

The Virginia Museum of the Civil War and New Market Battlefield State Historical Park

Located in Virginia's historic and beautiful Shenandoah Valley, the Virginia Museum of the Civil War and New Market Battlefield State Historical Park tell the story of the Civil War in Virginia and one of the last major southern victories in the "Breadbasket of the Confederacy."

On May 15, 1864, Confederate forces under Maj. Gen. John C. Breckinridge defeated a larger Union army under the command of Maj. Gen. Franz Sigel on Bushong's farm near the town of New Market. Breckinridge's army included 257 Cadets from the Virginia Military Institute, facing their baptism of fire. Never before, or since has an entire college student body been called from their classrooms into pitched battle. The Cadets lost ten of their number killed and 47 wounded that day.

Established by V.M.I. in 1967 by the philanthropy of Mr. George R. Collins, V.M.I. Class of 1911, the New Market Battlefield State Historical Park became a National Historic Landmark, comprising nearly 300 acres of the core battleground, the historic Bushong Farm and Hall of Valor Civil War Museum. The Hall of Valor was one of the first museums in the Commonwealth to be accredited by the American Association of Museums. In 2010 the museum changed its name to Virginia Museum of the Civil War to reflect its singularity as Virginia's only state-owned Civil War museum.

The building itself was designed as a monument to all valor in the battle but particularly that of the V.M.I. cadets, the youngest combatant only 15 years old. The brown metal rotunda is reflective of a drum with stacked bayoneted rifles. Inside the museum is an expansive red carpet depicting sacrifice and a gentle sweeping ramp indicative of the motion of the cadet's charge up Bushong's Hill. The Virginia Museum of the Civil War was among the top 100 structures identified as Virginia's Favorite Architecture in 2013.

The museum features colorful dioramas and compelling artifacts from the Battle of New Market which raged just outside of the building. In the theater, visitors can see the Emmy Award winning docudrama, *Field of Lost Shoes*, on the top of each hour. Recently opened in September of 2016 is the comprehensive Kaminsky Gallery of Civil War Firearms, featuring over one hundred original Civil War weapons and accouterments.

One of the most popular and admired exhibits in the museum is a 28-foot-long stained glass window, created by Israeli-born artist Ami Shamir. The window was the brainchild of Robert Blood, who designed the Hall of Valor exhibits for its opening in 1970.

Artist Ami Shamir included such elements as flowing lines to suggest the Shenandoah Valley and the river of the same name, and flags and seals of Virginia Military Institute, the Confederacy, and the Union, to portray the conflict at New Market. The names of the ten cadets who were killed or mortally wounded in the battle are inscribed as the central feature.