

The First Defenders Civil War Round Table Newsletter

October 2025, the 29th Campaign



www.firstdefenderscwrt.us

President's Message

THE SLEEPING LION

September 11, 2025 and Bus #12 winds its way through the streets of Lucerne. The afternoon sun feels warm on my face, and my thoughts are already focused on the next stop. My wife and I are on our way to visit one of Switzerland's historic treasures, the Lion of Lucerne. The tour guide leads us up a short, cobblestone path to a small pond. Behind the pond is the sheer vertical face of a 200' high wall of sandstone. Carved in relief on the face of the wall is the figure of a lion. He lies with one paw resting on a shield bearing the Swiss cross. The head of the lion rests against another shield decorated with the fleur-de-lis, symbol of the French monarchy. A broken spear pierces the lion's back. He is mortally wounded and near death. The magnitude of the sculpture and the tragic circumstance which inspired it makes one pause in silent reverence to the sacrifice given.

On August 10, 1792, revolutionaries stormed the Tuileries Palace in Paris. The Swiss Guards, true to their sworn duty, stood firm while King Louis XVI and the French royal family escaped. Overwhelmed by numbers, more than 600 Guards were slaughtered and another 200 would die later, massacred or guillotined in prison. One officer, Karl Pfyffer von Altishofen, was on leave in Lucerne. Grief stricken and feeling survivor's guilt, he began a fundraising campaign to honor his fallen comrades. He eventually hired Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen to design the lion monument and stonemason Lukas Ahorn to carve it. The monument was unveiled in 1821. It is visited by millions every year.

Knowing the story, we stand motionless, transfixed by the contrast between the serenity of the park and the heart-rending saga of the Guards. Suddenly, chaos erupts. A group of stylish teens, mobile devices in hand, push us aside and force their way to the edge of the pond. Blocking the view for several minutes, they giggle and pose, taking dozens of selfies. As they walk away, I hear one ask another, why they sculpted a sleeping lion. I heard the same question from many others in the crowd. Another sad commentary on history not taught.

Mark Twain visited Lucerne and, returning to America, brought the story and photos of the monument to his fellow citizens. In 1894, a replica sculpture was unveiled in Oakland Cemetery, Atlanta, Georgia. The monument rested peacefully among the graves of 3,000 unknown Confederates who died defending Atlanta in 1864. In this case, the lion's head rested on a Confederate flag, not shields of France and Switzerland. The cancel culture of the current century, has led to repression of

anything Confederate. The sculpture was repeatedly vandalized. City workers desperately worked to remove red paint and vulgar graffiti, to no avail. In 2021, the mayor ordered the monument removed “for safekeeping.” City officials have consistently declined to say where the lion is today. Many locals believe it has been destroyed.

I bring these two stories to you as more examples of history lost or repressed. In an era where patriotic and religious holidays have become nothing more than an excuse for a three-day party, should we be surprised? Let each of us do our small part to teach our children and grandchildren the lessons of history so no more is lost.

Joe

Round Table Business

Clark called the meeting to order at 6:15 pm. There were no guests or new members, this evening.

Treasurers Report

Chuck reported that the 501C3 has been approved. If you make a donation to support our round table, you may now claim it on your tax return.

The account has a balance of \$ 1,781.53, with the General fund having a balance of \$1,553.53 and Preservation having a balance of \$ 228.00.

Membership

Ev was not in attendance at the meeting, but he provided a written membership update. We now stand at 47 members for the 29th Campaign, which includes 7 new members. We received an additional \$ 446 to support the speaker programs.

Preservation and Book Raffle

Gary noted that our speaker, Jason Emerson, donated 3 books to add to this evening's raffle.

At our September meeting, the membership voted to make a \$ 175 donation to the ABT for their “Save 417 Acres at the Breakthrough.” The acquisition of the 417 acres will create an 857-acre unified park along with acreage already located at the Pamplin Historical Park, VA.

The park commemorates the ending of the 292-day siege at Petersburg where on April 2, 1865 Union troops assaulted and finally broke the Confederate lines south of Richmond. On April 3rd, Lee's army abandoned Richmond along with the CSA government and Union troops occupied the city. Within a week, Lee would surrender at Appomattox. On this ground, 31 Union soldiers would be awarded the Medal-of-Honor.

