



THE ALCATRAZ SENTINEL
The Newsletter of Historic Civil War Alcatraz Island
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Completion of Grant from the National Park Foundation

In September of 2011 year Ranger Marcus Koenen and I worked on applying for a grant from the National Park Foundation, for the purpose of enhancing our interpretation of the Civil War era in San Francisco Bay. The goal was to target 8th grade students who study the Civil War in their social studies curriculum, as well as visitors to Fort Point and Alcatraz. Another goal was to coordinate with FOCWA to increase school visitations, the number of Civil War Days, and the training of more people to give Civil War programs. The funding was to pay for an intern to help with the research and training, conduct outreach programs to schools, and to purchase items that would aid in our interpretation of the Civil War. The grant was accepted and an intern was hired to assist me in working on a Power Point presentation about California and the Civil War. (I chose that topic because I felt Alcatraz and Fort Point needed to be put in context of the bigger picture of California's role in the Civil War). In the meantime, we purchased additional equipment for volunteers who give Civil War programs - brogans, belts, and Kepi hats. We also purchased items for cannon demonstrations,

and a Civil War flag. Additionally, we increased our Civil War programs on Alcatraz using the new intern and a volunteer who had been trained to give them.

Unfortunately, the new intern did not work out and we lost some time as a new intern had to be found and trained. However, the new intern, Matt Connelly, has proved to be an excellent team member. He has been giving cannon demonstrations as well as Civil War programs, he has provided invaluable assistance with his computer skills in helping to develop the Power Point presentation, and he has used his prior skills in interpretation with students to help correlate our programs with state curriculum standards.

We are currently in contact with two schools and hope to have the school program up and running by next month. We would like to have a formal training session for volunteers, using FOCWA members as teachers, so that more volunteers can give programs and, by wearing uniforms, increase the Civil War presence on Alcatraz and eventually at Fort Point.

Completing the grant frankly would not have been possible without the generous support of FOCWA and its members. The purchase of a computer dedicated to FOCWA projects allowed us to use up-to-date programs to put together the "California and the Civil War" Power Point presentation. This, by the way, will be available to all FOCWA members when they want to give a school or community group presentation, once we establish the best way to make it accessible. And again, thanks to FOCWA, we have purchased a Canon camera which has already been used to record Civil War days, Civil War architecture on Alcatraz, and FOCWA members in action - which will eventually be posted on the FOCWA web site.

Next year we plan to continue to expand the Civil War programs on Alcatraz by training more volunteers; we also hope to connect with more schools and to have another two Civil War Days. I will keep you posted on our progress.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Johnson

FOCWA member and NPS volunteer

A True Friend of Friends of Civil War Alcatraz

A letter from Ranger Jayseon Vance

I began my career in the National Park Service in 1998 at the age of 51. I had begun hiking the coastal trails for fitness and was trekking through Fort Funston, the old artillery batteries and installations alongside the cliffs near the famous Olympic Club Gold Course.

Flashback to 1959 at Glacier National Park and my grandfather and I admiring the NPS arrowhead sign at the entry point to the park. Now fast forward to 1998 and admiring the arrowhead sign at Fort Funston. To shorten this story, I now thought back to 1981 when I left

the Social Security Administration for the civilian work force after initially deciding that a transfer to the National Park Service would not be good financially.

So there I was at Fort Funston and I started thinking about my years of dreaming about wearing a park ranger “flat hat” and badge. I went over to the ranger office and asked for a volunteer application and within 60 days, I was hired to patrol Ocean Beach and give programs. Lead ranger, Kevin Turner, (now at Lake Mead NRA), said “we need a military history person.”

So here I was, a history graduate with a short time in the Army as a cadet officer and a lifelong interest in Custer, the Civil War, World War II (dad was an Army Air Corps veteran from the European Theater of operations) and an interest in parks and being offered this opportunity! I developed a program devoted to the WWII soldiers in the concrete bunkers of Fort Funston, the “Panama Mounts” (observation bunkers) the huge emplacement covered in ice plant known as Battery Davis which once housed a 16 inch gun with a 25 mile range (all the way to the Farallones Islands).

