

The Eagle Eye

Volume V, Issue I

Non Facilie Viridis Est

FEB./MARCH 1863 {2008}

MARCH & APRIL EVENTS!

REENACTING ON THE ROCK OR DOING A DAY IN ALCATRAZ

By 2nd Sergeant Tim Pedersen

Mooney Grove
Visalia
MARCH 1 & 2
CWRS Event

Picacho Peak
Tucson, AZ
MARCH 8 & 9
ACWC Event

Knight's Ferry
APRIL 4 & 5
ACWA Event

Prado Park
Chino, CA
APRIL 4 & 5
SCCWA Event

Oakley Tactical
Gline Run, CA
APRIL 11

Mariposa
APRIL 25 - 27
{Friday School Day}
NCWA Event

Dog Island
Red Bluff, CA
APRIL 25 - 27
{Friday School Day}
RACW Event

**For a more
complete calendar
of the
2008 campaign
season,
see page 7**



**WE WERE FORCED TO SHARE A CELL WITH A CERTAIN MR. NELSON SNOOK,
THE INFAMOUS SOUTHERN SYMPATHIZER AND NOTORIOUS SCOUNDREL.**

With the history of Alcatraz involving so many failed escape attempts, why would anyone want to volunteer to portray a prisoner on the notorious Rock? The answer is easy, as it was an opportunity for me to be part of a Civil War era living history event hosted by the Friends of Civil War Alcatraz and the National Parks Service. There was a very healthy turnout of participants, including several members of our unit: yours truly, Dave Rogers, Ernie Manzo, Patti Ballard, a bunch of her guns, and Jane Lehman. Another friend of the company,



Mr. Nelson Snook was there, as well as many other familiar faces from the NCWA and other clubs.

Dave and I portrayed a couple of Union soldiers that went AWOL due to being detained in a Sacramento jail after a scuffle with a man who swindled us after a poker game. We thought we won some land from him, but we found out it belonged to someone else. The fellow didn't have our money when we came calling, so we decided to take matters into

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



A DAY AT ALCATRAZ {CONCLUDES}

our hands or fists as the case happened to be. Well, the authorities caught us and once the army located us they sent off to the island.

Our coats were stripped of the federal eagle buttons and a large letter "P" was sewn on the back. We managed to scrounge for buttons to close up our coats as the weather was quite foul. If that wasn't bad enough we had to be in the company of the secessionist and Rebel sympathizer Nelson Snook.

The weather was threatening a bit as we rode the ferry from San Francisco but nothing to be too concerned about just yet. I was quite impressed with the place as we approached it and laughed a bit at seeing the graffiti on the building that said "Indians Welcome." After a bit of orientation and settling in it was time to play prisoner. Nelson had a spare set of leg irons that

for some odd reason I volunteered to wear. The first order of business was to assemble this motley band of prisoners with our escorts and march on down to the sinks by the dock.

Having accomplished that, our day became pretty much a series of marches, searches, and being tossed in a cell if the soldiers got tired of parading us around. Being in a cell was less favorable to me than marching around with my ankles bound up as I had to listen to Snook ramble on about his "rights" and that "ape Lincoln." Then again the weather was starting to get more threatening and I learned how to tune the treasonous rhetoric out.

I must say that Nelson really looked the part and did a great job portraying his part. Seemed too easy to me. What I don't understand is how the guards didn't notice him not falling in with us when we called out to go on one of our "parades." I even dropped hints that they needed to double check if all of their prisoners fell in and nothing happened. Can't blame a guy for trying to help but what does that say about the guys who were guarding us. Then again, where are we going to go?

Somehow even prisoners got a lunch break so Dave and I dashed off to the NPS lounge for lunch. We decided to just wander off after we were done and see what would happen. We wandered out and came across nobody for a while but then we saw an officer talking to a visitor and Dave made a break up a sidewalk that went up a hill. I was little less daring yet ended up being momentarily



ALCATRAZ GUARD, PRIVATE PAT BALLARD DEMONSTRATING WHY THERE WAS NO NEED FOR WATER-BOARDING ON THE ROCK!

accosted by the officer who ended up letting me dash off for a bit of fun. I lost track of Dave and so I set off on my own adventure, evading soldiers and getting puzzled looks from the tourists. It was a fun way to see Alcatraz, running from authority and all that.

