

*A BGES Civil War Field University Program*  
*Grant's 1864 Lynchburg Campaign*

*With Scott Patchan*

*November 6-10, 2024; from Staunton, Virginia*

1864 dawned with the Civil War still in full fury throughout the country. As no president since Andrew Jackson had been elected to a second term, the November canvas loomed large. In a bid to end the war before the election, Lincoln brought his most successful general, U.S. Grant, east to assume command of all the Union armies. Grant derived a strategy to exhaust the nimble Confederates by engaging them on all fronts simultaneously. In Virginia, four forces were all commissioned to chew on important rebel resources. The plan quickly went awry—first in the Shenandoah Valley, where Gen. Franz Siegal was checked by a small force under the command of former U.S. Vice-President John C. Breckinridge and inspired by a contingent of young Virginia Military Institute cadets. And secondly, when Benjamin Butler failed to punch out of the Bermuda Hundred peninsula.

Siegal was quickly replaced by a hard conservative general, David Hunter. Hunter had previously been admonished by Lincoln in South Carolina for overreaching his authority with a premature emancipation policy. Hunter survived to find himself the choice of Grant to replace the hapless Siegal, and he was charged with tying up the Valley and, if possible, cutting off the Confederate supply depot at Lynchburg that was fed by the James River Canal and the Southside Railroad. Most importantly, Lynchburg also was the terminus for the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad, an essential link between vital sections of the Confederacy during the war (indeed it was the means of bringing Longstreet's Corps back to Virginia for the 1864 Spring Campaign).

This program takes in Hunter's Campaign with its peripheral, but essential, side shows near Wytheville, Big Lick, Amherst, Lynchburg, Piedmont and Gordonsville. This is the under-reported campaign of the summer of 1864. It precedes Early's late summer and fall 1864 campaign and is generally lost to history—but not for you!

**Wednesday, November 6, 2024**

6 p.m. Meet in the lobby of the Avid Hotel, where you will meet Scott and Burford, picking up your maps and nametags before Scott chats with you about the coming program.

We will finish in time for you go get dinner.

**Thursday, November 7, 2024**

We depart at 8:00 a.m. Today will take us to Southwestern Virginia to study the actions of Gen. George Crook and his cavalry commander, Brig. Gen. William W. Averell. Our first exploration will land us at Cloyd's Mountain, a site hardly ever visited. Here, on May 9, 1864, Crook defeated the outmanned forces of Brig. Gen. Albert Gallatin Jenkins and Col. John McCausland in the largest and bloodiest fight to occur in Southwest Virginia during the entire war.

After exploring the battle, we will follow Crook's footsteps to New River Bridge. The importance and difficulty in defending such structures becomes readily apparent once you arrive. In 1864, Crook drove away McCausland and fired the bridge crippling this indispensable Confederate communications and supply route.

After lunch, we will head to the mountains outside of Wytheville, Virginia and discuss how Confederate General William E. "Grumble" Jones, acting commander of the Department of Southwest Virginia, organized his scant and under-resourced forces to meet the threat to Wytheville and the nearby lead and salt mines. Jones used troopers from Kentucky and Virginia under the command of Brig. Gen. John Hunt Morgan, a name not often associated with operations in Virginia. Morgan proved equal to the task at Cove Gap on May 10. We will walk in the footsteps of the combatants and take in the pristine setting. It's an engagement that probably 10 people see in a year.

On our return trip to Staunton, we will make a brief stop in Salem to visit Hanging Rock Battlefield. This stop is out of cycle—the so-called desert before dinner, as it is Early's attempt to cut off Hunter's retreat after the engagement at Lynchburg in late June of 1864.

Lunch is included, and dinner is on your own.

### **Friday, November 8, 2024**

8 a.m. Our second field day has us starting at New Market Battlefield. While many are familiar with the traditional battlefield park, we will also visit several newly acquired properties that will give us a more holistic view of Sigel's failure at New Market. While not critical of the Hall of Valor view, the reality is it was a much more detailed engagement than just the charge of the boy cadets. That will be rather obvious after we finish.

Breckinridge did not exploit his victory and, by bringing his small force east to support Lee near Cold Harbor, he stripped the valley of most of its frontline defenders. Grant was not prepared to accept such a check in the valley so quickly, and he replaced Sigel with Maj. Gen. David Hunter. Hunter accepted the challenge and was advancing up the valley (southward) toward Staunton within a few days of assuming command. With Breckinridge around Richmond, Lee turned to Grumble Jones in Southwest Virginia. Jones managed to shuttle 4,000 troops from Southwest Virginia and East Tennessee to join the remaining troops in the valley under Brig.

Gen. John D. Imboden. This concentration led to the battle of Piedmont on June 5, 1864. A special treat of this tour is that you will actually be able to walk Piedmont—whereas in the past, you could only look from afar from the street. You will stand where Hunter pounded away at the Confederate left until Jones was able to counterattack. Sadly, the attack was poorly conducted and opened Jones's flank to a devastating U.S. attack that killed Jones and routed the Southerners from the field. If time permits, we will visit Blue Ridge Tunnel, where the Virginia Central Railroad passed through the mountains, bringing Jones's troops to the Shenandoah Valley.

