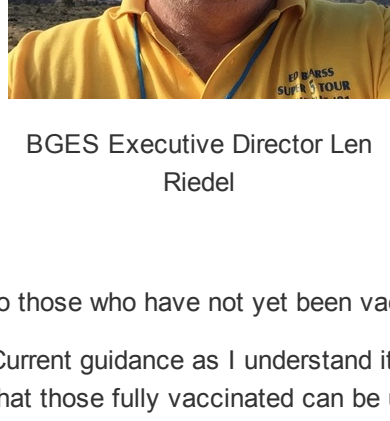




May 2021



"Silent Guardian" by BGES member Jeff Fioravanti



BGES Executive Director Len Riedel

## HQ Communiqué

I was reinvigorated to restart the BGES tour program this past month, and I want to thank those whose cooperation made the event a non-problem. I think the biggest move is the acknowledgement that the purpose of an immunization is to give you immunity and to allow you to return to normal life. There will be stories of "breakthrough reinfections," but for the overwhelming majority of the people, the immunization regime is the ticket you have to punch to take off your masks and begin circulating again. For BGES, that means masks off in the field and no need to social distance between others who are vaccinated. The overwhelming concern is about the threat

to those who have not yet been vaccinated.

Current guidance as I understand it—and it could change again, and most likely will this month—is that those fully vaccinated can be unmasked outside. Those fully vaccinated can congregate unmasked on BGES trips. I interpret that to include our opening lectures in a classroom and/or group meals. Large groups seem to be defined as much larger than we assemble in. Social distancing is not required among those fully vaccinated.

I interpret people not vaccinated on BGES trips as needing to be masked if they cannot socially distance from others. Thus, if not vaccinated, you may take your mask off outside if you remain more than 6 feet from others. The immunized will try to respect your space, and we may use vests to serve as a visual key to both groups of people.

The key with inside events for those not immunized, as I understand it, is that they are the ones at risk, and thus a mask is in their best interests. Social distancing is exactly that, and the measures of masking are mandatory if you cannot remain more than six feet separated from others; you must mask, be it one, three, or ten masks, or whatever current thinking is. Our events require temperature checks of all at the start of each day or event. A temperature over 100.4 requires a recheck in 10 minutes. If still running the temperature, you cannot assemble with the group or take part in that day's activity. We provide hand sanitizer and have Clorox wipes to help maintain clean spaces. BGES doctors are monitoring our activities and will be our best pickets.

Ultimately, each person must be comfortable with the cohort and practices we have. I do not see that the science is going to move toward tighter restrictions. Each program we do will conform with the existing guidance for the state we are in or the Federal CDC guidance. Our insurance underwriters require this. As I said, I expect all this to move toward fewer and fewer restrictions as we move to the summer. Each person can be more cautious, if that makes them more comfortable; it is an individual decision.

As to things more in keeping with the dog wagging the tail rather than vice versa ... BGES cleared its final debt of some \$15,500 by a very comfortable margin with nearly 100 members contributing to the "The Final Push." The contributors gave nearly \$14,000, and when combined with the challenge redemption, we paid both our residual debt and have enough left to complete the restoration of the wooden gun carriage we got in the 2020 Pamplin Park Cannon Carriage replacement project. I hope that we will be able to announce a home for it in the next sixty days.

BGES continues to power ahead with its Video Archives project. Nearly 150 of the estimated 350 lectures are now online and free to active members of the BGES at and above the Volunteer level (\$75) of support. We are in our fifth month of free video Zoom interviews, and our free YouTube site has about 20 videos on it.

BGES is considering another book publishing project that is undergoing examination and costing. We hope to decide by the end of the summer. We are also considering a request from preservationists and county officials in Northern Georgia to do interpretative signage in and around the Dalton area that will be tied to the start of the Atlanta Campaign.

Membership is steadily increasing, and we hope to reach 500 active members by the middle of the summer—if we can recover about 40 past due members we will be there. New members are joining, mostly we believe through the robust online Dispatch program that regularly has 1,400 readers.

I take no day for granted, and the response of BGES members and supporters throughout the pandemic was inspiring. Clearly the organization means a lot to a lot of people, and you have shown unflinching loyalty in the darkest days. As we return to a semblance of normalcy and in mind now tentative everything is, and remember if it is worth having, it is worth fighting for!

See you next month.

