



AMERICAN
BATTLEFIELD
TRUST ★ ★ ★

**Battlefield land at Fredericksburg
and Stones River are on the
cusp of being saved — if we
can raise the remaining funds.
YOUR YEAR-END SUPPORT
IS NEEDED!**

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Dear Friend and Fellow Preservationist,

Do you remember the way you felt when you paid off your first car loan? I do.

I didn't outwardly celebrate when I dropped that final payment into the mailbox. Rather, I felt a quiet sense of accomplishment. I had been making those monthly payments on time for years, never missing a single due date. I felt like a man of my word. A lender had trusted me with their money, and I had honored that trust. I drove away from that mailbox beaming with a new sense of pride. And ownership. The car was now mine, and it would be 'til death do us part, which, eventually, it did (fortunately, it was the car that went first).

I write to you today in anticipation of feeling that same sense of pride and accomplishment on behalf of the American Battlefield Trust. I hope you will have that same feeling yourself — after I have explained a little more — because it is only through your generosity and concern for our national history that we are positioned as we are. Here is why.

Right now, we are on the cusp of making the final payment on a 7.5-acre tract of twice-hallowed ground in Fredericksburg, Virginia, *one year ahead of schedule!*

As you may recall, more than a year ago we were contacted about the opportunity to buy land that witnessed both the First and Second Battles of Fredericksburg. We worked with the owners to sign an agreement to buy this valuable piece of battlefield history, before it was lost. But because we didn't have all the money upfront, we drew up a payment plan to allow for the time to raise the \$1.5 million asking price over three years.

The land was zoned and ready to go for a multi-unit housing project! The owners could have sold the land to developers, who were champing at the bit to build 34-plus townhouses on it. But — having a deep respect for history and patriotism — the property owners agreed to sell their piece of the Fredericksburg battlefield to the Trust.

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They did the right thing by us, and we want to do the right thing by them by making all payments in full to honor our end of the agreement. **Now, we ask for your help to make the final payment to protect this sacred acreage and preserve it for generations to come.**

As always, I'm asking you to help bring about this momentous event. I'm also thrilled to let you know an additional opportunity has come our way ... Today, we have the chance to preserve 38 acres at the historically significant Stones River Battlefield in Tennessee, valued at over \$9.4 million.

I'll go into greater detail regarding the importance of the Stones River tract in a bit, but for now, let me tell you about what we can save.

Thanks to a number of generous donors and federal, state, and local grants, we can secure both the Fredericksburg and Stones River tracts for only \$172,323. I know it can seem cavalier to put the word "*only*" in front of any six-figure sum, but given that we're in the home stretch of purchasing a tract priced at over \$1.5 million and another for over \$9.4 million, I hope you'll allow me some latitude.

A TALE OF TWO FREDERICKSBURGS

For the Union, it was the worst of times. It was the best of times.

The end of 1862 was a time of significant change for Union forces. Following his failure to pursue Gen. Robert E. Lee in the wake of the Battle of Antietam, Gen. George McClellan was relieved of his command of the Army of the Potomac. President Abraham Lincoln appointed Gen. Ambrose Burnside in his stead. Urged by Lincoln to move against his opponent quickly, Burnside developed a plan to interpose his army between Lee's forces and the Confederate capital, inciting a battle.

The ensuing fight was one of the most brutal of the war, with more than 200,000 combatants and 18,500 casualties. It witnessed the first opposed river crossing in American military history, where Union troops attempting to cross the Rappahannock River came under heavy Confederate fire, as well as some of the deadliest urban combat of the Civil War.

And the 7.5-acre tract we are hoping to make the final payment on was closely connected to the action. If you take a quick look at your map (enclosed), you'll see that it's located right on the eastern slope of Lee's Hill, which was known as Telegraph Hill during the war.

In December of 1862, Telegraph Hill acted as Lee's headquarters as well as an important observation and artillery location for the Army of Northern Virginia.

Generals Robert E. Lee, James Longstreet, Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson, and Lafayette McLaws were just some of the commanders who stood upon Telegraph Hill during the First Battle of Fredericksburg. It was here that Lee uttered the famous phrase, "*It is well that war is so terrible, otherwise, we should grow too fond of it.*"



Telegraph Hill served as Gen. Robert E. Lee's headquarters during the First Battle of Fredericksburg.

© Melissa Winn, American Battlefield Trust

Indeed, the First Battle of Fredericksburg was a painful loss for the Union. But it wasn't the last time this land would see combat.

The Second Battle of Fredericksburg was a different story. In April of 1863, the new commander of the Army of the Potomac, Union Gen. Joseph Hooker, split his forces into three parts, leaving one in the vicinity of Fredericksburg to hold the Confederates in place, while the other wings moved toward the Confederate rear.



