

A BGES Civil War Field University Program: He Must Be Suppressed: The Second Manassas Campaign With Greg Mertz and Len Riedel

In the Spring of 1862 under the urging of Presidential advisor, Robert E. Lee, General Stonewall Jackson engaged in a daring and brilliant campaign against disjointed and geographically separated Union forces in the Valley of the Shenandoah. Jackson's Valley Campaign caused great concern in Washington DC and compelled President Lincoln to withhold manpower from his major army advancing under Major General George McClellan.

Lee, utilizing Jackson's mobility brought him to Richmond to cooperate in operations designed to destroy McClellan. The Union command in tatters consolidated the Valley forces into one Army of Virginia and gave command to a successful but brash western officer, General John Pope. Pope was brought east to change the temper and conduct of the war in the East. His public pronouncements offended easterners in both the northern and southern armies. Lee observing his interface with citizens of Virginia noted "He must be suppressed!"

Having disposed of McClellan, Lee proceeded to act on his pronouncement. First Jackson was detached from Lee's army on the Peninsula and in August he would be followed by Lee and General James Longstreet. This program chronicles that campaign—perhaps Lee's most brilliant!

This tour brings the expertise of BGES Executive Director, Len Riedel, making a rare field appearance to guide the second Manassas campaign from Verdiersville to the slopes of Henry House Hill and Greg Mertz (retired supervisory historian for the National Park Service at Fredericksburg/Spotsylvania National Military Park) a long time student of Jackson and military operations in Central Virginia. This is gonna be a good un!

Tuesday, August 13, 2024

Meet at the Holiday Inn Express Warrenton at 6:00 PM, you will meet your cohort, pick up your nametags and reading books. Greg will then lead a discussion examining the battle of Cedar Mountain in the context of the changes that the people and the soldiers of both the Confederacy and the United States were experiencing both before and after the battle. It is a provocative and useful look into the subsequent moves to dislodge and destroy Pope. We will break so you can have dinner.

Wednesday, August 14, 2024

8:15 AM: Depart the hotel with Greg Mertz in the lead. The Virginia Central Railroad and the Orange and Alexandria Railroad were key transportation links which held great importance for both armies, we will head to their junction at Gordonsville to start this story. From there, we will head to Orange to discuss problems Jackson had with his cavalry under the command of Beverly Robertson in the face of aggressive and successful forays by Federal horse. An interesting aside will be a drive by and commentary on Jackson's leadership as reflected in his courts martial trial of Richard Garnett at the historic home Frascati. That trial would be interrupted by the onset of the battle at Cedar Mountain.

Jackson had many limitations and an irony to the courts martial is that while prosecuting Garnett he commits the same offense by failing to detail for AP Hill important information about his line of march and ignites one of the most infamous feuds of the war. A stop at Crooked Run Church will unveil one of the more humorous encounters of the war between Jackson and his quartermaster John Harmon. On a more serious note, we will see how the failure of Jackson's cavalry hampers his operations.

Our day concludes with an orientation to the area that will be the Cedar Mountain battlefield. Lunch is included but dinner is on your own.

Wednesday, August 15, 2024

8:15 AM: Jackson was perhaps the brightest star in the Confederate pantheon of military leaders, but, his tactical limitations were very real and obvious. We will start our day walking the robust artillery line of the Federals on land preserved by the American Battlefield Trust discovering how Jackson was nearly swept from the battlefield by Nathaniel Banks much smaller Corps.

The effective use of Federal artillery distracted Jackson and his Division Chief Charles Winder to the extent that they lost focus on the proper placement of infantry on Jackson's left. That omission thinned the Rebel line and allowed Banks' attack to come up on Jackson's left. Only timely arrival of reinforcements kept Jackson from being driven from the field.

Elsewhere, Jackson's line was more solid and we will discuss the stability of the Confederate right on the shelf of Cedar Mountain and the result of operations to prevent a route of the Confederate forces. Jackson holds his position, but only just and we will end the day at the Culpeper National Cemetery to honor the graves of soldiers who fell at Cedar Mountain. Lunch is included but dinner is on your own.

Thursday, August 16, 2024

8:15 AM: We will have a crew change as Len takes the left seat to present the Manassas Campaign. With Pope checked and dependent upon the Orange and Alexandria Railroad for his supplies, he has made a significant mistake that Lee intends to exploit, he has pinned himself in the fork of the junction of the Rapidan and Rappahannock Rivers vulnerable to being cinched up like a raccoon in a sack. If only Lee can pull the strings. Preparing to move against him, Lee's cavalry chief will be surprised at Verdierville and Pope's vulnerability will be revealed.

As Pope rapidly beats a retreat back across the Rappahannock we will examine the different ways that Lee using Jackson as the tip of his spear attempts to get at him. At the same time, we will also place Pope and the redeployment of Ambrose Burnside from North Carolina to a point near Fredericksburg where he will marshal reinforcements to support Pope in his advanced position centered on Warrenton. A Burnside quarterback the buildup of Pope's army the resentment of Pope spills over in the response of George McClellan to orders to withdraw from the Peninsula and march to support Pope's campaign which has now become static behind the protective waters of the Rappahannock. Those waters are significant enough that when Jackson makes an effort to cross at get at Pope an heavy rain isolates one of his units on the north side of the river and only Pope's ineptitude allows Jackson to extricate his force. We will finish the day with Stuart recovering some of his lost luster with a daring raid on Pope's rear at Catlett Station. Lunch is on your own as is dinner.

