

**McDOWELL, Irvin**, soldier, b. in Columbus, Ohio, 15 Oct., 1818; d. in San Francisco, Cal., 4 May, 1885. He received his early education at the College of Troyes, in France, and was graduated at the U. S. military academy in 1838, becoming 2d lieutenant in the 1st artillery. His first service was on the northern frontier during the Canada border disturbances, in Houlton, Me., pending the disputed territory controversy. He returned to the academy in 1841, and was assistant instructor of infantry tactics and adjutant until 1845. He

was then appointed aide-de-camp to Gen. John E. Wool, and became the acting adjutant-general of that officer's column on its march to Chihuahua, and participated in the battle of Buena Vista, where for his services he was brevetted captain, and on 13 May, 1847, received that rank in the adjutant-general's department. Subsequently he continued with the army of occupation, and was engaged in mustering out and discharging troops until 1848. He then filled the office of assistant adjutant-general in the war department in Washington, in New York, and elsewhere, attaining the rank of major on 31 March, 1856. The year 1858-'9 he spent on leave in Europe, and thereafter, until the beginning of the



*McDowell*

civil war, he was engaged in the duties of the adjutant-general's department in Washington and as aide-de-camp on Gen. Scott's staff, serving as inspector of troops. During the early part of 1861 he was occupied in organizing and mustering volunteers into service at the capital; but on being made brigadier-general, 14 May, 1861, he was assigned to the command of the Department of Northeastern Virginia and of the defences of Washington south of the Potomac. On 29 May, 1861, he was given command of the Army of the Potomac, which consisted of about 30,000 men, who, with the exception of 700 or 800 regulars, were almost entirely raw recruits. With these troops, in response to the public demand for some immediate action, he was ordered, on 16 July, to march against the Confederate army, posted at Manassas Junction under Gen. Beauregard. His plan of campaign had been carefully studied out, and its principal feature was to turn the enemy's left flank while threatening the front, which was well posted behind Bull Run on an elevation that commanded the entire plateau. A preliminary action, without the authority of Gen. McDowell, took place at Blackburn's Ford on the 18th, and developed the fact that the Confederates were strongly intrenched. The National troops, unable to carry the masked batteries, fell back to Centreville, where they rested during the two following days. On the morning of the 21st the National army crossed the run and succeeded in throwing the enemy's left into such confusion that the presence of Gens. Beauregard and Johnston was necessary to rally their troops, who then re-formed in line on the crest of the hill. A severe struggle for this position ensued, and it was lost and won three times, and about three o'clock in the afternoon it remained in the control of the National forces. But soon after that hour fresh Confederate re-enforcements arrived and completely turned the tide of battle. McDowell's men, who had been on their feet since two o'clock in the morning, who had marched twelve miles to the field and been engaged in heavy fighting since ten o'clock, were now exhausted by fatigue and want of food and water. Unable to withstand the fierce attack of fresh troops, they broke and retired in confusion down the hillside and made a

disorderly retreat to Washington. Thus the first great battle of the civil war was fought and lost. According to Gen. Sherman, "it was one of the best-planned battles, but one of the worst fought." Heavy losses of artillery and other war-supplies were experienced as the soldiers fell back on the capital. Both armies were fairly defeated, and whichever had stood fast the other would have run. Gen. Johnston says: "The Confederate army was more disorganized by victory than that of the United States by defeat." While the plan was excellent and had received the approval of the commanding general, still much difficulty was experienced from the fact that the time of many of the regiments had expired and the men refused positively to serve any longer. Indeed, 4,000 men marched to the rear to the sound of the enemy's guns, and the defeat of the National troops was due to Confederate re-enforcements arriving under Gen. E. Kirby Smith, who were supposed to be held in check by a force under Gen. Robert Patterson in the Shenandoah valley.

