

**Testimony of Tom Gilmore, Director of Real Estate  
Civil War Trust**

**Before the Committee on Natural Resources  
Subcommittee on Federal Lands  
United States House of Representatives  
Federal Lands legislative hearing on H.R. 87, H.R. 295, H.R. 1621, and H.R. 2817  
February 11, 2016**

**Introduction**

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony to you today. My name is Tom Gilmore and I am the Director of Real Estate for the Civil War Trust. I come before you today to respectfully request that the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Federal Lands support H.R. 87, the Shiloh National Military Park Boundary Adjustment and Parker's Crossroads Battlefield Designation Act.

The Civil War Trust is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving America's remaining Civil War, Revolutionary War, and War of 1812 battlefields. Thanks to the generosity of our 200,000 members and supporters, the Civil War Trust has protected more than 42,000 acres of critically important battlefield land, including 3,307 acres in Tennessee. Additionally, we have preserved more than 700 acres of associated with the Siege of Corinth, Mississippi – a unit of Shiloh National Military Park.

This legislation proposes to expand the boundaries of Shiloh National Military Park to include 2,284 acres of historically significant battlefield land at the Davis Bridge, Russell House and Fallen Timbers Battlefields. It also establishes Parker's Crossroads Battlefield as an affiliated area of the National Park Service (NPS). This legislation does not transfer ownership of any land to the NPS; rather, it provides the NPS with the authority to acquire land, on a willing seller basis, or via donation within the boundary expansion area. This expansion will bring in four battlefields associated with the Battle of Shiloh and the Siege of Corinth, further preserving the historic resources and enhancing the visitor experience.

**The Battle of Shiloh and the Siege of Corinth**

On the morning of April 6, 1862, the Confederate Army launched a surprise attack on the Union Army under General Ulysses S. Grant at Pittsburg Landing along the Tennessee River. After some of the most intense fighting yet seen in the War, the Confederates pinned the Union Army against the river by nightfall. After the arrival of reinforcements that evening, the Union launched a counterattack on April 7, fully reversing the Confederate gains of the previous day. In the end, the two-day Battle of Shiloh produced more than 23,000 casualties – the bloodiest battle of the war to that point.

Following Shiloh, the Union Army advanced toward the vital city of Corinth, Mississippi, repulsing Confederate forces along the way. The Federals laid siege to the city, which fell after a protracted struggle on May 30, 1862. Attempts by the southerners in October to retake the city failed, allowing the Union Army to use Corinth as its base of operations for the Vicksburg Campaign, which ultimately divided the Confederacy in two along the Mississippi River. The battlefields of Davis Bridge, Russell House, Fallen Timbers and Parker's Crossroads all played a role in Shiloh and Corinth campaigns of 1862.

**Preservation Efforts at Shiloh**

The establishment of Shiloh National Military Park in 1894 was the first major step in preserving the battlefield land associated with the fighting at Shiloh. Since then, preservation partners and the state and local communities have worked together to protect nearly 4,000 acres of land, including Shiloh National Cemetery.

To date, the Civil War Trust has preserved more than 2,300 acres at Shiloh and nearby battlefields, hallowed ground that could be lost to development if not protected. This total includes 858 acres at Davis Bridge and 350 acres at Parker's Crossroads. Nearly 750 acres at Davis Bridge have been transferred to the State of Tennessee and are preserved as part of Big Hill Pond State Park. In the long term, the Trust and the State of Tennessee hope to transfer these properties to the NPS, to provide tourists with a seamless visitor experience. These battlefields were recognized as nationally significant historic resources in a Congressionally authorized study of priority Civil War battlefields conducted by the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission. The study, completed in 1993, was updated by the NPS in 2010.

### **Living Monuments and Outdoor Classrooms**

America's battlefields, like those associated with the Shiloh and Corinth Campaigns, are irreplaceable parts of our shared national heritage. When preserved, these battlefields serve as outdoor classrooms to educate current and future generations about a defining moment in our country's history. They are living monuments, not just to the men in blue and gray who fought and sacrificed there, but to all who have proudly worn our nation's uniform.

Preserved battlefields are also economic drivers for communities, generating tourism dollars that are extremely important to state and local economies. Battlefield visitors, who typically travel in groups and as part of families, tend to stay longer and spend more than other types of tourists.

### **Conclusion**

The battles of the Shiloh and Corinth campaigns set the stage for the long and bloody struggle that was to come. By expanding the boundary of Shiloh National Military Park to include these four additional battlefields, NPS will be able to better tell the story of the soldiers who fought and died here so that the United States could become the nation it is today. By supporting this legislation, you honor the memory of the men who fought here, and allow their legacies to live on to inspire generations to come.

Mr. Chairman McClintock and Ranking Member Tsongas, I sincerely hope you and your subcommittee will consider reporting this bill out of committee. We look forward to working closely with you as we continue our important work to preserve America's battlefield lands. Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee.

