

The First Defenders Civil War Round Table Newsletter

June 2026, the 30th Campaign



www.firstdefenderscwrt.us

President's Message

How does a nation reward a general who has won a great victory and possibly saved his country? When Wellington defeated Napoleon at Waterloo, he became the hero of every British schoolboy for generations. So, too, for military leaders in many countries in many wars.

So how are we to understand and try to explain the treatment of General George Gordon Meade after the Army of the Potomac, under his command, defeated Robert E. Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia at a little crossroads town named Gettysburg? Lee's army was so damaged that it would never again mount a serious offensive campaign. Meade was the first Union general to beat Lee, and not only Pennsylvania, but maybe the Union itself, was saved. Was Meade rewarded with a ticker tape parade? Were laurels and honors showered on his shoulders? Hardly. Quite to the contrary, he was roundly criticized for not destroying Lee's army. His superiors, Halleck, Stanton and even President Lincoln, could not comprehend how he let Lee slip from his grasp. In their minds, they felt he needed only to reach out his hand and crush Lee's army. Senators labeled him a traitor and called for his dismissal. He and dozens of other officers, some willingly and some not so willing, gave testimony on his conduct of the battle before a Congressional committee. Many wanted his head, and many jealous officers wanted his job.

Being a dedicated soldier, he stayed on, doing his duty as he saw fit, continuing to serve his country. Lincoln came to soften his criticism as the reality of the story came to light, and Meade was retained in command of the Army of the Potomac for the duration of the war.

Later that autumn in the Tennessee mountains, General Ulysses S. Grant capped off his string of victories by driving Braxton Bragg's army from its entrenched fortifications surrounding Chattanooga. For that, Lincoln promoted him to lieutenant general, and on March 12, 1864 awarded him command of all Union armies. Staying in the western theater was not an option, and Grant came east to conceive of an overall plan to destroy the Confederacy and end the war.

Grant arrived in a cold, spring rain to meet Meade at his headquarters in Culpepper, Virginia. Meade fretted in letters to his wife that he expected Grant to bring someone from the west to take his job. Instead, Grant informed Meade that his job remained the same, but that Grant would accompany him. Grant would put forth the strategic plans, and Meade would implement tactics and coordinate the movements of the Army of the Potomac. "Where Lee goes, so you will go."

Many historians have sought to dissect the relationship between Grant and Meade. On June 9th, we will hear from Brad Gottfried, a returning guest speaker who will give us his insights. Brad is a wonderful man to talk to and we are happy for his return.

Joe

Round Table Business

President Joe Schaeffer called the May meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. at Giannotti's, with 25 attending. Linda Zeiber offered a prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Guests: None

New Members: Calvin Taylor was introduced

Craig Breneiser and Gary Hertzog were welcomed back after their recent surgeries.

Other Member News: Dave Fox donated 16 boxes of books since he is moving into a retirement home.

Treasurers Report

The General fund having a balance of \$3,210.02 and Preservation having a balance of \$ 161.00.

Membership

Bill Burns reported that there are currently 36 paid members.

Preservation and Book Raffle

At the May meeting, the membership made a motion by Rodney and 2nd by Wally, AIF, to make a \$ 100 donation to ABT for the "Save 438 Acres Across These Seven Battlefields." The 7 sites are Richmond & Perryville BF's (KY), Glorietta Pass BF(NM), Corinth BF(MS), Hoover's Gap BF(TN), Resaca BF(GA) and Newtonia BF(MO). There is a \$10 to \$1 matching grant. The ABT goal is \$349,938.

For our June meeting, the ABT has a "Help Save Historic Land at Antietam & Gettysburg." The campaign targets 2 acres at Antietam, where on September 17, 1862, surging Union troops, having crossed Burnside Bridge, were halted by the timely arrival of AP Hill's Division.

The Gettysburg tract (1 acre) is located along the historic Baltimore Pike near Culp's Hill, where on July 3, 1863, Union troops crossed to meet advancing Confederate soldiers. After this acquisition, there are only a few parcels of land that are unprotected along the Baltimore Pike. There is a \$3.95 to \$1 matching grant to reach the goal of \$349,938.

The May Book Raffle took in \$82. Our June Preservation balance is \$143.

Due to the generosity of Dave Fox, we have received a large number of books from his Civil War library. Our thanks to Dave for his support! Because of our large inventory of books, please hold off donating any books to our raffle for the time being. Thank you!

