



AMERICAN
BATTLEFIELD
TRUST ★ ★ ★

The site of the largest cavalry battle
ever fought in North America is under attack.

HELP SAVE 414 NEARLY PRISTINE ACRES AT BRANDY STATION.

Dear Friend and Fellow Preservationist,

I have been staring at the numbers for a new opportunity to purchase 414 acres at Brandy Station in Virginia, and I almost can't believe what I'm about to tell you.

The nearly pristine battlefield land is currently valued at more than \$8 million, but here's the part that shocks me (and I've been doing this a long time) ...

We just need to raise \$62,500 to save this important Civil War battlefield for all time!

I don't know if I've *ever* written to you about an opportunity quite like this one. Just a few years ago, I thought that if we were ever fortunate enough to have the chance to buy and preserve this property, we'd be seeking six or even seven figures in donations. But thanks to expected funding from federal and state grant sources, we need just \$62,500 to complete the acquisition of these 414 acres.

When you think about it, every dollar you can donate is worth \$132! Imagine if somebody offered you a \$1,000 round-trip airline ticket for just \$7.54. You'd probably wonder: what's the catch? I can assure you, today there is no catch, just an incredible chance to preserve American history and hallowed ground.

But preserving battlefield land is only part of the long game.

As you know, saving battlefield land protects it from development. Restoring battlefield land helps visitors understand why it mattered in the first place. And creating a visitor destination, like we are working to do with Virginia State Parks, creates a *permanent* legacy.

Over the years, supporters like you have helped transform Brandy Station. What was once an endangered battlefield became, just two years ago, Virginia's 43rd state park. Together, we've saved land, removed modern intrusions, and restored portions of the battlefield closer to their wartime appearance, allowing visitors to better experience the incredible story that unfolded there in 1863.

Yet the work is not finished.

So, in addition to the final \$62,500 needed to save 414 endangered battlefield acres, I ask that you consider helping us fund \$59,563 for restoration work at the battlefield so future generations can experience this landscape much as soldiers saw it more than 160 years ago. That's a total of \$122,063 to permanently protect *and* transform this hallowed ground — a truly exceptional value.

I'll tell you more about this remarkable effort in a moment, but first I want to tell you why I care so much about these acres at Brandy Station, and why I hope you will, too.

Think back to June 1863. Following a stunning victory at Chancellorsville, Gen. Robert E. Lee was preparing for what would become his second invasion of the North. In the early morning hours of June 9, his cavalry commander, the aggressive Gen. J.E.B. Stuart, with his horsemen in Culpeper County, Virginia, prepared to screen Lee's movements for the campaign ahead.



General George Gordon Meade stands tall at right with generals and staff members around him. U.S. cavalry corps commander Alfred Pleasonton wears an overcoat and a tilted hat.
© Library of Congress

For the first two years of the war, Stuart and his Confederate cavalymen had built a formidable reputation. His men were skilled horsemen, many of whom had brought their own mounts into the service, whereas the Union cavalry was inexperienced, and riding unfamiliar, government-issued horses.

But by the spring of 1863, the Union force had reorganized into a true Cavalry Corps. In hindsight, you could say the Union was playing the *long game*, but in reality, it took time for these large units of men to train, for their leaders to become accustomed to the tempo of large-scale cavalry operations, and to improve stabling and equestrian training. By June 1863, they were a dangerous fighting force, and Gen. Joseph Hooker sent his horsemen across the Rappahannock River to find Stuart.

Just before dawn, Union troopers caught the Confederates by surprise, and suddenly thousands of mounted men were fighting across the fields and ridges near Brandy Station in what would become the largest cavalry battle ever fought in North America. For some 14 hours, Union and Confederate horsemen charged and countercharged across the Virginia countryside. Sabers flashed, artillery opened fire, and men fought from horseback and on foot, sometimes at extraordinarily close range. At the center of much of this fighting stood **Fleetwood Hill**, a long ridge that dominated the surrounding landscape and served as Stuart's headquarters.



