

NEWSLETTER

Friends of Civil War Alcatraz

May 2018

Editor: Steve Johnson

Spring Living History Day on Alcatraz Every spring and fall Alcatraz returns to being a Civil War fort as re-enactors come to the island to portray the soldiers and civilians who were here in the 1860's. Visitors were treated to the sound of period music by the Third Artillery Band as their boat pulled up to the dock, and soon learned they could take a walking tour of Fort Alcatraz, visit with a medical doctor, see a cannon demonstration, or have a guided tour of the citadel, below the main cell block. Visitors especially enjoyed having their picture taken with the re-enactors and learning about the role of women during the Civil War. We are very grateful to the

Dates to Remember

Tuesday, May 15th, 2018

Peninsula CW Roundtable
Lecture TBA

Thursday, May 17th, 2018

SF CW Roundtable "Jefferson Davis & the Attempt to Decapitate the Union Govt." by Fred Martin 6:45 pm dinner, 7:30 pm talk

Monday, May 28th, 2018

Memorial Day at the San Francisco Presidio, 10 am



musicians who came from Sacramento to play all day on the island. Also many thanks to the cannon crew of the Nevada Civil War Assn. who braved the rains in coming over the Sierras to be with us. And thanks as well to Ranger Amanda Willford of the NPS Archives for setting up the display of period artifacts. It was gratifying that so many of our international visitors

on Alcatraz took the time to take our tours, or chat with the exhibitors. Some of the visitors we met were from Brazil, Russia, Britain, France, Germany, and our neighbors from Canada and Mexico, to name a few. We hope Americans show as much interest in the history of the countries they visit as these good folks did.

Ray Ahrenholz from Nevada describes the howitzer to visitors. More photos on the FOCWA "Activities" page





The Trust media team (L to R): Connor Townsend (Audience Development), Kris White (Education Manager), Garry Adelman (History & Education Director)

Civil War Trust Visits California

The Civil War Trust is one of the nation's largest land trusts, buying land that has historic military value to keep it from being developed. The trust has preserved over 40,000 acres over the past 30 years (that's equivalent to 75 square miles), mostly of land that was part of a Civil War battle. They have added acreage to such important sites as Gettysburg, Antietam, Fredericksburg, among many others, and donated them to the National Park Service. Besides land preservation, the Trust does many outreach programs in education, social media, and publications. Lately the Trust has been visiting National Park Civil War sites, doing a virtual reality tour of each location. We have been fortunate that their team came to

California and wanted to visit Fort Point, Alcatraz, the National Cemetery, and Point San Jose (Fort Mason). We gave them a tour of each location, and you can see all the tours on the Trust's Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/pg/civilwartrust/videos/?ref=page_internal You will also see their tours in Southern California — San Pasqual battlefield, the Huntington Library, and CBS Studios (regarding Civil War movies). Our thanks to the Trust team for showing everyone that California had an important part to play in the Civil War as well.

Upcoming Events (please contact Steve Johnson if participating in either event)

Memorial Day Parade and Ceremonies, Presidio of San Francisco, May 28th

Civil War Days, Angel Island, June 16 - 17

Resources: <https://www.facebook.com/SanFranciscoCivilWarRoundTable/>

<http://www.peninsulacivilwarroundtable.org>

<https://www.facebook.com/civilwartrust/>

Alcatraz Factoid (from the NPS/GGNRA website on the history of Alcatraz)

When President Lincoln suspended **the writ of habeus corpus** in 1863, the judicial system could arrest individuals and imprison them without trial in a court of law. The Union government in San Francisco now used the Alcatraz guardhouse to imprison private citizens, accused of treason, as well as soldiers. At this time, treason was broadly defined to encompass any pro-Confederate or anti-Union sentiment, from rejoicing in the Union's loss of a battle, refusing to take an oath of loyalty to the Union, or recognizing the Confederate States of America, to plotting or privateering for the Confederate cause. Many local politicians and citizens, whose loyalty to the Union was suspect, were arrested and jailed on Alcatraz to serve time. These prisoners could be detained without a trial and despite a lack of sufficient evidence of their crimes.