

# The Grapeshot

Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable

Newsletter

May 2023



**WELCOME!**

The mission of the Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable is to inform the public about the American Civil War, contribute to battlefield preservation and assist in the retention in the American memory of one of the most crucial events in our history. With 300 members from throughout the Valley we are one of the largest Roundtables in the United States.

The Roundtable presents nationally known speakers each month from September through May at the Scottsdale Civic Center Library Auditorium and we thank the City of Scottsdale and the Library for their support.

Our monthly events start at 5 PM with an opportunity to meet the speaker, converse with other members, browse our book sale, and watch a video in the auditorium. Our formal speaker programs begin at 6 PM.

The Library Auditorium is located at 3839 N Drinkwater Blvd and there is ample and free parking. All are welcome to attend our events, you do not need to be a member. For those who cannot attend in person, the meetings can also be watched via Zoom.

To learn more:

Roundtable Website: <https://www.scottsdalecwrt.org/about.html>

*Find Us On Facebook:* Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable

YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfxW2cvzCbGoKebHKPZsq5A>

Follow us on [Facebook](#)

Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable. Inc.

501 (c) (3) non profit Corporation , Founded 1978

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## Speaker Schedule for 2023-24

September 19: Brian Jordan, “A Monopoly on Misfortune: The Odyssey of an Immigrant Regiment in the Civil War”

October 17: Tim Smith, “The Real Horse Soldiers: Benjamin Grierson’s Epic 1863 Civil War Raid through Mississippi”

November 14: John Matteson, “The Concord Nurse and the Brooklyn Bard: Alcott and Whitman in Washington”

December 12: Meg Groeling, “First Fallen: The Life of Colonel Elmer Ellsworth, the North’s First Civil War Hero”

January 16: A. Wilson Greene, “Leaders and Leadership at Petersburg”

February 20: Peter Carmichael, “The Fate of a Confederate Deserter After Gettysburg”

March 19: Steven Cowie, “When Hell Came to Sharpsburg: The Battle of Antietam and Its Impact on the Civilians”

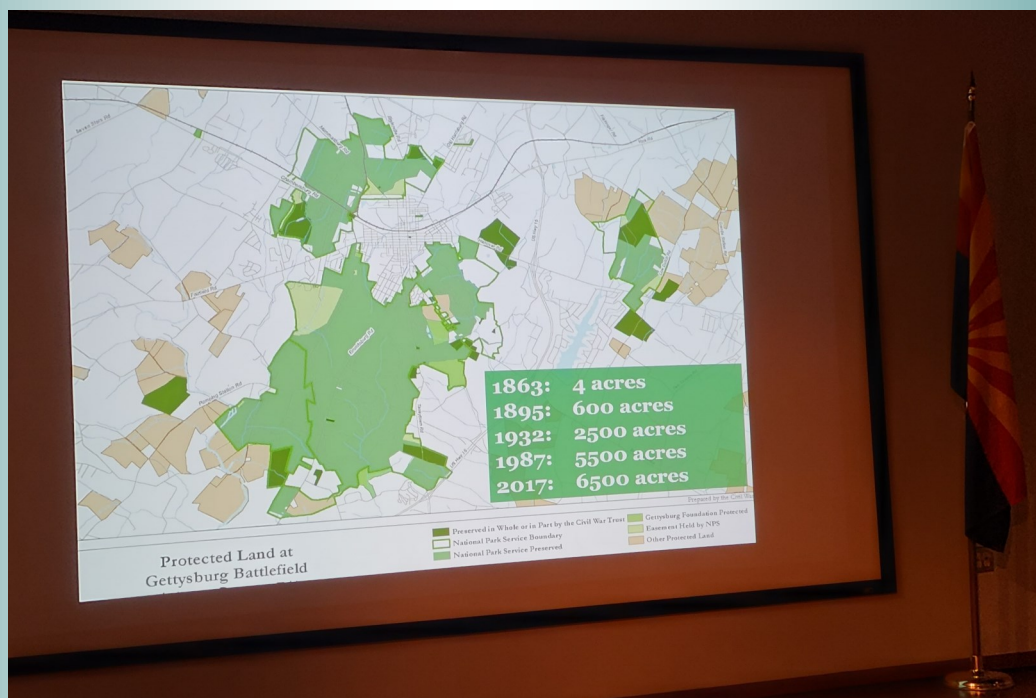
April 16: Eric Buckland, “Mosby’s Rangers”

May 21: Mark Bielski, “A Mortal Blow to the Confederacy: The Fall of New Orleans, 1862”



Our final speaker of the 2022—2023 season was the dynamic and entertaining Garry Adelman, Chief Historian of the American Battlefield Trust, and his topic Battlefield Preservation Extravaganza.