Fleetwood Hill, the scene of some of the fiercest fighting during the Battle of Brandy Station.
© Bud Hall, American Battlefield Trust

The fighting on and around Fleetwood Hill became so fierce that an area near its northern slope would be remembered as the **“Valley of Death.”** The Battle of Brandy Station ended without a clear victor. But the Union cavalry had stood toe-to-toe with Stuart's celebrated horsemen. The aura of Confederate cavalry invincibility had been broken. Federal cavalymen rode away from Brandy Station with a new confidence — one that would serve them well in the remainder of the **Gettysburg Campaign**.

That is why Brandy Station matters.

And, my friend, that is the ground you and I have the opportunity to save right now.

The largest of the properties before us is approximately 406 acres of remarkably intact battlefield land adjacent to Fleetwood Hill. The ridge itself forms the western border of the property. The nearby second tract is 8.45 acres, and its zoning and proximity to the Culpeper Regional Airport make it highly threatened by commercial development. Together, these 414 acres represent one of the largest unprotected pieces of the Brandy Station battlefield.

To save these tracts for \$62,500 means the cost shakes out to about \$150 per acre. Recently, land nearby that had been purchased for a data center sold for more than **\$900,000 an acre**. By any measure, this is an extraordinary opportunity to preserve historic land at a fraction of its potential market value.

I don't need to be very good at math to know which side of that equation I want us to be on!

If you can send \$150 today, you can help us secure the funding for approximately one full acre of the Brandy Station battlefield. We just need 414 dedicated individuals willing to do that. And if you and 413 other individuals send \$295, you'll save the 414-acre property as well as help return Brandy Station to a landscape visitors can experience and learn from for generations to come.

But if \$150 or \$295 isn't the right amount for you, I hope you will consider \$50 or \$100. Of course, if you can give \$250, \$500, or if you're able to purchase 10 acres by sending \$1,500, I would be tremendously grateful. Whatever amount is right for you, please help.

If you send a gift of \$50 or more, I'll also make sure you receive **our limited-edition Brandy Station Battlefield Challenge Coin**. I hope you'll keep it, and whenever you pick it up, remember that there is a piece of Virginia countryside where American soldiers fought in 1863 that still exists because you helped save it.

I think you should see what has happened at Brandy Station over the years, because it is one of the great battlefield preservation stories in America.



Nearly 40 years ago, dedicated preservationists led by Clark “Bud” Hall and Emanuel “Tersh” Boasberg III became great champions of the Brandy Station battlefield and began fighting to protect it from a series of development threats, from the expected housing developments to our only instance of fighting a Formula 1 racetrack. Time and again, proposals that could have dramatically altered this battlefield were challenged and ultimately defeated.

Hall and Boasberg’s perseverance, combined with the generosity of battlefield supporters across the country, like you, helped lay the foundation for one of the greatest preservation success stories in America. Over the years, acre by acre and tract by tract, Trust members helped save threatened land and restore portions of Brandy Station closer to their historic appearance.

Just this summer, the Trust worked with Virginia State Parks to demolish four non-historic barns and sheds and remove deteriorated equipment, fencing, and debris from the battlefield. Those improvements are part of the same long game that has protected Brandy Station for decades. Saving the battlefield was only the beginning. The larger goal has always been to preserve the landscape and, wherever possible, restore it so visitors can better understand the events that unfolded here in 1863.

As I write to you now, I’m proud to say that we have come a long way, but more restoration work remains ahead to save even more battlefield land and to continue the transformation of Brandy Station for future generations.

I can’t emphasize enough the importance of restoring the hallowed ground we’ve worked so hard to preserve — the before-and-after at Brandy Station is an incredible picture and a testament to what restoring historic land can do. I’ve included a map to show the difference.

Today, so much of the battlefield land that could have been covered with office buildings, roads, or a Formula 1 racetrack is open and available to all who want to walk it and study it. Fleetwood Hill itself has been saved. And in 2024, when I had the privilege of speaking at the grand opening of Culpeper Battlefields State Park, I looked around and told the people gathered there, ***“We are standing on the site of a miracle.”*** It’s true!

