Confederate states reentered the Union.

The Emancipation Proclamation went into effect on January 1, 1863. This image shows slaves waiting for the hour of Emancipation. This image is titled “Watch Meeting December 31st 1862—Waiting for the Hour.” It was created by William Tolman Carlton (1816-1888). This image is courtesy of whitehousehistory.org.
The Emancipation Proclamation did not immediately free a single slave.

The Emancipation Proclamation excluded the more than 800,000 slaves in the border states that remained in the Union or in Union occupied areas. This image is titled Black Man Reading Newspaper by Candlelight.” The headline states, “Presidential Proclamation, Slavery.” This painting was created by Henry Louis Stephens (1824-1882) circa 1863. This image is courtesy of the Library of Congress.
The Emancipation Proclamation applied only to lands outside federal control until Union armies occupied those lands. It weakened the Confederacy without severely angering slaveholders in the Union. Slaves were not freed in the areas colored blue. They were border states, or territory already occupied by Union forces on January 1, 1863. The proclamation covered the areas colored red. This image is courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.
Lincoln’s action gave the war meaning for many Northerners.

The Emancipation Proclamation transformed the war from a struggle to save the Union into a struggle to eliminate slavery. This image is titled “Emancipation Proclamation.” It was created by A.A. Lamb circa 1864. This image is courtesy of the National Gallery of Art.
The Emancipation Proclamation also discouraged foreign powers from aiding the South.

Many European countries that had laws banning slavery refused to take sides against a government fighting to end slavery. This image is courtesy of nortonvillage.org.uk.
Lincoln later supported the Thirteenth Amendment of the Constitution, which was ratified on December 18, 1865.

The Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery in every state of the Union. This image of the Thirteenth Amendment has the signature of approval of Abraham Lincoln, given on February 1, 1865. This image is courtesy of the National Archives.
Until the very end of the war, the South refused to let African Americans join the military.

This image shows 2nd Lieutenant John Wallace Comer and his body servant (slave) Burrell. This image is courtesy of The Alabama Department of Archives and History.
Confederate armies often used enslaved persons to dig fortifications, cook, drive wagons, and perform other labors. Widespread opposition to arming ex-slaves for combat existed in the South. This image is titled “Impressed Slaves Building Fortifications at James Island, South Carolina.” This image is courtesy of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture at the New York Public Library.
The Emancipation Proclamation announced Lincoln’s decision to permit African Americans to join the Union army.

Earlier in the war, Lincoln had opposed enlisting African Americans as soldiers. He feared that white citizens in the border states would protest. This photograph shows Company E of the 4th United States Colored Infantry Regiment at Fort Lincoln in Washington, D.C. This image was taken by William Morris Smith circa 1864. This photograph is courtesy of the Library of Congress.
Some Union officers in the field, though, wanted and needed their help.

This is a detail from the photograph in the previous slide which shows Company E of the 4th United States Colored Infantry Regiment at Fort Lincoln in Washington, D.C. This image was taken by William Morris Smith circa 1864. This photograph is courtesy of the Library of Congress.
At least 180,000 African Americans served in the Union army. 20,000 African Americans served in the Union navy. Two-thirds of the African Americans who served had been slaves when they fled the South. This image shows the 32nd United States Colored Troops Infantry Regiment at Camp William Penn in Chester County, Pennsylvania. This image is courtesy of Temple University.
African American troops formed all African American regiments (approximately 1000 men), most of which had “white” commanders. Only about 100 African Americans became officers. 166 African American regiments were formed. This image is titled “Come and Join Us Brothers.” It was created by the Supervisory Committee for Recruiting Colored Regiments. This lithograph was produced by P.S. Duval & Son, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania circa 1863. This image is courtesy of the University of Michigan.
African American soldiers faced other types of discrimination...

Most commanders, for example, used African American soldiers as laborers rather than sending them into combat. This photograph is titled “Cold Harbor, Va. African Americans Collecting Bones of Soldiers Killed in the Battle.” This image was taken by John Reekie circa April, 1865. This image is courtesy of the Library of Congress.
Eventually African American soldiers fought in all the major battles and skirmishes near the end of the war.

This image is a detail from the print titled “The Storming of Ft. Wagner.” This lithograph was created by Kurz and Allison in 1890. This image depicts the 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment attacking Fort Wagner on James Island, South Carolina on July 18, 1863. This image is courtesy of abcnews4.com.
Many of the African American regiments distinguished themselves in combat.

