

# The First Defenders Civil War Round Table Newsletter

December 2022



[www.firstdefenderscwrt.us](http://www.firstdefenderscwrt.us)

## President's Message

I hate being sick. Why me? It's such an inconvenience, and I'm not a particularly good patient. I curse my misfortune, and just want to get back to normal. Now!

Fortunately, being laid up also gives me time to think. I think about those many men who suffered far more during the Civil War both in camp and in hospitals where medical science was little advanced from the Dark Ages. In many instances, they would languish for weeks or months. Camp Letterman would remain in operation long after the armies had left Gettysburg and be home to thousands of sick and wounded men. During the Overland Campaign, the Union Army would be sending tens of thousands to hospital facilities in and around Washington City on a daily basis.

I fast forward to the current day as acquaintances, long-time friends, and even family face daily chronic pain, hospitalizations, extended recoveries or long-term care. The guilt sets in. The Lord, it seems, works in mysterious ways as I now ask for his blessings on those folks while thanking him for seeing me through my brief illness and restoring my health.

We are entering the traditional season of peace and reflection, a time when we are often overcome with a deep reverence and awe. A time when we reach out to friends and family certainly, but also to many others through our prayers and good deeds. A time when we think less of ourselves and our own travails and more of others. A time when our thoughts extend to those who are sick or lonely, whether on the battlefield or here at home. And we pray for peace.

The stories of many sick, injured and imprisoned Civil War soldiers tell of their reflections of hope, not despair, as December blanketed the world and a new year and new hopes were dawning. We take heart from what we can learn from them as we realize our own lives are not nearly so troubled.

Peace be with you all!

*Craig*

## Round Table Business

Vice President Mark Quattroco called the November 15, 2022, meeting of the First Defenders CWRT at 7:35 p.m. Twenty-nine members gathered at Giannotti's Country Manor for our monthly meeting. Linda Zeiber offered a prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Get well wishes were sent out to President Craig Breneiser and Treasurer Tim Antosy. We hope to see both gentlemen at the December meeting. Gerry Zeiber was welcomed back following surgery. Mark then described events happening in Gettysburg which are included in his preservation report.

### Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Tim Antosy reported a balance in the treasury of \$2,161.39 as of November 23, 2022. Last month there was \$253.00 available for preservation. Our membership stands at 50. The unencumbered balance as of November's meeting stands at \$1,808.39

### Preservation

Mother Nature had something to say the night of our November meeting when the weather in the evening went from rain to snow. Special thanks to the 29 members of the Roundtable who came out to see Charlie Fennell and his presentation. During the meeting we raised another **\$100** for Preservation. As always, we thank everyone who bought raffle tickets or made donations. It is greatly appreciated.

During the meeting, Mark Quattroco informed every one of the news on General Pickett's Buffet in Gettysburg, PA. The owner of the restaurant had sold the restaurant and the new owner is selling the building and moving the Buffet to the Barn that was occupied by Boyd's Bear. The new owner's plan is to renovate the Barn and to reopen March of next year. The location has a very large parking lot and the Barn is very spacious to seat more people and to bring in more tour bus groups.

With the new owner selling the restaurant, the American Battlefield Trust has come out officially and announced their plans to purchase the site. Once the sale of the property is completed the Trust plans to tear down the building and to restore the property back to its 1863 appearance. They would then turn the property over to the National Park Service and it would be incorporated in to the Battlefield. In order to raise the **\$550,000** they need to purchase the property, the Trust has announced a new Matching Grant of **\$3.05-\$1**. The **deadline** they have to raise the money is **December 15th, 2022**.

### Book Raffle News

The end of the year is almost upon us and the Christmas season is here. With that in our perspective, we will end 2022 with a silent auction. Members have donated, not only books, but other memorabilia that may be of interest to some of us. We have various items to put up for purchase—a replica of the Bennington flag (1776), 40 pieces cast metal soldiers and artillery, several CW playing card sets, and some cast metal cannons. You will be able to bid on these items until the start of our business meeting. Any money we take in from the sale of these items will go to battlefield preservation.

In November, the book raffle took in \$100 for battlefield preservation. Thank you to everyone for your continued support of the book raffle and battlefield preservation. Happy Holidays to All!!!

## **Joe's Jaunts**

Joe Schaeffer reported that the fall jaunt on November 5, 2022, with LBG Sue Boardman was a great tour of monuments beginning at the old parking lot for the original Visitors' Center to the Hancock Memorial. He announced that the spring tour will be Culp's Hill in Gettysburg led by Charlie Fennell. Details will be available closer to the spring.

## **Programs**

Joe Schaeffer announced the topic for the December meeting will be Camp Discharge. Two gentlemen from Philadelphia will be offering this program which is new to many of us. Be sure not to miss this.