I knew what almost happened to Brandy Station and how many years people had worked to prevent it. And I knew that without generous preservationists and history buffs like you and me — people who donated \$25, \$50, \$100, \$500, and sometimes much more when the opportunity arose — much of what we were looking at that day would probably have been lost.

To me, that is the real “long game” of battlefield preservation. Sometimes you simply have to keep at it. You save one tract ... then another ... A developer comes along and you fight ... You wait years for another landowner to become willing to sell ... You apply for grants ... You raise the money ... You get disappointed ... You try again ... And little by little, year after year, something that once seemed almost impossible begins to happen: **You put a battlefield back together and restore it where needed.**

This is why I’m writing to you about these 414 acres. I told you at the beginning of this letter that the numbers are remarkable, and I wasn’t exaggerating. The value of these properties is more than \$8 million, but we need only \$62,500 to acquire this historic land. And if we can secure another \$59,563, we can continue the restoration work that has already helped transform Brandy Station from threatened land into an extraordinary place of learning, reflection, and remembrance.

Together, that means raising \$122,063 to protect this battlefield and continue returning it to the appearance of 1863.

We’re so close, but in the words of famous baseball legend Yogi Berra, *“It ain’t over til it’s over.”* Developers are waiting to pounce if we come up short or falter even a bit. After nearly 40 years of fighting to save Brandy Station, I don’t want us to get within \$62,500 of protecting another 414 acres and come up short. I know you don’t either.



Both Union and Confederate forces encamped around Brandy Station in 1862-1864. © Library of Congress

There's one other favor I'd like to ask.

You'll notice that I've included a few questions for you on the reply form. Please take a minute and answer them. I really do want to know what you think. Tell me which kinds of development worry you most and why saving places like Brandy Station matters. Your input will help shape the preservation battles ahead.

And while you have that reply form in your hand, I hope you'll make the most generous gift you can to help us reach our goal of \$122,063. If you are unable to make a donation at this time, I ask that you still return your survey so we can have your answers.

Bud Hall once reflected on the moment preservationists secured threatened land at Brandy Station. Standing on Buford's Knoll, he realized he no longer had to sneak onto the property. The land had been saved.

He later told visitors they were standing on ground once slated for development until ordinary citizens said, *"No, thank you. We don't want that to happen, and if you want it to happen, we're going to fight you. And we prevailed in the end."*

I love that story because, in the end, that is what battlefield preservation looks like. It isn't really about transactions and grants and deeds. That is how we get it done, of course, but they're not why we do it. We do it so the ground will still be there 25 years, 50 years, 100 years from now, and a father can bring his daughter to Brandy Station, a park ranger can lead a tour, and a Civil War buff can walk out onto Fleetwood Hill with a map tucked under his arm and look across the fields and finally understand why this ground mattered.

They'll be able to stand at Brandy Station and picture what happened there because people like you and me decided it was worth saving. **Please help me finish this.** Brandy Station has taken decades, but when I look at what was threatened all those years ago, and then look at what has been saved today, I know the *long game* has been worth it.

Now we have 414 more acres within our reach, and \$122,063 standing between us and another extraordinary victory for preservation.

Together, we can save endangered battlefield land, continue restoring the historic landscape, and ensure that future generations experience Brandy Station as something more than dots on a map or words in a history book.

Let's finish the job.



'Til the battle is won.

David N. Duncan
President



Rolling hills and patches of trees characterize much of the ground around Brandy Station. © Library of Congress

P.S. I keep coming back to these numbers because they really are remarkable. More than \$8 million worth of battlefield land can be permanently protected if we raise the final \$62,500 needed for acquisition. At the same time, another \$59,563 will help continue the restoration work that has already transformed Brandy Station over the last several decades. Please make your most generous gift today. If you give \$50 or more, I'll send you our Brandy Station Battlefield Challenge Coin with my thanks.

P.P.S. When you look at the enclosed map and see what preservationists like you have helped save at Brandy Station over nearly four decades, I think you'll understand why this opportunity means so much to me. We've come too far, and we're too close, not to save these 414 acres and restore others.