

Department of Historic Resources

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STATE HISTORICAL HIGHWAY MARKER

"JOSHUA L. CHAMBERLAIN—PROMOTED 'ON THE SPOT'"
TO BE DEDICATED

—Petersburg marker commemorates Union Civil War hero, Joshua L. Chamberlain, who received a near-fatal wound during fighting in 1864 and was a commander at Appomattox during ceremony at which Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee's army surrendered—

—The marker's text is reproduced below—

RICHMOND – A state historical marker issued by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources commemorating Joshua L. Chamberlain, a Civil War hero for the Union army during fighting at Gettysburg and, later, in the area of Petersburg, earning him a battlefield promotion, will be dedicated in November.

The dedication ceremony for the marker will begin at 1:30 p.m., Saturday, November 8, at the sign's location in front of the Petersburg Public Schools administrative offices, located at 246 E. South Boulevard, Petersburg. The event is open to the public.

Speakers during the ceremony will include Dean Clegg, who spearheaded the effort to create the historical marker; Tim Chamberlain, a descendant of Col. Chamberlain; David Teschner, Rector, Christ and Grace Episcopal Church; and H. Edward Mann, a member of the Governor-appointed Board of Historic Resources of the Department of Historic Resources. Prior to the marker's unveiling, Union Civil War re-enactors will deliver a salute in honor of Chamberlain. Musical contributions also will be provided by the Fort Lee 392nd Army Band.

The unveiling of the marker is part of a weekend of activities scheduled in and around Petersburg to recognize and commemorate the war time exploits of Chamberlain, a native of Maine, and other Union soldiers from the state. “The story of Maine troops during the nine and one-half months of the Battle of Petersburg is one of bravery, tragedy, and fortitude,” according to Mann, who is helping to organize the events, whose sponsors include the City of Petersburg and the Petersburg National Battlefield.

On Friday, November 7, at 7 p.m., Diane Smith, author of “Chamberlain at Petersburg: The Charge at Fort Hell,” will present a talk about Chamberlain at the Eastern Front Visitors Center, Petersburg National Battlefield.

Other events during the weekend will include an introductory overview of the Petersburg Campaign and a battlefield tour, as well as a wreath laying at the First Maine Heavy Artillery Monument on Saturday morning. Beginning at 3:30 p.m. Saturday there will be a tour of the City Point Unit of Petersburg National Battlefield and Cemetery, and in the evening luminaries are scheduled at Poplar Grove National Cemetery. Sunday, November 9, activities will include a tour of Bonneville Farm and other Chamberlain-related sites in Dinwiddie County, with a focus on the Battle of White Oak Road.

For more information on these events, please contact H. Edward ‘Chip’ Mann at h.edwardmann@gmail.com.

The marker for Chamberlain recalls that in the vicinity of the sign’s location, on June 18, 1864, Chamberlain “received a near-fatal wound while leading a Union brigade in a charge against Confederate works defending Petersburg.” As a result, Lt. General Ulysses S. Grant promoted Chamberlain to Brigadier General of Volunteers “on the spot” for “gallant conduct.”

The marker notes that “Chamberlain returned to duty in November and was wounded again in March 1865,” and that on April 12 “at Appomattox he commanded the ceremony

at which the Army of Northern Virginia formally surrendered its arms.” Chamberlain later served as governor of Maine and in 1893 received the Medal of Honor.

The Chamberlain highway marker was approved for manufacture and installation by the Department of Historic Resources in June of this year. The cost of manufacturing the marker is covered by the sponsor, the Chamberlain Highway Marker Fund, which was established by Clegg, a Rochester, NH, resident and a guide at the Chamberlain House Museum in Brunswick, ME.

Virginia’s historical highway marker program, which began in 1927 with the installation of the first historical markers along U.S. Route 1, is considered the oldest such program in the nation. Currently there are more than 2,500 official state markers, most maintained by the Virginia Department of Transportation, as well as by local partners in jurisdictions outside of VDOT’s authority.

Text of the marker:

Joshua L. Chamberlain—Promoted “on the spot”

In this vicinity on 18 June 1864 Col. Joshua L. Chamberlain received a near-fatal wound while leading a Union brigade in a charge against Confederate works defending Petersburg. Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant promoted him to Brig. Gen. of Vols. “on the spot” for “gallant conduct.” Chamberlain returned to duty in November and was wounded again in March 1865. On 12 April at Appomattox he commanded the ceremony at which the Army of Northern Virginia formally surrendered its arms. He was governor of Maine from 1867 to 1871 and received the Medal of Honor in 1893.

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