The reaction from some of the public was quite funny, I would get asked for directions and then would hear "look he's a prisoner!" There was a little kid who asked me if I was a soldier and I told her yes. She went to her parents and said, "look a soldier!" and I told them that I indeed was a soldier but if they saw any soldiers around not to tell them that they saw me and then took off away from them. Good fun while it lasted but I got bored not getting caught and caught up

with the folks waiting to take a tour we were scheduled to go on.

The tour was of the Citadel and was a chance to see the old Alcatraz. The tour took us under a cellblock to Civil War era Alcatraz and what a sight with the old cells and living quarters there. What a dreary place to be in but it was neat though. Our tour guide was quite enthusiastic and knowledgeable. He told us about the history of the graffiti in the cells from the 19th century prisoners and the 20th century Indian occupation. It seemed everywhere we went a room had a story about it.

Our guide took us to a section of the prison that had nothing to do with the Civil War era but was fascinating as well and that was the hospital ward section. Maybe more so for me as I work in one of the medical trades. I felt a bit at home as I noticed that the color scheme reminded me of the Veterans hospital that I did my radiology tech internship in back in the early 1980's. the government must have bought a lot of those icky shades of green or whatever that was. We saw an old pharmacy, an operating room, and a dental room which had a hole in the floor that went down to the dining hall. Can anyone say "rinse?" One thing I saw that was neat to me was an old x-ray table and an ancient darkroom where they developed

CONCLUDES ON BOTTOM OF NEXT PAGE



WINTER CONFERENCE REVIEW - 2008

A Report on the Weekend Conference at the Benicia Camel Barn

By Ted Stahr

The weekend of 9 to 10 February, the NCWA conducted it's Third Annual Winter Conference. The event was held in Partnership with the Benicia Historical Museum in Benicia, California. The Benicia Arsenal was the largest arsenal on the West Coast prior to the Civil War. As in the past two years, the conference covered a whole range of topics concerning the era of the Civil War. In fact, there was some topic for almost everyone's interest.

For those interested in California history, there was a class covering the history of the state up to the Civil War. The role of the California Volunteers in the war was also covered in detail. For your information, there were some 16,000 California Volunteers who wore the Blue during the war. Another class covered the Civil War Flags of California.

For the ladies, there were classes on Foundation Garments (Civil War Victoria Secrets types), table ware, mourn-

BENICIA GOES BACK IN TIME



A UNION UNIFORM from the Civil War era captures the attention of participants in the third annual Civil War Winter Quarters Conference on Sunday during a tour of the Camel Barns Museum in Benicia.

Brevet Private Ted, at right, managing to make the papers again!

ing clothes, headwear, and the like.

For the military types, there classes on how to improve your impression, drill, and parade formations.

Especially interesting and informative were the classes on Civil War rations, what was issued, how it was preserved, cooking methods, mess equipment and various period recipes. This class was very practical since we often receive period rations at our events.

Another fascinating class covered the countermarch used by Longstreet's corps during the Second Day at Get-

tysburg. This particular seminar discussed the various theories on what maneuver was used during the battle.

Overall the event was very informative, not only for the reenactors, but for the general public as well. All who attended the event learned something about the era of the Civil War; I know I certainly did.

ALCATRAZ {CONCLUDES}

their films in dunk tanks. Ick! There were some other cool things like the cell where the Birdman of Alcatraz was held and finding out that he was a real jerk not to mention he had no birds while he was at Alcatraz.

The tour ended and we discovered that there was a meal waiting for us. Some of the participants had brought cooking gear and some firewood. After a long struggle with the elements, a stew was prepared and we had a bit of that in the comfort of being indoors. It was a good time to be inside as the weather was getting nasty as predicted and the wind was getting rather fierce.