Twenty-three African American men earned the military's Medal of Honor for their bravery. This image shows Sergeant William Carney of the 54th Massachusetts Regiment who was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions at Fort Wagner in South Carolina on July 18, 1863. This image is courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.
The 54th Massachusetts Volunteers became the best-known African American regiment. Its soldiers assaulted Fort Wagner near Charleston Harbor on July 18, 1863. Under heavy fire, the soldiers forced their way into the fort. This image is titled “The Old Flag Never Touched the Ground.” This image was created by Rick Reeves in 1999 for the United States National Guard. This image is courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.
The commander and many of the troops died in fierce hand-to-hand combat. The soldiers’ bravery inspired other African Americans to enlist. This image is titled “Storming Fort Wagner.” It depicts Colonel Robert Gould Shaw being shot by the flag as his men attempt to go over the Confederate fortifications. This lithograph was created by Kurz and Allison in 1890. This image is courtesy of the Library of Congress.
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After Lee retreated at Antietam, McClellan hesitated six weeks before pursuing him. Then he began a slow advance toward Richmond. This image shows Major General George B. McClellan and President Abraham Lincoln with Union officers near Sharpsburg, Maryland following the Battle of Antietam. This image was taken by Alexander Gardner (1821-1882) on October 3, 1862. This image is courtesy of the Library of Congress.
Lincoln lost patience with McClellan and replaced him with General Ambrose Burnside. He is most famous for his distinctive style of facial hair that became known as sideburns, derived from his last name. Burnside had invented a weapon known as the Burnside carbine before the war. This image was taken circa 1862. It was taken by Mathew Brady (1822-1896). This image is courtesy of the Library of Congress.
In late 1862 Burnside led his troops to Fredericksburg, Virginia, on the Rappahannock River. By the time the Union troops crossed the river (from north to south or right to left in this image), Lee had amassed 73,000 soldiers to try and stop them from advancing further on the hills on the other side of the town. This image was taken by Timothy H. O’Sullivan in March, 1863. This image is courtesy of the Library of Congress.
Union attacks could not break through the Confederate lines at Fredericksburg.

Burnside then gave up trying to attack the Confederates at Fredericksburg. Admitting his failure, Burnside resigned. The United States in blue crossed open ground in an unsuccessful attempt to drive the Confederates, shown in red, from the heights on the south side of the Rappahannock River. This image is courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.
Lincoln replaced Burnside with General Joseph Hooker. Lee outmaneuvered Hooker also. This image of Major General Joseph Hooker was taken by Mathew Brady (1822-1896) in 1863. This image is courtesy of the Library of Congress.
On May 4, 1863, the Confederates defeated Hooker’s forces at Chancellorsville, Virginia.

The Confederates (61,000) are shown in red and the United States (134,000) is shown in blue. General Robert E. Lee with a portion of the Confederate army faced Hooker from the south, while Lieutenant General Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson marched around Hooker’s right flank and attacked him from the west and the north. Other Union and Confederate soldiers from both armies, not shown on this map, were in the area of Fredericksburg. This image is courtesy of pbs.org.
Although Southerners had won the battle at Chancellorsville, they suffered a great loss. During some night fighting, edgy Confederates accidentally shot one of their own officers—Stonewall Jackson. This lithograph is titled “Battle of Chancellorsville-May2-4, 1863…” It was created by Kurz and Allison in Chicago, Illinois in 1889. This image is courtesy of the Library of Congress.
Stonewall Jackson’s left arm had to be amputated.

Lee told Jackson’s chaplain: “He has lost his left arm; but I have lost my right arm.” Stonewall Jackson’s arm is buried at the Jones-Lacey family cemetery at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Park. This image is courtesy of the National Park Service.
A week later Jackson, suffering from delirium, shouted orders from his sickbed.

On May 10, 1863 Jackson was dying of pneumonia. Suddenly he grew calm and said, “Let us cross over the river and rest under the shade of the trees.” Then he died. Stonewall Jackson died in this bed and in this room located in an outbuilding of the Chandler Plantation at Guinea Station, Virginia. This image is courtesy of the National Park Service.
Encouraged by almost destroying Hooker’s army of 134,000 at Chancellorsville and wanting to end the war as soon as possible, Lee decided to invade the North once again.

On June 3, 1863, Lee’s army left Fredericksburg and moved towards Pennsylvania. This image is courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.
Just three days before the battle, Lincoln replaced Hooker with Pennsylvania General George Meade.

Meade swiftly moved his army into Pennsylvania to chase after Lee. This image of United States Major General George Gordon Meade (1815-1872) was taken by Mathew Brady (1822-1896) circa 1863. This image is courtesy of the Library of Congress.
From July 1-3, 1863, Meade’s Northern army clashed with Lee’s Confederate forces in one of the most celebrated battles of the war—The Battle of Gettysburg.