The ABT is seeking to finalize the acquisition of the 417 acres not yet protected with a campaign to raise \$660 thousand with a matching grant of \$17 to \$1. That brings out contribution to \$2,975.

Our September Book Raffle took in \$ 80 and our Preservation balance for the beginning of October is \$133.

At the October meeting we will conduct a Book Bonanza Sale in addition to the monthly raffle. The books displayed will be available for a donation—any amount you wish to make. So, bring a few extra dollars and perhaps you may find a bargain for your library.

Correction---In our September Newsletter, I entered an incorrect amount for our Preservation balance (\$243). The correct balance should have been \$228. The \$243 was the total cash raised so far in the 29th Campaign.

29 th Campaign	Total for all Seasons
Total amount raised-\$ 323	
Total amount donated-\$ 275	Total amount donated - \$ 39,921
Total contribution with matching grants-\$ 6,675	Total contributed with Matching Grants – \$ 569,772

October Program

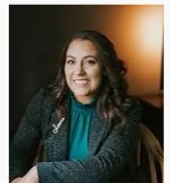
Women at War: the Female Soldiers of the American Civil War and Those that Wished They Were

presented by D0minish Miller

Contrary to popular belief, women did, in fact, fight in the American Civil War. They also infiltrated the United States Army in earlier wars. Deborah Sampson served for 17 months in the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War as Robert Shurtliff, and Lucy Brewer served with the Marines aboard "Old Ironsides" as George Baker during the War of 1812. Once a taboo topic, modern historians are finally shedding light on the role that female soldiers played in the Civil War and the women who made a living off of lying about their military service.



Dominish Marie Miller is the Third Circuit Court of Appeals Librarian for the Middle District of Pennsylvania, the founder of Preserving the History of Newberrytown, runs the Lewisberry Area History Lovers group and is a founding board member of the Newberrytown Special Events Committee. She serves as Librarian and VIS Chair for the Harrisburg Chapter, NSDAR. Dominish is also a living historian with the 87th Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry, Company C, where she portrays a private. She is the author of two cookbooks and a local history book.



29 th Campaign Programs		
Date	Speaker	Program
November 2025 **	Craig Symonds	<i>David Farragut & Chester Nimitz</i>
12/9/2025	Michael Harris	<i>The Philadelphia Campaign of the Revolutionary War</i>

**** The November 2025 meeting will be held on an alternate date to accommodate Craig Symonds presentation. Stay tuned! ****

If you would be interested in presenting to our membership, please reach out to Clark.

Dinner Reservations for the Tuesday, October 14, 2025

Meeting & Program: Deadline to order is October 10th, NOON.

We had 33 in attendance at the September meeting this evening. Just wanted to express my sincere “thanks” to all of you for getting your reservations in to me on time. It is very much appreciated!

Our meal choices for October are:

Soup

Breaded Haddock

Pork Chops

Pasta with Grilled Vegetables

If possible, please make your reservation on the website. When doing so, you should receive:

- An immediate email “thank you” for making the reservation.
- A follow-up email that includes a copy of your meal selection, and
- A second email confirmation that everything has worked properly (this may be delayed by up to 24-hours).

If you must call in reservations, please, CALL or TEXT your menu selection to Vicky Heffner at 610.413.5543 no later than **NOON, October 10, 2025**, which is also the deadline for online reservations. 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”

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.

New Excursion in Gettysburg! Gettysburg Railway

Gettysburg Excursions Train Ride

All Ages! · 1 Hour Round-trip

- As the train winds through the countryside, enjoy captivating storytelling about the leaders of the Battle of Gettysburg and historical landmarks along the route.

<https://fareharbor.com/embeds/book/gettysburgrailway/items/?language=enus&full-items=yes&back=https://gettysburgrailway.com/>

Blue and Grey Education Society (BGES) Winter 2025 / Spring 2026 Schedule of Events

Even though we've still got a few good months left in 2025—along with some incredible BGES tours- we're already looking ahead to 2026. Here's a first look at next year's tour lineup as it currently stands.