It was about that time we decided to leave on the next boat out as it was time to close down the event anyway. We hid under a

cover until it was time to make a dash for the line once the boat was ready to take on passengers. It was at that time the rain started to cut loose and I grabbed my poncho and wrapped it over my head. While that was going on, the ferry boat people were having a time getting the boat moored as the waves were making things tough. I was glad to be aboard and dry, but the ride back to shore was quite choppy.

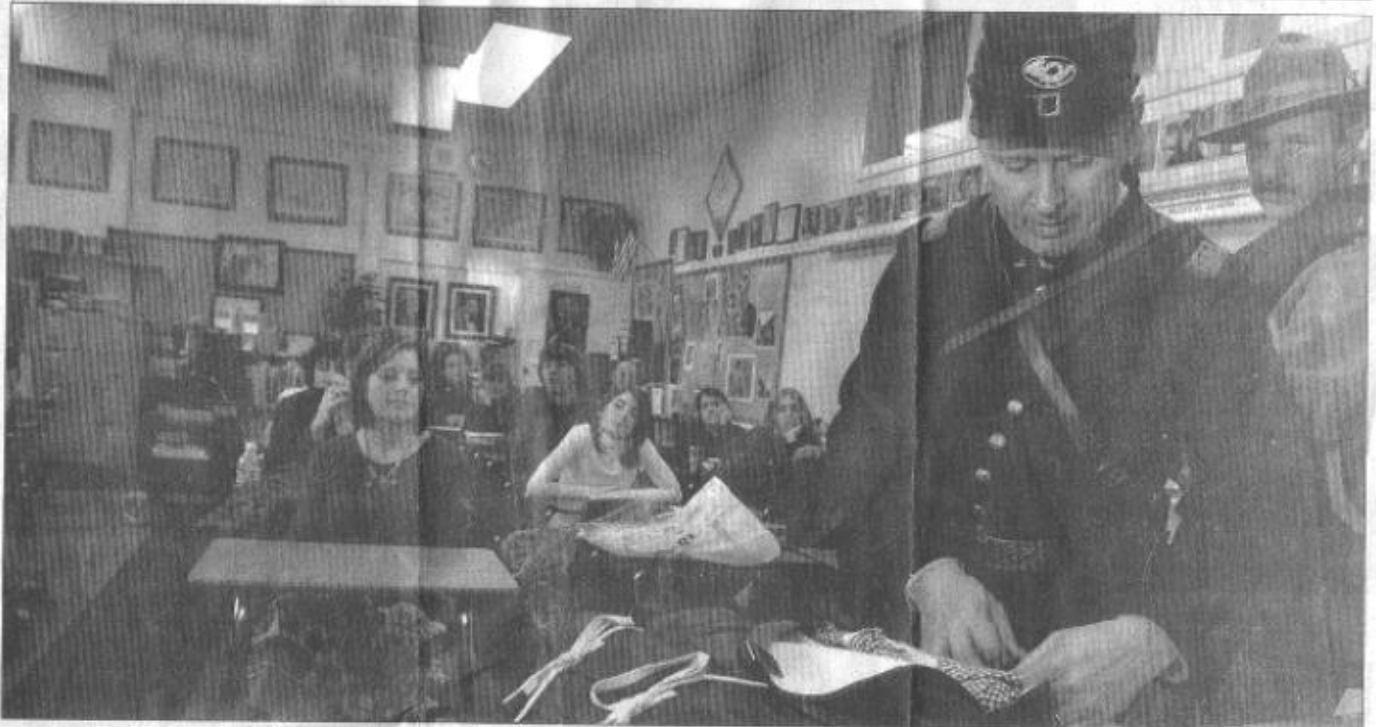
I'd have to say that the living history day was a success in my eyes, especially since I have never been there before. I even had a chance to get a taste of the nasty weather that the original prisoners complained about. There will be another living history day coming up in October so I hear and might

PRESENTATION IN PLACERVILLE

Mountain Democrat FOOTHILL LIFE | B SECTION

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 30, 2008

MIMI ESCABAR, FEATURES EDITOR, mescabar@mtdemocrat.com



Democrat photo by Kyrilna Pelkum

CIVIL WAR REENACTOR Dave Rogers shows Super Quiz students the contents of a typical Union Army officer's pack. Rogers and other reenactors like John Nevins, far right, dressed as a Confederate sharp shooter, gave a show and tell to help students from three area high schools train for the Academic Decathlon set for Wednesday and Saturday.

