

On Richmond's FRONT LINE

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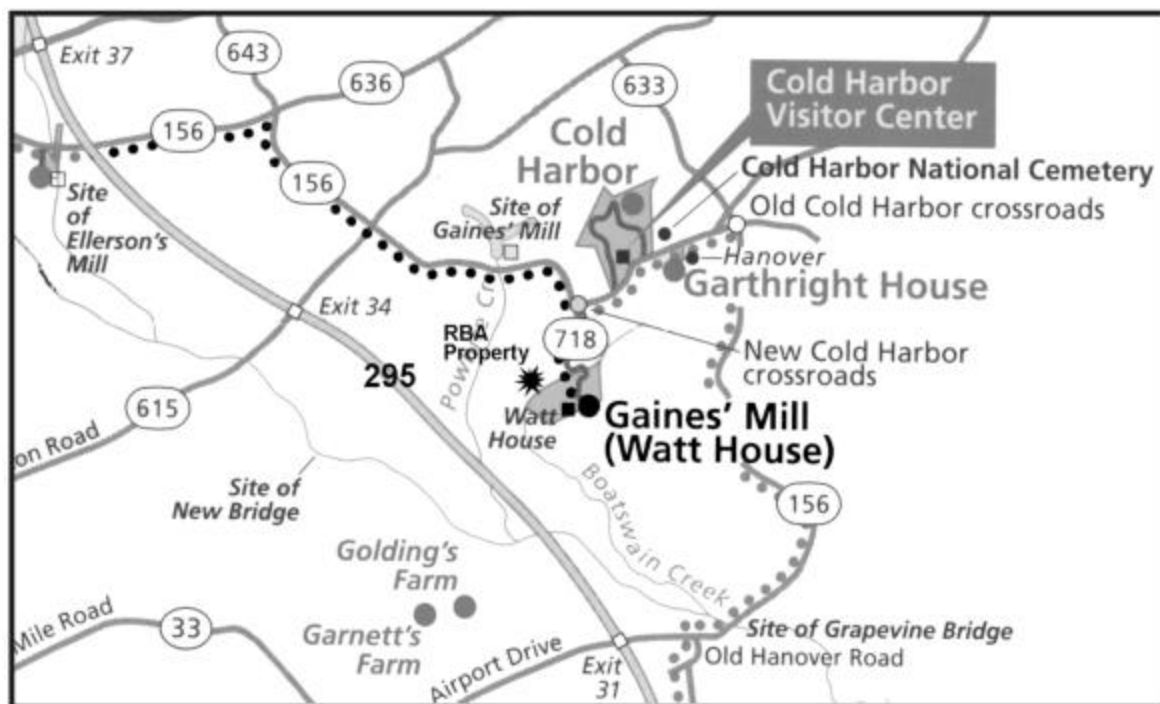
Members will not be surprised to learn that the annual meeting, scheduled this year for Saturday, June 11, will take place on the newly preserved property at the Gaines's Mill battlefield. We will follow the successful formula developed in previous years, with a battlefield walking tour that highlights the new property, followed by the annual business meeting.

National Park Service historian R. E. L. Krick will lead the walking tour. We will meet at the battlefield, on the edge of the RBA property, a few yards north of the National Park Service boundary (see the adjacent map). The walk will cover approximately 1 ¼ miles all told. We'll spend extra time on the RBA property and examine with care the slope where so many Confederate soldiers fell in the series of attacks against the Union position on June 27, 1862. Our tour will make a "combat crossing" of Boatswain's Creek, following in the footsteps of Hood's Texas Brigade and other pieces of the Confederate army. Once across the creek, we'll explore the wooded slopes defended by Union soldiers of Martindale's and Butterfield's brigades.

Once the tour has wrapped up, we will convene again on the RBA property for the business meeting. As always, this will be a good opportunity for members to commune with each other, mingle with the RBA Board of Directors, and enjoy the chance to walk around one of the Civil War's great battlefields.

recommended. We also expect to have a small raffle during the business meeting, with books and related items as the prizes. Come prepared to win something.

This will be a great opportunity to see a critical part of the battlefield not previously accessible. Please make plans to join your fellow preservationists at Gaines's



From the Richmond National Battlefield Park tour map.

The event will run from 9.30 until approximately 12.00 or 12.30. It is free and open to members and non-members alike. Reservations are not required. Some refreshments will be on hand, but please bring along your own, too, especially if the weather is hot. Although most of the walk will be on roads and trails, the middle portion will be through the weeds and woods, so bug and tick spray is

Mill on June 11.

["Personne" was a pen name for

How you can help the RBA

See details on the back page.

