



AMERICAN
BATTLEFIELD
TRUST ★ ★ ★

PRESERVE. EDUCATE. INSPIRE.

It could be said that loss is the wages of war. And long after the guns fall silent, what lingers is the painful knowledge that perhaps something more could have been done to avoid calamity. Today, two hallowed battlefields face imminent threats — and if we don't do all we can now, I know we will regret it.

Please help save 155 acres of sacred ground forever — and your gift will be matched \$27-to-\$1!

Dear Friend and Fellow Preservationist,

Few things in life weigh heavier than hindsight.

After the 1863 Battle of Bristoe Station, Gen. Robert E. Lee was so angry about the defeat and the unnecessary loss of life in the brutal fighting that he reportedly ordered Gen. A.P. Hill to *“Bury these poor men and let us say no more about it.”*

The following year, Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's assaults at Cold Harbor saw nearly 7,000 Union casualties. More than 20 years after the war, the attack was still with Grant. He reflected on it painfully, writing: *“I have always regretted that the last assault [at Cold Harbor] ... was ever made,”* adding *“no advantage whatever was gained to compensate for the heavy loss we sustained.”*

It's no wonder they both looked back with such deep regret. Both battles were devastating. Thousands fell wounded or died. For many commanders who ordered failed assaults, the feelings of intense regret haunted them for the rest of their lives.

I have never commanded men in battle, as they did. But over the years I have known a thing or two about looking back and wondering if more could have been done. Every time we have tried and failed to save threatened battlefield land, either by being outbid or simply outmatched by huge corporate forces, I have carried regret and disappointment for the loss of our history. **Because once these places are lost and destroyed, they may be gone forever.**

I tell you all this because today two significant tracts at Bristoe Station and Cold Harbor in Virginia are facing threats as urgent as any I have seen.

At Bristoe Station, 152 acres of battlefield land have already been approved for a residential subdivision development, and if we don't act now, it will be lost forever. At Cold Harbor, a vulnerable three-acre tract could soon disappear beneath some new McMansion if we do not acquire it while we can.

Here's the situation: The combined price for these 155 acres is high — more than \$8.7 million. But the good news is that we have already received a generous donation from the Bristoe Station landowner, as well as federal and state grant awards. Now, **we only need to raise \$328,000** before the closing dates this fall to ensure these two sacred tracts are preserved forever.

But we cannot do it without your help!

Knowing every dollar you give will be matched by a \$27-to-\$1 multiplier, will you please consider sending your best gift today?

It is one thing to lose irreplaceable battlefield land because the seller wasn't willing or even interested in preserving the battlefield's history. There's not much we can do if they won't even talk to us. But it's quite another to have willing and generous sellers, and to have most of the funding lined up, but still fall short. That's a scenario I cannot even allow myself to consider.

That's why I hope you'll help today.

Let me tell you more about both of these tracts now, and why it is so important that we save them from development and destruction.



Battle of Bristoe Station drawing by Alfred R. Waud (1863). © Library of Congress

The Bloody Battle at Bristoe Station

The tract we have the chance to save today at Bristoe Station saw action two separate times during the Civil War — the first time in the lead-up to the August 1862 Battle of Second Manassas and the second time in the Battle of Bristoe Station, which one may argue marked the conclusion of General Lee's last major offensive.

On October 14, 1863, Confederate Gen. A.P. Hill believed he had caught a retreating Union army, vulnerable and disorganized near Bristoe Station in Virginia. Eager to strike, Hill ordered an immediate assault.

But the Union troops were ready. Hidden behind an Orange & Alexandria Railroad embankment, they unleashed devastating fire into the advancing Confederates. Brigade after brigade was decimated as they surged forward. In just a short time, Hill's forces suffered roughly 1,300 casualties.

The attack had failed disastrously.

Even Gen. Lee — no stranger to battlefield bloodshed — was furious at the reckless loss of life. When Hill admitted to Lee, “I am convinced that I made the attack too hastily,” he responded angrily, “*Well, General, bury these poor men and let us say no more about it.*”

The parcel we have the chance to save today is a large one — 152 acres — which will add substantially to the preserved land on the Union side of the battle lines. In addition to troop movements and a Union battery, the tract also became a makeshift hospital during the battle, as Union surgeons and hospital stewards tended to the wounded.

Today, this hallowed ground is threatened by a residential development, already approved for construction. If you’ve had the chance to visit Bristoe Station Battlefield Park, you’ve probably seen the residential and commercial development pressing up against the northwestern part of the battlefield.

