



AMERICAN
BATTLEFIELD
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DAVID N. DUNCAN
President

Dear Fellow Preservationist,

The enclosed battle map shows our opportunity to save a small but crucial piece of hallowed ground at a \$5-to-\$1 match at one of America's most threatened battlefields. But before I get to that, I want to draw your attention to something else I have included because it's unlike anything the Trust has sent to members like you before:

It's called *America's Hallowed Ground: A Personal Battlefield Journal*, and it features what I believe are 20 of our country's "must-see" battlefields. Now that the pandemic is subsiding, I hope you'll be able to visit a battlefield or two (or ten!) this summer. And when you do, I hope you'll take along the special travel logbook I've enclosed for you.

If you haven't visited all of these "must-see" battlefields already, maybe this small token of my appreciation will inspire you to visit a new one soon.

As you'll see, there's room on each page to write a few notes to help you remember your trip. I've also included a sheet of stamps for you to mark the battlefields you've visited. And since this is the very first time we have sent this battlefield journal to supporters like you, will you please do me the honor of letting me know your thoughts?

First, do you like it, and do you think you will use it? I obviously hope so!

Second, while cost considerations limited the number of battlefields we could include in the journal, do you think we missed any especially important ones that we should include in future journals?

Third, do you have any suggestions as to how we can make it better?

If you could let me know your answers to these questions on the enclosed reply sheet, I would be grateful, as it is my hope that in the coming months, more people than ever will be inspired to visit a battlefield — or multiple battlefields — to learn more about our country's amazing history.

I recently read that about two-thirds of Americans are planning trips and vacations between now and the end of August. I've already seen this surge to get outside with my own eyes.

When my wife and I walk our dog on the miles of trails at the Manassas National Battlefield Park (just 20 minutes from our home), we are amazed by the number of people who are there not only to enjoy the beautiful open spaces and fresh air but also to explore the battlefield and learn the incredible history of that place.

Manassas National Battlefield Park is one of the “must-see” battlefields included in your journal, and I want to call your attention to it because I have some important news about the park’s future:

While, on the whole, Manassas is a well-preserved battlefield, there are still many privately-owned tracts of land at risk of loss. Intense development pressures — some of the worst in the country — are squeezing this battlefield from all sides, threatening to consume what land remains to be saved.

The threats come from things we never dreamed of twenty years ago — “data centers,” enormous e-commerce distribution centers, and like something out of science fiction, “industrial-scale solar farms.” And these are on top of the ongoing residential and commercial development that has enveloped the battlefield in the last forty years from the ever-expanding Washington, DC, suburbs.

Right now, you and I have the opportunity to buy and save one of those key small tracts at the northern edge of the battlefield, totaling 3.5 acres. You’ll find the parcel highlighted in yellow on your enclosed battle map.

If we are not able to save this important piece of land now, I can all but guarantee you that a developer will purchase the property ... and build more McMansions, and we will lose the chance to preserve this land for another generation or two.

The 3.5 acres, located near the Sudley Church, also noted on your map, have been a top priority for the park for many, many years. In fact, the park has made four separate attempts to buy it. And yet none of their offers were accepted.

But when the family was ready to sell this year, they contacted the Trust and we acted quickly. And now with your help, we can purchase the property, valued at \$385,000, for a commitment of just \$75,000 when we factor in expected funds from other sources. That’s the equivalent of a \$5.13-to-\$1 match for your preservation donation.

We can’t miss out on this opportunity — I have it on good authority that developers are very interested in this land. So, please, I hope I can count on you to help us raise the \$75,000 we need to preserve forever this small but important piece of Civil War history.

If we’re successful in raising the funds needed to complete this purchase, we hope in time to transfer it to the Manassas National Battlefield Park, adding key acres to the northern part of this battlefield and keeping the crush of development at bay just a little while longer.

Let me tell you a little about why this battlefield is so important.

First, it’s actually the site of two critical battles. The first happened 160 years ago *this* month! At the Battle of Bull Run (or First Manassas), when Union troops marched right over and passed this ground just minutes before the fighting flared (which culminated on the plain where a virtually unknown Confederate named Thomas Jackson would earn his famous nickname), this land and

the nearby Sudley Church served as a Union Army field hospital. The 21st Georgia regiment also used Sudley Church later that fall of 1861 as a hospital for sick soldiers. Any Georgians who died of disease there may well have been buried in the vicinity of the church. The land deserves our respect for those who may lay there still.