First Defenders Bookshelf

At our June meeting, we will have a Book Bonanza Sale. Numerous books will be available for a donation only. You decide the amount! Whatever you give is acceptable! The books being offered will be from our past inventory. All proceeds go to our preservation efforts. Thank you for your support!

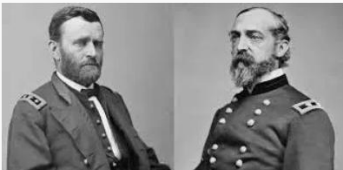
30TH Campaign	Total for all Seasons
Total amount raised-\$ 152	
Total amount donated-\$ 100	Total amount donated - \$ 40,696
Total contribution with matching grants-\$ 1000	Total contributed with Matching Grants – \$ 575,552

June Program

Grant & Meade: An Uneasy Alliance

Presented by Brad & Linda Gottfried

The relationship between Army of Potomac commander General George G. Meade and the newly-appointed general-in-chief, Ulysses S. Grant, would prove to be complex and evolve slowly over time. Although Meade would continue to be the *de facto* leader of the eastern army until the end of the war, Grant would travel with that army and be looking over Meade's shoulder continuously. Indeed, Grant would completely overshadow Meade in the view of almost everyone North or South. The victor of Gettysburg would spend the last year of the war attempting to navigate the minefield of Washington's politics, battling an oft-times vicious press, and forging a working relationship with a commanding general who sometimes seems like he wished to personally command the Army of the Potomac.



Brad Gottfried earned a Ph.D. in Zoology and served as a college educator for over 40 years, rising to the presidency of two colleges before he retired in 2017. He has written 23 books on the Civil War, and is a Gettysburg Licensed Town Guide and an Antietam Licensed Battlefield Guide. Linda Gottfried earned a BFA and served as a graphic designer and development officer at several colleges and nonprofit organizations before retiring in 2015. She now spends her time as sculptor having won several awards, and she enjoys retirement. Brad and Linda have collaborated on five projects: Hell Comes to Southern Maryland, Lincoln Comes to Gettysburg: The Creation of the Soldiers' National Cemetery and Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, The Antietam Paintings of James B. Hope, Race to the Potomac: Meade and Lee After Gettysburg, and their most recent book, Grant & Meade: an Uneasy Alliance. The Gottfrieds have five children and seven grandchildren and live in Fayetteville, Pennsylvania.



30th Campaign Programs		
Date	Speaker	Program
July 14, 2026	Tom McMillan	<i>The Year that Made America: From Rebellion to Independence 1775-1776</i>
August 11, 2026	Mike Rupert	<i>The Big Dogs of Europe Watching Our American Civil War</i>
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 reviewed the process for making reservations for the meal and finding events on the site. When ordering meals, you should receive an instant email “thank you” and later a 2nd email notice from Craig. Contact Vicky if you have any questions regarding your reservation.

The website is being changed to Firstdefenders.org from Firstdefenders.US as .ORG is more common and easier to find.

Dinner Reservations for Tuesday, June 9, 2026 Meeting & Program

The First Defenders Civil War Roundtable had 25 people present at the dinner meeting and program on May 12, 2026.

If possible, please make your meal choices/reservations on the website.
Our meal (includes salad) choices for June are:

Shrimp Scampi with Linguine
Grilled Chicken with Rice
Lasagna

If you make your reservation online and 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, June 5, 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. I will gladly add it to the monthly newsletter. Please send your items of interest to my email at 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!**

2026 ECW Early Bird Registration Tickets – \$275.00 if you sign up before the end of this year
This year's theme: Partnerships and Rivalries

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

Civil War Institute Summer Conference

June 12-17, 2026

With Dennis Frye, Jennifer Murray, Andrew Lawler, Jim Broomall, Lesley Gordon, Timothy Orr, Jim Hessler, *and more!*

Customizable packages and paid livestream access available!

Be sure to inquire about our numerous discounts for military veterans, Gettysburg College alums, members of local partnering institutions, current K-12 educators, full-time students, public historians, youths, and “new attendee recruiters!”

Questions ? Contact civilwar@gettysburg.edu or 717-337-6590

Destination Gettysburg – America's 250th Celebration!

Spring- Summer 2026

Honoring the Past. Inspiring the Future. Where America's Story Still Echoes.

Check out Destination Gettysburg website below for upcoming events celebrating America's 250th!

<https://destinationgettysburg.com/america-250th/america-250th-events>