If we fail to act now, the fields where the Confederates’ doomed advance was repulsed and where some of the fallen are likely still interred could disappear beneath streets, driveways, and modern houses forever. And heartbreakingly, it sits near another battlefield tract lost to warehouse development.

I still regret that we didn’t get that tract, despite years of effort from the Trust and its local preservation partners. It’s another piece of history lost. I do not want to have any regrets about this opportunity.

That is why I am asking for your help today.

I know I would regret it if you and I didn’t do everything in our power to preserve this hallowed ground now.

Gen. Grant’s Regret at Cold Harbor

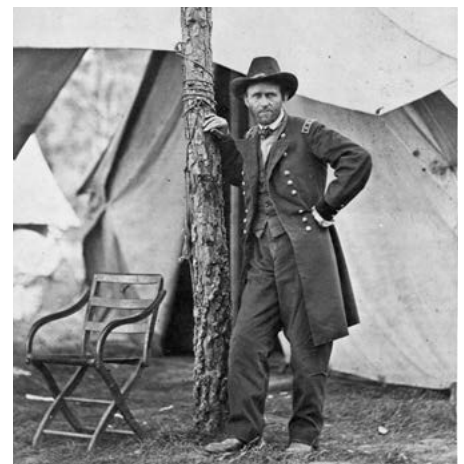
Eight months later, Lee’s army found itself fending off Federal forces outside of Richmond, near the crossroads at Cold Harbor. It’s like a larger Bristoe Station, in reverse — the Union Army would experience devastating losses in the face of the entrenched Confederate lines.

On June 3, 1864, after weeks of brutal fighting across Virginia, Gen. Ulysses S. Grant ordered a massive assault against the heavily fortified Confederate positions at Cold Harbor. Many Union soldiers reportedly sensed what was coming.

*It was among **the most lopsided slaughters of the Civil War** — and it happened here, on this tract.*

Today, if you drive into the battlefield park at Cold Harbor and go past the visitors’ center, you will see a house, built in the 1970s, that stands oddly out of place on Civil War battlefield land. Confederates in 1864 occupied breastworks nearby the tract and the line quite possibly touched the land we hope to save.

On your battle map, you can see the tract, positioned between Union and Confederate battle lines. From June 3 to June 12, the tract separated the opposing lines by as little as 200 feet — *close enough for troops to hear each other’s voices across the divide.*



General Ulysses S. Grant at Cold Harbor.
© Library of Congress

As Union forces began their planned attack on the morning of June 3, troops from Gen. George J. Stannard's "Star Brigade" became pinned down near the northwestern corner of the property, losing 500 of the brigade's 1,600 men. One regiment — the 25th Massachusetts — suffered a 73% casualty rate and saw 17 of 20 officers fall before the Confederate artillery. Reports indicated that a few soldiers were even "burned and blackened" by the Confederate rifles, which likely took place on the very ground the Trust is working to save.

Grant would later admit that *no advantage had been gained worth the terrible cost of the attack at Cold Harbor*. The regret stayed with him for the rest of his life.

Now, this vulnerable three-acre tract at Cold Harbor faces a new assault from modern development pressures.

I'm sure you know that it's not easy to compete with big developers and mega-corporations. But we do ... by going on the offensive. By getting there first. By being strategic. And by pulling together partners, including local preservation organizations, federal and state preservation grant dollars, and amazing individuals like you, to get the money in hand before the developers can snatch our nation's battlegrounds up!

Ultimately, we know the threats won't ever relent. **But we won't ever give up either.** Together, you and I have preserved nearly 63,000 acres of battlefield land, even when the odds have been stacked against us.

Now, I need your help to raise the final \$328,000 we need to save this hallowed ground once and for all. Remember that every dollar you give today will be multiplied in impact by \$27-to-\$1. Use the envelope provided to mail back your donation or go online to battlefields.org/regrets. You can also scan the QR code with your smartphone to make your gift if that's easier.

I'll hope to be able to report to you very soon that we succeeded and saved the land forever ... *with your help*.



With warmest regards,

A blue ink handwritten signature that reads "David N. Duncan".

David N. Duncan
President

P.S. Generals Grant and Lee lived with their regrets knowing they could never undo what happened at Bristoe Station and Cold Harbor. I don't want to look back months or years from now and wonder if there was something else we *should* have done.

P.P.S. Let's make this happen and save 155 acres at these two critical battlefields. Please give your most generous gift now while every dollar will be matched \$27-to-\$1, so together we can save this hallowed ground forever. Thank you in advance for your continued generosity!

To make your gift online, please go to battlefields.org/regrets or scan the code to the right with your smartphone.

