

# The First Defenders Civil War Round Table Newsletter

**May 2026, the 30th Campaign**



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

## President's Message

Monty Python's Flying Circus had a line they would use to introduce a new sketch which went, "And now for something completely different." After 30 years of Round Table talks it is sometimes difficult to uncover a good subject which has not been previously presented to our membership. As you all know, we agreed last year to widen our scope of topics to include history subjects outside of the Civil War. This has opened a door behind which an untold number of stories can be found. Clark Zimmerman, our Vice-President and speaker coordinator, has found something completely different. He regularly attends the World War II Air Show at the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum, Reading Airport. It is held yearly the first weekend in June, and if you have never been there, consider going. The day can be long, sometimes hot, but you will not regret spending the time. It was at one of their weekends where Clark found this speaker.

The last few decades have witnessed a phenomenal plethora of authors emerge producing research and studies on World War II. Because that war touched the entire planet, thousands of stories have been written worldwide and just as many are waiting to have their tale told. Most of the veterans are now gone, but while they were alive a drive was put on to interview and record their memories. Some were hidden, nearly forgotten. Some were purposely kept secret and could have been lost had it not been for some inquisitive minds who thought there is something important here and it needs to come to light.

This is that kind of tale. The men of the Alamo Scouts were not allowed to tell of their missions for decades after the war ended. They did their duty and came home, forced to live silently with their memories. Only in the 1990's did the light begin to shine on them, and yet today almost none of us knew who they were and what they accomplished.

I have a suggestion for this meeting. To those of my son's generation, born 1985, this is the era of history of which they find they cannot get enough. Try to think of someone born in the 80's or 90's and invite them along to this meeting.

Thanks again Clark. We are looking forward to the May meeting. I will see you all there.

*Joe*

## **Round Table Business**

President Joe Schaeffer called the first meeting of our 30th campaign to order at 6:00 p.m. at Giannotti's, with 31 attending.

He first addressed the issues of guests, illnesses, and notable absences;

Guests: Gus Person

Noted absences: Craig and Lisa Breneiser, Gary Hertzog, Mary Ann Hartner, Bill Clyde, Tim Antosy and Kathy and Dana Little, who will not be joining.

Deaths: Ray Miller, long-time member from Sinking Spring passed away on Nov. 5, 2025.

Joe gave updates on many of those listed above and he asked all in attendance to keep them in our prayers.

## **Treasurers Report**

The General Fund has a balance of \$2,182.00 and Preservation has a balance of \$ 91.00.

Neither figure includes money taken in Tuesday night which will include membership fees.

## **Membership**

Bill Burns reported that there are currently 25 paid members. Joe thanked Bill for filling the membership position.

## **Preservation and Book Raffle**

Our 30<sup>th</sup> Campaign is off! Our book raffle took in \$70. My thanks to Wally Heimbach for taking care of the book raffle in my absence. I shall return to my duties in May. There are several interesting fundraising campaigns being offered by ABT. These two are interesting.

1. Help Save Historic Land at Antietam & Gettysburg. There are 2 parcels of land at Antietam (app. 2acres) where AP Hill arrived in time to stop Burnside's attack. The Gettysburg parcel (1acre) is located along the historic Baltimore Pike near East Cemetery Hill. For the 3 parcels there is \$3.95 to \$1 match. The goal is \$349,938 of a total \$1,392 million.
2. Save 438 Acres Across These Seven Battlefields. The 7 sites are Richmond & Perryville KY (1862), Glorietta Pass NM (1862), Corinth MS & Hoover's Gap TN (1863), Resaca GA (1864) and Newtonia MO (1862 & 1864). The parcels of land range from 0.2 acres at Corinth, MS to 273 acres at Resaca, GA. There is a \$10 to \$1 matching grant for this campaign. The goal is \$374,900. This amount is the balance of the total \$3.8 million dollars, which ABT has already acquired.

Gary will have a Preservation total for you at the May meeting.

<b>30<sup>TH</sup> Campaign **</b>	<b>Total for all Seasons **</b>
<b>Total amount raised-\$ 681</b>	
<b>Total amount donated-\$ 575</b>	<b>Total amount donated - \$ 40,696</b>
<b>Total contribution with matching grants-\$ 12,455</b>	<b>Total contributed with Matching Grants – \$ 575,552</b>

## First Defenders Bookshelf

Savis Beatie Publishing books available as of April include a special discount for books authored about Antietam. Here is the link to Savis Beatie website to order any of the above books or the many others they have available.