## **Member Information**

Please do not forget that membership fees (\$25) are now past due. There is still time to fill out the membership form and include it with your payment. You may mail this to Lori Border whose information is on the form found on the website. We are able to provide top-notch speakers with your dues money so don't forget to re-up your enlistment! We currently have 50 paid members.

## **Website**

Webmaster Lisa Breneiser announced that books for the raffle and for sale is being updated. Stay tuned. Check your website for pertinent information and fascinating articles.

## **Meal Captain**

Kathy Little asked everyone to be aware that the last date to order meals for the December meeting will be noon on Tuesday, December 9<sup>th</sup>.

## **AAP Update**

Barbara Shafer sent the following message that she recently received from Gettysburg National Military Park:

**Gettysburg National Military Park Adopt-A-Position Program thanks you for your prior years of dedication and service. We sincerely appreciate the work of our park volunteers and the contribution they make to keeping the park beautiful and protecting resources. Unfortunately, at this time the AAP program as it has been known for the past several years will no longer be available. The park has evaluated all the park volunteer programs in terms of how we can better manage them, as well as evaluating the work they do to ensure that these programs are focused on our highest priorities and most urgent needs. The result of our evaluations has directed the park to focus more on volunteering opportunities that correspond with national efforts like "Park Day" and "Lands Day", etc. in lieu of smaller individual efforts focused on specific locations. The park will keep you updated as to the next volunteer opportunities in the spring.**

## A Christmas Tale

Anyone who listens to Christmas music has heard the song, "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day," yet few realize that its origin lies in a poem written during the Civil War. This true story of tragedy and triumph has now been made into a feature film titled, appropriately, "I Heard the Bells" that is scheduled for release in theaters on December 1st.

Some may recall Joe Schaeffer relating this story at previous December Roundtable meetings. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, America's poet of the mid 19th century, condemned slavery but opposed war as the solution. In 1861 his beloved wife, Fanny, had died from burns received in a household accident. Henry plunged into despair as he was left to raise five children alone. His will to write left him.

Two years later, Henry's oldest son, Charlie, ran away to enlist in a Union regiment. Grievously wounded near New Hope Church during the Mine Run campaign, Charlie was sent to a hospital in Washington not expected to recover. Henry makes the journey to the capital, and grieves by his son's bed. He begins work on the poem. As the days pass, Charlie....well, you need to see the movie for the rest of the story.

The movie likely will not last long in the theaters. Check for availability...

## December Program

### "Camp Discharge"

featuring Jim Remsen & Brad Upp

Along the Schuylkill Expressway heading toward the City of Brotherly Love, just after the Conshohocken Curve, thousands of motorists daily pass by an unmarked site on the property of the Philadelphia Country Club. This is the site of "Camp Discharge," the final military post for hundreds of Union soldiers closing out their military adventure.



Mostly hailing from throughout the eastern reaches of the Keystone State, these men were funneled to a special Union Army post outside Philadelphia. For many, it was their last stop before heading back to civilian life after surviving years of bloody combat. Some had been wounded and hospitalized. Many had endured long captivity in the South. Thus separated from their regimental comrades, they straggled north, sometimes alone and often in dire health.



Modern Camp Discharge is a story of discovery and of unearthing a past that few have ever known (especially those thousands speeding by every day). Most importantly, it is a human interest story about those who had answered the call and were seeking a return to some measure of normalcy in a much-changed nation.



*Jim Remsen is a retired Philadelphia Inquirer journalist and the author of two prior Pennsylvania history books. Brad Upp is a longtime Civil War living historian for the 69th Pennsylvania Infantry and a board member of the Lower Merion Historical Society*



<b>Coming Campaign Programs</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Program</b>
12/13/22	Jim Remsen/Brad Upp	<i>Camp Discharge</i>
1/10/23	Ev Binns	<i>Lost 10 Commandments of the Civil War</i>
2/14/23	Sue Boardman	<i>Lincoln Statues Around the World</i>
3/14/23	Brad Gottfried	<i>Lee in the Gettysburg Campaign</i>
4/11/23	TBA	
5/9/23	Scott Mingus	<i>Lincoln's Funeral Train in Pennsylvania</i>

**Dinner Reservations for the Tuesday December 13, 2022 Meeting  
& Program:**

If possible, please make your meal choices/reservations on the website. Our meal choices for December are:

**Soup  
Salmon  
Veal Marsala  
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. If you must call in reservations, please call your menu selection to Kathy Little at 610-367-8082 no later than noon, Friday, December 9, 2022, which is also the deadline for online reservations. The price is \$31.00 inclusive for meals.

**\*IMPORTANT NOTE\*** Once you have made your reservation, there are no cancellations for any reasons after noon 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.**