CLIPPING FROM THE MOUNTAIN DEMOCRAT, PLACERVILLE'S LOCAL NEWSPAPER

The California State Academic Decathlon for the 2007-08 school year focused on the American Civil War. This being the case, requests for school presentations had an upsurge in the months preceding the February 2nd competition between schools within the state's 58 counties.

Answering one such call were four of us from the NCWA. Ted Stahr, Russ Hanson, John Nevins, and myself agreed to travel up to El Dorado High School in

Placerville and give the students an up close look at the uniforms and equipment of the infantryman and sharpshooters of the era.

Mrs. Clare Dusek's class hosted us along with some students from a neighboring high school.

We presented for the better part of two hours to an audience that could only be described as bright, receptive, attentive, and flawlessly polite.

- Dave Rogers

KEEPING THE SCORE HONEST

Sharpshooters on both sides earned special respect from their opponents and also engaged in a unique type of competition. One of Berdan's men recalled that when he peered out of his trench, a ball "flattened the corner of my cap down on my head." Seeing the man fall to the ground, the enemy marksman thought he had a kill.

When the Southerner called out, the Union soldier informed his adversary of the miss, "so that he would not mark down any more Yankees than was entitled to."

— Source: Killers in Green Coats

By R. L. Murray, Civil War Times, April 2008

MORE SCENES FROM THE ROCK



Kept on the move and under constant scrutiny, the detail of the prisoners under the command of Lt. Doug Erickson



Here we have the former convict Pedersen awaiting his release to the ferry back to the mainland. Despite the incessant rain at the end of the day, freedom and the promise of a warm meal at home made the wait worthwhile.



The feared Alcatraz Guard, Ernie "The Hammer" Manzo served a day long stint and received praise when he managed to spot convict Rogers attempting to pass into the line of departing sightseers with his prisoner's sack coat turned inside out.



Private Ballard approaching historic Alcatraz.

Many thanks to Pat Ballard and Tim Pedersen for the photos appearing in this issue.

Look fun to you? Then you should know that the Friends of Civil War Alcatraz have **tentative** plans for an encore event on the weekend of October 5 & 6. Space was limited to the first 50 reenactors to sign up, so watch the Eagle Eye as more information becomes available.

You can also visit the website for the latest updates at www.friendsofcivilwaralcatraz.org.

And for more photos from this event, see www.printroom.com/pro/amfoto1

2008 CAMPAIGN CALENDAR

☆ = School Day at this Event * = Tentative Date as of this printing

MARCH

1 & 2	CWRS	Mooney Grove Event	Visalia
8 & 9	ACWC	Picacho Peak Event	Tucson, AZ

JUNE

7 & 8	ACWS	Acton I Event	Acton
21 -22	ACWA	Casa De Fruta Event	Hollister

APRIL

4 & 5	ACWA	Knights Ferry Event	Knights Ferry
4 & 5	SCCWA	Prado Park Event	Chino
4 & 5	RACW	RACW Tactical	Reading
11		Oakley Tactical	Gline Run
19 -20	ACWS	St. Catherine's Event	Anaheim
25 -27	NCWA	☆ Mariposa Event	Mariposa
25 -27	RACW	☆ Dog Island Event	Red Bluff

JULY

4 - 6	CCWR	Gray Eagle Event *	Portola
19 -20	CHAS	Civil War Days Event	Duncan's Mills

AUGUST

28 -1	CSRМ	Gold Rush Days	Old Sacramento
28 -1	HBHS	Huntington Beach Event	Huntington Beach

SEPTEMBER

13 -14	ACWA	Nevada City Event	Nevada City
19 -20	NCWA	To Be Announced	To Be Announced