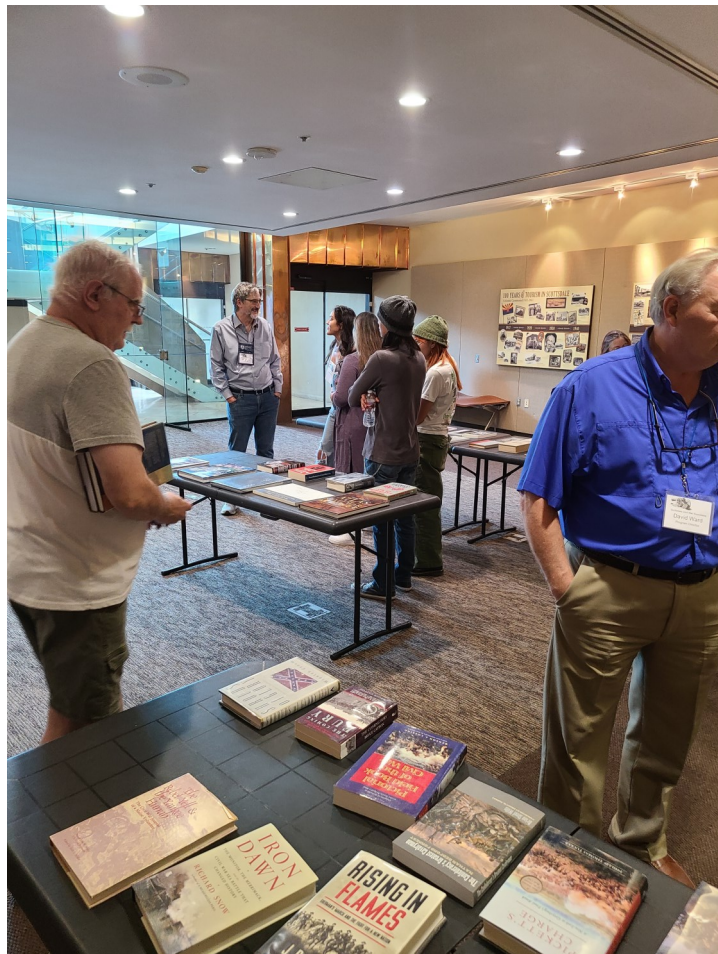
The United States is the only nation that has preserved so many battlefields and such large portions of these battlefields. From Manassas to Chickamauga, and 200 more sites, the story flows like a suspense novel with twists, turns, villains, and more. Garry took us on a lively, illustrated presentation on these sometimes agonizing, but ultimately successful and ongoing efforts to preserve hallowed ground.







Speaker Garry Adelman and SCWRT members perusing the club's wide variety of history books.



## **BEN BUTLER**

The Roundtable ended its 2022-3 season events with a special occasion: attending a performance of Ben Butler at the Don Bluth Front Row Theatre in Scottsdale on May 20. The theatre was kind enough to arrange something special just for us - after the show, the cast, director, and playwright sat down with the audience to answer questions and talk about what we'd just witnessed.

The intimate (74-seat) theater in the round setup was a wonderful setting to watch the play, centered on the 1861 incident when escaped slaves entered General Butler's command at Fort Monroe, Virginia and he had to decide how to respond. Although the play is about a very serious matter, it is also uproariously funny and had all of us laughing throughout.

A big thanks to Roundtable Board member Hal Bliss, who came up with the idea and worked with Don Bluth to make it happen.

