



AMERICAN
BATTLEFIELD
TRUST ★ ★ ★

It's going to be a close call.
127 acres spread across four battlefields can be saved —
but developers are eyeing them, too.

Please help raise the last \$196,000 to see this campaign through —
and have your gift matched ~~\$39-to-~~\$1 when you do!

Dear Friend and Fellow Preservationist,

Most Americans know the outcome of the Civil War. *But not every American knows how many **close calls** there were.*

In each year of the war, there were key battles where the conclusion was far from certain as the fighting raged. We can only wonder how our nation would look today if these battles turned out differently ...

At the American Battlefield Trust, we know a thing or two about close calls, too. Very often, we're in a race to get the funds in hand before a transaction closes, while big developers pursue every angle to stop us in the hope we won't succeed. Thanks to you, we are successful much of the time and secure our history for future generations!

But this one is going to be down to the wire. Right now, we're working to save 127 acres that are spread across four battlefields in the Western Theater. Five properties total. *Together, they span the Civil War.*

Simply put, we can't risk losing them.

The value of these properties tops \$7.5 million. But, thankfully, a number of generous partners, grants, and one large landowner contribution have brought us achingly close to having the funds we need. We have to raise only the last \$196,000 to save all this hallowed ground forever.

You can see how close we are, and what a huge opportunity this is for preservation. But two of the properties close in the next 60 days, so we must move quickly.

We may not have much time, but the good news is that you can make one gift today and have your generosity matched \$39-to-\$1 while helping to save land at these four irreplaceable battlefields: Shiloh and Stones River in Tennessee, Dallas in Georgia, and Spanish Fort in Alabama.

I truly hope you'll give today. But I don't ever take your generosity for granted. So, I'd like to thank you for supporting this critical campaign in a very special way. Give \$62 or more now, and you can choose to receive a special 2026 preservation edition of *Attack at Daylight and Whip Them: The Battle of Shiloh, April 6–7, 1862*, a gripping book by historian Gregory A. Mertz, as your free gift.

Longtime friends may remember the Trust has offered this book as a “thank you” before. It was so popular that we’re bringing it back in a special limited edition print run. If you’re lucky enough to already have a copy, you can choose to receive another today and give it as a gift during the holidays or share it with a young person to help ignite a passion for America’s history.

Now, let me tell you about how these remarkable battlefields are linked and about the close calls that they witnessed more than 160 years ago. Starting with Shiloh, Tennessee ...

The Battle of Shiloh

By the early spring of 1862, the Western Theater of the Civil War had become a bright spot for the North. Victory at Fort Henry, the Confederate surrender at Fort Donelson, the capture of Nashville, along with massive territory gains west of the Mississippi, had forced Confederates to come to terms with the major disadvantages they faced in the west.

Their numbers were smaller. But their hopes remained high. Confederate Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston believed a surprise attack could work against Union Gen. Ulysses S. Grant and his men, who had gathered on the banks of the Tennessee River at a spot called Pittsburg Landing.

Those early hours at Shiloh were a close call. Johnston and his Confederate troops got off to a rocky start but still managed to drive back a large part of Grant’s army. The fighting lasted all through the first day of battle, but Johnston was mortally wounded and Grant was able to stabilize his line. Reinforced, Grant’s plan was to “*Attack at daylight and whip them.*” He struck back the next morning, inflicting a terrible defeat upon the Confederates. Casualties exceeded 23,700, making the fighting that began at Pittsburg Landing the costliest in United States history up to that point — by far.

The two tracts we’re fighting to save at Shiloh were right at the heart of the action on that first day of fighting. Together, they total nearly 32 acres. Both border battlefield acres you and I have already saved. In fact, the Trust has saved most of this section of the battlefield over the years.

This hallowed ground must be saved! And we must act now to see it preserved for all time!

The Battle of Stones River

Almost nine months later, at Stones River, Tennessee, fierce fighting broke out just a few days after Christmas. And just like at Shiloh, it was initially a close call.

The night before the battle, on December 30, 1862, the two armies gathered near Murfreesboro within a half mile of one another, with Confederate Gen. Braxton Bragg and his Confederate Army of Tennessee holding the advantage.

Both he and Union Gen. William Rosecrans planned to strike his opponent’s right flank — *but while Rosecrans’ army had to cross Stones River to accomplish this goal, the Confederates faced no such obstacle.*



Beneath the quiet trees of Shiloh, cannons mark the ground where Union and Confederate forces fought in April 1862. © Mike Talplacido, American Battlefield Trust

Bragg launched a hammerlike attack that drove back Rosecrans' stubborn force. But just like earlier that year at Shiloh, these U.S. forces were able to regroup in a solid line of blue, with muskets and powerful artillery blazing. Bragg's forces tried but failed to make further gains, and their early momentum was lost. The Union troops eked out a victory at Stones River, which boosted morale in the North and gave the Federals control of Middle Tennessee. It didn't come without a cost, however — of all the major battles in the Civil War, Stones River had the seventh-highest number of casualties, nearly exceeding the losses at Shiloh, and a staggering 32% casualty rate for those involved.



