



AMERICAN
BATTLEFIELD
TRUST ★ ★ ★

Virginia was the site of approximately one-third of all the Civil War battles. Today, the fight continues to save our hallowed ground. Can I count on you to help?

Dear Patriotic Friend,

Sometimes, fate is on our side. Allow me to explain.

Last month, Tom Gilmore, Chief Land Preservation Officer at the American Battlefield Trust, was driving home from a meeting at one of the Civil War battlefields in Virginia and took time to drive through the Malvern Hill battlefield. It's a beautifully preserved historic landscape, where your generosity has already saved more than 1,400 acres. But to his surprise, he noticed a backhoe sitting on what appeared to be a section of the battlefield.

Trees had been cut down. Land had been cleared. It was obvious the area was being leveled for construction. At first, Tom told me, he thought he was imagining things. This land was already protected, or so he thought. He spotted a "For Sale" sign on the property and dialed the number on it.

The real estate agent told Tom the 2-acre property borders the Malvern Hill battlefield, but it was privately owned and had just sold to a developer who was planning to construct a half-million-dollar home on it. Sure enough, the prototype of the home was shown on their website. I've included the advertisement for you to see for yourself.

But, lucky for us, the developer was convinced to sell this hallowed ground for preservation.

My friends, that was a close call. Too close! A new house on that area of the battlefield would have been devastating. Today, when you look across the expansive Malvern Hill battlefield, you can visualize the intense battle that unfolded there, where the Union Army fought and was ultimately able to hold off Confederate forces after a series of losses. This was a significant moment in the war and had major implications for the Peninsula Campaign of 1862.

However, had this house been built, it's the only thing you would see from every angle on the southwestern edge of the battlefield. And all I'd be thinking is, "How could we have let this happen?"

That's why I'm reaching out to you urgently. Today — with the help of a dedicated preservationist who helped facilitate this transaction — we have the opportunity to save these two hallowed acres at Malvern Hill, plus 208 more acres on four more tracts from three additional battlefields in Virginia — but only if we raise the funds in time!



Image of proposed new house to be constructed next to Malvern Hill

The total value for this irreplaceable historic land is more than \$2.7 million, but fortunately, every dollar you are able to donate toward that goal will be **multiplied by \$6.44**, thanks to the anticipated government matching grants from the Commonwealth of Virginia, the federal government, committed partner groups, and some very generous supporters. The bottom line is: We need to raise \$429,500 to forever preserve these battlefield acres.

Think about it: every dollar you contribute today will have nearly **six and a half times** the impact on preserving history and hallowed ground. Please help us save this land by donating today.

After all, we can't always count on luck.

Tom's story is a real-life example of just how vulnerable our battlefields are. Like that section of Malvern Hill, many critical battlefield tracts are privately owned and can pop up for sale at any time without warning and without notice. We must act whenever we can!

This story also underlines the importance of the Trust's vigilance. But no matter how diligently our team works, we can't always count on our staff, volunteers, and local friends being in the right place at the right time. And we certainly can't count on developers being willing to do the right thing to protect history.

What we have been able to count on is you. And I will never take that for granted. Only through the dedication of its steadfast supporters is the Trust able to move quickly and secure at-risk properties. Without your generosity, we don't have a seat at the table, and half-million-dollar homes get built where they shouldn't be.

So, thank you. Thank you for believing in our mission to preserve a vital part of our nation's history. Your support ensures future generations can learn from our past and from the sacrifices of those who came before us.

Four Virginia battlefields, five tracts, and a \$6.44-to-\$1 match to preserve them.

Today, I am once again turning to you for support in protecting America's hallowed ground. We have the opportunity to increase our preservation footprint at five tracts on four Virginia battlefields, ensuring that these acres will be saved for all future generations.

Each of the battlefields represents a major geographic icon of Virginia combat: Malvern Hill and New Market Heights in Richmond, Brandy Station in Culpeper, and New Market in the Shenandoah Valley. The tide of the Civil War flowed through all of these regions, leaving a mark on Virginia's landscapes that remains to this day.

Now let me take a few moments to tell you a little more about the history of each of these battles.

Our first tract is at **Malvern Hill**. Fought on July 1, 1862, this battle marked the final engagement of the Seven Days Battles, pitting Union General George B. McClellan's Army of the Potomac against Confederate General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia near Richmond.

Union forces held an advantageous position on the high ground of Malvern Hill, where they rained overwhelming artillery fire down on the attacking Confederates, who suffered heavy casualties.

Though technically a Union victory, the battle effectively ended McClellan's campaign to capture Richmond. The Confederates still held their capital.

Over the years, and thanks to your dedication, the Trust has saved more than 1,400 acres of battlefield land at Malvern Hill.

In order to acquire this threatened tract, the same two-acre parcel of land Tom Gilmore spied with backhoes at the ready, the Trust must act quickly. We're hoping we can count on you to help raise the funds so we can ensure that all future generations can learn from and explore this beautifully preserved battlefield.