We're still working on the registration forms, and online registration isn't open yet. For more information or to join a tour, please reach out to BGES Executive Director Wade Sokolosky at BgesExDir@gmail.com. We'll be posting registration forms in the coming months, so stay tuned.

Winter 2025 Tours starting in 2026

- **Revolutionary Williamsburg and Yorktown**, with Bert Dunkerly, from Williamsburg, VA: Feb. 7, 2026
- **The Wilmington Campaign**, with Chris Fonvielle, from Wilmington, NC: Feb. 12–15, 2026
- **Forrest and the Streight Raid**, with Norman Dasinger, from Gadsden, AL: Feb. 20–22, 2026
- **Monmouth Campaign**, with Gary Ecelbarger and Scott Patchan, from Princeton, NJ: Feb. 26–March 1, 2026

Spring 2026

- **The War of 1812 on the Gulf Coast: Pensacola, Mobile, Fort Mims, Fort Sinquefield, and New Orleans**, with Mike Bunn, from Mobile, AL & New Orleans, LA: March 10–15, 2026
- **Spring 1865 North Carolina Campaign Wyse Fork, Monroe's Crossroads, Averagesboro, and Bentonville**, with Wade Sokolosky: March 26–29, 2026
- **The Atlanta Campaign—New Hope to Kennesaw, Part II**, with Dave Powell, from Marietta/Kennesaw, GA: April 15–19, 2026.
- **The Siege of Suffolk, April 11–May 4, 1863**, with Brian Wills, from Suffolk, VA: April 23–26, 2026.
- **George Washington's Alexandria and Mt. Vernon Tour, including the Carlyle House**, with John Maass, from Alexandria, VA: May 1–3, 2026.
- **From Petersburg to Appomattox, The Final Chapter in Virginia & Five Forks, Amelia Courthouse, Dinwiddie, High Bridge, and Sailor's Creek**, with Phil Greenwalt, from Richmond, VA: May 6–10, 2026.
- **The Wilderness Campaign**, with Greg Mertz, from Fredericksburg, VA: May 13–17, 2026.

Civil War Roundtable Congress (CWRT) Special Events to Support our “Giving Tuesday” Campaign



Announcing 3 Very Special Events in Support of Our Giving Tuesday Campaign

The 2025 CWRTC **Giving Tuesday** campaign continues our partnership sharing 50% of all proceeds with the **American Battlefield Trust**.

To achieve our \$5,000 goal and provide value for your donation, we are hosting three special events featuring **Dr. Curt Fields** as General Grant in conversation with Confederate generals: Beauregard, Pemberton, and Lee.

			
Dr. Curt Fields As General Grant	DONATE - \$20 LIVING HISTORIAN CONVERSATION BATTLE OF SHILOH Curt Fields as Grant & Larry McCluney as Beauregard Tues, Sept. 23 @ 7:00 PM Eastern	DONATE - \$20 LIVING HISTORIAN CONVERSATION THE VICKSBURG CAMPAIGN Curt Fields as Grant & Morgan Gates as Pemberton Tues, Oct 14 @ 7:00 PM Eastern	DONATE - \$20 LIVING HISTORIAN CONVERSATION THE APPOMATTOX CAMPAIGN Curt Fields as Grant & Thomas Jesse as Lee Tues, Nov. 4 @ 7:00 PM Eastern