Among the rocky woods of Stones River, Union and Confederate forces clashed in one of the Civil War's most costly battles. © Rob Shenk, American Battlefield Trust

We have the chance today to save hallowed ground at Stones River where so many soldiers fought and died. The tract, which consists of 30.5 acres, witnessed Union and Confederate combat and maneuvers on the morning of the first day. It is also adjacent to land you and I are already working to preserve! Developers are itching to acquire this land for residential development. But we can't let that happen. By saving this land, there could be an opportunity to connect previously saved battlefield land with trails and install additional on-site interpretation — a huge win for all of us who care not only about saving our history, but also ensuring all future generations can learn from it as well. **Will you help me save it today?**

The Battle of Dallas, Georgia

Fast forward nearly 17 months from the Battle of Stones River. Vicksburg had fallen, Chattanooga had been captured by Union forces, Gen. Grant was in command of all U.S. armies, and Gen. Bragg had been removed from Confederate command.

On May 28, 1864, Confederate Gen. Joseph E. Johnston was trying to halt Gen. William T. Sherman's advance toward Atlanta. Johnston hoped he had the chance for victory against what he believed was a weakened Union flank in motion at Dallas, Georgia.



General William T. Sherman



General Joseph E. Johnston

Despite some initial Confederate success, the Federals had more men and beat back early assaults before inflicting a three-to-one casualty rate on those in the main Southern assault. The Confederates lost another chance to regain momentum in the Western Theater.

Captain Francis DeGress's four-gun Battery H, 1st Illinois Light Artillery, occupied the ridgeline position on the target property. The still-visible infantry trenches around DeGress's battery were dug and occupied by Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, and Ohio regiments of the Fourth Division, XV Corps. **Plows and bulldozers from residential developers could destroy these earthen remnants of war.** We must act now to preserve them forever!

The Battle of Spanish Fort and Fort Blakely

Finally, we turn to our fifth and final tract at Spanish Fort, Alabama. In 1864, Confederate hopes to turn the tide had been dimming. Mobile Bay and the City of Atlanta had fallen to Union forces, and Gen. Grant was besieging Petersburg and Richmond. President Lincoln was reelected, ensuring a fight to the finish. Gen. John Bell

Hood met disaster in Middle Tennessee. In early 1865, Sherman marched northward through the Carolinas with impunity and beat Johnston at Bentonville. Richmond and Petersburg were on the brink of falling to Federal forces, and Gen. Robert E. Lee's vaunted army began to melt away.

Still, the fighting was not over. Union troops sought to capture the city of Mobile, Alabama, and drive the rebels out of their final strongholds on the Gulf Coast. Confederate forces at Spanish Fort and Fort Blakely were outnumbered as much as six-to-one but were determined to protect the city.

After nearly two weeks of maneuvers and engagements from March 27–April 9, the Union forces took both forts, and Mobile's mayor surrendered the city without a fight soon after.

With the fall of Mobile, the final outcome of the Civil War was only a question of time. The Confederates would soon surrender; the Union remained intact; and an uneasy process of healing could begin.

But another battle for this 45-acre tract is still raging today. In fact, some of the property nearly became a Walmart! Only a late change in plans by the developer (talk about a close call!) has given us the opportunity to save more land than we anticipated — our first saved land at Spanish Fort, and a huge win for preservation.

As I study these battles that were critical to the ultimate outcome of the war, I often ask myself: how can we honor the brave men, of the blue and gray, who left their homes and farms to risk their lives for a cause greater than themselves? How do we ensure that future generations can learn our nation's full story (including the chapters that unfolded on the lesser-known Western Theater), ponder the close calls, and contemplate the price of freedom?

My friend, at the American Battlefield Trust, we will do it as we always have — by preserving irreplaceable hallowed ground, one acre at a time, with your help. **Please make your best gift now to help save these battlefield lands, knowing the value of your support will be multiplied 39 times.** Mail your gift in the envelope provided or visit battlefields.org/close to contribute online. And know how much your generosity is appreciated!



With warmest regards,

David N. Duncan

David N. Duncan
President



Confederate defenders held earthworks like these at Spanish Fort, Alabama, during the final weeks of the Civil War.
© Mike Talplacido, American Battlefield Trust

P.S. Don't forget the special thank-you gift I'm making available today. Give \$62 or more now, and I'll be honored to send you *Attack at Daylight and Whip Them: The Battle of Shiloh, April 6–7, 1862*, by historian Gregory A. Mertz. Mertz grew up on the Shiloh battlefield, and his book taps into five decades of study and perspective. This is a great addition to your library. I've learned a lot from it, and I know you will, too. **Thanks so much for your prompt and generous reply!**

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

