

# The First Defenders Civil War Round Table Newsletter

November 2019



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

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

During a recent trip to Barnes & Noble, I decided to conduct a survey on the subjects of their Civil War offerings. 97 books were on the shelves, and a count showed that 72 of them related specifically to the War itself, battles, armies or related subjects. Another 17 were biographies of well-known, and a few not-so-well-known, generals or lesser luminaries. Four dealt with slavery or Reconstruction, and three focused on politicians or political events. Only one book...a fraction more than one-percent of the available inventory...had a naval theme.

To quote the late Andy Rooney, "Why is that?" Surely herculean efforts to blockade more than 3500 miles of Southern coastline is deserving of mention. The significant efforts to conquer and control the western rivers directly penetrating into the Confederate heartland have more than a few stories worth telling. The titanic struggle between the Monitor and the Merrimack that ushered in the age of steel warships has to be worthy of interest. Yet the seafaring alternatives were limited to a single tome on the rather swashbuckling adventures of the C.S.S. Shenandoah as it circumnavigated the globe in 1864-65.

The financial impact on the North in its quest to save the union amounted to some \$6.8 billion. Of that, only \$587 million was allocated to naval expenditures, a paltry 8.6% of the total. Yet the return on that investment was astonishing, far exceeding in results that of the land forces on a dollar-for-dollar basis.

Even our own Round Table membership survey last winter gave short shrift to naval themes as interest placed below "Unusual Subjects" and just above "Politics" (which may have more to do with modern political frustrations than those of the Civil War era). A recent lecture I gave to a Round Table left

many attendees aghast at the breadth and impact of the adventures, derring-do and table-turning contributions the Navy lent to the war effort.

Every Civil War student should consider indulging in Craig Symonds' *Lincoln and His Admirals* or *War on the Waters* by James McPherson. Both professors are leading lights in the modern historian/author community, and both books provide interesting, insightful and very readable recountings of why the North could not have won the war without those who fought afloat. Check them out today. Just don't expect to find a copy in your local Barnes & Noble.

*Craig*

## Round Table Business

President Craig Breneiser called the October 8, 2019, meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. at the Inn at Reading with 46 members present. The first order of business was to remind everyone of the latest "Joe's Jaunt" which occurs on October 26. Those interested in going but not driving on their own need to be at Joe's Wyomissing office by 6:45 a.m. If you haven't signed up, before to contact Joe Schaeffer to let him know of your intentions. If you are planning on driving yourself, meet at the Heritage Center at 8:45 a.m. before beginning the tour with LBG Jim Hessler. The tour of Longstreet's March/Countermarch will take about three hours rain or shine. Further details are available in October's newsletter.

Craig reported on his trip to St. Louis to attend the Civil War Round Table Congress with his wife Lisa in October. Among various other issues, they heard discussions on how other round tables across the country function. Three issues came to the forefront for our round table:

1. Should we pursue becoming a charitable organization with the IRS?
2. We need a set of by-laws which we currently do not have.
3. Should we have liability insurance?

Craig asked for input from members regarding our round table. Several items were discussed regarding issues such as our "guest" policy and the cost of liability insurance. More discussion is encouraged in upcoming meetings.

## Preservation

Mark Quattrock explained the donation made in Dave Sweigert's memory in October. He then gave a listing of the most recent matching grants available for battlefield preservation—

New Market Heights	\$2:1
Wilderness	\$10.43:1
Perryville	\$5.85:1
Shenandoah/Bushong Farm	\$14.00:1
<b>Bristoe Station</b>	<b>\$539:1</b>

The money that makes such an incredible leverage for Bristoe Station is from a one million dollar federal government fund. Mark is eager to discuss these offerings at length during the November meeting.

Mark also gave an update about the Spangler Farm which has been in the hands of the Gettysburg Foundation for restoration. A classroom has been completed in the farmhouse which will host a leadership program. There is also a podcast filming center. Everything on the farm is now new or restored. To visit the farm, you must still buy a ticket at the Visitors' Center at Gettysburg. A walking trail is in the works which will connect the Visitors' Center to the farm.

### **Treasurer Report**

Treasurer Tim Antosy reported a balance in the treasury of \$3052.17 as of October 10, 2019. There is currently \$325.00 available for preservation which includes \$150.00 set aside for a special project. The unencumbered balance as of April's meeting stands at \$2727.17. Our membership stands at 56.