The Don Bluth Theater has informed us that the discount on tickets for Roundtable members will continue throughout the run of Ben Butler which will end on July 8. If you wish to see the play go to the theater website <https://www.donbluthfrontrowtheatre.com/> and after you select your seats and go to checkout, use the Discount Code SCWR25.



**The General**



**Butler and Mallory**



**Confrontation between  
the Major and the General**



**To contraband!**







Cast of play **Ben Butler** with Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable guests.



SCWRT Board Member Hal Bliss



## Letter from our President

### **Mark Stoler**



There is a lot to cover this month, as we end our season on a high note with Garry Adelman's dynamic and engaging presentation on May 16th.

I think everyone is happy that May marks our last 5 PM speaker starting time. As of September, we will open our doors at 5 PM, with speaker start time at 6, which should make attending easier for our members. Our thanks once again to the City of Scottsdale and the Library for accommodating us.

We also have another series of meetings each season, the History Discussion Group, which meets in the week after our monthly meetings, except in December and May. These are informal member led discussions on a specific topic. When we restarted these meetings last September, we had to move the starting time to 5 PM and found that our attendance dropped significantly.

We are in the process of identifying a location other than the Library to hold the History Group next season, which will allow us to start later and hopefully draw more of you for these fun and freewheeling discussions. We'll let you know over the summer what we come up with.

At our May 16 meeting we announced \$5,000 in battlefield preservation donations which, along with the \$1,000 donation announced at the Ed Bearss event in January, makes this the largest amount donated we've ever donated during a Roundtable season. You'll find more details elsewhere in this issue.

At the end of each season, we report to you regarding the "State of the Roundtable".

Financially we are in the strongest position in our history due to membership dues, your generous donations, and the cost control efforts of the Board. We are a financially stable and viable organization.

We've maintained our reputation with the expert speaker community who like addressing large audiences like ours and by our approach to covering their expenses and providing accommodations. That reputation allows us to continue to attract speakers who often have to commit 2-3 days of their time, including traveling, to be with us.

The Roundtable is an Arizona non-profit corporation and a U.S. 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization. As such, we have legal and fiduciary obligations. We have approximately \$17,000 in expenses each year and track our income and spending carefully. The Roundtable does not pay honorariums, but does cover all costs for our speakers, many of whom travel long distances to be with us, from the time they leave home to when they return. We put speakers up at nice hotel accommodations in Scottsdale, where we negotiated discount rates.

The Roundtable ended this season with 294 members, one more than last year, adding 21 new members, and having four former members return.

That number is down about 20% from our pre-Covid peak. Our goal is to add 100 members over the next three to five years. As mentioned, our financial position is strong in the near-term, but additional members are essential for our longer term financial stability and, as importantly, to maintain the vitality of the Roundtable. Along with our financial fiduciary obligations, we have an fiduciary obligation to America and its history, to attract new members with an interest in one of the great pivotal events of our history.

We are also concerned with our attendance, both at the library and via Zoom (which we will be continuing next season). Attendance has dropped since pre-Covid days and we very much want to get those numbers back up. While we saw hopeful signs during the latter part of this season with in-person audiences reaching 80 to 90, we are looking for ways to attract new members and existing members who are no longer coming to hear speakers..

We certainly hope the later starting time will help but the Board has decided that this summer it will conduct a telephone survey of our members. Board members will reach out to contact members to ask, for those who are attending, what you would like to see more of, less of, and any ideas you have for drawing others in. For those who have not been attending, what have been the barriers and what would be likely to get you back. So please pick up the phone or call us back when a Board member leaves a message.

This is your Roundtable. If you have any ideas of how to improve the Roundtable, increase attendance, and attract new members, please reach out to me or any other Board members.

## Board Members

We have three long-time Board members who have decided not to serve another term. We are going to miss them and their thirty years of Board expertise.

Many of you know **Shelly Dudley** from Guidon Books, which for many years was THE bookstore for civil war, military and western history in the Valley. In recent years, Shelly has been ably handling media publicity for our speaker sessions and many of you have seen her handiwork in local publications.

**Don Swanson** began serving on the Board before any of its other current members, served for years as our Program Chair, and was as a wonderful mentor for me when I took on those responsibilities in 2018.