Gen. McDowell was then given charge of the 1st corps, Army of the Potomac, having been superseded in the chief command by Gen. McClellan. This corps under his command was soon afterward detached from the main army and designated as the Army of the Rappahannock. Meanwhile he was made major-general of volunteers on 14 March, 1862. In the summer of 1862 there were four independent commands in Virginia, and in quick succession they were attacked with such force that concentration became necessary, and the Army of Virginia was formed under Gen. John Pope and the command of the 3d corps was given to Gen. McDowell. The campaign of northern Virginia followed, and with his command he participated in the battle of Cedar Mountain, the action of Rappahannock Station, and the second battle of Manassas. In the latter engagement Gen. McDowell tenaciously held his old position on Henry Hill until forced to retire. The campaign ended at this point, and, beginning with the retreat from Cedar Mountain on 9 Aug., with scarcely a half day's intermission, McDowell's corps was either making forced marches, many times through the night and many times without food, or was engaged in battle. Though worn out with fasting, marching, and fighting, his men were neither demoralized nor disorganized, but preserved their discipline to the last. Public opinion persisted in holding him responsible for the defeat at Bull Run, and in consequence no further field-command was intrusted to him during the civil war. He was retired from duty in the field on 6 Sept., 1862, and, regarding this as a reflection upon him as a soldier, he asked for a court of inquiry, which reported "that the interests of the public service do not require any further investigation into the conduct of Major-General McDowell." During part of 1863 he was president of the court for investigating alleged cotton-frauds, and later he was president of the board for retiring disabled officers. On 1 July, 1864, he was placed in command of the Department of the Pacific, with headquarters in San Francisco, and held that office until 27 July, 1865, after which he had command of the Department of California until 31 March, 1868. Meanwhile he was brevetted major-general in the U. S. army and mustered out of the volunteer service on 1 Sept., 1866. In July, 1868, he was assigned to the command of the Department of the East, and on 25 Nov., 1872, was promoted to major-general. Soon after this he succeeded Gen. George G. Meade as commander of the Division of the South, and re-

remained until 30 June, 1876, after which he returned to San Francisco in charge of the Division of the Pacific until his retirement on 15 Oct., 1882. Gen. McDowell had great fondness for landscape gardening, and during the last years of his life was one of the park commissioners of San Francisco, in which capacity he constructed a park out of the neglected Presidio reservation and laid out drives that command fine views of the Golden Gate.



**Military History.**—Cadet at the U. S. Military Academy from July 1, 1834, to July 1, 1838, when he was graduated and promoted in the Army to  
BVT. SECOND LIEUT., 1ST ARTILLERY, July 1, 1838.

SECOND LIEUT., 1ST ARTILLERY, July 7, 1838.

Served: on the Northern Frontier, 1838, during Canada Border Disturbances; on the Maine Frontier, at Houlton, 1838–40, pending the “Disputed Territory” controversy; on Recruiting service, 1840; on Maine Frontier, at Houlton, 1840–41, pending the “Disputed Territory” controversy; at the Military Academy, 1841–45, as Asst. Instructor of Infantry Tactics, Sep. 4 to Nov. 11,

(FIRST LIEUT., 1ST ARTILLERY, OCT. 7, 1842, to FEB. 22, 1851)

1841,—and as Adjutant, Nov. 11, 1841, to Oct. 8, 1845; as Aide-de-Camp to Brig.-General Wool, Oct. 6, 1845, to May 13, 1847; in the War with Mexico, 1846–48, in mustering in Volunteers, June–July, 1846,—as Acting Asst. Adjutant-General of the Army commanded by Brig.-General Wool, on the march for Chihuahua, Aug. 24 to Sep. 12, 1846, and Dec. 24, 1846, to Jan. 29, 1847, being engaged in the Battle of Buena Vista, Feb. 22–23, 1847,—as Asst. Adj.

(BVT. CAPT., FEB. 23, 1847, FOR GALLANT AND MERITORIOUS CONDUCT  
IN THE BATTLE OF BUENA VISTA, MEX.)

tant-General to Brig.-General Wool's division, “Army of Occupation,” May 13,

(BVT. CAPT. STAFF—ASST. ADJUTANT-GEN., MAY 13, 1847)

1847, to Dec. 9, 1847, and of the “Army of Occupation,” Dec. 9, 1847, to May 22, 1848,—and in mustering out and discharging troops, June–July, 1848; as Asst. Adjutant-General at the War Department, July, 1848, to June, 1849,—at the Headquarters of the Army, New York city, June, 1849, to Jan. 8, 1851,—of the 2d Military Department, Jan. 8 to May 17, 1851,—of the 6th Military Department, June 29, 1851, to Mar. 31, 1853,—at the Headquarters of the Army, New York city, May, 1853, to Nov. 1, 1856,—of the Department of Texas, Dec. 11, 1856, to May 27, 1857,—and at the Headquarters of the Army,

(BVT. MAJOR STAFF—ASST. ADJUTANT-GEN., MAR. 31, 1856)

New York city, June 27, 1857, to Nov. 17, 1858; on leave of absence in Europe, Nov. 17, 1858, to Nov. 14, 1859; as Asst. Adjutant-General, at the Headquarters of the Army in New York city, Nov. 14, 1859, to Jan. 11, 1860,—and of the Department of Texas, Feb. 6 to Apr. 8, 1860; on leave of absence, Apr. 8, 1860, to Aug., 1860; on tour of inspection in Minnesota, Missouri, and Kansas, Sep., 1860, to Feb., 1861; and in inspecting troops at Washington, D. C., Feb. to Apr., 1861.