<https://www.savisbeatie.com/sb-titles-by-year/2026/>

## May Program

### Shadows in the Jungle: The Alamo Scouts Behind the Japanese Lines in World War II

Presented by Larry Alexander



Determined almost to the point of distraction to retake the Philippines ever since his ignominious flight from the islands in 1942, General Douglas MacArthur needed a first-rate intelligence-gathering unit for one of the most dangerous and grueling assignments of the Pacific War. Out of thousands, only 138 soldiers were chosen: the best, toughest, and most fit men the army had to offer with a "simple" task: silently slip onto the Japanese-held islands, stalk through the thick jungles, assess enemy locations, conditions, morale and troop strength, all while remaining undetected. It was an impossible task, doomed to failure, but incredibly, the Alamo Scouts were a valuable success that helped MacArthur fulfill his vow that, "I shall return." This story is drawn from personal interviews and testimonies from Scout veterans, and weaves together the tales of the individual Scouts who often spent weeks behind enemy lines to complete their missions. Now, more than eighty years after the war, the story of the Alamo Scouts is finally told.

*Larry Alexander worked for 23 years as a reporter/columnist for the Lancaster New Era/Intelligencer Journal newspaper and is presently a freelance writer for Lancaster County Weeklies, a division of LNP/Media Group. He has won numerous state-level awards for excellence in journalism including several Keystone Awards from the Pennsylvania Newspaper Association. More recently, he has published several non-fiction and fiction books on World War II events and personalities. Alexander has a Bachelor's Degree in history from Millersville University and resides in Ephrata.*



Clark gave an update on programs and gave information about the May meeting speaker Larry Alexander. He also reported that November's speaker may replace Joe Schaeffer on the list, but the speaker has not confirmed yet.

<b>30<sup>th</sup> Campaign Programs</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Program</b>
June 9, 2026	Brad Gottfried	<i>Meade and Grant Relationship</i>
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.

### **Joe's Jaunts – TBD**

#### **Website**

Nothing to report

### **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. Send your items of interest to my email at [Lisa.breneiser@gmail.com](mailto:Lisa.breneiser@gmail.com).

## **Destination Gettysburg – America's 250<sup>th</sup> Celebration!** **Spring- Summer 2026**

**Honoring the Past. Inspiring the Future. Where America's Story Still Echoes.** As America prepares to commemorate 250 years of independence, Gettysburg stands ready to welcome the nation. Here, every event, from historical commemorations to concerts, art, and community gatherings, carries deeper meaning. The fields where freedom was tested and unity restored now set the stage for new stories, shared experiences, and moments of connection that honor the enduring American spirit. Throughout 2025 and 2026, our community will host a diverse lineup of **America 250<sup>th</sup> events**, each designed to connect past and present while reflecting the heart of Gettysburg. Here, reflection becomes inspiration, and remembrance leads to renewed purpose.

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

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

## Emerging Civil War Symposium

August 7-9 2026

Stevenson's Ridge

**\*\* There will be a Free Pre-Conference on Friday August 7<sup>th</sup> 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/](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!*

*Featuring* lectures and interactive small-group discussions on:

- The American Revolution and the Civil War Generation
- Antietam Re-Assessed
- The 1869 Gettysburg Reunion
- The Battle of Chickamauga
- The Civil War in Indian Country
- Cowardice and Courage on Civil War Battlefields
- The Post-War Lives of 20<sup>th</sup> Maine Veterans
- Electing Civil War: Constitutional Democracy and the Election of 1860
- U.S. Grant and the Ku Klux Klan
- The Emancipations of 1775 and 1863

*And an* interactive battlefield experiences exploring:

- Medical Aid Stations and Nursing at Gettysburg
- The Battle of Cedar Creek
- Gettysburg's Lost Avenue
- The Photographic Footsteps of Alexander Gardner
- The 9<sup>th</sup> Corps Attack at Antietam
- The Philadelphia Brigade at Gettysburg
- George Armstrong Custer, East Cavalry Field, and the Road to Little Bighorn
- The July 2<sup>nd</sup> Actions of the Union 5<sup>th</sup> Corps (\*Active Track tour option!)

*...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](mailto:civilwar@gettysburg.edu) or 717-337-6590

## **Dinner Reservations for our Second Meeting of the 30<sup>th</sup> Campaign**

The First Defenders Civil War Roundtable had 31 people present at the dinner meeting and program on April 14, 2026.

Dinner Reservations for Tuesday, May 12, 2026, Meeting & Program:  
If possible, please make your meal choices/reservations on the website.

Our meal (includes salad) choices for May are:

Broiled Salmon  
Veal Marsala  
Rigatoni

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, May 8, 2026.** The price is

\$32.00 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.**

Checks may be made payable to "First Defenders Civil War Roundtable".