

## SCENIC 340 PROJECT, INC.

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### For Immediate Release:

A significant but little-known Civil War battlefield at Overall, Virginia, is the subject of a new booklet published this month by Scenic 340 Project, a non-profit, grass-roots preservation group. The author, John B. Rice, Jr. is a member of the group and a Civil War buff. His booklet, The Civil War Battles at Overall, is an in-depth account of two strategically important battles in the autumn of 1864.

This summer, through the efforts of Scenic 340 Project, the battlefield was listed as a Virginia Landmark and was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The September and October battles occurred at the village of Milford, as Overall was called during the Civil War. The village, which straddles the Page-Warren county line, boasted several mills and was a commercial hub on the old Front-Royal-Luray Turnpike, now US 340. The Blue Ridge Mountains to the East of the village and the Shenandoah River to the West, make the area a choke point on the road, thus giving it military value as a natural defensive position.

In a preface to the work, historian Joseph Whitehorne describes the battles as "critical in preventing a [Confederate] defeat from becoming a disaster. He concludes, "The story of 1864 military operations in the Valley is incomplete without an awareness of the events in Milford/Overall. "

Although the 800-acre battlefield is more forested now than it was in 1864, a veteran of the fights would still recognize the place today. Remnants of Confederate trench lines dug into a hillside field can

be still seen from Route 340. All the land in the Milford Battlefield Historic District is privately owned. The majority of the battlefield is protected in perpetuity by voluntary conservation easements donated by landowners.

Meticulously researched and written over a period of four years, Rice's 52 page paperback is based on official army records, military memoirs, soldiers' letters, and civilian diaries. The Civil War Battles at Overall is illustrated with period and contemporary maps and contains a list of combatant units as well as era photographs of the principal commanders and mini-biographies of them.

The printing of the booklet was funded in part by a grant from the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation. Copies are on sale for \$10.00 each and are available in local bookstores and gift shops, as well as by phone or email order from Scenic 340 Project. All proceeds from the sale benefit the preservation work of the group whose mission is to protect the natural and cultural resources of the Route 340 corridor.

Scenic 340 Project's President and Front Royal architect Fred Andreae recalls, "our group organized to fight VDOT's proposed plans to wipe out the village of Bentonville by expanding Route 340 to four and five lanes. Now the conflict is focused on how the Overall Bridge will be replaced. There is some irony in the fact that once again, the topography at Overall is the site of a local battle. "

The author will sign copies at the Cedar Creek Battle re-enactment at Belle Grove Plantation in Middletown on October 15 and 16. He will also sign copies and give a short talk on his research at evening receptions in Luray on October 21, and in Front Royal on October 22. Both receptions are open to the public. For more information contact Scenic 340 Project.

A review copy of The Civil War Battles at Overall, Virginia is available upon request.