



# The Petersburg Campaign. Volume 1: The Eastern Front Battles, June - August 1864

*Edwin C. Bearss*

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The wide-ranging and largely misunderstood series of operations around Petersburg, Virginia, were the longest and most extensive of the entire Civil War. The fighting that began in early June 1864 when advance elements from the Union Army of the Potomac crossed the James River and botched a series of attacks against a thinly defended city would not end for nine long months. This important?many would say decisive?fighting is presented by legendary Civil War author Edwin C. Bearss in *The Petersburg Campaign: The Eastern Front Battles, June–August 1864*, the first in a ground-breaking two-volume compendium.

Although commonly referred to as the “Siege of Petersburg,” that city (as well as the Confederate capital at Richmond) was never fully isolated and the combat involved much more than static trench warfare. In fact, much of the wide-ranging fighting involved large-scale Union offensives designed to cut important roads and the five rail lines feeding Petersburg and Richmond. This volume of Bearss’ study of these major battles includes:

The Attack on Petersburg (June 9, 1864)  
The Second Assault on Petersburg (June 15 - 18, 1864)  
The Battle of the Jerusalem Plank Road (June 21 - 24, 1864)  
The Crater (July 30, 1864)  
The Battle of the Weldon Railroad (August 18 - 21, 1864)  
The Second Battle of Ream’s Station (August 25, 1864)

Accompanying these salient chapters are original maps by Civil War cartographer George Skoch, together with photos and illustrations. The result is a richer and deeper understanding of the major military episodes comprising the Petersburg Campaign.

About the Authors: Edwin C. Bearss is a world-renowned military historian, author, and tour guide known for his work on the American Civil War and World War II. Ed, a former WWII Marine wounded in the Pacific Theater, served as Chief Historian of the National Park Service from 1981 to 1994 and is the author of dozens of books and articles. He discovered and helped raise the Union warship USS Cairo, which is on display at Vicksburg National Military Park.

Bryce A. Suderow is a Civil War writer and researcher living in Washington, D.C. He received his B.A. at Knox College and earned a Masters in American History at Sonoma State University. His Masters' Thesis, *Thunder in Arcadia Valley*, was published in 1985 (Univ. of Missouri). Bryce has also published many articles in a number of Civil War periodicals and is recognized as one of the finest archival researchers working today.

## REVIEWS

“Ed Bearss’s impeccable research and lucid prose provide a vivid tactical account of the early actions of the Petersburg Campaign. Everyone interested in untangling the complex operations between Lee and Grant in the summer of 1864 will benefit from a careful reading of this excellent collection of essays.” - A. Wilson

Greene, author of *The Final Battles of the Petersburg Campaign*

“Reading this book gives the same thrill as taking a tour with the ‘King of Civil War Battlefields.’ The elder statesman’s voice resonates through every page of this detailed study of the climactic campaign in Virginia. Here is pure military history. Here is Ed Bearss at his best.” - James Robertson, author of *The Untold Civil War*

“As a long time Park Historian (Ret.) at Petersburg National Battlefield, I would constantly refer to the numerous studies now comprising Ed Bearss’ new *The Petersburg Campaign*. Indeed, these monographs are still being used for battlefield preservation purposes by the park. As the sesquicentennial approaches in 2014-15 for the Petersburg Campaign, these volumes will be a must for anyone who wishes to understand that complex period of the war, which could be more commonly referred to as the ‘wearing down of Lee’s army.’” - Chris Calkins, author of *The Appomattox Campaign, March 29-April 9, 1865*

“Edwin C. Bearss, former chief historian for the National Park Service and a World War II hero himself, is perhaps the greatest Civil War historian of the modern era. In the mid-1960s working as a research historian, Ed put together a series of Petersburg battle narratives and highly detailed troop movement maps that continue to withstand the test of time for their insightfulness and accuracy.” - James H. Blankenship, Jr., Historian

“Here is good news for students of the Petersburg Campaign. Edwin C. Bearss, former Chief Historian for the National Park Service, is publishing his studies on the Petersburg Campaign in a multivolume effort. Many of us who have written on the campaign have used these studies as starting points. The maps are outstanding and I have had difficulty tearing myself away from riveting accounts of the combat.” - John Horn, author of *The Destruction of the Weldon Railroad and The Petersburg Campaign*, co-editor of *Civil War Talks: Further Reminiscences of George S. Bernard and his Fellow Veterans*

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