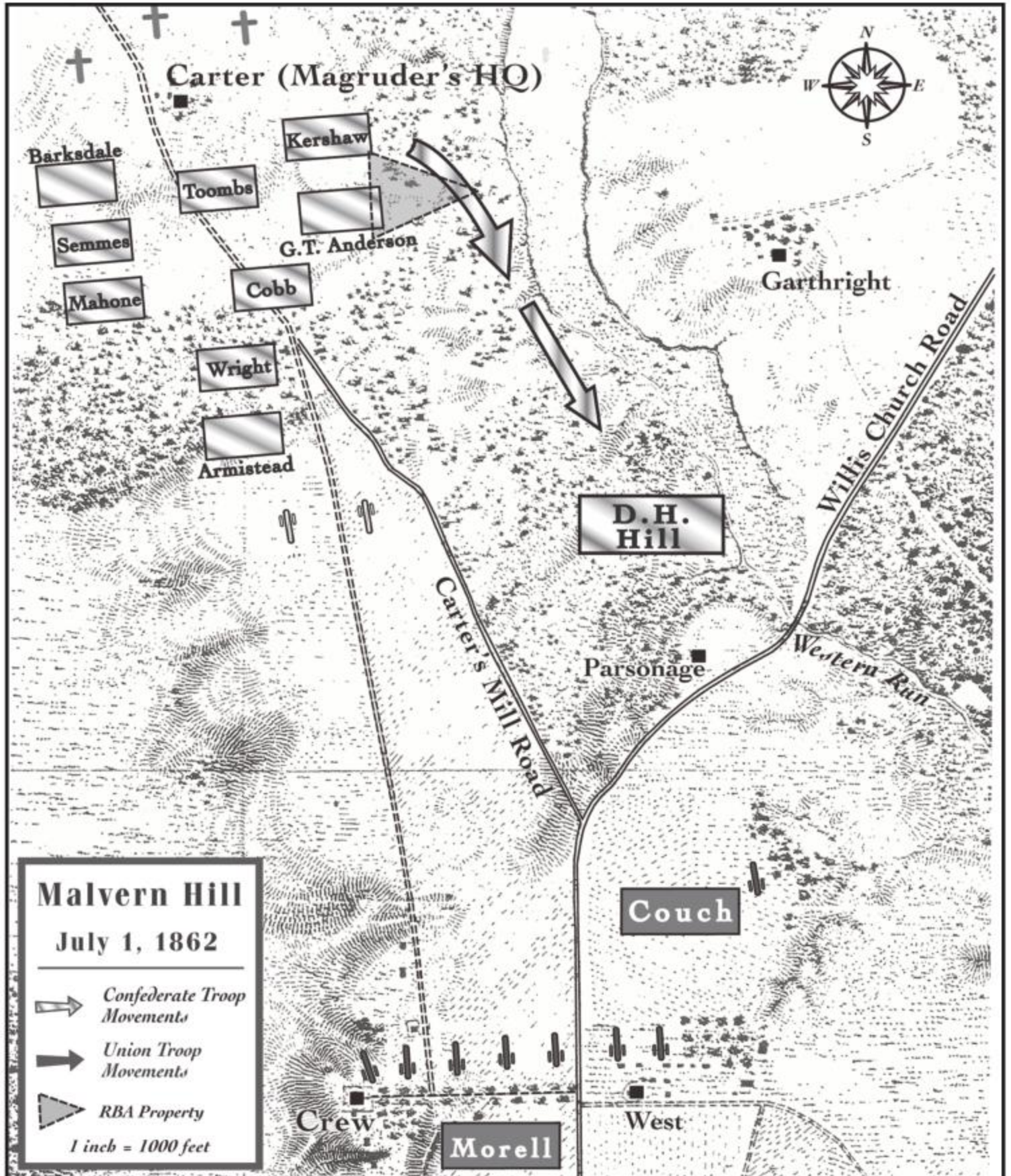
After nearly a year of work, the RBA finally has closed on a 4-acre piece of land at the Malvern Hill battlefield. This particular deal is unlike any other we have attempted, as it was a straight donation from an absentee landowner in Texas. Despite being "free," there were some expenses incurred during the transaction. Fortunately the large bequest directed to the RBA from the Karl Lehr estate, through the Eastern Pennsylvania Civil War

Roundtable, arrived at a perfect time, and a small portion of that generous donation was used to cover the costs of the Malvern Hill work.

The accompanying map shows the location of the parcel. It is within the Confederate attack zone at Malvern Hill, but it does not front on any road. It is wooded today, as it was in 1862. Some of the division of Confederate general Lafayette McLaws moved through

there, under fire, while maneuvering for room on the crowded battlefield.

