

Longstreet's East Tennessee Campaign: Knoxville

A BGES Civil War Field University Program

with Colonel Ed Lowe

March 28-30, 2025, from Knoxville-Farragut, TN

Following the rousing victory at Chickamauga, Georgia, in September 1863, which forced the defeated Federal Army of the Cumberland to fall back into Chattanooga and led to the dismissal of Maj. Gen. William S. Rosecrans, Gen. Braxton Bragg and his Southern troops formed a ring along the high ground surrounding the “Scenic City,” as Chattanooga has been called. From the Tennessee River east of the city, along Missionary Ridge, and up to the towering heights of Lookout Mountain, Bragg’s men effectively bottled up the beleaguered blue-clad soldiers who were now under the direction of Maj. Gen. George H. Thomas.

But for Bragg and his high command came the pressing question: what next? Unable to bypass Chattanooga and reclaim Middle Tennessee with the beaten but still dangerous Federal army at their rear, and unable to subdue Thomas’ forces, Bragg settled into a siege. This stalemate was eventually cracked by the arrival of Union Gen. Ulysses Grant and his veteran Army of the Tennessee, bringing fresh rations and supplies.

During the lull, infighting erupted among Bragg and his junior officers, who blamed him for failing to turn the Chickamauga victory into a complete rout of the retreating Federals. One of Bragg’s chief generals, Lt. Gen. James “Pete” Longstreet, who had been borrowed from Gen. Robert E. Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia, devised a bold plan of his own: to reclaim Knoxville and East Tennessee for the Confederacy.

This plan led to what is now known as Longstreet’s Knoxville, or East Tennessee Campaign. The Southerners divided, which weakened Bragg’s defense at Missionary Ridge in November, resulting in his defeat and withdrawal 28 miles south to Dalton, Georgia. Despite several months of campaigning, Longstreet made no significant gains in East Tennessee and eventually returned with his men to Lee’s army in Virginia by May 1864.

Why did Longstreet fail? What were his objectives? How did this failed Confederate strategy impact Bragg and the Confederates at Chattanooga? How did the Federals counter Longstreet’s plan, and how did they perform in Knoxville and its surroundings?

Join Col. Ed Lowe, author of a recent book on this subject, as he retraces Longstreet’s trail through East Tennessee, answering these questions and more on this outstanding tour!

Itinerary

March 28, 2025

Meet Ed at our headquarters hotel for a one-hour orientation program and an overview of the sights and events your tour will cover. Program materials will be handed out (or the next morning for late arrivals).

Dinner is on your own.

Saturday, March 29, 2025

- Depart hotel at 8 a.m.
- Travel south on I-75 and visit:
 - Charleston, TN (Shermans' HQs and Charleston Cumberland Presbyterian Church)
 - Sweetwater & Niota (Depots)
 - Loudon (Longstreet's Crossing)
 - North on I-75 back to Farragut (Museum and the Battle of Campbell's Station) (The museum is currently undergoing renovations and will reopen in 2025; will monitor to see if we can get in.)
- Knoxville
 - Fort Dickerson
 - Bleak House
 - Mabry House
 - Armstrong House
 - Fort Sanders

We will return to the hotel by 5 p.m. Lunch is included, but dinner is on your own.

Sunday, March 30, 2025

- Depart hotel at 8 a.m.
- We will visit:
 - Longstreet Headquarters
 - Battle of Bean's Station
 - Battle of Mossy Creek
 - Battle of Dandridge
 - Greeneville, TN
 - Longstreet's final headquarters
 - Dickson-Williams Mansion (John Hunt Morgan was killed)
 - Andrew Johnson's home

We will return to the hotel by 5 p.m. Lunch is included.

About the Faculty

Colonel (retired) Ed Lowe served 26 years on active duty in the U.S. Army, with deployments to Operation Desert Shield/Storm, Haiti, Afghanistan (2002 and 2011), and Iraq (2008). He attended North Georgia College and holds graduate degrees from California State University, the U.S. Army War College, the U.S. Command and General Staff College, and Webster University. He is an adjunct professor at the University of Maryland Global Campus and Elizabethtown College, where he teaches history and government. In February 2024, he published his first book, *A Fine Opportunity Lost*, with Savas Beatie, which explores James Longstreet's East Tennessee Campaign. He is currently working on two other book projects for Savas Beatie: *The Great Locomotive Chase* and *Longstreet's First Corps, from Gettysburg to East Tennessee*. He lives in Ooltewah, Tennessee, with his wife and two daughters and serves as vice president of the Chickamauga and Chattanooga Civil War Round Table, reconstituted in September 2020.

Hotel Information

This program will be headquartered at Fairfield Inn Knoxville Turkey Creek, 11763 Snyder Road, Knoxville (Farragut), Tennessee; 865-392-1122. The BGES special hotel rate is \$124 plus tax, with a rate cut-off date of February 26, 2025. When you call the hotel, be sure to tell them that you are booking your room with the group "Blue and Gray Education" to get the special rate.

Transportation

The servicing airport is Knoxville McGhee Tyson Airport (TYS), 18 miles from the hotel. The hotel does not have an airport shuttle.

Recommended Reading

You will receive maps and materials that will meet your onsite requirements. The following books are suggested to enhance your readiness for the program.

Alexander, Edward P. *Fighting for the Confederacy: The Personal Recollections of General Edward Porter Alexander*. Edited by Gary W. Gallagher. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989. ISBN 978-0807847220.

Cox, Jacob D. (1882). *Atlanta. Campaigns of the Civil War, IX*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. Retrieved April 16, 2020.

Eicher, David J. *The Longest Night: A Military History of the Civil War*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001. ISBN 978-0684849454.

Hartley, William. "Knoxville Campaign." In *Encyclopedia of the American Civil War: A Political, Social, and Military History*, edited by David S. Heidler and Jeanne T. Heidler. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2000. ISBN 978-0393047585.

Hess, Earl J. *The Knoxville Campaign: Burnside and Longstreet in East Tennessee*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press. (2013). ISBN 978-1572339958.

Korn, Jerry, and the Editors of Time-Life Books. *The Fight for Chattanooga: Chickamauga to Missionary Ridge*. Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Books, 1985. ISBN 978-0809448166.

Longstreet, James. *From Manassas to Appomattox: Memoirs of the Civil War in America*. New York: Da Capo Press, 1992. ISBN 978-1494451196. First published in 1896 by J. B. Lippincott and Co.

Lowe, Col. Ed. *A Fine Opportunity Lost, James Longstreet's East Tennessee Campaign, November 1863–April 1864*. Emerging Civil War Series. El Dorado Hills, CA: Savas Beatie Press, 2024. ISBN: 978-1611216738.

Wert, Jeffry D. *General James Longstreet: The Confederacy's Most Controversial Soldier: A Biography*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993. ISBN 978-0671892876.

Registration

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

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Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

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_____ Current BGES member \$575

_____ Non-BGES member \$625

_____ 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 membership donation of \$_____ (must be \$75 or more, which is tax-deductible; see [blueandgrayeducation.org](http://www.blueandgrayeducation.org) for levels).

_____ I am sending a deposit of \$150 per person and/or memberships. Total enclosed is \$_____. 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, P.O. Box 1176, Chatham, VA 24531; or fax credit card registrations to 434-432-0596. You may also register online at www.blueandgrayeducation.org.