

The First Defenders Civil War Round Table Newsletter

August 2026, the 30th Campaign



www.firstdefenderscwrt.us

President's Message

THE EYES OF THE WORLD ARE UPON US

The United States of America in the springtime of 1861 was not the world superpower of today. The standing army and navy of the Republic were small compared to those belonging to European powers. Americans were focused in the Western hemisphere. The Monroe Doctrine held sway in the minds of politicians, industrialists and citizens. Broad oceans protected against threats from Europe and Asia while our neighbors to the north and south were of little threat.

Since no real external threats loomed, America was free to grow and prosper. Settlements stretched from sea to shining sea. Food, water and other natural resources were abundant, and the population was booming. Anyone looking casually from the outside would have reason to believe it to be the land of milk and honey. Settlers were welcomed to the land of opportunity. Yet underneath it all, the country was about to tear itself apart. Millions of slaves yearned for freedom and they now had a voice. The new Republican party threatened to wrest political power from the Southern Democrats who for so long had their way. Facing the imminent threat to their economic and political power if the institution of slavery should disappear, the southern states declared themselves no longer part of the Union. No one could envision that the war to come would change America forever.

Around the world, all eyes were watching. America had become a vital source of trade to all of Europe and even parts of Asia. Countries as small as the Papal State in the Vatican and as large as the Russian Empire sent emissaries to the United States as well as to the Confederate States. Great Britain and France, above all, focused their attention on the West. Britain sold manufactured goods to both North and South while importing cotton from the South and wheat from the North. Britannia ruled the seas, and if she intervened many felt that she might sway the outcome. On the other hand, she had much to lose if she backed the wrong pony. If she took the wrong side and lost, what of her Caribbean colonies and Canada? English society was about to be divided in a hotly debated Parliament. France, on the other hand, under Emperor Napoleon III yearned to lay claim to Mexico and other territory while America could not intervene. What would these European nations decide to do? Intervene or stay on the sidelines?

God Bless America. See ya in August.

Joe

Round Table Business

President Joe Schaeffer called the June meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. at Giannotti's, with 31 attending. Linda Zeiber offered a reading and prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Joe reminded us that he will be stepping down as President in December and we should start thinking about a successor. He noted that there have only been 4 presidents in the 30-year history of the organization.

Guests: None

New Members: None

Treasurers Report- No Report

Membership

Bill Burns reported that there are currently 42 paid members; 3 of which re-enlisted this evening.

Preservation and Book Raffle

At our July meeting, the membership voted on two preservation efforts:

1. Cross Keys, VA Battlefield---Wally Heimbach spoke on the Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Association's efforts to preserve more of the battlefield. Rodney made the motion and 2nd by Wally Heimbach to make a \$100 donation to the SVBA. AIF.
2. Antietam Institute---Since our July speaker, Tom McMillan, declined a speaker's fee, a motion was made by Wally and 2nd by Clark to make a donation of \$ 100 to the Antietam Institute. AIF (The Antietam Institute is committed to preservation, research and history of the Battle of Antietam and the Maryland Campaign.)

We started a bonus raffle of memorabilia that we have received. The items are:

- 1st Prize---2 Collections by the Postal Commemorative Society. One is an Indian Head Penny collection of the war years including a 100th Anniversary US postage stamp. The 2nd is CW tokens from 1861 & 1865 with postage stamps from 1961 & 1965.
- 2nd Prize---1800s Bingham & Dodd lithograph of Abe Lincoln. 18" X 22".
- 3rd Prize---21" X 27½" print "The Faces of Discovering Gettysburg" by Tim Harman 2017.
- 4th Prize---Smithsonian's "The Civil War: A Visual History". Published 2011 by DK Publishing.

Ticket prices are the same as our monthly book raffle. The raffle will continue to October or November. More info on that in the future.

Our July book raffle took in \$145.00. After our two July donations our preservation fund balance for August is \$170.

We received two "thank you" letters for our donations from Pamplin Park and the American Battlefield Trust for Gettysburg and Antietam.

We also would like to thank Dave Fox for his donation of books to help support our fundraising efforts.

Thank you to all the members for your donations and support of our preservation efforts through our book raffles and our special raffles.