Thus began my volunteer service and later internship with Range Bob Holloway. Eventually I moved on to the Cliff House and the ruins of Sutro Baths and thence into the Presidio Visitor Center as a storekeeper near Sixth Army HQ. In my time as a storekeeper for the Parks Conservancy, I also worked at the Marin Headlands Visitor Center (former 1941 Army chapel). I also worked at historic icy Fort Point bookstore and saw the passion of re-enactors and their excitement on living history events.

An opening finally appeared when Ranger Craig Glassner called me at home after reviewing my resume and offered me a jog at Alcatraz for “not more than two to four months.” After six months on the job as the night ranger and applying myself in full to my duties, I saw the opening appear for the permanent position I now hold, it is now early 2001.

I have been fortunate to be honored with one employee of the month, one safety employee of the year award, one safety star award, two unsung hero awards and a certificate from Indiana University as a National Trainer Development graduate to present operational leadership (employee safety) training.

I have served as the primary authority on the military history of Alcatraz (an ongoing learning experience) and as the island safety officer for the past ten years.

I must admit my first month of developing a Fortress Alcatraz program were faltering at best and once a crusty old gentleman visitor asked me about what the Army Engineers did here on Alcatraz and I was sadly clueless in 2001 on this subject. Thanks to John Martini and a fellow named John Weaver (author of “America’s Third System Brick Forts, a Legacy in Brick and Stone”). I learned and learned and learned and am still learning the ways of the coastal defenses of this island and surrounding venues.

On Sunday, February 22, 2004, I met Fred Bohmfalk, Susan Cohn, William and Isabelle Tate Ted Stahr and Thomas Cartwright (of Tennessee fame) for a fortress tour and I guess I presented it well enough to help inspire the eventual creation of the Friends of Civil War Alcatraz.

Now as my career winds down I foresee the development of much stronger and more robust exhibits here in the great historic casemate building we use every day (good old Building 64) which was planned and built by the fine army engineer officer, George H. Mendell. We are building a partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers through Charles Fenwich at Lake

Sonoma to make this happen and we can be thankful for the help of my intern, Matt Connelly, m Brad Schall, Fred Bohmfalk, John Nevins, Steve Johnson, Chuck Gardali, Robert Hubbs and many more of you (you know who you are!) for this effort.

With thanks to all of you, I look forward to retiring in March.

Jayseon Vance

Living History Day's

Each and every living history day on Alcatraz gets better and better. The two living history days held in 2012 were no exception. Visitors to Alcatraz are always surprised to see Union soldiers manning their posts and guarding Confederate prisoners on Alcatraz. As you know the effort it takes to put on such an event is tremendous. If you want to help, contact Co-chairpersons Fred or Brad. Besides having a great time, the photo opportunities are endless. We hope to see you at the 2013 living history days in the spring and fall. To view photos of past LHD'S visit the FOCWA web site.

Living History Display

During the living history day, Brad Schall manned a table in China Alley outside the area where the orientation videos are shown. On the table, were the contents of what a union soldier would have carried in his haversack. The haversack was used to carry personal items as well as items needed for everyday use. Some of the items on the table were a tin plate, tin cup, knife, fork, & spoon to eat with, a small cooking pot, Bible, tooth brush, candles, lucifers (matches), a crude tooth brush, deck of cards, pair of wooden dice, soap container, pin and ink well, cigar tin, and many other items. I suspect that also a soldier would have an extra shirt, sox's, and coffee beans as well. Thank you Brad for the wonderful display and taking the time to tell visitors to the Island what life was like for union soldiers.

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Editors Corner

Another very successful year for the "Friends of Civil War Alcatraz" is drawing to a close. It truly makes me proud to belong to such an organization. I ask myself; if we did not help the National Park Service in their efforts to tell the story of Military years (especially the Civil War years) on the rock, who would. A big Thank You to all members for all your help.

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Annual Elections

Annual elections for the Board of Directors and 2013 Officers will be held on October 27, 2012 As required in our by-laws. The Friends of Civil War Alcatraz will be in good hands under the elected leadership for 2013.

Annual Board of Directors & Officers Meeting

Visit The Friends of Civil War Alcatraz web site to read the published minutes of all board

Meetings.

Last but not least a great photo from the Living History Day



Union Soldier Pvt. Dean Enderlin standing guard in front of the power magazines