



A soldier guarding cannons at City Point, one of more than 16,000 United States Colored Troops at Petersburg, the largest concentration of African American troops in the Civil War. © Library of Congress

Protect Critical Battlefield History at Petersburg National Battlefield

Civil War battlefields are being destroyed at the alarming rate of 30 acres each day, despite their continued value and meaning to America. Critical battlefield land at Petersburg remains unprotected, allowing our nation's history literally to be paved over. After years of careful study, the National Park Service's 2005 General Management Plan recommends adding 7,238 acres of significant core battlefield land.

The Siege & Defense of Petersburg

In May of 1864, General Grant and the Union army made a series of attacks on the Confederate capital of Richmond, but were continually repelled by the Confederate Army. After a brutal defeat at Cold Harbor, Gen. Grant decided to abandon plans to take Richmond directly, and instead cut off the capital's supply lines by attacking Petersburg, to the south.

After a failed Union attack in early June 1864, troops settled in for what became the longest siege in American military history. The Union army gradually and relentlessly fought to capture the network of railroads feeding into Petersburg, cutting off Confederate supplies. The monotony of the siege was occasionally broken by fierce fighting, including a failed Union plan to blow up a huge underground tunnel dug under Confederate lines. Union patience finally overwhelmed the Confederates in late March 1865. After evacuating Petersburg and Richmond, General Lee surrendered his army at Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865.

In addition to being the longest siege in American history, Petersburg was a milestone for newly-commissioned United States Colored Troops. More than 16,000 USCT soldiers served at Petersburg, the largest concentration of African-American troops in the War.

Preserving Core Battlefield Acreage

Today, the Petersburg National Battlefield protects over 2,500 acres of core battlefield land, including tracts at City Point, Five Forks Battlefield and historic buildings in Old Town Petersburg. Over 213,000 visitors to the battlefield in 2011 spent more than \$11 million and supported over 150 local jobs.

Legislation is needed to permit the NPS to complete the 7,238-acre boundary adjustment to Petersburg National Battlefield as recommended in the NPS' 2005 Final General Management Plan. The additional acreage will protect America's Civil War history at Petersburg; leave a lasting legacy for future generations; and enhance the park's ability to attract visitors.

Contact Information

For additional information, contact:
-Pam Goddard, NPCA's Chesapeake and Virginia Program Manager, at pgoddard@npca.org or 202.454.3365 or
-Alan Spears in NPCA's Government Affairs Office, at aspears@npca.org or 202.454.3384.

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Please Cosponsor Bills to Protect Petersburg Battlefields

President John F. Kennedy stated many years ago, “Actions deferred are all too often opportunities lost, particularly in safeguarding our natural resources.” Present day inaction is resulting in sites of important natural and historical significance that should be included in Petersburg National Battlefield disappearing.

We urge you to cosponsor, and vote to enact, the ‘Petersburg National Battlefield Boundary Modification Act’ that was introduced by Representatives Randy Forbes (VA04) and Robert Scott (VA03) on July 9, 2013.



“LOTS SELLING QUICKLY GET YOURS TODAY” – this new development was recently built on land with historic significance eligible for inclusion in the Petersburg National Battlefield, and adjacent to the park.

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