—Len Riedel

BGES Executive Director

## May Happenings: The Spring Campaign

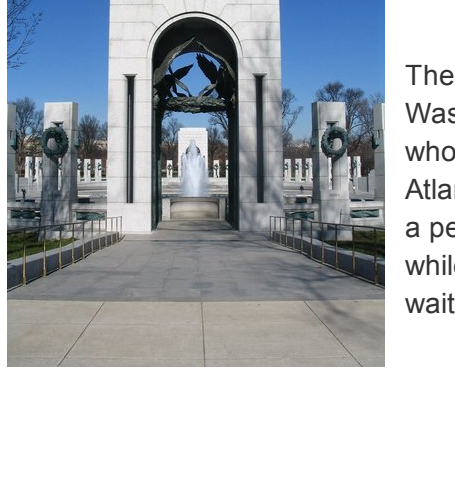
Welcome to the May 2021 issue of *Holding the Line!* This month we hear from Neil Mangum and learn about his fascination with one of the most legendary men of the Wild West, Gen. George Armstrong Custer. Mangum will be leading the upcoming "Custer's Trail" tour on June 20–29, 2021. Perhaps the greatest news of the year: BGES has returned to the field! BGES Executive Director Len Riedel gives a play-by-play account of the first two tours, back-to-back visits focusing on the Atlanta Campaign, led by Bob Jenkins in late April. How Covid-safe were the participants? Len also reviews one of legendary historian Ed Bearss' first books, *Rebel Victory at Vicksburg*. What did he think? We also travel to Washington, D.C., where the World War II Memorial hides several secrets. We showcase them here. And last but not least, we feature a BGES member who is making a difference with his World War II scholarship. Enjoy!



### Tour Talk: Custer's Trail, with Neil Mangum

Neil Mangum, who will be leading BGES' "Custer's Trail" tour in June, is the foremost expert on General Custer. How did his life become intertwined with that of the dashing Union officer with flowing hair and luxuriant mustache? It's a story that begins with the National Park Service.

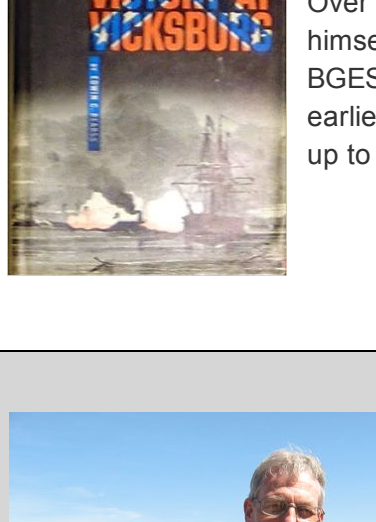
[Read More](#)



### BGES Returns to the Field!

After an excruciating long year, BGES has kickstarted its field tours once again. How did it go? Did the field tourists feel safe?

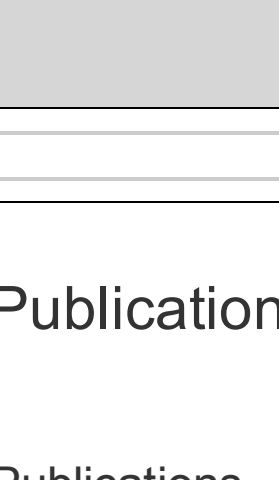
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### Travel Guide: World War II Memorial By The Numbers

The magnificent World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C., honors the men and women who fought for democracy both in the Pacific and Atlantic Theaters as well as on the homefront. It's a peaceful place to wander and take it all in. But while you do, there are symbols and secrets waiting to be discovered.

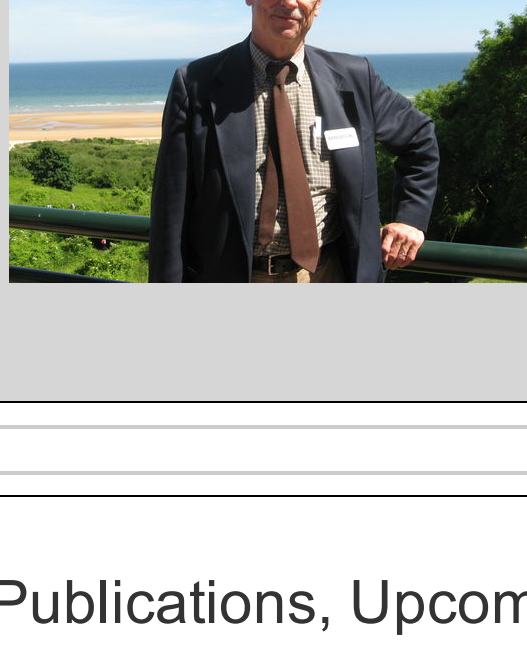
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### Book Review

Over a long life of 97 years, Ed Bearss made a name for himself as a Civil War expert and popular tour leader. BGES Executive Director Len Riedel reviewed one of his earliest books—*Rebel Victory at Vicksburg*. Does it stand up to the Ed Bearss everyone knows?