**Cal Thompson** has run our book sale for many years. It's his organizational skills, devotion, and a lot of heavy lifting that made it such a success.

Shelly, Don, and Cal - thank you for your contributions to the success of the Roundtable. You've made a difference.

A former Board member, **Jo Roberts**, has returned to the Valley, and is rejoining the Board, taking on Shelly's responsibilities.

Board member **Pat Toftoy** will take on coordination of the book sale.

Other returning Board members and Officers:

President Emeritus, **John Bamberl**.

Zoom and YouTube coordinator, **Tom Merrill**.

Program Chair, **David Ward**.

Secretary, **Hal Bliss**

Treasurer, **Bruce Washburn**

VP, **Richard Cox**

And I will serve another two-year term as President.

We are looking for additional Board members and for others to assist Roundtable operations. There is a lot of work that goes into keeping this whole thing going and we need people who are willing to spend some time and effort helping us with those efforts. If you are interested, let me or any of our other Board members know.

This summer we will send out renewal letters and a Constant Contact reminder to join us for the 2023-24 season. You can pay by check or by Credit Card on our website.

Look forward to seeing you next season!



## **MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

The Roundtable ended the 2022-23 season with 294 members.

We thank all those who renewed from prior years.

And greeting to the new members joining us during the season:

James Becker  
Jeff Brown  
Brian Clague  
John Curran  
Dale Enlow  
Harry Gross  
James Hawthorne  
Ashlee Henderson  
Don Hesselbrock  
Charlie Jones  
Bill Kidd  
Ernie Levine  
Roger Lienesch  
John Machir  
Brian McNeil  
Charlie Robinson  
Robert Vance  
Weiland Family

## BATTLEFIELD PRESERVATION DONATIONS

Each year, the Roundtable Board makes donations on behalf of its members towards battlefield preservation. Every Roundtable member is contributing to preserving American history.

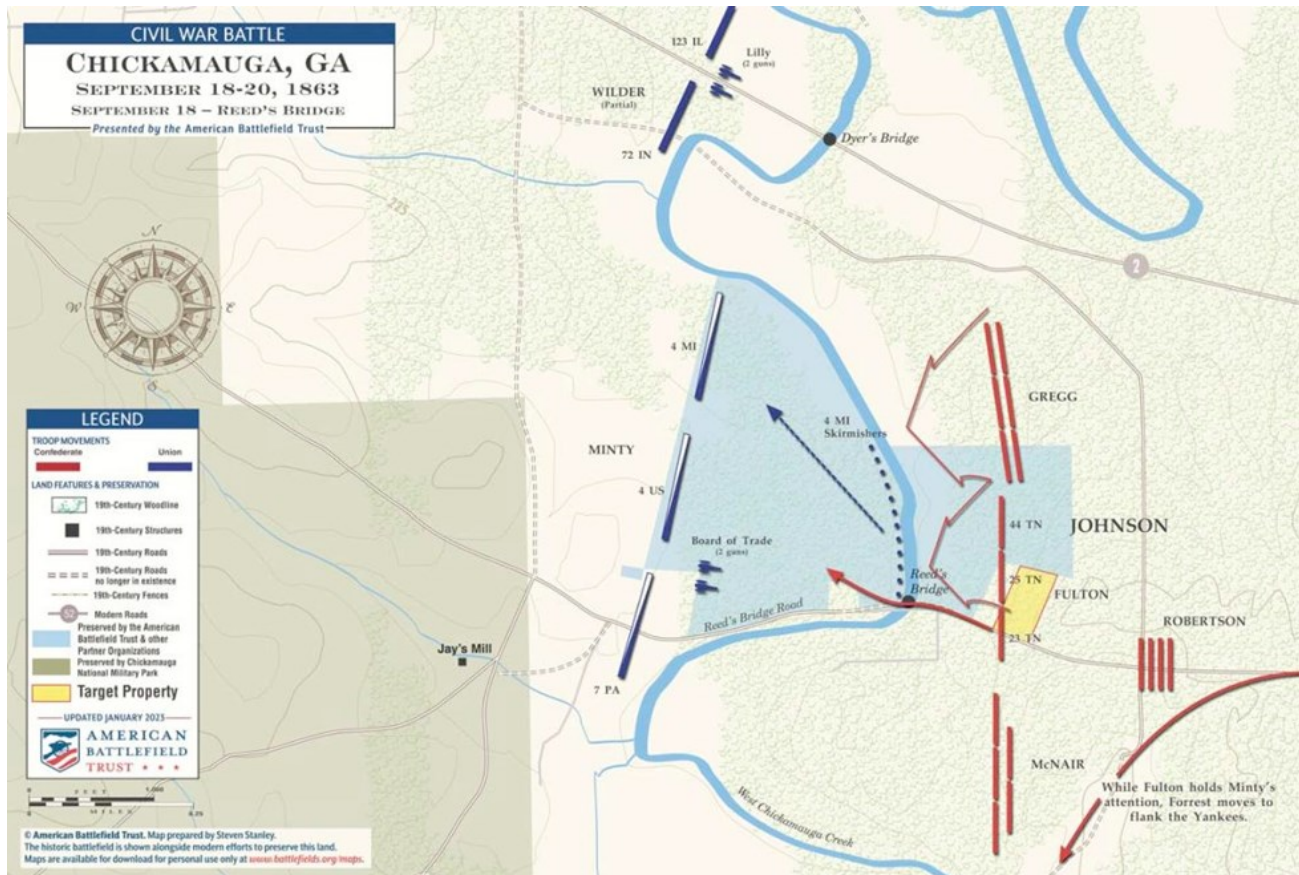
For the 2022-23 season, the Roundtable has made \$6,000 in donations, the most in its history. These donations are enabled by membership fees and donations.

