



President Lincoln at Ft. Stevens. July, 1864

# Alliance to Preserve The Civil War Defenses of Washington

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## Washington Attacked: The 1864 Invasion and 1864 Shenandoah Valley Campaign

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### *Overview of Relevant Historical Facts*

- **The Civil War Defenses of Washington (CWDW)** were constructed at the start of the Civil War in 1861 to protect the nation's capital. By the end of the war in 1865, the CWDW contained 68 forts, 93 unarmed batteries, 807 mounted cannon, 13 miles of rifle trenches, and 32 miles of military roads.
- The major test of the CWDW came with the **Shenandoah Valley Campaign of 1864**. It started when Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee ordered Lt. Gen. Jubal Early to attack the nation's capital. Starting from Lynchburg VA, where he defeated Union General David Hunter, Gen. Early led about 14,000 troops through the Shenandoah Valley to Harpers Ferry, West VA and Frederick MD.
- Gen. Early was delayed by Union Maj. General Lew Wallace and his troops near Frederick MD at the **Battle of Monocacy on July 9, 1864**. Early won, and his troops marched down through Rockville MD, and reached **Fort Stevens** at the northern edge of Washington DC. Fighting ensued on **July 11**. By then, however, Union Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant had sent troops from Petersburg VA to augment the depleted defenses of Washington.
- **President Lincoln visited Fort Stevens on both days of the battle**. On July 12, he stood up on the parapet and was shot at by a sharpshooter. A surgeon standing near him was shot in the leg. **This was the only time in U.S. history that a President in office came under direct enemy fire.**
- Gen. Early realized he could not take Washington. He led his troops away overnight on July 13, later crossing the Potomac near what is now White's Ferry. He continued fighting into the fall.
- Shenandoah Valley campaign ended when Union Lt. General Philip Sheridan defeated Gen. Early, **Battle of Cedar Creek, VA on October 19, 1864.**

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