Our next tract is a 100-acre parcel at **Brandy Station**. Here, on June 9, 1863, the Union cavalry came of age. Up to this point in the war, the Confederate cavalry had dominated the field. But at Brandy Station, horsemen under the command of Union General Alfred Pleasonton proved their mettle when they went toe-to-toe with Confederate General J.E.B. Stuart and his men in the largest cavalry engagement of the war.



Brandy Station signal station | *American Battlefield Trust*

Though the battle of Brandy Station resulted in a tactical draw, it represented a turning point in the war, particularly for the Union cavalry, which would move on to play a more vital role in reconnaissance, screening, and fighting for the remainder of the conflict.

This 100-acre parcel of hallowed ground at Brandy Station, like much of the undeveloped battlefield land in Virginia, is being targeted by developers for residential subdivisions, utility-scale solar farms, and massive, monolithic, power-hungry data centers. Make no mistake: developers want this land, and once they get their hands on it, it's gone forever. We cannot allow this to happen.

Now, jump with me about a year further into the war. On May 15, 1864, Confederate forces under the command of General John C. Breckinridge achieved a decisive victory in the Battle of **New Market**.

The Union defeat, with forces led by General Franz Sigel, slowed Federal efforts to control the Shenandoah Valley and stymied one of Grant's sweeping movements designed to stretch Confederate forces to the breaking point. The Battle of New Market famously featured cadets from the Virginia Military Institute who performed well and helped lead Breckinridge to victory, not far to the north of the tract we are working to preserve.

The 3.6 acres at New Market represent a tremendous opportunity not only for preservation, but for battlefield interpretation in the Shenandoah Valley as well. The tract offers a sweeping view from a hilltop and is ideally suited for educational purposes. In our minds, and in the mind of our partner, the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation, this property is a "must-have," and with your help, it will be preserved forever.

Finally, let's turn to our final tracts, two adjacent parcels totaling 104 acres located on the New Market Heights Battlefield. Fought on September 29, 1864, **New Market Heights** was a pivotal engagement during the Siege of Petersburg. Union forces under the command of General Winfield S. Hancock launched a movement toward Richmond that resulted in savage combat at Fort Harrison and New Market Heights. Fort Harrison, a mere 12 miles south of Richmond, fell to Union forces.

New Market Heights pushed the Confederates right up to the breaking point. The larger of the two tracts we are trying to save — 73 acres located up the slope of the hill — is directly in the path of the Union assault, which is where some of the major action happened. Union Colonel Joseph C. Abbott's brigade surged over this land, facing moderate resistance from the Confederate rearguard as they abandoned the heights. Although Union troops made gains, the Confederates established new lines and halted further advance.

At New Market Heights, Union men, black and white, received the Congressional Medal of Honor for their bravery, including Sergeant William H. Carney, who became the first African American soldier to receive the honor. The courage and sacrifice demonstrated by the U.S. Colored Troops challenged lingering doubts about their capabilities and helped pave the way for greater recognition and integration within the Union Army.

Many scholars believe the timely Union victory helped President Lincoln get reelected as well.

Today, the city of Richmond continues to sprawl. It's already swept miles outward to the east, west, and north, and is now spreading further and further to the south, encroaching upon the New Market Heights battlefield.

For many developers, this hallowed ground represents nothing more than prime real estate for new subdivisions and utility-scale solar farms. But the preservation of these two tracts by the Trust and its partner, the Capital Region Land Conservancy, will ensure that never happens.

And so, my friend, can I ask once more for your help **preserving hallowed ground in the Commonwealth?**

I don't believe I'm being overdramatic when I say that Virginia is under attack. From Petersburg, Richmond, and Manassas to the Tidewater, the Shenandoah Valley, and beyond, thousands of acres of hallowed ground are threatened by rampant, widespread, unrestrained, and extremely well-funded development from utility-scale solar farms, data centers, warehouse distribution centers, residential, and other commercial development.

Now, I've said it before, and I'll say it again here: The American Battlefield Trust is not anti-development. We understand people need places to live, work, raise families, shop, and enjoy the American Dream.

However, we are absolutely opposed to development on hallowed ground. Developers can move their projects to other sites; we cannot change where America's history happened, and once this ground, hallowed by the blood of those who fought there, is paved over and built upon, it is gone forever.

Each and every day, the Trust fights this battle, but we never fight it alone. We are honored to have the backing of proud Americans like you who recognize the importance of the work we do. Please know how grateful I am for all you have done and for all you are doing to save our nation's hallowed ground at these five sites and others across America.

Thank you, in advance, for once again stepping up to support our work in Virginia and beyond.



With warmest personal regards,

David N. Duncan

David N. Duncan
President

P.S. I've included detailed maps of the properties for you to review. Be sure and take note of the enclosed artistic rendering of the house that was to be built on the Malvern Hill battleground. It's a lovely house, but it doesn't belong on a battlefield. With your help, it's not going to be built on this hallowed ground. Please make your best gift today. Thank you!

P.P.S. If you decide to give today, the timing of your gift couldn't be better! Right now, any contribution you are able to make will be multiplied by a factor of **\$6.44-to-\$1! Don't wait!**