



AMERICAN
BATTLEFIELD
TRUST ★ ★ ★
PRESERVE. EDUCATE. INSPIRE.

“Three hallowed Virginia battlefields
are under attack.

Help save them before the data centers
and developers destroy them!”

Dear Fellow Preservationist and Patriot,

If you heard of someone desecrating the graves of American soldiers, I believe I know what you would do.

You’d do everything in your power to stop them! If we allowed those who fought and died for our country to be insulted like that, we would sell out the soul of our nation.

I believe it’s the same with our battlefields. You and I CANNOT stand by as hallowed battlefields where blood was shed, valor was shown, and freedom was won get *paved over, carved up, and sold off* to the highest bidder!

As you know, the American Battlefield Trust has been fighting inappropriate development for decades, as developers buy up battlefield land to build housing subdivisions, racetracks, shopping malls, even casinos. They either don’t know the significance of these irreplaceable lands, or, more likely, they don’t even care!

But now, many of our nation’s still-unprotected hallowed grounds are facing an alarming new generation of aggressive threats.

Big-tech companies with billions to spend are racing to build huge warehouse-style **data centers and distribution facilities** in places where young men fought and died for country and for freedom.

They even send the Trust solicitations asking if we’ll sell them the lands we’ve purchased and protected! ***Can you believe their gall?***

Of course, we tell them, “***Not now ... not ever ... not for any amount of money!***” Period.



Aerial view of data centers in Loudon County — Northern Virginia.

But I can't promise other landowners will do the same. Not with all-cash offers — many coming in well above appraised value — pouring in almost every day! If we want to protect battlefield lands from unrelenting developers, we must act immediately ... and I need your help.

Right now, we have the opportunity to purchase and permanently protect 52 acres of prime Virginia Civil War battlefield land: in Manassas, Reams Station, and Cumberland Church (Farmville). The total transaction value is just over a million dollars ...

... but if we can raise just \$145,000 in the next 45 days, with your help, we can multiply your impact by \$7-to-\$1, purchase all three parcels, and keep them out of the hands of tech companies and developers forever!

I'll tell you about the three battlefields in just a moment. But first, let me take a moment to share my feelings, if you haven't guessed already, about the growing threats we're facing from data centers.

Hulking, windowless, often multi-story monstrosities — some bigger than shopping centers — that use enormous amounts of electricity to keep their computers running and push up the cost of the nearby lands we're trying to protect and preserve.

And right now, more of them are being built than ever before. One developer recently called the region between Richmond, Virginia, and Washington, DC, "*The Data Center Hotspot of the World.*" Northern Virginia alone now has more than 100 of them, totaling over 10 million square feet. I just read a story about a new one, with a footprint of 344,000 square feet — that's about 8 acres! — heading for the bucolic Shenandoah Valley.

These mega-companies — who could build these massive structures almost anywhere — are often choosing to build them in places that encroach on some of the most sacred battlefield lands in America. And many localities, enticed by tax revenue, are ignoring their own comprehensive development plans when these companies come calling, sacrificing their unique history to attract mega-dollars.

As the nation's premier battlefield preservation organization, which has saved (with your amazing help) more than 55,000 acres of hallowed ground, we simply can't let that happen!

But I know your time is valuable, so let's get to the history, and I can tell you exactly what your generous support — multiplied \$7-to-\$1 — will help save.

Three acres in Manassas: I'm starting with a small tract, but because it's in Northern Virginia, it's also the most expensive of the three we are working to save today.

As you can see from your enclosed battle map, this critically important tract is at the heart of the battlefield of Second Manassas. For the second time in 13 months, the two sides clashed in an epic battle on the "Plains of Manassas," with the strategic initiative in the east hanging in the balance. This parcel is very near the famous "Deep Cut," where Confederates under General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson — out of ammunition after repeated Union assaults — resorted to throwing rocks at the attacking Federals.

As Jackson held on for dear life, General James Longstreet led a hammer-blow attack against the Union left flank. The Union army was thrown back, and Lee was emboldened to march north, more confident of eventual triumph than ever. That effort — the Antietam or Maryland Campaign — was one of the turning points of the War.

Back in 1862, these lands were under siege during the battle. Today, they are under siege again, targeted by developers who want to build data centers or massive McMansions, maybe for one of those big-tech millionaires! In fact, *Preservation Virginia* placed Manassas on the 2022 list of most endangered historic places, due to data center threats. We have identified this three-acre tract as a **“must have,”** and it’s critical that we raise the funds to preserve it before a developer outbids us. Please help!