### **Membership**

Membership chair Lori Border announced that it's past time to renew your membership for the new campaign of 2019-2020 if you have not already done so. Please fill out the membership form found on the website, and return it with your check as soon as possible. The deadline for payment was October 8, 2019. If you plan to pay your dues in person at the November meeting, please be sure to fill out **the renewal form** and **bring it along** with your payment. There are 55 paid members currently.

### **Preservation/Book Raffle**

Thanks to everyone for continuing to support our preservation efforts through the book raffle. As a reminder, over the next 2 months (Nov. to Dec.), we will continue to sell tickets for Don Troiani's "Garryowen" print. That drawing will be held at our December meeting. There are 3 other runner-up prizes. All proceeds from the special drawing will go to battlefield preservation.

### **Meal Captain**

Kathy Little reminded everyone of the changes of times when making reservations. Your reservations are due one week prior to the monthly meeting date. The Inn at Reading has requested this. The November 12 meeting reservations must be made by November 5. Please heed these new guidelines, and keep in mind that the price of dinner is now \$32.00.

### **Programs**

Dave Unger announced the speaker for the November meeting which is member Wally Heimbach. Wally will be talking about Phil Kearny. In December Paula Gidjunis will discuss the 128<sup>th</sup> PA Regiment whose commander was the Mayor of Reading.

### **Website**

Webmaster Lisa Breneiser reported that there is a new tab on our website, "Civil War Ancestors". Two stories have been added. Read about Nancy Melcher's great, great grandfather who was a Medal of Honor winner and more!

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## November Program

### "Phil Kearny- International Soldier" *presented by Wally Heimbach*

The American Civil War produced many memorable and flamboyant personalities who, even 15 decades later, almost seem larger than life. Major General Phil Kearny was one such individual who would have loomed even larger had he not been cut down during the Battle of Chantilly in September 1862. "Kearny the Magnificent" was the scion of a wealthy family who pointed him toward a career in law. But, a desire for military adventure that burned from his youth would push him toward the U.S. Army and a commission at the age of 21. Wanderlust would take him to other continents to fight with other armies, and he was known for riding into battle with the reins of his horse held in his teeth, a revolver in one hand and a swinging saber in the other. Loss of an arm during the Mexican War did nothing to decrease his flamboyance (even if he did have to use only one weapon at a time!). On the Peninsula, Kearny was at the head of his troops



urging them forward saying, "Don't worry men, they'll be shooting at me!" At the time of his death, rumor suggested President Abraham Lincoln was considering him as a replacement for George McClellan, and it's interesting to hypothesize what may have happened to the Union war effort if the magnificent Kearny had been promoted to lead the Army of the Potomac instead of Ambrose Burnside.

*Wally Heimbach is a long-time Round table participant who seems to know almost everyone who is anyone in modern-day Civil War touring, research and writing. His first Round table presentation in 2018, a last-minute substitute for the renowned Ed Bearss, dealt with another superb Union general, "Hancock the Superb."*

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### **Dinner Reservations for the November 12, 2019 Meeting:**

**Please make your meal choices/reservations on the website. Our meal choices for November include: Roasted Turkey with Cornbread Stuffing; Meatloaf with Mushroom Gravy; Stuffed Flounder; or Rigatoni with Zesty Vegetable Marinara. Soup, starch, vegetables, dessert, rolls, coffee, tea, and water are included. The price is \$32.00 inclusive for meals.**

**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, TUESDAY Nov. 5, 2019, which is also the deadline for online reservations.**

**\*IMPORTANT NOTE\*** Once you have made your reservation, there are no cancellations for any reasons after noon on the **TUESDAY** preceding the meeting. This is the policy of the Inn at Reading, 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.**

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### **23rd Campaign Programs**

<u>DATE</u>	<u>SPEAKER</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>
11-12-2019	Wally Heimbach	"Phil Kearny: International Soldier"
12-10-2019	Paula Gidjunis	"The 128th PA Volunteer Infantry"
1-14-2020	Dave Fox	"Col. Charles Albright & the 132nd PVI"
2-11-2020	Linda Minarik	"An Evening with Mary Todd Lincoln"
3-10-2020	Dave Unger	"From Soldiers to Governors"
4-14-2020	Phillip Greenwalt	"From Kirby's Kingdom: Ramifications from the Trans-Mississippi in 1864"
5-12-2020	Tom Huntingdon	"In Search of George Gordon Meade"