At the Second Battle of Manassas in 1862, intense fighting took place on and swirled around the property. When that same General Thomas J. — now “Stonewall” — Jackson chose to establish a defensive line stretching nearly two miles along an unfinished railroad grade, his corps’ left flank, held by General Maxcy Gregg’s brigade of South Carolinians, part of General A.P. Hill’s division, was positioned on a rocky knoll near Sudley Church.

Late on the afternoon of August 29th, Union General Philip Kearny’s full division launched a heavy attack and managed to push Hill’s forces back some 300 yards beyond the unfinished railroad. Some of Kearny’s men took position on the 3.5-acre tract we’re trying to preserve right now. You may recall that ammunition was running so low on parts of Jackson’s line that his troops were reduced to throwing rocks at the attacking Federals. Only the arrival of reinforcements from Jubal Early’s brigade, and growing darkness, saved that part of Jackson’s line from destruction. Overnight, Kearny’s troops withdrew from the hard-earned ground they had gained, and the 3.5-acre parcel remained behind Jackson’s line.

Given the incredible history of this small but sacred piece of ground, I have no doubt you fully understand why we’re so eager to preserve it. And with your help, we can do just that and save it forever if we can raise \$75,000 today. Every dollar you are able to send will be worth \$5.13 toward the full value.

Let me also point out that by safeguarding this “must-have” parcel, you and I are continuing work dating back fully 100 years.

It was in 1921 when a park was established at the Henry Farm, around which both Battles of Manassas raged. The park remained the *only* preserved battlefield land at Manassas until the federal government began acquiring property as part of the New Deal, and it wasn’t until May 10th, 1940, that the Manassas National Battlefield Park was finally and officially established.

But as with most battlefield parks across America, those early preservationists were not able to save every acre upon which the two battles of Manassas (also known as Bull Run) were fought. Plus, over the last 35 years, as you may know, northern Virginia has experienced exponential growth and development which continues to threaten and encroach upon the battlefield. A particularly high-profile incident occurred back in 1993-94 when the Walt Disney Corporation started buying up land in hopes of building a history-themed park near Manassas.

The Trust’s two predecessor organizations joined a large number of citizen groups and historians in strongly opposing the idea and, thankfully, Disney cancelled the project.

Since then, the battlefield park has identified critically important parcels it wants to protect in and around the Manassas battlefield, but lack of funding and challenging regulations have made quick action almost impossible.

Time and again, with the generous support of dedicated people like you, American Battlefield Trust has proudly stepped into that gap, buying and protecting some of the most important properties — like the 3.5-acre parcel I'm writing you about today.

Today, you and I have the chance to make history again. These 3.5 acres, when added to the preservation accomplishments that you have already helped make at Manassas (see some of them in blue on your maps!), mean that you and I will have protected some 377 acres of the sacred history that was written in blood on these grounds.

By saving such key battlefield lands forever, you and I are making it possible for people to know the full, amazing history of our country. This work is so very important because only by understanding where you came from can you know how you got here, and how to build an even better future for those who will follow after us: our children and grandchildren.

This “higher calling” is really what you are doing with every acre of hallowed ground you save. You are creating a better nation ... a better future ... and, ultimately, a better world for those you care deeply about.

Admittedly, this work is not easy, and it's not inexpensive, but if there is any more important work that we can do for the country we love, I don't know what it is.

So please help me today — as soon as possible — with the most generous gift you can muster to help raise the \$75,000 we urgently need to save 3.5 critical acres at Manassas. I thank you for your dedication to our great cause.

Very sincerely yours,



David N. Duncan
President

P.S. By saving these 3.5 acres, you will be helping to acquire one of the key “puzzle pieces” at Manassas, protecting it from development and assuring its place as a part of our nation's history. Please let me hear back from you as soon as possible. We must not let this \$5-to-\$1 matching opportunity go to waste!

P.P.S. I truly hope you'll enjoy the battlefield logbook I've enclosed for you. And please be sure to tell me your opinions of it. My sincere hope is it will inspire you to perhaps go to one of the 20 “must-see” battlefields you have yet to see or visit again one of your personal favorites. If you don't think you'll personally use the journal, I urge you to pass it along to a friend or student you know to spark their interest in preserving our country's history. Thank you again.