Three acres in Reams Station: Like many of the battlefield lands we buy, this one may not be well known to the casual student of the War. Today, a house built in 1981 mars part of the view, and there’s no marker on the property to say what happened here.

But at a glance, I’m confident you’ll understand how significant this acquisition is. Especially since you’ve helped us purchase and conserve much of the battlefield around it, while this “doughnut hole” property remains privately owned and threatened!

As you know, Reams Station was a key stop on the Petersburg Railroad, then known as the Weldon Railroad. And in 1864, railroads were crucial supply lines to the Federal and Confederate armies. Lee’s army, entrenched around Petersburg, needed supplies to be brought by rail ... which put Reams Station right in the crosshairs of the Federals.

Unfortunately, August 25 would turn out to be the worst day of the War for the once-vaunted Union II Corps. General Winfield Scott Hancock’s forces suffered 2,602 casualties, nearly 40% of those engaged, including 1,968 captured. Even more mortifying to the corps was the loss of twelve regimental flags and nine pieces of artillery.

After the War, Confederate division commander Henry Heth wrote, “I have read that if Hancock’s heart could have been examined there would have been written on it, ‘REAMS’, as plainly as the deep scars received at Gettysburg ... were visible.”

There is so much for people, especially young people, to learn at places like Reams Station — about the strategies of war, and the fierce and determined efforts made by brave soldiers on both sides. I love to read, but books alone cannot tell the whole story. Standing on the battlefields, and seeing the exact places where history happened, brings these stories to life in ways no book or movie ever can.

47 acres in Cumberland Church: I’ve saved this one for last — not just because it is the biggest, but because of its very special role in Civil War history.

The Battle of Cumberland Church (sometimes also referred to as the Battle of Farmville) was one of the last battles before the surrender at Appomattox and the unofficial end of the Civil War. By April 1865, the War had clearly turned in favor of the Federals. But at Cumberland Church, the Confederates continued to fight with every ounce of waning strength they had left.

At 5:00 pm on April 7th, General U.S. Grant wrote his now-famous letter to Lee, speaking of the “hopelessness of further resistance,” and shifting to Lee the “responsibility of any effusion of blood, by asking of you the surrender of that portion of the C.S. Army known as the Army of Northern Virginia.”

The 47 acres we are saving at Cumberland Church are also the first acres ever saved at this battlefield, fought two days before the surrender at Appomattox Court House. Unfortunately, the parcel has already been subdivided into five parcels for residential development.

So, we have a choice: Fight on, and work to save these crucial acres so that this important part of our history is preserved forever. Or surrender, and possibly see unwanted development on this pristine battlefield.

I can tell you my response to any developer who might write to me to try to convince me that my situation is hopeless, that I should give up and let them destroy our history:

***No. Not now ... not ever ... not for any amount of money ...
and I'm backed up by an army of nearly 45,000 patriotic Americans
who stand with me and who will do whatever it takes
to preserve that irreplaceable history!***

We can't lose these lands without a fight. If you'd never let someone dishonor the grave of an American soldier, please don't allow our battlefields to be dishonored either.

The total transaction value for these three crucial tracts is \$1,018,500. Expected grants and commitments from our partners have helped raise \$873,500 (85.7%) toward the purchase price so far. If you will help raise the final 14.3% we need by giving what you can today, your impact will be multiplied by \$7-to-\$1 and these priceless tracts will be conserved forever.

In closing, let me make one very personal request of you. If you have children or grandchildren, please take them to battlefields and teach them about our nation's exceptional history. *Teach them that our freedom cannot ... must not ... ever be taken for granted.*

Freedom is worth fighting for. **So is our history.** Thank you for showing your values and multiplying your impact by giving today while your gift can be matched by \$7-to-\$1!



Very sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David N. Duncan". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

David N. Duncan
President

P.S. Come to my office one day when I'm there and I can show you the dozens of letters we receive each month. "Sell us your land," they implore. "NEVER," is my response. Because if we allow deep-pocketed land speculators working for big-tech companies to buy these lands, they will be lost to us, and lost to history. **Please act now before more hallowed ground is lost forever.** Thank you again for knowing your history, respecting your history, and preserving your history.