

NEWSLETTER

Living History Day Viewed by Thousands

Last April the Friends of Civil War Alcatraz hosted the first Living History Day of this year. With the cooperation of the American Civil War Association, the California Historical Artillery Society, the 5th California Volunteer Infantry Band, the National Civil War Association, and the National Park Service, the day was filled with tours, exhibits, music of the period, and military drills. The public was invited to take part in cannon drills, using the howitzer in the sally port. The visitor count that day was over 5,000 people, and although most people were clearly more interested in visiting the federal penitentiary - especially those from other countries - there were certainly many folks who wanted to know more about the early history of Alcatraz, and the connection it had with the Civil War. Visitors loved having their pictures taken with soldiers, and asked lots of questions about their uniforms and muskets. Many of the re-enactors stated that they liked coming to Alcatraz because of the natural beauty of the Bay and the long military history of the island. The next Living History Day in October will be special because the Park Service is going to allow re-enactors to stay overnight on the island, in the cell block. One might say that sleeping in a cell would be a step above sleeping on the ground, which is what they are accustomed to when doing re-enactments.

BOOK REVIEW:***The Civil War in Arizona*****by Andrew Masich**

This is one of the few book-length accounts of the Civil War in the Arizona territory, and the the part that California troops played in that arena. These California volunteers, some of whom probably had some basic training on Alcatraz, had been sent to what had been called the New Mexico territory to stop the advance of Texans into the Southwest. The value of this book is found in the great detail the author provides in the uniforms, equipment, provisions, horses, artillery, and the logistics of moving troops and waging war in the desert. The author is also unique in

describing how Californians were instrumental in the development of Arizona as a territory and later as a state. They became "agents of change" by establishing mail service, making maps, fostering mining and other businesses. But of course the main thrust of the book is the confrontation of the California and Colorado Volunteers with the Texas army under General Sibley. All the skirmishes and battles are described in full, and many first-person accounts are provided. The *Alta California* reported on the war in Arizona quite extensively, and many excerpts are included. Another valuable feature of the book is the description of how Californians also protected the border with Mexico, pacified the Apaches, and eventually came to settle the new territory of Arizona after the war.

Dates to Remember

June 21-22 - Civil War Days on Angel Island

July 27 - Fort Point Brass Band plays on Alcatraz

August 16 - Fort Point Living History Day

October 4 - Living History Day on Alcatraz



Members of the California Historical Artillery Society help FOCWA members man the cannon in the sally port to demonstrate how it was loaded and fired in the 1860's