

# A 2022 BGES Weekend Warrior Program: Best Laid Plans—Hood Attacks Again and Again Chapter 6 of the 1864 Georgia Campaign

Robert E. Lee gave conditional concurrence to President Davis's proposal to replace General Joe Johnston with Lieutenant General John Bell Hood. Bell Hood was provisionally appointed to full general, the youngest such man in American military history, on July 18 and two days later he attacked Sherman at Peachtree Creek—defeated in their attacks at the Battle of Atlanta on July 22nd and Ezra Church on July 28<sup>th</sup>. Hood generated such large casualties that it was suggested he stand down lest he lose Atlanta through attrition. A fight at Utoy Creek, a bit over a week later, was the precursor of nearly a month of siege operations that eventually resulted in Hood evacuating Atlanta the first week of September. There can be little doubt that Hood inherited the mantle of command cornered and with a mandate to fight.

This program reflects the now desperate nature of the Atlanta Campaign—having reached the city there was no more grand maneuvering for the Confederate arms—they were out of real estate. Sherman managing an Army Group now had the advantage of numbers and freedom to maneuver in any direction or multiple directions if he wished. Atlanta was a pivotal and key citadel. Three more chapters will follow under Bob Jenkins's guidance—next year will bring Chapter 7, Cavalry Operations, Chapter 8, Atlanta Falls and Chapter 9, Rebels Released. Each program stands on its own. This one tackles the story of the fighting for Atlanta within an enlarged modern metropolitan area. It is a challenge that requires someone of Bob Jenkins's enthusiasm to tackle. You will be in great hands!

## **Thursday, November 10, 2022 (Optional Add On at additional cost)**

Jenkins series has progressed despite Covid sadly, our March 2022 Chapter 5 suffered attrition as a result of Covid and other factors. Some subscribers missed that part due to factors beyond their control, we agreed to offer them a one day catch up covering the Crossing of the Chattahoochie River and the Battle of Peachtree Creek. We are also concluding a 6 day program studying George Thomas on this day. You may add this day to your Chapter 6 registration for just \$150 more and experience a program that goes from The Crossing of the Chattahoochie River and includes the three principal battles for Atlanta.

The narrative supporting this day follows:

After Kennesaw Mountain, Sherman maneuvered yet again to cross the final riverine obstacle leading to direct operations against a fortified Atlanta. This period saw the replacement of General Johnston with General John Bell Hood when President Davis lost

his confidence in Johnston's resolve to hold Atlanta. Rivers are significant obstacles ripe with opportunity for detailed defensive operations, the relative ease with which Sherman passed the several rivers to Atlanta cost Johnston his job and set the stage for a post war feud between Davis with Hood as a central pawn.

The attack at Peachtree Creek was General Hood's first offensive action to save Atlanta. It is an instructive and important change in Confederate strategy. Thomas and Sherman were receptive to the challenge. Jenkins has written the definitive works on both the crossing of the Chattahoochie River and the Battle of Peachtree Creek. Lunch included while dinner on your own. You will then be free until 6 PM Friday night.

### **Friday, November 11, 2022**

We will meet at the Hotel headquarters hotel for a discussion of The Georgia Campaign, the situation in Atlanta in July 1864, the strategies of each side, the importance of the Campaign, the principal players, and the challenges faced by Generals William T. Sherman and John Bell Hood.

We have a surprise evening tour of the Atlanta History Center where we will get a special tour of the museum and the recently restored Cyclorama.

6:00, Introduction. We will meet at the Hampton Inn headquarters for a discussion of The Georgia Campaign, the situation in Atlanta in July 1864, the strategies of each side, the importance of the Campaign, the principal players, and the challenges faced by Generals William T. Sherman and John Bell Hood. We have added a special evening tour of the Atlanta History Center where we will get a personal tour of the museum and the recently restored Cyclorama. I suggest you eat before 6 PM as it may be 9 before we are back.

### **Saturday, November 12, 2022**

#### **Battle of Atlanta:**

Our viewing of the Cyclorama captures the drama of the Battle of Atlanta fought on July 22<sup>nd</sup>. Commissioned to assist Black Jack Logan in his presidential bid it has become with Waterloo and Gettysburg the larger than life portrayals of events hard to conceive. With the massive growth of Atlanta it is impossible to place the stops between interstates, within subdivisions and with flowing traffic cutting up the combat landscape. Still the details of the Cyclorama should ground you in the desperate and large scale of the Battle of Atlanta.

We will leave the hotel at 8:15 with 13 purposeful stops that will bring the battle into focus for you. When we are done, you will want to reread Castel and other

sources that describe the narrative. Maps we provide will let you put modern references on them to identify where you have been and what happened where.

Hood had ordered forces under the command of William Hardee to turn the Army of Tennessee's left flank. Delayed in its march the Federal position near Bald Hill was not attacked until nearly noon. Both William Bate and William "Shot Pouch" Walker's divisions attacked-- after an initial repulse a reattack forced the Union left back and then it broke. Army Commander, James B. McPherson was killed observing the action as was Walker. At the same time Pat Cleburne's Division hit and was repulsed by Frank Blair's Federal XVII Corps. This broke the momentum of the Confederate assault with Maney's Division to Cleburne's left also suffering a repulse.

Anticipating a decisive success, Hood had sent Wheeler's cavalry to the Federal rear where he successfully got into the supply wagons near Decatur. The delay in attacking left Wheeler unsupported and he quickly departed the area. All this we will see in a busy morning at 9 different stops.