### *Our 2022-23 donations:*

**\$1,000** to the Ed Bearss Memorial Fund for preservation at Vicksburg National Military Park.

**\$1,000** to the Central Virginia Battlefield Trust for acquisition of the Stonewall Brigade III Tract, part of Jackson's flank attack at Chancellorsville.

**\$2,000** to the American Battlefield Trust (ABT) campaign to acquire 343 acres at five Western theater battlefields; Chickamauga, Brice's Crossroads, Shiloh, Bentonville, and Wyse Fork. This donation is for an 18-1 match.



(Above, the area being acquired at Chickamauga was the subject of Eric Wittenberg's talk to the Roundtable in March 2023)

**\$2,000** to the American Battlefield Trust campaign to acquire 820 acres in Virginia at Mine Run, Reams Station, the Breakthrough at Petersburg site, Boyden Plank Road, and Dinwiddie court House. At Boyden Plank and Dinwiddie this will be the first acreage acquired by ABT. This donation is for a 30-1 match.

With these gifts, the Roundtable has made \$35,500 in donations over the past eight years. With matching grants, this has enabled the acquisition of parcels valued at \$2,327,000!

You can find the list of recent donations at the Roundtable website: <https://www.scottsdalecwrt.org/resources.html>



## BEFORE THERE WAS THE CSS HUNLEY THERE WAS THE USS ALLIGATOR

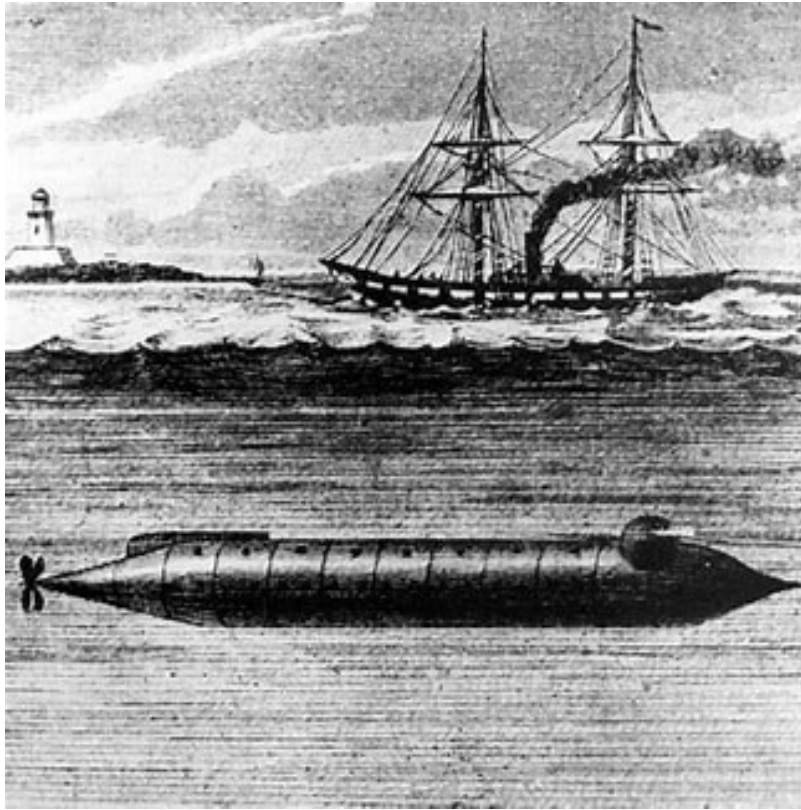
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Every serious Civil War buff knows the story and tragic fate of the first operational Confederate submarine, the *H.L. Hunley*. Less well known is that a year earlier, the Union had already built and tested a prototype submarine of its own, the USS *Alligator*.

It seems the U.S. Navy intended to work along parallel lines to construct subsurface vessels as well as ironclads like the *Monitor*. Time was of the essence. Intelligence reports confirmed that the Confederacy was preparing to convert the former screw frigate *Merrimack* into the ironclad ram CSS *Virginia* at the Norfolk Naval Yard. The North was desperate to counter the South's threat to its wooden-hulled blockade ships.

In the autumn of 1861, the Navy asked the Philadelphia firm of Neafie & Levy to construct a small submersible ship designed by the French engineer Brutus de Villeroi, who had designed and built submarines in France.

The boat was about 47 feet long with a beam of 4 feet 8 inches. She was made of iron with the upper part pierced with small circular plates of glass for light and contained watertight compartments. The crew complement was set at 18. For propulsion, she was equipped with 16 hand-powered paddles protruding from the sides. The Washington Navy Yard later replaced the paddles with a hand-cranked propeller. Air was supplied from the surface by two tubes of floats connected to an air pump inside the vessel. The boat had a forward airlock and was the first operational submarine to allow a diver to leave and return while both diver and ship remained submerged. A diver was to attach a mine to a target, then return and detonate the charges by connecting the mine's insulated copper wire to a battery inside the vessel.



*Artist Rendition of the USS Alligator*

The Union Navy's contract with the builder specified that the submarine was to be finished in not more than 40 days. Its keel was laid down almost immediately following the signing of the contract on November 1, 1861, but the work proceeded so slowly that more than 180 days had passed when the sub was finally launched on May 1, 1862.

Soon after her launching, she was towed to the Philadelphia Naval Yard to be fitted out and manned. She was placed under the command of Samuel Eakins, at that time a civilian. On June 13, the Navy formally accepted the boat. A spring 1862 a newspaper report called her the *Alligator*, partly because of her green color and shape. The name stuck and was soon used in official correspondence.