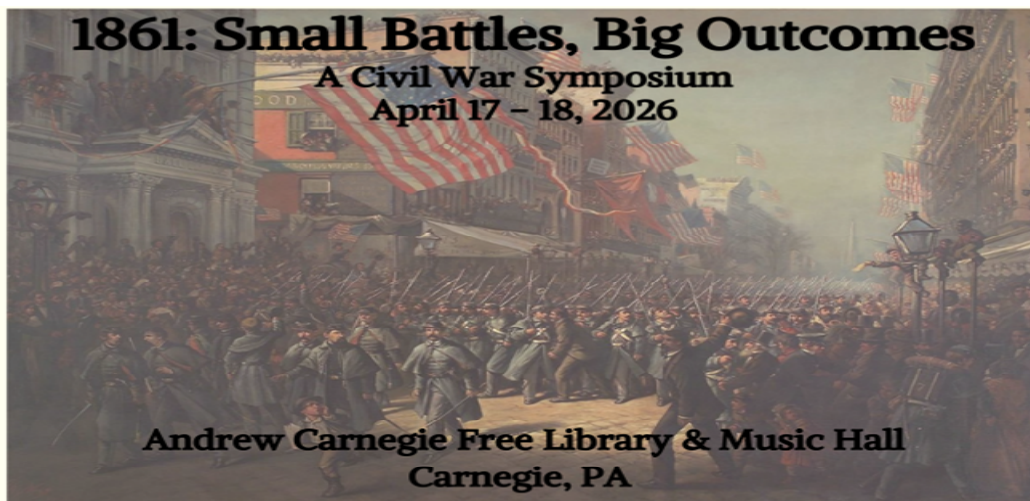
All donations are tax deductible

Click on the link below to donate and save your place for one or all of these compelling sessions.

Sign up here: <https://www.cwrtcongress.org/giving-tuesday.html>

The Andrew Carnegie Free Library & Music Hall

is pleased to announce our eighth annual Civil War Symposium, slated for April 17 – 18, 2026. Though overlooked in favor of later years and larger battles, the first year of the Civil War witnessed many advances and setbacks, trials and tribulations, personalities and decisions that affected how the remainder of the war came to be fought. In 1861: Small Battles, Big Outcomes, seven dynamic historians will unpack the military, political, and social threads of this pivotal year in our nation’s history.



<https://www.showelix.com/event/andrew-carnegie-free-library-music-hall-civil-war-symposium-1861>



National Museum of Civil War Medicine

Join us at the National Museum of Civil War Medicine on Saturday, October 11 at 3 p.m., for our America 250 Speaker Series!

Author John Rees will examine the role of Black Americans, free and enslaved, in the regiments of the Continental Army. Black troops served in nearly every Continental regiment, and even relatively large numbers served in southern regiments. The greatest number served alongside their White comrades in integrated units. Rees will discuss Black soldiers' acceptance, service, and experiences during and after the war for American independence. African American women with the army will also be discussed, including a rare Connecticut soldier's letter sent home to his wife who also spent time in camp.

John U. Rees, is a lifelong resident of Bucks County, Pa., and has been writing for almost 40 years on the experiences of common soldiers and women in the armies of the American Revolution. He has authored more than 200 articles, most available free online. His first book, *'They Were Good Soldiers': African Americans Serving in the Continental Army, 1775-1783* was published in 2019; his second, titled *Don Troiani's Black Soldiers in America's Wars, 1754-1865*, was published in January 2025.

This event is included with admission to the Museum, and it is FREE for members of the National Museum of Civil War Medicine.

The event will be streamed LIVE on our [Facebook page](#) if you cannot attend in person.

<https://www.civilwarmed.org/event/black-soldiers-in-the-continental-army/>

Haunted History Tours at the National Museum of Civil War Medicine

Haunted History tours are back at the **National Museum of Civil War Medicine!** This year, the Museum is offering **two special Halloween night tours** with extra time to tour the galleries.

During the month of October, Museum staff and volunteers will share stories of Civil War embalmers, the building's most infamous tenants, and their first-hand accounts of paranormal activity that have given the building its spooky reputation. In addition to a trip through the Museum galleries, the tour provides exclusive access to the third floor where numerous sightings have occurred.

Visitors are encouraged to bring their own cameras and ghost-finding apps to capture possible paranormal activities. Flash photography and LIVE streaming are prohibited.

Tours will be given on October 11, 18, 25, and 26 from 5:00 p.m.-6:30 p.m. There will be two special Halloween night tours on **Friday, October 31 from 5:00 p.m.-7:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.-10:00 p.m.** During these Halloween tours, guests will have additional time to tour the galleries without a guide.

Tickets are \$30 for the general public and \$20 for Museum members. Tickets for the Halloween Night tours are \$50 for the general public and \$40 for Museum members.