MAY

3 & 4	ACWS	Wooden Nickle Event *	Riverside
16 -18	NCWA	☆ Gibson Ranch Event	Sacramento
16 -18	RACW	☆ Yreka Wilderness Event	Yreka
21 -26	ACWA	Roaring Camp Event	Felton

OCTOBER

4 & 5	ACWa	Modesto Event	Modesto
17 -19	NCWA	☆ Fresno Event	Fresno
	ACWS	Spring Mountain Ranch Event	Las Vegas, NV

***Remember to confirm all
dates and contact the host
clubs before attending!***

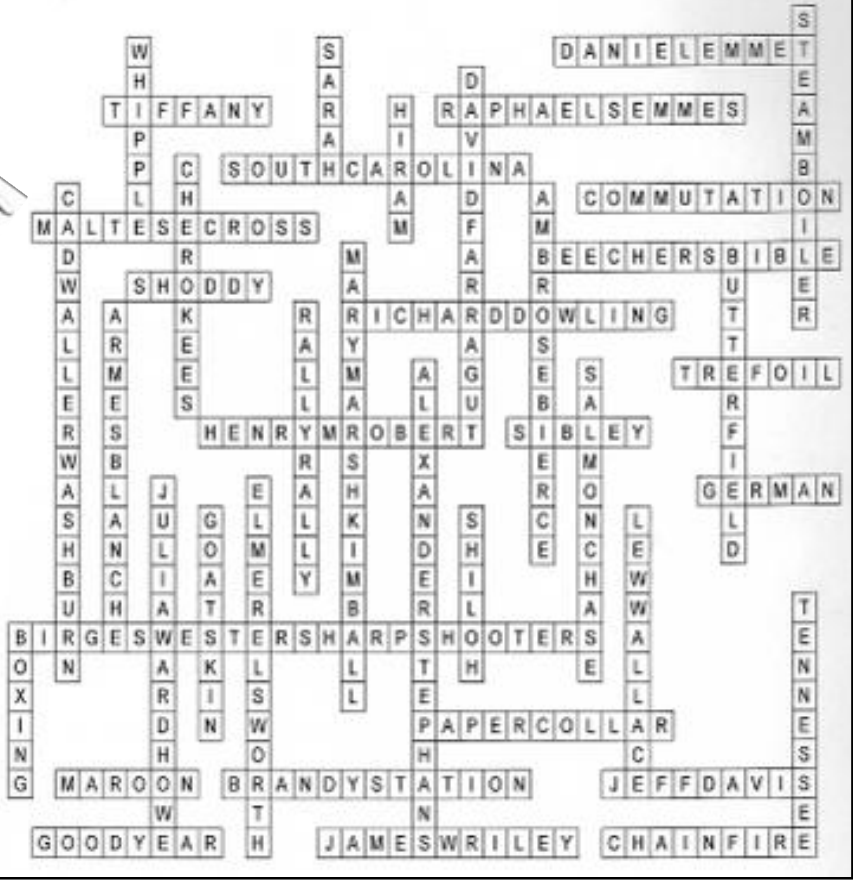


THE WINTER QUARTERS PUZZLE SOLVED!

Private Dennis "Deadeye" Donovan surely puts some of our gentle readers out of their misery by providing us with the answer key to the Winter Quarters 2007-8 crossword puzzle.