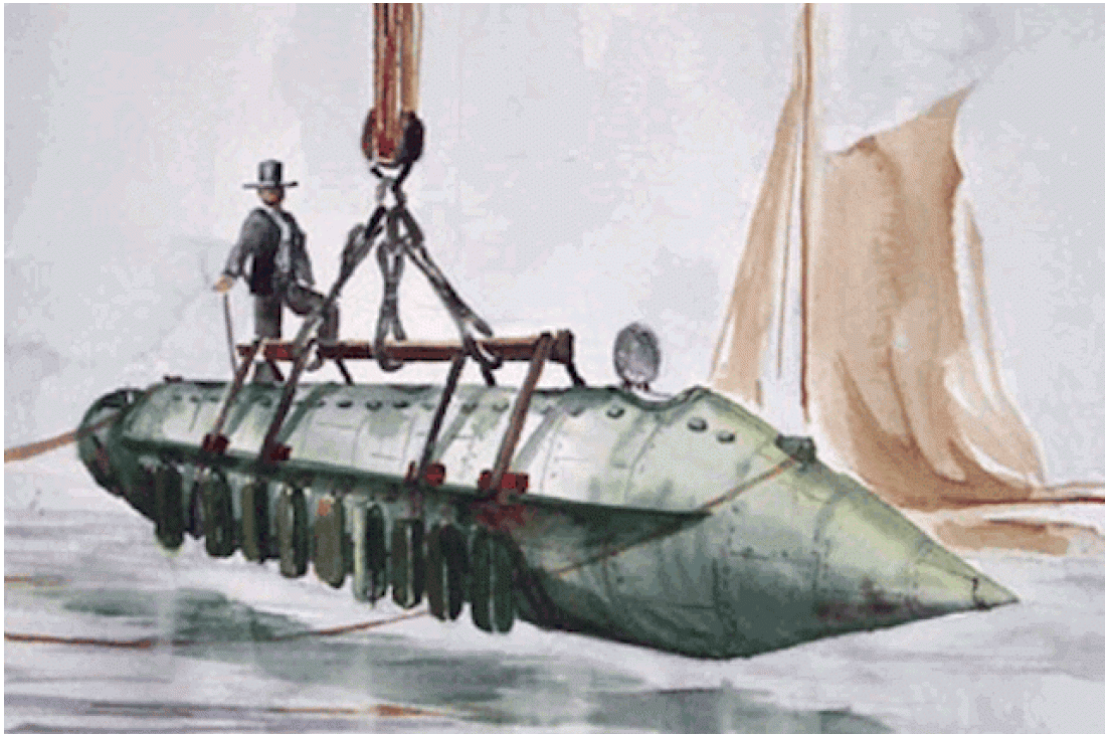
*Samuel Eakins, Commander of the Alligator*

On June 23, 1862, the *Alligator* reached Hampton Roads. She was considered for several tasks, including destroying bridges and clearing obstructions in the James River that had prevented Union gunboats from steaming upstream to support McClellan's drive up the Peninsula.

Commander John Rodgers, the senior naval commander in the James River area, examined *Alligator* and reported that the James and other rivers where the submarine could be used were too shallow to allow her to submerge completely. Moreover, he feared that the gunboats under his command would be highly vulnerable to her attacks if *Alligator* fell into Confederate hands. He requested permission to send the submarine back to Hampton Roads.

*Alligator* was ordered to proceed to the Washington Naval Yard for more experimentation and testing. In August, Lt. Thomas Selfridge, Jr. was given command of *Alligator* and she received a naval crew. The tests proved unsatisfactory and Selfridge pronounced the enterprise a failure.





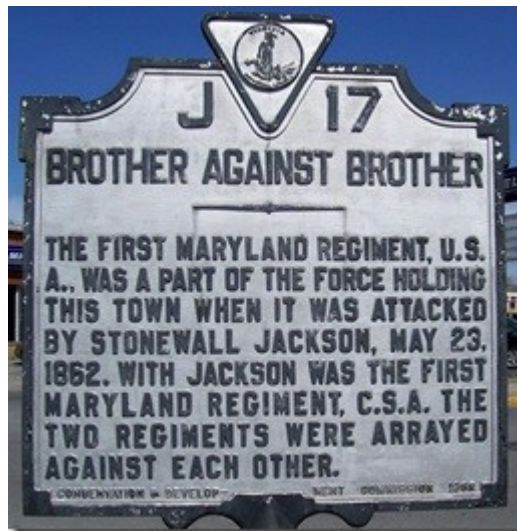
About this time, Rear Admiral Samuel Francis du Pont, who had become interested in the submarine while commanding the Philadelphia Naval Yard early in the war, decided the *Alligator* might be useful in carrying out his plans to take Charleston, South Carolina. He ordered the USS *Sumpter* to tow the *Alligator* to Port Royal, South Carolina. On April 2, 1862, severe weather forced *Sumpter* to cut *Alligator* adrift off Cape Hatteras. She either sank immediately or drifted awhile before sinking. Fortunately, no crew members were on board.

Thus ended the career of the U.S. Navy's first submarine.