Gen. Robert E. Lee
© Library of Congress



Gen. Joseph Hooker
© Library of Congress

Lee promptly responded by dividing his forces to meet these threats, leaving some 56 cannons and 11,000 soldiers at Fredericksburg to hold the Federals in place, while he and “Stonewall” Jackson led the remainder of the army west to thwart Hooker.

The forces remaining in Fredericksburg were not enough. On May 3, 1863, Union troops overwhelmed Lee's rear guard in the Second Battle of Fredericksburg. Once the Union regiments seized Telegraph Hill, they placed their own batteries on Telegraph Road and shelled the Confederate position on Marye's Heights to the north.

While the battery position is not known with certainty, it's possible these Union batteries were positioned on the 7.5 acres that we are on the cusp of saving!

The historic value of this land has been rightly recognized for decades, and not only by us. The National Park Service erected interpretive signage on Lee's Hill way back in 1962, and this tract is in plain view of that and other Park Service exhibits.

Our quest to save the 7.5-acre Fredericksburg battlefield tract has been going on for several years and is about to come to fruition — thanks to you! — and now we have the chance to make the final payment to save it forever.

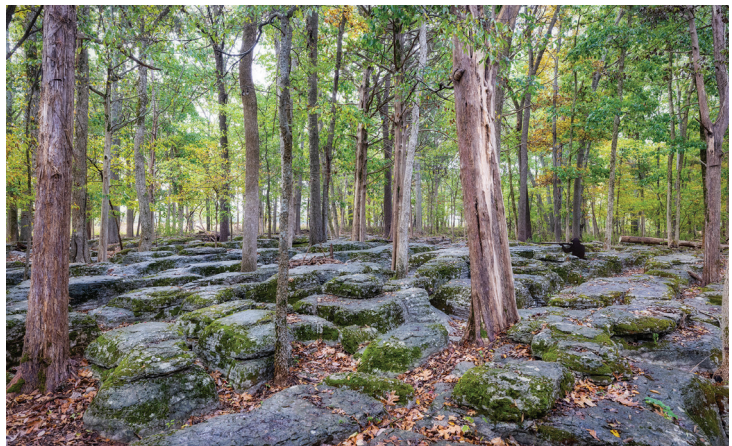
In addition to the impressive Fredericksburg tract, we also have the chance to save 38 acres at Stones River.

The tract at Stones River witnessed some of the critical opening moments of the battle. The day after Christmas 1862, Gen.

William S. Rosecrans' Army of the Cumberland departed Nashville with 44,000 men marching toward Confederate Gen. Braxton Bragg's Army of Tennessee at Murfreesboro, 30 miles to the southeast.

But the cautious Rosecrans left some 40,000 men in and around the Tennessee capital to guard his communication and supply routes, creating an opportunity for Bragg to defeat part of the Union force.

At dawn on December 31, 1862, Confederate brigades under Generals Lucius E. Polk and Bushrod Johnson collided with Col. Sidney Post's Union troops on this tract.



The Battle of Stones River began on the last day of 1862 and became one of the bloodiest conflicts of the Civil War.

© Rob Shenk, American Battlefield Trust

A fierce struggle raged on this ground until Post's men finally broke and retreated. Though it lasted less than 30 minutes, the cost was high. Confederate Gen. Bushrod Johnson reported that "More than half of the whole loss of this brigade, in my opinion, occurred in this conflict." In fact, of the major battles in the Civil War, Stones River had the highest percentage of total casualties.

Ultimately, the bloody Union victory set the stage for campaigns into the heart of the Confederacy while invoking a much-needed northern morale boost and support for the Emancipation Proclamation, which had taken effect two days earlier.

My friend, we have the chance to save this hallowed ground, one of the single largest undeveloped tracts remaining on the Stones River battlefield! For years, the family that owned this land was approached by developers to sell it for residential subdivision development, but the family wanted to see it preserved and gave us a chance to buy it. However, if we don't purchase it now when we have the opportunity, it will be gone forever.

So please consider making one more gift before the year's end so we can finalize the purchases of these two tracts of battlefield history — and finish out 2025 saving 45.3 more acres of hallowed ground.

The holiday season of 1862 was not a joyous one for the brave combatants of First Fredericksburg and Stones River, but now, 163 years later, we can honor their passion and commitment during this holiday season.

Please give what you can to help secure these two pieces of hallowed ground. You can use the envelope enclosed or make a secure gift online at battlefields.org/valor. Think of it as a present to future generations and to our nation itself.



With warmest regards and best wishes for a joyous holiday season,

David N. Duncan

David N. Duncan
President

P.S. With your help, we are just one final payment away from saving a key piece of twice-hallowed ground at Fredericksburg — forever. And with Stones River under threat, we have a rare chance to protect both sites for just a fraction of their value.

Please send your gift today to help us cross this finish line, honor the valor shown on these fields, and give future generations the chance to walk in the footsteps of history!