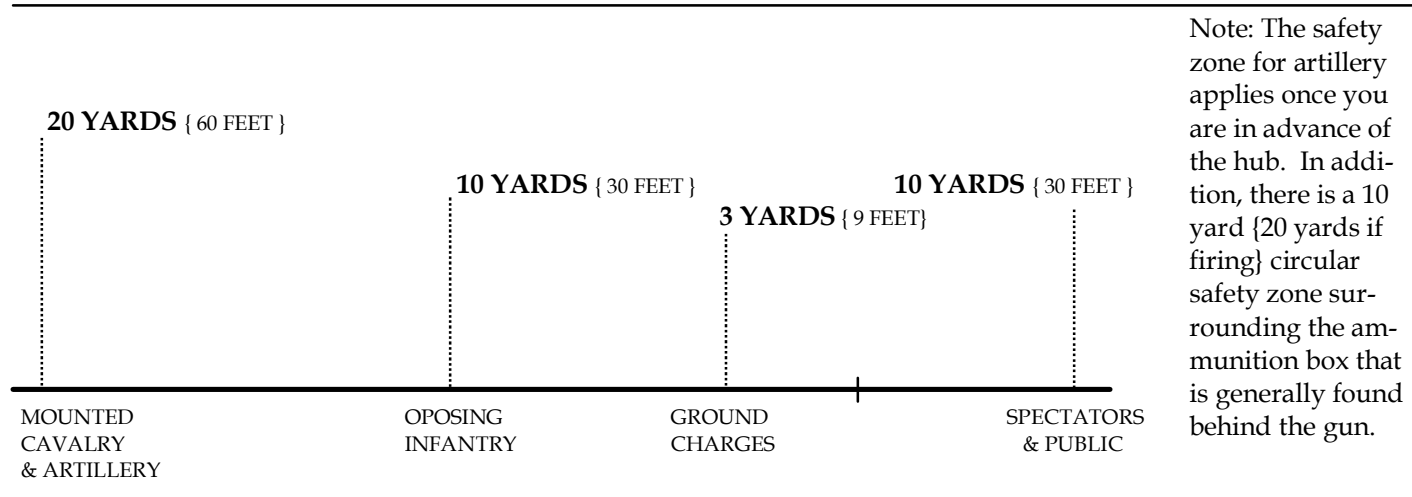


If only I could have found that last clue! I could have let him live, but Noooooooooooooooooooo!



"They as the skirmishers, go ahead and 'kick up the muss' as they say."
 - Journal of Charles Mattocks assigned to the command of the 1st USSS

THE OFFICIALLY PRESCRIBED SAFETY ZONES



When in doubt, elevate your muzzle. When in serious doubt, don't fire!

The Eagle Eye

THE NEWSLETTER OF WEST
COAST BERDAN
SHARPSHOOTERS



Proudly serving the Berdan
Sharpshooters of the the NCWA,
ACWA, RACW, and NCWC

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Period sketch from life by Medal of Honor
recipient Charles Wellington Reed,
9th Massachusetts Light Artillery.

FROM THE PATENT PORTABLE DESK OF 1ST LT. D.W. ROGERS

The campaign season is once again upon us. We seem to have a fairly full schedule despite the loss of Ardenwood Farm. Given the choice between Ardenwood and the field at Mariposa, I am not exactly heartbroken about it, but I know that was a couple of our fellow's local event.

Chris Hoshaw returns as our Colonel again this year so we will be in experienced hands. The Colonel made a point of using as skirmishers rather than just another line infantry unit last season and I am confident that this will be the case again in 2008.

Private Vern Lemke has had to postpone his transfer to one of the outposts in Arizona and so will be with us on occasion this year. We may expect a melodic visit from the much in demand diva Mrs. Sonia Lemke as well. It is rumored that the dry air would have played havoc with the vibrato which would have been a near tragedy to the stage.

Official company order #1: Given that the Lieutenant has managed to cleverly fracture two bones in his foot, and that former First Sergeant, now Private Russ Hanson has seen it acceptable as a common enlisted rifleman to hack into the flesh and bone of his left index finger, it is hereby ordered and shall be so that no member of the 1st Regiment, United States SharpShooter shall endeavor to harm themselves in any manner that might exempt them from duty until such time as winter quarters. After that, have at it.

D. W. Rogers

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Idle hands are the Devil's workshop! Consider penning a article for the next issue of the Eagle Eye. All contributions gladly accepted.

AN EMINENT SOUTHERN CLERGYMAN,
During an eloquent discourse, is wonderfully assisted in finding scriptural authority for Secession and Treason, and the divine ordination of Slavery.

— Editor

A patriotic envelope of the period with a appeal from your club's periodical