

ALCATRAZ LIVING HISTORY DAY 10/2009

IMPRESSIONS AND SCENARIOS

IMPRESSIONS

U.S. MILITARY Military **impressions** will be **limited to units** that were **stationed on the island** during the war*. *If you wish to portray a different impression and can demonstrate a reason for being on the island we will certainly consider it. An example would be portraying U.S. Navy personnel bringing dispatches from Headquarters in Benicia.

Between now and event time, please visit your local sutler to obtain the correct insignia.

Units Stationed at the Post on Alcatrazes Island during the War Between the States:

REGIMENT/UNIT COMPANY/BATTERY 3rd U.S. Artillery A, B, D,

E, H, I, K, L, N, Band 9th U.S. Infantry F, G, H, K

U.S. Engineering Det. A 1st Dragoons Recruits 1st California Vol. Inf. 2nd California Vol. Inf. G 2nd

California Vol. Cav. F 5th California Vol. Inf. H, K 6th California Vol. Inf. A 8th California Vol. Inf. B, E, G, H, M 1st Washington Vol. Inf. Recruits Military Prisoner N/A (see below)

Uniforms

Artillery and Infantry

This is a garrison impression. Required uniform for artillery and infantry: 1) Frock coat with appropriate buttons. Kepi with appropriate insignia. A Hardee Hat with appropriate insignia is acceptable. 2) Sack coat with appropriate buttons. Kepi with appropriate insignia. Weapons M1842, M1855 or M1861 Springfield Rifle œ depending on the unit. Sword **only if** appropriate to the impression. There is a 24-pound Garrison (Flank) Howitzer in the Guard House available for gun drill and other demonstrations. Implements on the island include: one staff with sponge

and rammer, one worm staff, —gun hoist bar,“ one dummy friction primer, one lanyard, one canister round, one grape round and one dummy shell. NO POWDER and NO CAPS ALLOWED

Cavalry

Cavalry shell jacket and kepi with appropriate insignia. Weapons M1859 Sharps Carbine or appropriate issue weapon. Appropriate revolver (Colt pattern 1851 or 1860). Saber appropriate to the impression. NO POWDER and NO CAPS ALLOWED

U.S. Army Prisoner

Sack coat with white letter —P“ sewn on back (9“ high, 5“ wide [centered]) and kepi (no insignia). Note: In the only Civil War era photo we have of military prisoners on the island, there is no —P“ on the sack coat. However, we request (not mandate) that the —P“ is present for the purpose of identifying you to visitors.

U.S. Army Prisoners may be utilized as —time portal hosts.“ In this capacity, the participant has the opportunity to meet the public and re-direct their mindset from the Penitentiary years to the Civil War era. It would be a good idea to decide —what you’re doing time for“ ahead of time. Many prisoners were doing time for desertion and assaultive behavior. Going AWOL while on liberty in San Francisco would likely be a minimal sentence. Striking an officer might get you shot. Keep in mind that you’ll likely have to explain your situation in front of children, so crimes such as rape or sodomy (while authentic) would be NOT be appropriate. **Note:** Military prisoners weren’t known for being responsible people (which is why they were prisoners). With that said, we have found that those portraying prisoners NEED TO BE THE MOST RESPONSIBLE. Once again, you will likely be the visitor’s gateway to the past.

Civilian impressions may include: Women Wife Laundress* Cook (for officer’s family)* Other impression(s) *For your reference, several cooks and laundresses lived in the Citadel

Men Contractor Laborer Mason Carpenter Secessionist Prisoner (limited number) Confederate Privateer

Secessionist Prisoner

A secessionist prisoner may very well be the most difficult impression. Since there is no documentation of anyone wearing a Confederate uniform in California during the war, CIVILIAN ATTIRE is required. This impression will require answers to questions such as: Where are you from originally and what did you do there? Why are you in California? How long have you been here? Where do you live? What is your occupation? If you are a miner (for instance), how do you do that job? Why are you a prisoner? As a Secessionist prisoner, you may be philosophical or somewhat indignant about your situation, but keep in mind that this is the Civil War. Your rights have been suspended and corporal punishment is acceptable. So it would be very unwise to antagonize your captors too much.

Confederate Privateer

Approximately 27 privateers from the schooner Chapman were confined on Alcatraz beginning March 15, 1863. Details of the Chapman situation may be found on the internet, including the California Military Museum website (see WEBSITES on page 4, below). There is also information on the internet concerning the Chapman's captain, Asbury Harpending. Again, this impression calls for CIVILIAN ATTIRE. Note: When researching this historical event, you may find the vessel identified as the, —J.M. Chapman.“ —Chapman“ was the schooners correct name. We also have a list of most of the crewmen's names, but little, if any background research has been conducted.

Additional Impression Information

It is our intention to move living historians around during the day (unless you want to stay where you are) to provide breaks and changes of scenery.

Attire for the most versatile impression would be a frock coat. In this uniform, you are free to adopt / portray many personas. You may post yourself (or be posted) as a guard in a variety of locations on the island, including the Dock, Guard House, China Alley and the 1866 Tunnel as well as strolling the island. The impression will allow for interpretation on the road above the Gardens where the ladies will be having tea in the afternoon.

SCENARIOS AND LOCATIONS*

*You are not limited to the Scenarios and Locations listed, below. If you have other ideas, we'd like to hear them. If your impression lends itself to mobility, (rather than a static presentation station) we'd like you to go for it. If you'd like to alternate, that's okay too. For most impressions, you live on the island œ it's your home and (within limits) your impression should convey that.

Scenario Locations:

Alcatraz Dock (three locations)

Alcove œ period music

Cooking Demonstration

Amphitheater for presentations: weapons, life on Alcatraz, soldier's pay, etc.

A guard posted at the Dock
Guard House (two rooms) Artillery Demonstrations with 24-pound Flank Howitzer Women's
Demonstrations (or other)
China Alley (including Tunnel) Soldier's Life (life as a soldier, passes to San Francisco, etc.)
Prisoners
Gardens (afternoon) Ladies Tea Electric Shop (site of the 1862 prison) Medical Impression

Suggested Topics of Discussion with Visitors Entertainment (or lack thereof) Food (it was actually good on the island) Uniforms The post as a fortress The post as the Military Prison for the Department of the Pacific Concerns about the possibility of a Confederate raid Concerns about secessionist activity in San Francisco and other locations Reading or writing letters Maintaining equipment Playing cards Discussing fatigue duties

On the island (maintaining gun batteries, painting, etc.)

Maintaining the gun battery or tending gardens on Angel Island Discussing Ft. Point (advantages or disadvantages of being stationed there vs. the island) Complaining

About being paid with paper money. California was a "—coin" state; gold and silver. A soldier's hard earned paper money pay was discounted 15% in San Francisco & sometimes more. Complaining in general. It's something soldiers did and still do.

Presentations in the Guard House will need to be synchronized with the Tram. Since we're dealing with a very narrow road, presentations at locations along the thoroughfare need to begin after the tram comes through and conclude before it makes the return trip. This means presentations should have a maximum duration of about 20 minutes.

WEB SITES

Friends of Civil War Alcatraz: www.friendsofcivilwaralcatraz.org This is a new web site. We are still getting up to speed, so please be patient.

National Park Service, Alcatraz: www.nps.gov/alcatraz

Fortress Alcatraz: www.fortressalcatraz.com

This is John Martini's web site. John is the historical consultant for Friends of Civil War Alcatraz. He was the National Park Service Historian for the island for many years and has written two books on the military history of the island.

California Military Museum: www.militarymuseum.org Good histories about the units stationed on Alcatraz as well as some information on the island itself.