Served during the Rebellion of the Seceding States, 1861–66: in organizing and mustering D. C. Volunteers into the service at Washington, D. C., and in command of the Capitol, Apr.–May, 1861; in command of the Department of

(BRIG.-GENERAL, U. S. ARMY, MAY 14, 1861)

N. E. Virginia, and of the defenses of Washington, south of the Potomac, May 17–27, 1861,—and of the Army of the Potomac, May 27 to July 25, 1861, being engaged in the Battle of Bull Run, July 21, 1861; in command of divi-

NUMBER.

1838.

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sion (Army of the Potomac) in the defenses of Washington, D. C., July 25, 1861, to Mar. 13, 1862,—of the 1st Corps (Army of the Potomac), Mar. 13 to  
(MAJOR-GENERAL, U. S. VOLUNTEERS, MAR. 14, 1862)

Aug. 12, 1862,—of the Department and Army of the Rappahannock, Apr. 4 to Aug. 12, 1862; in command of 3d Corps (Army of Virginia), Aug. 12 to Sep. 6, 1862, in the Northern Virginia Campaign, being engaged in the Battle of Cedar Mountain, Aug. 9, 1862,—Action of Rappahannock Station, Aug. 25, 1862,—and Battle of Manassas, Aug. 29-30, 1862; as President of Court for investigating alleged cotton frauds, May to July, 1863,—and of Board for retiring disabled officers, at Wilmington, Del., July 11, 1863, to May 21, 1864; and in command of the Department of the Pacific, July 1, 1864, to June 27, 1865,—

(BVT. MAJ.-GENERAL, U. S. ARMY, MAR. 13, 1865, FOR GALLANT AND MERITORIOUS SERVICES AT THE BATTLE OF CEDAR MOUNTAIN, VA.)

and of the Department of California, June 27, 1865, to

MUSTERED OUT OF VOLUNTEER SERVICE, SEP. 1, 1866.

McDowell, Irvin, major-general, was born in Ohio, Oct. 18, 1818, received his early education at the College of Troves in France, and was graduated at West Point in 1838, becoming second lieutenant in the 1st artillery. He was recalled to the military academy in 1841, and served four years, first as assistant instructor in infantry tactics, and afterward as adjutant. On the outbreak of the Mexican trouble he was appointed aide-de-camp to Gen. John E. Wool, and took a creditable part at the battle of Buena Vista in 1847, which earned for him the brevet of captain. He continued with the army of occupation for a while, and was then made assistant adjutant-general in the war department serving in Washington, New York, and elsewhere, and attaining the rank of major on March 31, 1856. After the Civil war was declared he occupied himself in organizing volunteer companies at the capital until he was made brigadier-general, May 14, 1861, and assigned to the command of the Department of northeastern Virginia. On May 29 he was transferred to the Army of the Potomac, and in such command fought the well-planned but unsuccessful battle of the first Bull Run. On March 14, 1862, he was made major-general of volunteers, and took part in the engagements of Cedar mountain, Rappahannock Station, and the second battle of Manassas, but ill fortune continued to follow him and he was retired from ac-

tive duty on the field, Sept. 6, 1862. On July 1, 1864, he was assigned to the command of the Department of the Pacific, and on July 27, 1865, he was transferred to the Department of California, holding the latter office until March 31, 1868. Meanwhile he was mustered out of the volunteer service and received the brevet of major-general, U. S. A., Sept. 1, 1866. In July, 1868, he was assigned to the Department of the East, and on Nov. 25, 1872, he was promoted major-general. After this he had command of the division of the South until June 30, 1876, and again of the Department of the Pacific until his retirement, Oct. 15, 1882. Gen. McDowell died in San Francisco, May 4, 1885.

**McDowell, Irvin.\***

[Born in Ohio. Appointed from Ohio.]

Brevet 2nd Lieut. 1st Artillery, 1 July, 1838. 2nd Lieut., 7 July, 1838. 1st Lieut., 7 Oct., 1842. Brevet Captain, 23 Feb., 1847, for gallant and meritorious conduct in the Battle of Buena Vista, Mexico. Brevet Captain Asst. Adj. Genl., 13 May, 1847. Brevet Major Asst. Adj. Genl., 31 March, 1856. Brigadier Genl., 14 May, 1861. Major Genl. Vols., 14 March, 1862. Brevet Major Genl., 13 March, 1865, for gallant and meritorious service in the Battle of Cedar Mountain, Va. Mustered out of Volunteer service, 1 Sept., 1866. Major General U. S. A., 25 Nov., 1872.





*C. McDowell*