After lunch, we will wrap the Battle of Atlanta with the final three hours of fighting in and around Bald Hill. Hardee's attacks had bent the Federal line into an L shape. As Cheatham's Corps pressed the assault across Bald Hill the fighting often became hand to hand with Blair's XVII Corps. This fighting lasted until dark when Brown's Division moving along the Georgia Railroad broke through pushing elements of the XV Corps back until a strong Federal artillery barrage broke their momentum allowing Logan's Corps to stabilize the line. The bloody battle of Atlanta spilled the blood of more than 8,000 soldiers.

Time permitting, we will visit the sacred grounds of Oakland Cemetery where more than 6,900 Confederate soldiers and 5 generals are interred. If we do not do it today, we will do it on Sunday. Lunch is included but dinner is on your own.

## **Sunday, November 13, 2022**

### **Battle of Ezra Church:**

Hood had attacked twice and had failed to shake Sherman from his purpose. Well made plans had suffered from a want of alacrity in execution, with the Confederates suffering losses they could scarcely accept. In just 3 days, Hood had lost nearly 8,000 men, more than 15% of his force. Now he would strike again, his third attack in 8 days. This time Hood would suffer his most lopsided reversal.

We leave the hotel at 8:30 enroute to Hood's Headquarters on Whitehall Street. Intelligence had warned Hood that Sherman would try to cut the Macon and Western Railroad west of Atlanta. Hood would send two Corps under the command of AP Stewart and Stephen D. Lee to hit the Federals in the flank before they could close the railroad.

Hood assumed that he would surprise General O.O. Howard, who had replaced the deceased McPherson, but when his troops arrived General John Logan was well entrenched and Lee's attacks were futile and bloody. We will examine this battle and the attacks in detail. Most visits to the battlefield limit themselves to a distant examination from the Confederate perspective in Westview Cemetery. We will enhance your understanding by walking the Federal lines in and around Ezra Church and along Mozeley Park. Even today the strength of the position is obvious—indeed the Federals do not even use artillery in this lopsided victory. The morning includes some 18 interpretative perspectives.

Following lunch, we will expand your appreciation of the battle and the battlefield. Bob will walk you between two and three hours in a neighborhood setting bringing AP Stewart to the field, where he is wounded, and focusing on EC Walthall's brigade level attacks concluding with "Old Blizzards" Loring's equally futile attacks. The Confederates will suffer another 3,000 casualties while the well-prepared Federals lose less than 700 men killed and wounded.

In 8 days, Hood has lost more than 11,000 men. That butcher's bill has reduced his effective strength by nearly 20%. As Sherman makes better deployments of his three interactive armies, Hood finds he cannot get a good pull at Sherman's strategically positioned forces—with his jugular increasingly vulnerable Hood falls back to his entrenchments. Lunch is included and we will dismiss by 5 PM if not a little sooner. Part 7 will take place in the spring of 2023.

### **About the Faculty:**

**Bob Jenkins** is a practicing attorney in Dalton, Georgia. An active preservationist, Bob has played a significant role in expanding the story of the start of the 1864 Atlanta Campaign. He has completed two outstanding books: The first being **The Battle of Peachtree Creek, Hood's First Sortie July 20, 1864 (2014)** and **To the Gates of Atlanta: from Kennesaw Mountain to Peachtree Creek 1-19 July 1864 (2015)**. Bob is an animated and detailed interpreter and you will be regaled with new and thought provoking information.

### **Hotel Information:**

This program will be based at the Hampton Inn, 1975 North Druid Hills Rd., Atlanta, GA 30329. The BGES (Blue and Gray Education rate) is \$99 per night plus tax. They can be reached by calling 404-320-6600. Please note hotels have tightened their rules for block reservations and most will not honor a block rate a day or two early or a day or two afterwards. This is also caused by a reduction in the number of hotels with dedicated sales managers who use to work exceptions for groups. Thus if arriving early or staying late you may find better rates on line.

**Transportation:**

The servicing airport is Atlanta (ATL). For people driving in, the hotel will be convenient to Interstate 85.

**Recommended Reading:**

You will be provided with maps upon arrival. The following books are suggested to enhance your readiness for the program. These books are available on line. If you register with AmazonSmile a portion of any books you purchase for this program or other purchases will be sent to BGES as a charitable contribution. BGES's EIN is 54-1720582

Albert Castel, **Decision in the West, The Atlanta Campaign 1864**

Jacob D. Cox: **Atlanta**

Gary Ecelbarger: **Slaughter at the Chapel, The Battle of Ezra Church 1864**

Gary Ecelbarger: **The Day Dixie Died: The Battle of Atlanta**

Robert Jenkins: **The Battle of Peachtree Creek, Hood's First Sortie July 20, 1864 (2014)**

Robert Jenkins: **To the Gates of Atlanta: from Kennesaw Mountain to Peachtree Creek 1-19 July 1864 (2015).**

**Registration Form**  
**Best Laid Plans, Hood Attacks Again and Again,**  
**Chapter 6 of the 1864 Georgia Campaign**  
**A 2022 BGES Weekend Warrior Program**  
Presented by Robert Jenkins  
November 11-13, 2022

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Registration includes two lunches, all admissions, maps, the academic program, support of a professional historian, tour director and transportation by passenger bus or van. We will also provide snacks and bottled water.

\_\_\_\_\_ Registration Atlanta Chapter 6 only \$600

\_\_\_\_\_ Current BGES member Atlanta Chapter 6 only \$535

\_\_\_\_\_ Atlanta Chapter 6 and Optional add on day \$750

\_\_\_\_\_ Current BGES Member and Optional add on day \$675

\_\_\_\_\_ I am not a member but would like to join so that I can get the member's rate or I am a member who is past due to renew. Please accept my donation of

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Mail to BGES Seminars, PO Box 1176, Chatham, VA 24531, or fax credit card registrations to 434-432-0596 . You may also register on line at [www.blueandgrayeducation.org](http://www.blueandgrayeducation.org).