30 TH Campaign	Total for all Seasons
Total amount raised-\$ 479	
Total amount donated-\$ 400	Total amount donated - \$ 41,096
Total contribution with matching grants-\$ 1,595	Total contributed with Matching Grants – \$ 577,147

August Program

The Big Dogs Of Europe Watching Our American Civil War

Presented by Mike Rupert

Students of the Civil War we are usually hyper-focused on battles and personalities between the North and South. We know the Confederacy courted assistance and support from Europe, most especially England and France. We also know the Lincoln Administration worked feverishly, and in the end successfully, to keep the European powers on the far side of the Atlantic Ocean. But, what was actually going on in Europe, and how did their self-interests, both nationally and internationally, play a part in the bloody conflict "across the pond?" The "American Question" of lasting self-government is on trial, and the world powers are more than curious to see if this young "United States" can survive.



Michael Rupert has worked in automotive service and management for almost 40 years. The past had become the present while on a family trip to the Gettysburg battlefield in 2001. Since then, countless seminars, lectures, conferences, and battle walks made "it as real as something that happened last week." A self-taught student with an unending quest to keep the memory alive for future generations, Michael became a Licensed

Battlefield Guide at Gettysburg National Military Park in 2018. Born and raised in the Oakland neighborhood of Pittsburgh, PA, he is married with two grown children. In the colder months Michael lives in hometown Pittsburgh - and in Littlestown during the Guide season.



A big thank you to Errol for providing a list of 15 speakers, 9 of whom responded back within 24 hours. Clark reported that all the speakers are secured for 2027 and he has 4 slots filled for 2028.

30 th Campaign Programs		
Date	Speaker	Program
September 8, 2026	Michelle Krowl	<i>Lincoln Treasures at the Library of Congress</i>
October 13, 2026	Michael Jesberger	<i>1913 Gettysburg Reunion</i>
November 10, 2026	Joe Schaeffer	<i>TBA</i>
December 8, 2026	Michael Harris	<i>Battle of Paoli</i>

If you would be interested in presenting to our membership, please reach out to Clark.

Website

Craig noted that some may not be receiving their mailing as we made some changes. The initial notice will be emailed 2 weeks prior to the meeting, and a reminder notice will be sent 1 week prior to the meeting. If you do not receive your email notice, please reach out to the meal captain to order your meal. Please also reach out to Craig so he can follow up on the email.

Dinner Reservations for Tuesday, August 11, 2026 Meeting & Program

Meal Captain's Report for July, 2026: Thirty-One people attended the meeting.

Our meal choices for August are:

Breaded Haddock
Pork Chops
Pasta with Grilled Vegetables

If you make your reservation online and you do not receive a thank you and/or confirmation email, your reservation did not go through, so please try again. If you must call in reservations, please call or text your menu selection to Vicky Heffner at 610.413.5543. **Reservations MUST be made no later than noon, August 7, 2026.** The price is \$32.00 inclusive for meals.

IMPORTANT NOTE Once you have made your reservation, there are no cancellations for any reasons afternoon on the FRIDAY preceding the meeting. This is the policy of Giannotti's, and the Round Table will be billed for your meal whether you attend or not. Please understand that you will be asked to reimburse the RT should you not attend after having made a reservation and not cancelled prior to the aforementioned time period.

****PLEASE NOTE: IT IS MUCH APPRECIATED IF YOU PAY IN THE APPROPRIATE DOLLAR AMOUNT. WE DO NOT HAVE A CHANGE DRAWER. WE WILL NOT ACCEPT \$50 OR \$100 BILLS IN PAYMENT. THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.**

Events, Tours and Other Happenings

Please feel free to send anything that you are aware of that you would like to share with our Company. Please send your items of interest to: Lisa.breneiser@gmail.com.

Emerging Civil War Symposium

August 7-9 2026

Stevenson's Ridge

There will be a Free Pre-Conference on Friday August 7th hosted by the Civil War Roundtable Congress!

This year's theme: Partnerships and Rivalries

https://emergingcivilwar.com/ecw_event/2026-symposium/

Civil War Congress Sustainability Conference – Cancelled due to lack of participants

National Civil War Museum- Harrisburg

August 22, 2026

11:00 am

Gary Adelman will be discussing Civil War Photography

This is a free event