Friday, August 17, 2024

Depart at 8:15 AM: One thing that amazes me and is frequently overlooked are the broad and wide ranging fields of operations that these campaigns encompass, whereas we started along the vital Central Railroad and have discovered Pope's dependence and vulnerability on the Orange and Alexandria the unfolding operation as happened on the Peninsula in June has shown a way to cut off Pope and perhaps destroy him—Stuart's operation showed that dependency and vulnerability. In an operation that will reinforce the reputation of Jackson's foot cavalry, we will retrace the route of Jackson as he finds a secure crossing above Pope and makes for familiar ground towards Winchester. Pope's signal stations spot Jackson moving Northwest and Pope concludes they are headed for the Shenandoah Valley. They are not.

In a daring move, Lee using the Rappahannock and his other main force under James Longstreet holds Pope's attention in the Federal's front while sending Jackson to his rear and the Federal supply depot at Manassas Junction. With Pope expecting reinforcements from Fredericksburg he clearly believes that Longstreet's force is the primary threat and it is not until reports reach him of another raid on his supplies near Bristow Station that Pope senses danger and responds. Jackson having achieved a dominating position on Pope's jugular (the O&A) railroad falls back and awaits Pope's next move. Our day will end on the Brawner Farm where Jackson announces his presence to a truly befuddled and clueless Pope. Lunch is included but dinner is on your own.

Saturday, August 18, 2024

8:15 AM: Jackson has baited the hook and we start this morning following Longstreet and Lee to Manassas. They have been given free reign by Pope's having turned his back on them to pursue the very real threat of Confederates in his rear and on his supply line. An engagement at Thoroughfare Gap does not alert the now fixated Pope as he hurls repeated assaults at Jackson who has entrenched himself along an unfinished railroad cut near Sudley Church and across the fields west of the first battlefield of Manassas. Not realizing his peril, Pope is obsessed with destroying the Confederates and despite repeated failures over 4 different attacks he remains in position along the Centerville Turnpike.

As Longstreet deploys, Lee wishes him to turn Pope in a massive attack to route the now extremely vulnerable Federal force. However, Longstreet is a deliberate officer who measures, measures and measures again before cutting. Pope is receiving reinforcements from McClellan's army and Longstreet is aware. He will await until he is confident and then will unleash nearly 30,000 men on a wide front that drives the Federals back upon themselves across Chinn Ridge and the fields behind the Stone House and along Henry House Hill in one of the most devastatingly effective charges of the war. Lee has won another impressive victory and yet another Federal army is sent fleeing back to the protection of the Washington defenses.

The aftermath of the battle is fascinating for both its political dimensions and as a precursor to truly strategic decisions and operations—from here Lee will enter the North for the first time only to falter on the banks of the Antietam and Lincoln will decide to expand his war aims to force Europe to stay on the sidelines.

Lunch is included and we will return to the hotel about 5 PM. You will have learned and been given a great deal to chew on. I am sure you will be happy!

About the Faculty:

Greg Mertz is one of the BGES's senior historians, having done his first program for them in 1995. Since then, he has presented a range of eastern programs and most recently a study of Shiloh, his lifelong interest. Always prepared and ready to parlay with participants he will make you think and come to your own conclusions. As a retired National Park Service historian, Greg was supervisory ranger for the Fredericksburg/Spotsylvania National Military Park. He oversaw the summer intern program in which he supervised teachers during summer jobs thus improving the delivery to history to students at all levels. He is the author of **Attack at Daylight and Whip Them, The Battle of Shiloh April 6-7, 1862 (2017)**.

Len Riedel is the Executive Director of the Blue and Gray Education Society. Since 1994, Len has been crafting tours on fields all over the world that are reputed for

their scholarly content, behind the scene's access and comprehensive range. A graduate of the Virginia Military Institute and Old Dominion University where he received his MA degree, Riedel is a retired USAF officer and he has produced 4 books with the National Geographic the latest he was the editor, **The Civil War, A Traveler's Guide (2016)**. He has engineering a new guide book on the Revolutionary War **An Explorer's Guide to America's Revolutionary War (2022)**.

Hotel Information:

This program will be based at Holiday Inn Express, 410 Holiday Court, Warrenton, VA (540-341-3461) The room rate for our group is \$119 per night plus tax. Reservations must be made by May 4th. The room block goes away after that date. Ask for the Blue and Gray Education rate.

Your hotel is not included with the registration fee.

Transportation:

The servicing airport is Washington Dulles (IAD) which is served by every major airline. Washington Reagan (DCA) is also an alternative

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.

John Hennessey: **Return to Bull Run**

Robert Krick: **Stonewall Jackson at Cedar Mountain**

Scott Patchan: **Second Manassas, Longstreet's attack and the Struggle for Chinn Ridge**

SC Gwynne: **Rebel Yell, The Violence, Passion and Redemption of Stonewall Jackson**

Peter Cozzens: **General John Pope, A Life for the Nation**

Registration Form

**He Must Be Supressed:
The Second Manassas Campaign
A BGES Civil War Field University Program
Presented by Len Riedel and Greg Mertz
August 13-18, 2024 from Culpepper, VA**

Name (s): _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Registration includes five lunches, maps, the academic program, support of two professional historians, tour director and transportation. We will also provide snacks and cold drinks.

_____ Registration \$1100

_____ Current BGES member \$1000

_____ 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 \$

And (If applicable)

.

I will pay the balance due before the event.

_____ Check enclosed

Charge my (circle one) MC VISA AMEXP Discover \$_____

Exp: _____ CVV: _____

Signature: _____

Mail to BGES Seminars, PO Box 1176, Chatham, VA 24531, or fax credit cards to 434-432-0596 . You may also register on line at www.blueandgrayeducation.org.