[Read More](#)



### Members Making A Difference

He may be a World War II expert, writing important works and leading tours to Normandy for some of the world's foremost organizations, but that doesn't diminish his interest in the Civil War.

[Read More](#)

## Publications, Upcoming Tours, & News

### Publications

**BGES Authors:** There may be no more formidable author in this list of BGES authors than Edwin C. Bearss, the legendary historian emeritus of the National Park Service and tour guide who passed away in 2020 at the age of 97. His dozens of publications range from *Unconditional Surrender: The Fall of Fort Donelson*, published in 1962, to *The Petersburg Campaign* with Bryce A. Suderow, published in 2012. He had a special relationship with BGES, as his support helped sustain the organization in its earliest years. Through the years, he collaborated with BGES on many projects of national significance, including several publications, among them: *Fields of Honor* with the National Geographic Society, released in 2006; and *Receding Tide*, also with National Geographic, published in 2010.

**In Camp Along the Monocacy:** The "In Camp Along the Monocacy" newsletter has been temporarily suspended while Len gets the Dispatches and Video Archives settled. Look for it again by the summer. To see what you are missing, click [here](#) (and scroll down) to visit the archives of the past newsletters.

### Upcoming Tours

See latest schedule [here](#).

May 12–15, 2021: "Shiloh, Bloody April" with Greg Mertz, from Pickwick Landing State Park, Tennessee

June 2–6, 2021: "Not Welcome Here: Gentleman Johnny Burgoyne Invades New York" with Scott Patchan, from Lake George, New York

June 11–13, 2021: "Civil War 101: Gettysburg," with Dave Collins and Len Riedel, from Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

June 20–29, 2021: "Custer's Trail," with Neil Mangum, from Bismarck, North Dakota

June 25–27, 2021: "All's Fair in War, Streight's Raid & Forrest's Bluff," with Brian Steel-Wills and Norm Dasinger, Jr.

### Upcoming Zoom Presentations

Get to know the historians we have selected for our 2021 programs via lively Q&A or lecture every Wednesday at 8 p.m. Each program will be announced the day after the previous interview was conducted and will require registration to receive the sign-in credentials and the instructions.

May 12, 2021: John Derden, Sherman's March to the Sea Interview

May 26, 2021: Wade Sokolosky, Sherman in North Carolina Lecture

### BGES Video Archives

BGES has been busy posting our video archives—BGES Field University lectures from the past—on the BGES website as well as YouTube. To date, 142 lectures are posted online, with 19 additional on the YouTube channel, including 15 from 2021 tour leaders talking about their upcoming tours. You don't want to miss these vintage and contemporary lectures celebrating the best moments of BGES and the most revered historians through the years.

Sign up to view the archives [here](#) (BGES members only), and sign in [here](#) to view the YouTube channel.

### AmazonSmile

When you order goods from Amazon, you can benefit BGES in the process. One-half of one percent of your purchase price will be provided to BGES as a donation from Amazon—if you sign up at [smile.amazon.com](#). On your first visit you will be prompted to choose BGES as your charitable organization.

BGES also has a charity list on Amazon for needed items. Go [here](#) for the prompt.

### Investors' Reports

Detailed reports for donors and prospective donors are available for download from our website on [Our Mission](#) page.

## BGES Recruiting Station

### Membership

As a member of BGES, you will be part of a community devoted to saving our Civil War. You will receive our e-newsletter, updated info on upcoming tours, and access to some of our greatest historians. [Join here](#).

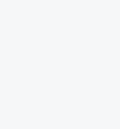
Already a member? Don't let your membership slip. [Renew here](#).

### Dubose's Rangers

We would also like you to consider joining the [Dubose's Rangers](#) (formerly the QuarterGurad Program), which supports BGES on a monthly or quarterly basis. The program is named in honor of the late David Dubose, who passed on February 17, 2021. He donated to BGES over 400 times in his life including every month from June 1996, and he has made provisions to continue donating every month in perpetuity.

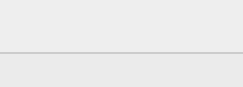
### BGES Major Gift and Legacy Program

What Will You Be Remembered For? Be part of BGES's future by making an endowment or legacy gift. [Contact us](#) if you would like to make an endowment or legacy gift.



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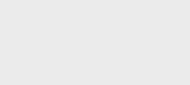
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