With at least 1000 acres already protected at Malvern Hill, a 4-acre addition may not inspire many as being major news. But in battlefield preservation every acre does have meaning, and getting this land secured forever certainly beats the alternative, particularly with several fairly new houses existing just to the west.



Felix De Fontaine, who traveled with the Army of Northern Virginia during much of the war, sending in columns to his hometown newspaper. He often provided his readers with substantial eyewitness details, made still more appealing by his eloquent writing style. In fact, other newspapers across the South often picked up the "Personne" pieces, making him in essence a syndicated columnist. His letters to the newspapers did much to shape the Confederate population's view of the war. He wrote several columns about Gaines's Mill, interviewing survivors and walking the ground. Here are excerpts from one of those columns, written on the battlefield on July 17, 1862, just less than three weeks after the battle. Much of what he describes here pertains to the slope leading down to Boatswain's Creek, which includes the ground now owned by the RBA.]

"To attempt to give you a clear, geographical narrative of the events of the day, (Friday, the 27th of June,) would be impossible. The ground is so broken and diversified in its character, that a description embracing the movements of all the troops would be misunderstood, if not totally impracticable. I shall, therefore, ask the reader to accompany me to

the points of greatest interest, and from an examination of these draw his own conclusions as to the nature of the battle in detail....The Division of Whiting had arrived, and with it the famous Texas Brigade of General Hood....From their peculiar position it fell to the lot of the 4th Texas and the 18th Georgia to storm the most difficult part of the works....Forming in line of battle as quickly as possible, the order was given to reserve fire and 'charge.' And charge they did like a resistless torrent that sweeps every thing from its track. Down the hill they go, into the broad ravine, through the *abattis*, over the logs and up the slope, never stopping until they reach the summit....

Strange to say, our own killed were mostly upon the opposite [north] side of the creek, before we arrived at the works....more closely examine the positions occupied by our troops, and you will see that the victory was not purchased without a dear sacrifice. Clusters of graves are under the trees, showing that many of the killed belonging to the various regiments have been buried together, and the little wooden head boards, or rude carvings upon the bark of a limb, to tell the name and command of the dead soldier. Looking among these, you observe that Virginia, North Carolina, Mississippi, Georgia, Texas and Alabama are largely rep-

resented in this locality.

Here are two nameless graves, the resting place of strangers to those by whom their corpses were found. Still their comrades in arms have tried to perpetuate their memory, and to afford some clue to surviving relatives, have written upon a board the following words:

"The graves of two

Confederate soldiers,

names unknown. Upon the person of the man on the right was found a due bill given by D. W. Nance in favor of E. F. Moore. Good for \$5.

Supposed to belong to the Fourteenth Alabama."

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The complete absence of books on the individual battles of the Seven Days Campaign has been a sad reality for nearly 150 years. None of the component actions (Mechanicsville, Gaines's Mill, Savage's Station, Frayser's Farm/Glendale, and Malvern Hill) have received separate book-length treatment. But we can only say that for a few more days. A book on Frayser's Farm/Glendale is due for release at the end of April 2011. The author is named Jim Stempel, and the title is *The Battle of Glendale: The Day the South Nearly Won the Civil War*. It is published by McFarland in North Carolina, apparently will exist in paperback only, and is at the usual bloated McFarland price of \$35. Absolutely nothing else is known about this new volume.

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Last year longtime RBA supporter Bruce Venter donated a free seat on one of his company's Civil War tours. It was raffled off at the annual meeting. This year he again has volunteered to help the organization, though in a slightly different way. On the right is a list of the various history-themed tours his company is offering in 2011, including several on Civil War battles and campaigns. Anytime an RBA member signs up for one of these tours in 2011, Bruce will donate \$25 to the RBA. Obviously you must identify yourself as a dues paying member when you reserve your seat on one of the tours. This is a generous and unsolicited idea from Bruce, and a good way for you to help the RBA. For more details on these specific tours, see the website: americashistoryllc.com or call them at 1-855-OUR HISTORY (687-4478).

2011 Tours

- **Blackbeard and the Pirates of the Chesapeake**
- **Fredericksburg: A Comprehensive Walking Tour**
- **Leatherstocking Tales: The Real Historic Sites of James Fenimore Cooper's Novels**
- **George Washington's Spies**
- **Pontiac's Rebellion in Western Pennsylvania and New York**
- **The Regulars are Coming...**
- **Shiloh: A Comprehensive Walking Tour**
- **The Bristoe Campaign**
- **The Gamecock vs. the Swamp Fox**

Yes! I WANT TO HELP PRESERVE OUR NATION'S HERITAGE, PLEASE SIGN ME UP.

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