

GEORGIA

BATTLEFIELDS

Published by Georgia Battlefields Association, Inc., a non-profit organization dedicated to preservation of Georgia's Civil War history and sites. Contact newsletter editor by e-mail: info@georgiabattlefields.org

Registration now open for 13-16 April 2023 tour in Savannah

For our 2023 tour in Savannah, we've added a full day of touring on Thursday!

Program: *Thursday* - Morning walking tour of the city's Revolutionary War sites. Tour will be led by [Georgia Historical Society's president Todd Groce](#). After lunch, we'll bus to [Bonaventure Cemetery](#). See also <https://www.savannahga.gov/864/Bonaventure-Cemetery>. That evening will include our customary reception open to all members and featuring a presentation and a self-serve array of food that should suffice for dinner.

Friday and Saturday – Itinerary still being developed but is almost certain to include [Fort Pulaski](#), [Old Fort Jackson](#), [Wormsloe State Historic Site](#), [King's Bridge](#), [Fort McAllister](#), [Ebenezer Creek](#), and remnants of the 1864 landward defenses. All meals will be provided: Breakfast is included in the hotel price, while lunch and dinner are included in the tour price.

Sunday – Walking tour of Civil War sites in downtown Savannah. Tour ends at noon.

Guide: As most of you know, Ed Bearss, our peerless guide for 20 years, died in 2020. For several years, we have been transitioning to having [Jim Ogden](#), an eminent historian in his own right, lead our tours. Jim is a familiar name to most and a friend to many of our tour participants, and we're pleased that he will be our guide.

Price: \$460 per person for the usual Thursday night through Sunday morning tour of Civil War sites. Price has increased from our longstanding price of \$430. Savannah is more expensive than any other location except Atlanta. The meal and bus costs are notable examples, and bus contracts include a potential surcharge that reflects the fluctuating price of diesel fuel.

\$120 additional for Thursday tours. So, \$580 per person includes all tours.

Hotel: [Hampton Inn & Suites Historic District](#) at 603 W. Oglethorpe Ave. 912 721 1600.

GBA rate is \$179 per night for Wednesday and Thursday nights and \$259 per night for Friday and Saturday nights. If you reserve for all four nights, it's \$219 per night. The almost 16% tax adds \$34.47 per night, for a daily total of \$253.47. Parking in the hotel lot is \$30 per night, but other parking decks within walking distance may have cheaper rates. We know this hotel rate is more expensive than usual for our tours, but Savannah hotel prices have increased dramatically. Also, we chose a hotel closer to downtown to reduce time spent on the bus.

Registration: Mail a check payable to Georgia Battlefields Association to **PO Box 669953, Marietta GA 30066**, or use PayPal or credit card to register online at our web site tours page <http://georgiabattlefields.org/tours.aspx>. If you have trouble, e-mail billgurry@bellsouth.net.

Naming Commission submits final report to Congress

On 19 September 2022, the commission created to make recommendations about renaming Defense Department assets named for Confederates or incorporating Confederate symbols submitted its final report to Congress. <https://www.thenamingcommission.gov/report>.

The report is instructive for the history it recounts, regardless of whether you agree with the recommendations. The [August 2022 Georgia Battlefields newsletter](#) summarized Part I recommendations that addressed U.S. Army posts. Part II considered names at the U.S. Military and Naval Academies. The recently completed Part III addresses all remaining DoD assets, and its appendices provide lists of the assets that the commission considered.

Georgia facilities mentioned included Forts Gordon and Benning in Part I and Buford Dam and Lake Lanier (both managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and both named for people who served the Confederacy) in Part III. The Commission did not make name recommendations for the dam and lake.

Prater's Mill annual Country Fair scheduled for 8-9 October

Prater's Mill is in Northwest Georgia, not far east of Varnell, which is about ten miles north of Dalton. The Varnell area was the site of cavalry actions in May 1864 during the opening of the Atlanta Campaign. The mill is a preservation success story, and a visit to the mill will help anyone to learn more about life in the 19th century. You can spend an enjoyable day or two when the mill celebrates over 50 years of its annual country fair that will resume on 8-9 October. For more info, see www.pratersmill.org.

Decisions of the Atlanta Campaign – part 3

GBA member Larry Peterson, author of the 2019 book [Decisions of the Atlanta Campaign](#), continues his series. Part 1 appeared in the [January 2022 Georgia Battlefields newsletter](#) and part 2 in the [August 2022 newsletter](#).

Davis orders reinforcements to Johnston

Article by Larry Peterson

Situation

Confederate General Joseph Johnston was convinced that his opponent's forces greatly outnumbered his own. While this was true, U.S. Major General Sherman had to commit more and more of his men to protecting their supply line the farther south they went.

The Confederacy knew from the start of the war that it could never put more men in the field than the U.S. could. President Davis's policy of keeping each Confederate force within its assigned department exacerbated this imbalance in each region. His practice did not support the transferring of units to threatened areas, and it minimized cooperation between departments. Commanders on both sides constantly struggled to find reinforcements. Naturally, each department commander believed that his department was critical to the war effort and deserving of protection. As a result, these leaders were loath to loan any of their troops to another department, perhaps never to see them again, perhaps to have them reduced by combat or other losses. Department commanders routinely exaggerated their opponents' numbers while downplaying their own numbers to build on their individual needs for help. Though aware of Davis's policies and personality, Johnston nonetheless repeatedly requested reinforcements.

Options

President Jefferson Davis had three options: He could deny Johnston any reinforcements, he could send Johnston large reinforcements at the expense of another department, or he could assemble men from several departments and order them to support the Confederate commander.

Decision

Surprisingly in light of his actions thus far in the war, Davis ordered some garrison troops to Johnston, and he also ordered Lieutenant General Leonidas Polk to send Johnston those units of his Army of Mississippi that Polk thought he could spare. Polk cooperated and immediately dispatched Cantey's infantry brigade to Rome to reinforce Johnston, and prepared additional units to follow.

Results/Impact

Cantey's brigade initially reinforced Johnston at Rome, and Johnston then ordered Cantey's troops to march from Rome to Resaca. This movement literally saved the day for Johnston. As we will eventually see, U.S. Major General James McPherson, after marching through Snake Creek Gap, sighted Cantey's troops near Resaca and fell back to the gap, foiling Sherman's plan to cut Johnston's supply line at Resaca. This action almost certainly prolonged the campaign.

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