



AMERICAN
BATTLEFIELD
TRUST * * *
PRESERVE. EDUCATE. INSPIRE.

Greetings, old friend! These days, I don't write to you as often as I used to. But I'm writing today for two very important reasons.

Dear Patriotic Friend,

When I retired from leading American Battlefield Trust four years ago, I took the role of President Emeritus and figured there wasn't much that could drag me fully back into the battle fray.

After all, I'm 78 years old — and, besides, the organization is in very good hands.

But I decided to write to you today (don't tell David) for two important reasons. And the first is an extraordinary opportunity to save seven and a half acres of *twice-hallowed ground*.

We've coveted this property for years. It has major significance in the two battles of Fredericksburg and is the site of artillery positions, observation areas, and command posts. It's only a short walk from Lee's Headquarters. *For three generations*, families visiting Fredericksburg have surely pointed their figures at the private house and large outbuildings situated right alongside National Park Service land and wondered — *how is that still there?*

Well, it turns out, we weren't the only ones coveting it. With its current zoning that allows for development into 34 residential townhouse lots, developers have been chewing at the bit to acquire it. When the landowner announced he was ready to sell, we knew it was a once-in-a-lifetime moment. **Save it or pave it!**

I'm thrilled to tell you we now have a contract with the landowner. He wants to sell to us, not to developers! **But it won't come cheap**. It's going to cost us \$1.525 million over three years. And the first \$500,000 is due in 45 days!

Back when I was leading this organization, I knew I could trust you to come through when we needed you most. Today, I'm hoping I still can. There are townhouses *directly across the street from this lot*, and if we don't save it now, they're a preview of what will happen to these twice-hallowed acres. **Will you PLEASE make a gift today?**

I know I don't need to tell *you* about the two battles of Fredericksburg and why they matter. The first, in December of 1862, was one of the largest and deadliest battles of the Civil War.

It featured the *first* opposed river crossing in American military history, as well as some of the deadliest urban combat of the Civil War.

It was also a decisive Confederate victory that served as a catalyst for a Federal command change within Lincoln's principal army, while setting the stage for the spring 1863 campaign in northern Virginia.

But while Chancellorsville 12 miles to the west of Fredericksburg would be a Confederate victory, the Second Battle of Fredericksburg, considered part of the Chancellorsville Campaign, was not. In April of 1863, Union General Joseph Hooker split his army into three pieces, leaving one in the vicinity of Fredericksburg to hold the Confederates in place, while his other wings cut into the rear of the Confederates. Hooker planned to smash the Southerners in his Northern vise. Undaunted, Robert E. Lee, too, split his forces to meet these threats, leaving some 56 cannon and 11,000 soldiers at Fredericksburg to hold the Federals in place, while Lee and Stonewall Jackson led the remainder of the army west to thwart Hooker. On May 3, 1863, Union forces overwhelmed Lee's rear guard at the Second Battle of Fredericksburg.

And this very tract, the one we are striving to save from development, was involved in both campaigns!

You can see it for yourself, next time you're in Fredericksburg. The property is bordered to the north by Lafayette Boulevard, to the east by National Park Service land, and to the south and west by a mix of National Park Service land and private property.

The tract is entirely inside the authorized boundary of the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park. Yet it is now unprotected and features several 20th-century structures. The modern townhouses located immediately across the street show *what its fate will be* if we don't raise the funds to preserve it now! And so, we must. **For truly, this is sacred land.**

During the First Battle of Fredericksburg, Gen. Lee selected Telegraph Hill (today dubbed Lee's Hill) as his headquarters and an important artillery and observation point for the Army of Northern Virginia. Here, Generals Lee, James Longstreet, Jeb Stuart, Stonewall Jackson, and others gathered to discuss the forthcoming battle. Later Lee, Longstreet, and Lafayette McLaws monitored the progress of the fighting — *and came under fire, taking shelter among the guns.* In fact, a Confederate cannon near this land exploded, nearly killing Lee and others.

This 7.5-acre tract, located about 75 feet to the rear of these gun positions, most certainly served as an area occupied by personnel in support functions for both the artillery and the headquarters.

The property was soon hallowed again, a host to more fighting during the Second Battle of Fredericksburg. Whereas the Union Army had been unable to break the Confederate lines in December, during the second battle the following May, they achieved success. Once again, Telegraph Hill served as a Confederate command post, this time for the fiery leader of an all-Mississippi brigade, General William Barksdale.

In fact, one location where the Union attacks overran the Confederate position was right here on Telegraph Hill. Surging up the eastern slope and over the crest, onto this tract, Union regiments from Vermont and New Jersey drove the Mississippians before them.

Among those who stormed Telegraph Hill were soldiers from the 2nd Vermont, one of whom left the following account:

“The rebs had set fire to the brush on the top of the hill, and the hot, suffocating smoke drifted into our faces...The air was intensely hot and sultry, the fire of the rebel musketry as we neared the top of the hill, was hot too...Our skirmishers drove the gunners away from two excellent pieces of artillery and captured them. At the top of the hill we were met with a more terrific shower of bullets than before.”

Another member of the 2nd Vermont, Sgt. Ephraim Harrington, actually earned the Medal of Honor for capturing two of the Confederate guns of the famed Washington Artillery on or near the tract. Once again, history was made here!

Those are some of the reasons that saving this parcel of land is so important to me, to you, and to America.

But there’s another reason I’m writing to you (on the sly). You see, we have a birthday to celebrate. Our mutual friend David Duncan, President of American Battlefield Trust, is about to turn 60 on June 26th. *And I need your help with something ...*

Back when I was President, David used to surprise me by asking folks like you to sign birthday cards for me, and it was wonderful to receive all those good wishes. Now, I want to return the favor. I’m including a “Big 60” birthday card for David, asking you to sign it and send it back with your gift. ***Hurry, so we can surprise him together!***

And in fact, this tract has a deeply personal connection for David. I’ve printed and enclosed an email he recently shared with me, and other members of the team.

David clearly has a passion for saving this land. **So do I.** Like David, I have more of my life behind me than ahead of me, and I consider our work saving America's battlefields to be among the greatest achievements of my life.

Which brings us to this moment. If we can raise \$500,000 in the next 45 days, with your help, we'll have the one-third down payment we need to save this property before it's too late. We will help to unite National Park Service lands that are now divided, expand opportunities for access to and interpretation of Lee's Hill, and — I add with some satisfaction — we will stop the townhouse developers in their tracks.

I can't think of a much better birthday present for David than to see this campaign through to success. And the "icing on the cake" would be hearing from you. Which is why, along with your gift today, I'm asking you to sign and send back the card with your best wishes ... ***from one battlefield lover to another.***

Well, that's it. It's been a pleasure to write to you again. I hope you are well. Thanks for all the great work you do keeping America's battlefield legacy alive!

Most sincerely yours,



Jim Lighthizer
President Emeritus

P.S. I still smile to think of all the times David surprised me with birthday cards. It was so heartwarming to hear from our battlefield preservation community on my special day. **I know he would be just as delighted to hear from you on his 60th.** Please sign your card now, and send it back with your gift. Please hurry so we get the card before David's birthday — and before the 45-day deadline for raising the \$500,000! Let's keep on saving our history, ***together!***