Lunch included, but dinner is on your own.

### **Saturday, November 9, 2024**

8 a.m. Today we will again enter relatively pristine grounds where most Civil War groups rarely go. After Hunter's victory at Piedmont, he subsequently advanced from Staunton to Lynchburg and then hastily withdrew from the theater, opening the door for Early to move down the valley and create a panic within official Washington.

Our first stop will be in Lexington, where McCausland attempted to defend the town and the VMI with his brigade of cavalry. They were unsuccessful. Hunter occupied the town and opened a new controversy in the war by burning the VMI and ransacking the home of Gov. John Letcher. From here, Hunter ventured to Buchanan, where Averell drove McCausland back from the crossings of the James River. As Averell led Hunter's army over the Blue Ridge at Peaks of Otter, converging Federal cavalry from Amherst and Buena Vista arrived near Liberty (today's Bedford). We will follow the army to Lynchburg, where Robert E. Lee dispatched his "bad old man," Lt. Gen. Jubal Anderson Early, to save that vital railroad junction and supply center from Hunter's grasp at the last moment. Early forced Hunter back to the Allegheny Mountains (you saw Hanging Rock on the first day). We will return north by a different route to allow you to see a few sites we missed on our approach.

Lunch is included, but dinner is on your own.

### **Sunday, November 10, 2024**

8 a.m. Our final day takes us back to one of those forgotten elements of the campaign. Grant sent Sheridan to help Hunter in his efforts, but Sheridan never got there. Today we will find out why. Of course, Early's detachment had something to do with it. But for us, our move to the east of the Blue Ridge will take us to the central spot on the Virginia Central Railroad, and that is Gordonsville. It, of course, is on the link of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, so pivotal during Pope's 1862 campaign and Lee's 1863/1864 winter encampment. Sheridan's cavalry was to wreck the rail lines at Gordonsville and then cooperate with Hunter at Staunton and beyond.

An astute General Lee dispatched Gen. Wade Hampton. Hampton stopped Sheridan cold at Trevilian Station on June 11–12. This frustrated Grant's hoped for cooperation. Although not part of this campaign, we cannot resist making a brief stop at Liberty Mill's, where, in December 1864, Maj. Gen. Lunsford Lomax's southern horsemen engaged U. S. general Alfred Torbert, fending off another effort to capture Gordonsville.

This day will see us return by mid-afternoon, allowing all to begin their return around 3 p.m. Lunch is on your own.

### **About the Faculty**

**Scott Patchan** is a graduate of James Madison University and the author of eight books; his latest is [\*George Washington in the French and Indian War\*](#). He authored six featured battle campaigns for Blue and Gray Magazine's "The General's Tour" and countless articles for other magazines and journals. Scott is a much sought-after tour guide for both Civil War and Revolutionary War sites from New York to Georgia. He brings a "boots on the ground" approach to studying combat and strives to bring his students to seldom-seen spots that shed an illuminating light on events as they unfolded. People love his energetic and dynamic style. Scott is a member of the Board of Directors for the Blue and Gray Education Society.

### **Hotel Information**

The headquarters hotel is the Avid Hotel, 62 Sanger's Lane, Staunton, Virginia. Ask for the Blue and Gray Education block. The hotel is not included as part of the registration fee. The rate is \$99 per night plus tax. Cutoff date for the block is October 16, 2024. Call 540-712-3939 or click [here](#) for reservations.

### **Transportation**

The servicing airports are Roanoke (ROA), about 75 miles south on I-81, or Charlottesville (CHO), 45 miles east but over the mountains via I-64 and a usually congested US 29 south. Staunton is easily accessed by I-64 and I-81. Amtrak stops in Charlottesville but is about 40 miles to Staunton via I-64.

### **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 online.

Charles R. Knight: [\*Valley Thunder: The Battle of New Market and the Opening of the Shenandoah Campaign, May 1864\*](#)

Scott C. Patchan: [\*The Forgotten Fury: The Battle of Piedmont, Virginia\*](#)

Howard R. McManus: [\*The Battle of Cloyds Mountain: The Virginia and Tennessee Railroad Raid, April 29–May 19, 1864\*](#)

Paul Magid: [\*George Crook: From the Redwoods to Appomattox\*](#)

William Marvel: [\*Southwest Virginia in the Civil War; The Battles for Saltville\*](#)

Edward A. Miller: [\*Lincoln's Abolitionist General: The Biography of David Hunter\*](#)

Len Riedel ed.: [\*The Civil War, A Traveler's Guide\*](#)

Eric Wittenberg: [\*Glory Enough for All: Sheridan's Second Raid and the Battle of Trevilian Station\*](#)

*Registration Form*  
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Name (s): \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

Registration includes four lunches, maps, the academic program, support of a professional historian, a tour director, and transportation. We will also provide snacks and cold bottled water.

\_\_\_\_\_ Registration \$850

\_\_\_\_\_ Current BGES member \$785

\_\_\_\_\_ 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 \$\_\_\_\_\_ (must be \$75 or more, which is tax deductible).

\_\_\_\_\_ I am sending a deposit of \$300 per person plus full payment for any memberships. Total enclosed is \$\_\_\_\_\_.

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