

URGENT



AMERICAN
BATTLEFIELD
TRUST ★ ★ ★
PRESERVE. EDUCATE. INSPIRE.

There are just a few weeks left before the end of the year and we have a **12/31 deadline to raise \$100,000 TO SAVE TWICE-HALLOWED BATTLEFIELD LANDS IN FREDERICKSBURG.**

Please make one more tax-deductible gift this year **before we run out of time!**

Dear Patriotic Friend,

Happy holiday season to you, and thank you for being such a strong supporter of the American Battlefield Trust.

Your generosity is creating a proud living legacy that future generations will cherish and learn from.

Honestly, I wish I could tell you that our work for the year was done, and there was nothing left to do but lean back, reflect on our hard work, and celebrate the impact we've made together in 2024. **But I'm afraid we're closing out the year with *one more urgent deadline we simply must meet.***

Here's the situation. It's one you may remember. We were contacted about a year ago and informed that seven and a half acres of *twice-hallowed battlefield* in Fredericksburg was available for purchase — and zoned for 34 townhouses. We had to move swiftly, and didn't have time to raise all the cash we needed to meet the \$1.5 million asking price.

It was a crisis. If we did nothing, the land would fall prey to major residential development, forever destroying the hallowed ground that had witnessed both the First and Second Battles of Fredericksburg. We knew that we were facing a "*Save it or pave it*" scenario.

So, we did what we had to do. We sat down with the property owner, and we drew up a payment plan with \$500,000 due on agreement and a schedule to make the remaining installments, including \$100,000 by year's end. And we all signed on the dotted line.

My friend, I don't regret that decision for one second. We had our eye on this property for years because we knew its enormous significance as the scene of not one, but two Civil War battles. And I'm so grateful to you and every supporter who helped come up with the down payment earlier this year so we could save this land from the bulldozer and the steamroller!

But year's end is now here, and we need to raise **\$100,000** more before December 31st to see the first part of this transaction through. So I'm coming to you now to ask you a huge personal favor. This is the season of giving, and I'm hoping you can make just one more gift this year.

Please make your year-end gift now. There's no better way to commemorate the anniversary of the First Battle of Fredericksburg than to finish what we started and ensure this twice-hallowed ground is permanently protected!

This property is a battlefield preservationist's dream come true.

It's the site of artillery positions, observation areas, and command posts. It's only a short walk from Lee's Headquarters. Just think of the stories this land could tell – stories of valor, of loss, of history being made!

But this property is also a developer's dream come true. If you multiply those 34 lots by the average home sale price in fast-growing Fredericksburg today – just over \$450,000 and climbing – this property would be worth over \$12,000,000 to them! And they are ready to snatch it up in a second if we falter in our obligations.

But I'm confident we won't let that happen. Because you recognize, as I do, why covering this next payment is really a small price to pay for such an irreplaceable piece of America's story.

Let me take a moment to refresh your memory about the history that unfolded on this tract. Two Civil War battles of immeasurable importance took place here on this hallowed land — one a devastating loss for the Union and the second a tactical victory.

THE FIRST BATTLE OF FREDERICKSBURG

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

The ensuing battle was one of the largest and deadliest of the Civil War, with more than 200,000 combatants and 18,500 casualties. It witnessed the first opposed river crossing in American military history, as well as some of the deadliest urban combat of the Civil War.

And the 7.5-acre tract we are working to save today was closely connected to the action.

If you take a quick look at your map, 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, General Lee selected Telegraph Hill as his headquarters and an important artillery and observation point for the Army of Northern Virginia.

Generals Robert E. Lee, James Longstreet, Stonewall Jackson, and Lafayette McLaws are just some of the commanders who stood upon Lee's Hill during the 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."

Just to the east of this tract, on what are now National Park Service lands, Confederate artillery of the Fluvanna Artillery was positioned behind earthen fortifications. Here, the Confederate high command came under fire.



This Battle of Fredericksburg lithograph depicts the first opposed river crossing in American military history. © *Library of Congress*

And this same property, located about 25 yards to the rear of these gun positions, almost certainly served as an area occupied by personnel in support functions for both the artillery and the headquarters!

As you know, the First Battle of Fredericksburg was a decisive Confederate victory. But it wasn't the last time this land would see combat. Instead, the battle served as a catalyst for another Federal command change within Lincoln's principal army, while setting the stage for the campaign in northern Virginia in the spring of 1863.

Which means just a few months later, more bullets would fly, and history would be made — again — on this very battlefield.

THE SECOND BATTLE OF FREDERICKSBURG

In April of 1863, the new commander of the Army of the Potomac, Union Gen. Joseph Hooker, split his army into three elements, leaving one in the vicinity of Fredericksburg to hold the Confederates in place, while his other wings cut into their rear.

Lee promptly responded by splitting 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 forces overwhelmed Lee's rear guard at 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 quite possible these Union batteries may have overlapped with the trenches that we are tasked with saving!



General Robert E. Lee selected Telegraph Hill as his headquarters and observation point for the Army of Northern Virginia during the First Battle of Fredericksburg.

© Melissa Winn, American Battlefield Trust

OUR BATTLE TODAY

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.

Yet it's entirely unprotected and always has been. For all these years, the property owners have lived on it, but now, for the first time, the land can be preserved forever.

But the alternative — the 34 townhouses I mentioned to you before — paints a very different picture.

Just imagine for a moment how building 34 houses on this twice-hallowed land would destroy the sanctity of the land — paving and plumbing and digging basements and roads would be completely irreparable. It would rob generations to come of the irreplaceable history that unfolded on this land.

That's why we did what we did. We signed on the dotted line, and we made a promise. And now we have to keep our word, and make our payments, to secure the land forever.

I know it often feels like we are battling it out for the soul of our nation, that our history is under siege.

But in the end, the victories we'll secure will help to save these outdoor classrooms for all future generations while honoring those who fell on both sides, defining America's story.

At least, that's my dream for the future. Right now, I have an urgent 12/31 deadline to raise \$100,000, and that's only a few weeks away.

And I'm counting on the help of our best supporters like you.

Please give what you can. Your year-end gift to American Battlefield Trust isn't the kind you can wrap in pretty paper or tie with a bow, but it might be one of the most important gifts you make. **Thank you so much!**

In closing, I'd like to send you my best wishes for the season. I hope your plans for the new year will include taking trips to see some of the battlefield lands that you've helped to save!



With warmest regards,

David N. Duncan

David N. Duncan
President

P.S. My team and I used to point to this very tract and promise each other that if it ever became available, we would be the ones to buy it. It almost slipped away. When I saw that it could be developed for 34 townhouses, I was crushed. But thanks to your generosity, we secured it. And now, by raising the needed funds, we can put it on the path to be saved forever!



On this hallowed ground, the Union suffered about 12,500 casualties (killed, wounded, or captured), while the Confederates suffered approximately 6,000 casualties.

© Chris Landon, American Battlefield Trust

*Can I count on you to help?
Will you please make one more gift this
year so we can make this critical deadline?*