

The First Defenders Civil War Round Table Newsletter

March 2024



www.firstdefenderscwrt.us

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

“All quiet along the Potomac.” So read many of George McClellan’s daily reports during the fall and winter of 1861-62. Many in the North clamored for “something” to be done, yet Little Mac’s troops idled their time away just waiting.

“All quiet on the First Defenders front” seems to be our lot, as well, as we while away our time watching the snow come and go. We can hardly remember the last time we were together in fellowship, and our winter hiatus is now almost as long as our regular summer break. We anxiously hope to get back on the campaign trail in March!

Although Punxsutawney Phil may not have called the coming of spring quite right (again!), the promise of warmer weather does signal the opportunity to get back outdoors and begin enjoying battlefield tramping, and a couple of interesting opportunities are noted elsewhere in the newsletter. Too, we still have three remaining programs in the 27th Campaign featuring a trio of renowned historians and authors. So, the “quiet” is soon to be broken!

With the coming of spring we also begin planning for our 28th Campaign. Some of our programs are already booked, and, of course, it will soon be time to choose our leaders for the coming year. While you still have some time before turning to the outdoors, consider serving as an officer or committee chair for 2024-25. New leadership means new ideas and opportunities to keep the First Defenders Civil War Round Table an interesting way to learn about Civil War history while spending time with old friends and making new acquaintances around a modern-day bivouac fire.

Now, everyone get out you Ouija Board to help the weatherman ensure our March meeting and program will enjoy fair weather!

Craig

Round Table Business

The February meeting and program was cancelled due to the threat of adverse weather. Round Table business discussions will (hopefully!) return in March!

March Program

“Jackson is With You! – The Battle of Cedar Mountain”

presented by Greg Mertz

The success of Confederate General Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley during the spring of 1862 was due in part to the Federal forces he confronted belonging to three separate departments that did not cooperate with one another. That would change in the summer of 1862, as those former departments became corps in a new Federal army under General John Pope. On August 9, 1862, Jackson decided to strike Union General Nathaniel P. Banks’ isolated corps before Pope’s army consolidated. Jackson enjoyed a sizeable advantage in numbers over Banks, which may have given him a level of confidence that contributed to both Jackson and division commander General Charles Winder being distracted by an artillery duel rather than attending to the proper alignment of Winder’s infantry. While Jackson was preparing to attack the Federal forces, it was Banks who first attacked the Confederates, wreaking havoc on the poorly positioned Confederate left. With Jackson rallying his troops and the timely arrival of Confederate reinforcements, a counterattack brought gray-clad superior numbers to bear and turned a near-defeat into a Confederate victory.



Greg Mertz has retired after 40 years working with the National Parks Service, with the final 36 years at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park. He is currently the vice president of the Brandy Station Foundation with that battlefield and Cedar Mountain to become part of a new Culpeper Battlefields State Park in 2024.

Future 27th Campaign Programs		
Date	Speaker	Program
4/9/2024	Brad Gottfried	<i>Lee Invades the North: A Comparison of the Antietam & Gettysburg Campaigns</i>
5/14/2024	Kevin Pawlak	<i>Fire on the Mountains: The Battles of South Mountain and Harpers Ferry, September 12-15, 1862</i>

ALL ROADS LEAD TO GETTYSBURG A CENFAD CONFERENCE



TEMPLE UNIVERSITY CITY CENTER CAMPUS
SATURDAY, APRIL 6, 2024 7:30 AM - 5 PM
ROOMS: 418 & 421
FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

CO-SPONSORS:



For more information visit: <https://liberalarts.temple.edu/research/labs-centers-and-institutes/center-study-force-and-diplomacy/lecture-series/2024-cenfad-conference-all-roads-lead-gettysburg>

Jackson's 1862 Valley Campaign

CIVIL WAR SEMINARS & TOURS

Chambersburg Civil War Seminars & Tours

100 Lincoln Way East, Chambersburg, PA 17201

Tel: 717-264-7101 ext. 206

Email: civilwarseminars@gmail.com

We'll be based in Staunton, VA for this great conference focused on Jackson's 1862 Valley Campaign! Gary Ecelbarger will be our main tour guide studying the Battle of Kernstown, skirmish at Meem's Bottom all the way to the Battle of Cross Keys and the Battle of Port Republic. Our lecture day will be moderated by Eric Wittenberg and include talks by: Michael C. Harris, Bill Miller, Frank O'Reilly, Scott C. Patchan, Don Pfanz and Gary Ecelbarger.

Dinner Reservations for the Tuesday March 12, 2024
Meeting & Program:

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

Soup
Shrimp Scampi
Chopped Sirloin
Spaghetti w/ tomato sauce

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, March 8, 2024, 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.**