At the battle of Gettysburg, Meade’s Union army numbered approximately 93,000 men. Lee’s Confederate army contained approximately 75,000 men. This image is courtesy of historicalspotlight.com.
The first shots exploded on July 1, 1863 when a Confederate soldiers, searching for supplies, encountered Union soldiers just outside of Gettysburg. By the end of the day, Meade's forces had been pushed south of town. They took a strong defensive position on high ground. This image shows Lieutenant Bayard Wilkeson commanding Battery G, 4th United States Artillery at Barlow’s Knoll on July 1, 1863. Wilkeson would be mortally wounded here. This image is courtesy of Battles and Leaders of the Civil War which was published by the Century Company in New York City in 1887.
The Union defensive line ran about 3 miles along Culp’s Hill, Cemetery Hill, Cemetery Ridge, and hills called Little Round Top and Big Round Top.

The Union line at Gettysburg, shown in blue, is now commonly called the “fishhook line” because of its shape. There were only a couple of dozen Union soldiers on Big Round Top. This image is courtesy of pbs.org.
A confident Robert E. Lee ordered flanking attacks at both ends of the Union position on July 2, 1863.

After a full day of battle, Union forces still held their positions. The Union line was broken on July 2nd when Union Major General Daniel Sickles moved his men towards the Confederate lines without permission. General Meade sent in reinforcements, and the fishhook line was finally restored at the end of the day. This image is courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.
On July 3, 1863 Lee decided to attack the Union center in what has become known as Pickett’s Charge.

Led by Major General George Pickett, approximately 12,000 Confederates marched almost one mile across an open field and attacked the slopes of Cemetery Ridge under heavy enemy fire. This image shows a portion of the Gettysburg Cyclorama which was painted by Paul Philippoteaux (1846-1923) in 1884. This image is courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.
Only a few troops reached the top of the ridge, and Union forces quickly killed or captured them.

Pickett's Charge was over. After some cavalry actions that day, the Battle of Gettysburg was over. This painting was created by Peter Frederick Rothermel (1812-1895) in 1870. This painting is on display at the Pennsylvania State Museum in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. This image is courtesy of theburgnews.com.
Over the three days of fighting there were approximately 51,000 casualties (killed, wounded, missing, captured).

The Confederates suffered 28,000 casualties and the Union suffered 23,000 casualties. This image, known as the “Harvest of Death” was photographed by Timothy O'Sullivan (1840-1882) circa July 5, 1863. This image is courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.
“Don’t let the enemy escape,” Lincoln wired the victorious Meade.

On July 5th, Lee’s army began to retreat towards Virginia. Meade’s army followed him and there were 34 more small battles or skirmishes. However, Lee escaped across the Potomac River, and the war would go on for two more years. Abraham Lincoln was very upset with General Meade for letting Lee “escape.”

This image is titled “President Lincoln in the War Department Telegraph Office Writing the First Draft of the Emancipation Proclamation.” This image was created by C.M. Relyea and H.C. Merrill for the May-October, 1907 edition of Century Magazine. This image is courtesy of the Library of Congress.
Gettysburg was a victory for the Union and the turning point in the Eastern Theater. Lee’s Confederate army was greatly weakened, and he would now lose most of the rest of the battles of the war. This image is titled “Attack of the First Minnesota at Gettysburg. It was created by Don Troiani for the Minnesota National Guard. This image is courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.
The burial sites of the soldiers who lost their lives at Gettysburg stretched for miles. Northerners built a cemetery at Gettysburg to honor the United States dead. Confederate dead remained on the battlefield for eight to ten years after the battle until Southern state government and non profit organizations dug up the bodies and had them reburied somewhere in the South. This image was created for the December 5, 1863 edition of Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper. This image is courtesy of americaslegacylinks.com.
President Lincoln attended the cemetery dedication ceremony on November 19, 1863. Lincoln was not the main speaker at the dedication ceremony. That honor went to Edward Everett, one of the most famous speakers of his time. Everett spoke for two hours to approximately 15,000-20,000 people describing the battle from Cemetery Hill. Both Abraham Lincoln and Edward Everett are visible in this image of the dignitaries gathering on the speaker’s platform on November 19, 1863. This image is courtesy of the Library of Congress.
Lincoln then rose and spoke for only three minutes. His brief remarks are now recognized as one of the finest speeches ever made. This image is titled “Lincoln’s Address at the Dedication of the Gettysburg National Cemetery, November 19, 1863. This image was created by the Sherwood Lithograph Company circa 1905. This image is courtesy of the Library of Congress.
In a few words, Lincoln made clear why Union soldiers died. He reminded his audience that their nation, with the creation of the Declaration of Independence in 1776 was conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.” They were fighting to free other people to see if we really believed what we wrote in 1776. This image titled “Declaration of Independence” was created by John Trumbull circa 1818. This image is courtesy of the Architect of the Capitol.
Lincoln then stated that “We here highly resolve that these (Union) dead shall not have died in vain (for nothing) like the Confederate soldiers had.

“...and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth.” This image was taken by James Gibson (?-1905) for Alexander Gardner (1821-1882) circa July 5, 1863. This image is courtesy of the Library of Congress.
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