*Dick Cox is SCWRT vice president and chair of the History Committee.*

## THIS MONTH IN CIVIL WAR HISTORY

**May 23, 1862.** At Front Royal, Virginia, Stonewall Jackson's army of 17,000 attacks and nearly destroys a detachment of about 1,000 Federal troops. Jackson knew of their presence because of information provided by Belle Boyd, a Confederate spy, who had circulated through the Union camp. In a famous "brother against brother" moment, the First Maryland Regiment (CSA) led the attack and routed the First Maryland Regiment (USA).



*Virginia Highway Roadside Marker*

## May 2023 Trivia Questions

1. Daniel Harvey (D.H.) Hill was the general to whom Lee's famed lost order (Special Orders # 191) was addressed prior to the Battle of Antietam, but he was also given a copy written by his brother-in-law. Who was Hill's brother-in-law?
2. The first six Congressional Medals of Honor were presented to the surviving members of a daring raid. Who were these men and for what raid were they honored?
3. What future President of the United States was of proper age to serve in the military, but in order to remain home and support his mother and sisters, bought a substitute to serve in his place?
4. When Ulysses S. Grant arrived to take command of all Union forces at Chattanooga in October 1863, he removed William Rosecrans from command of what army? With whom did he replace Rosecrans?

*Answers on page 24.*

## **Officers & Organization (as of June 1, 2023)**

### **Officers / Board Members**

President: Mark Stoler (203-645-1387) (stolerscwrt@gmail.com)

President Emeritus: Dr John Bamberl (480-699-5844)

Vice President: Richard Cox

Secretary: Hal Bliss

Treasurer: Bruce Washburn

(All Officers through 5/2025)

Board Members (thru 5/2025): John Bamberl, Jo Roberts

Board Members (thru 5/2024): Tom Merrill, Pat Toftoy, David Ward

### **Committees**

Program: David Ward

Grapeshot: Richard Cox

Greeters: John Bamberl

History: Richard Cox

News Media: Jo Roberts

Membership: Mark Stoler

Social Media: John Bamberl

Student Outreach: Tom Merrill

Book Sales: Pat Toftoy

Dues:

\$35 Individual; \$45 Family; \$500 Lifetime

Students & Active Military Service - Free

Website: [www.scottsdalecwrt.org](http://www.scottsdalecwrt.org)

Mailing Address:

Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable

7359 N Via Paseo Del Sur, Ste 515-274

Scottsdale AZ 85258



# Scottsdale Civil War Round Table Membership Form

## Please Join Us!

Your membership enables the SCWRT to donate towards civil war preservation projects and attract the best Civil War experts from around the country to speak at our meetings, from September to May! Please fill out this form and return it with your check payable to Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable. Mailing address:

Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable

7349 N. Via Paseo Del Sur, Ste 515-274

Scottsdale, AZ 85258

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE, ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Membership (no charge)

Active Duty Military (no charge)

Lifetime (\$500) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Individual Annual (\$35) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Family Annual (\$45) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Additional donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

The Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable is an Arizona non-profit corporation and a U.S. 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.

Website: [www.scottsdalecwrt.org](http://www.scottsdalecwrt.org)

All members receive our monthly publication, The Grapeshot, from Sept-May

Follow us on Facebook at Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable

## Other Opportunities via Zoom

A series of free lectures on **Wednesdays hosted by the Civil War Round Table Congress (CWRTC)**. Check out their website for topics and to register.

<https://www.cwrtcongress.org/speaker.html>

**CWRT Congress Fridays With U.S. Grant** for a special series with Dr. Curt Fields. To register (free)

<https://www.cwrtcongress.org/grant.html>

**YouTube Channel for CWRT Congress** includes 40+ recorded past talks: [https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=cwrt+congress](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=cwrt+congress)

### **From Chambersburg Civil War Seminars and Tours**

Zoom presentations 15th and 30th of every month. Nationally known speakers. \$5 per registration

For schedule and registration

<https://www.civilwarseminars.org/lectures>

### ***Trivia Answers***

1. Thomas (Stonewall) Jackson
2. The six survivors of the Andrews Raid, or the Great Locomotive Chase, which took place in northern Georgia in April 1862.
3. Grover Cleveland
4. Rosecrans commanded the Army of the Cumberland. George H. Thomas replaced him.