

# *A BGES Civil War Field University Program: Grant and Lee: From Cold Harbor to Petersburg*

In a month's time the complexion of the Civil War had changed. With Lieutenant General US Grant in command of the Union armies the mighty military force of the United States had pushed back the Confederate forces on every front and horrific casualty figures documented the bloody butcher's bill that was required to bring the rebellion to an end. The slaughter of June 3rd in front of well laid trenches at Cold Harbor had proven to Grant that never would Lee be more dangerous than when he was cornered and so plans were made to shift the weight of the blow to supply lines feeding into Petersburg while disrupting the primary supply lines from the Shenandoah Valley and Lynchburg. The logistics were intimidating and the risk of a devastating attack on his shifting forces made this Grant's greatest gamble.

Gordon Rhea is the nation's foremost authority on the great Grant versus Lee campaign. This is his first field tour of his fifth and final book that started with his Wilderness narrative more than 20 years ago. The book is masterful, readable and crystal clear—his field style is the same. He has private property access made available during his precise and comprehensive years of field research. Gordon is a practicing attorney and he does few tours, don't miss the chance to be on his very first tour of this aspect of the Overland Campaign. PLEASE NOTE YOU MUST BE PREPARED FOR EXTENSIVE WALKING AS MANY SITES ARE AWAY FROM PAVED ROADS. IF YOU WALK IN YOU MUST BE PREPARED TO WALK OUT.

## **Monday, May 14, 2018**

6:30 PM Check in at headquarters hotel for meet, greet and to pick up your reading books. Gordon's opening lecture will discuss the dramatic change in fortunes created by Grant's hammer blows during the previous month. We will have a variety of Domino's Pizzas, snacks and beverages starting at 6:45 PM. Gordon will speak at 7:15.

## **Tuesday, May 15, 2018**

We will leave the hotel at 8:15 to travel to the Cold Harbor battlefield where we will examine the Confederate and Union positions following the big battle of June 3rd. This extensive walk will take us to parts of the battlefield rarely visited by visitors and ground that has been recently acquired by the National Park Service through the efforts of the Richmond Battlefield Association and the Civil War Trust—of particular interest are the 18th Corps positions and the critically important Fletcher's Redoubt. We will then move to the area where Jubal Early attempted to push through the northern end of the Union lines on June 6th and 7th. Be prepared for some serious walking and some rugged field conditions—we will have plenty of bug spray and you will want to wear long pants. Lunch is included. Dinner will be on your own.

### Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Again we will leave at 8:15, this is really the beauty of the campaign and Grant's gutsy decision, having lost tens of thousands of soldiers he now risked having Lee discover his intentions and destroying his rear guard. We will follow Grant's withdrawal from the trenches and his march to the James River. We will pass Moody's Plantation where Grant spent the night before crossing the Chickahominy River, we will explore the route followed by Warren's V Corps and the important screening action at Riddell's Shop. We will then view the crossing of the VI Corps and IX Corps at Jones' Bridge and then over to the site of the II Corps bivouac near Wilcox Wharf. We will close the day with a visit to Charles City Court House and Weyanoke Peninsula where Union engineers constructed the long, vulnerable pontoon bridge across the James River—truly an engineering marvel. Lunch included, dinner is on your own.

### Thursday, May 17, 2018

Our final day starts again at 8:15 with a full treatment of Union actions south of the James River. The central event is the assault of June 15th against the Confederates thinly manned Dimmock Line. We will visit Bermuda Hundred from where Baldy Smith initiated the attack; City Point where Grant would set up his headquarters and provision his massive army now merged with the Army of the James; Baylor's Farm where African American troops under General Edward Hincks overran General James Dearing's Confederates concluding with the general assault against the Dimmock line by Baldy Smith's 18th Corps—yet another missed opportunity deflected by the heroic and determined resistance of Beauregard's small command. Time permitting we will also retrace Winfield Hancock's II Corps route from Windmill Point to the Petersburg lines. We will return to the hotel having participated in the first tour Gordon Rhea has ever conducted of this conclusive event of the Overland Campaign. Lunch is included and we will dismiss by 5:30 PM. You can book return flights from 7:30 PM and afterwards. Thanks for coming.

#### **About the Faculty:**

**Gordon Rhea** is a practicing attorney from Mt. Pleasant, SC. He has completed 6 books related to the Overland Campaign that pitted US Grant against RE Lee. The award winning series published by LSU Press has now been completed with the recent release of **On to Petersburg, Grant and Lee June 4-15, 1864**. Rhea brings the same analytic skills so essential for good trial work to the analysis of military campaigns—exhaustive research, the lessons of precedent and the logical outcomes from well thought out plans and the unexpected curveballs that are known in the military as friction. Personalities count in law and in leadership—Rhea recognizes both bringing a delightful summary that both clients and juries appreciate and respect.

#### **Hotel Information:**

This program will be based near the Richmond, Virginia International Airport. The hotel will be posted on this site. The headquarters hotel room block will likely be in the \$125 a night range with an airport shuttle, we will also be near I-64 making it easily accessible by car.

**Transportation:**

The servicing airport is Richmond International (RIC). Amtrak services Richmond. The program is also easily accessible by automobile.

**Recommended Reading:**

You will be provided with a reading book and maps upon arrival. The following books are suggested to enhance your readiness for the program. If registered through AmazonSmile, BGES will receive a portion of any books you purchase from them for this program. Bring your books along with you and have Gordon sign them

Gordon Rhea: **On to Petersburg, Grant and Lee June 4-15, 1864**

Gordon Rhea: **Cold Harbor, Grant and Lee, May 26-June 3, 1864**

Chris E. Heisey and Gordon Rhea: **In the Footsteps of Grant and Lee: the Wilderness to Cold Harbor** (A photographic essay of key and remote sites from the Overland Campaign)

## *Registration Form*

*Grant and Lee: From Cold Harbor to Petersburg*

*A BGES Civil War Field University Program*

*Presented by Gordon Rhea*

*May 14-17, 2018 from Sandston, Virginia*

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

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

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

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

Registration includes three lunches, a welcoming Pizza party, a reading book with maps, the academic program, support of a professional historian, tour director and transportation appropriate to the registration. We will also provide snacks, bottled water and a limited selection of sodas.

\_\_\_\_\_ Registration \$725\*

\_\_\_\_\_ Current BGES member \$675\*

\_\_\_\_\_ Teacher/full time student with identification \$625\*

**\*10% of your registration fee is a tax deductible contribution to the BGES 25th Anniversary Capital Reserve Campaign**

\_\_\_\_\_ 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 plus full payment for any 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: \_\_\_\_\_

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