**Testimony of Tom Gilmore, Director of Real Estate  
Civil War Trust**

**Before the Committee on Natural Resources  
Subcommittee on Federal Lands  
United States House of Representatives  
Federal Lands legislative hearing on H.R. 87, H.R. 295, H.R. 1621, and H.R. 2817  
February 11, 2016**

**Introduction**

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony to you today. My name is Tom Gilmore, Director of Real Estate for the Civil War Trust. I come before you today to respectfully request that the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Federal Lands support H.R. 1621, a bill to expand the boundary of Petersburg National Battlefield in Virginia.

The Civil War Trust is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving America's remaining Civil War, Revolutionary War, and War of 1812 battlefields. Thanks to the generosity of our 200,000 members and supporters, the Civil War Trust has protected more than 42,000 acres of critically important battlefield land, including 22,107 acres in Virginia. Of that figure, 2,419 acres are on battlefields associated with the campaign and siege of Petersburg.

This legislation proposes to expand the boundaries of Petersburg National Battlefield to include an additional 7,238 acres of critical battlefield. It provides the National Park Service (NPS) with the authority to acquire land, on a willing seller basis, or via donation within the boundary expansion area, as recommended by NPS in 2005 as part of its Final General Management Plan. This expansion will create opportunities for visitors to access these significant landscapes and resources, allowing the park to convey a more comprehensive Civil War story.

The boundary expansion would include 12 battlefields associated with the Petersburg Campaign of 1864-1865, including Boydton Plank Road, the Crater, Five Forks, Fort Stedman, Globe Tavern, Hatcher's Run, Peebles' Farm, Petersburg-Breakthrough, Reams' Station and White Oak Road. I thank this committee for its previous support of similar legislation in the past, and ask that you report H.R. 1621 out favorably today.

**The Petersburg Campaign**

Some of the heaviest, bloodiest and most consequential battles of the Civil War were fought around the city of Petersburg, as legendary generals Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee struggled to control the critical supply lines into the Confederate capital at Richmond. Over a ten-month period from June 1864 to April 1865, 108 separate engagements covering more than 176 square miles were fought in and around Petersburg. By early April 1865, the depleted Confederate trench lines finally collapsed, allowing the Union army to take control of both Richmond and Petersburg. The remnants of Lee's army fled west, but ultimately surrendered at Appomattox Courthouse on April 9, 1865. These last few days around Petersburg are considered to be among the most critical of the war, and led to the ultimate collapse of the Confederacy and reunification of the United States.

**Threats to the Petersburg Battlefields**

More than 2,500 acres of hallowed ground are currently preserved as part of Petersburg National Battlefield, including portions of the Crater battlefield, Fort Stedman, and Five Forks. However, Petersburg and Dinwiddie County lie in a region of intensive growth, at the intersection of the busy I-95

and I-85 corridors. The National Park faces threats to historic resources from incompatible residential, commercial and industrial development, both inside and outside the existing NPS boundary. Significant battlefields associated with the Petersburg Campaign have already been lost.

Concerned about these threats, NPS developed an *Assessment of Integrity Report* that identified nationally significant battlefield lands critical to the park's mission that lie outside its current boundaries. This report included the 12 significant battlefields, all of which were also recognized as nationally significant historic resources in the 1993 Congressionally authorized study on the status of the nation's Civil War battlefields, the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission Report. This study was updated by the NPS in 2010.

### **Living Monuments and Outdoor Classrooms**

America's battlefields, like those associated with the Petersburg Campaign, are an irreplaceable part of our shared national heritage. When preserved, these battlefields serve as outdoor classrooms to educate current and future generations about the defining moment in our country's history. They are living monuments, not just to the men in blue and gray who struggled in the trenches of Petersburg, but to all who have proudly worn our nation's uniform.

Preserved battlefields are also economic engines, generating tourism dollars that are extremely important to state and local economies. They are heritage tourism destinations, producing revenue through spending at local restaurants, hotels and other visitor-oriented businesses. For example, in Petersburg, a 2012 report by the *Petersburg Progress-Index* noted that more than 175,000 visitors to Petersburg National Battlefield spent nearly \$8.7 million in 2010. The region saw an explosion in visitation during the Civil War sesquicentennial commemoration, with more than 200,000 tourists journeying to Petersburg for the anniversary in 2014.

Legislation to expand these boundaries has broad local support. Resolutions from Dinwiddie County, Prince George County, the City of Hopewell, the Crater Area Planning Commission and Petersburg Area Regional Tourism have expressed approval for this legislation. The Civil War Trust has preserved hundreds of acres of land at six of the twelve battlefields that would be included in the boundary expansion. In the long term, we hope to transfer this property to the NPS, to provide tourists with a comprehensive and seamless visitor experience.

### **Conclusion**

The battles of the Petersburg Campaign are essentially the penultimate chapter of the American Civil War. The 10-month siege ultimately stretched the Confederate lines to the breaking point, leading to a decisive Union victory and the surrender of the South's most effective army at Appomattox Courthouse. These battlefields, like many other battlefields throughout the country, are threatened by rapid growth and development. This legislation would enable NPS, working with private sector groups like the Civil War Trust, to further preserve these irreplaceable battlefields and shrines to American heroism.

Chairman McClintock and Ranking Member Tsongas, I sincerely hope you and your subcommittee will consider reporting this bill out of committee. We look forward to working closely with you as we continue our important work to preserve America's battlefield lands. Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee.