

Published June 19th, 2013

## Students Participate in Living History Experience on Angel Island

*Submitted by Lucy Dendinger*



Los Perales fourth-graders dress as U.S. Army soldiers from 1864. Photo Provided

the Confederate Army, who might try to steal the gold found during the Gold Rush. They learned that the gold rush had far reaching implications beyond personal wealth. Gold was what financed the Union.

The 24-hour adventure began early in the morning with a ferry ride to Angel Island, the students outfitted in jeans with red duct tape stripes down the side, navy sweatshirts, canvas haversacks, and Union kepi hats. Once they reach the Island, they were met by Major Andrews, a park ranger and experienced Civil War re-enactor. All students fell into ranks and units and addressed superiors with 'yes, sir' and 'no, sir'. They carried their sleeping bags and gear on their backs as they hike over the hill to the barracks, marching in line and shouting in cadence. When they reached the barracks they found a place on the raised wooden platforms and prepared their bedrolls for inspection.

For the next 24 hours they worked and learned. As they embrace their historical roles, they keep a diligent eye on the coastline. If a soldier saw an approaching enemy ship, they yelled out to their fellow soldiers, 'Hit the deck! Enemy ship!' and all 26 students dove to the ground in the middle of whatever task they are doing. In actuality, the enemy ships were the Blue and Gold Fleet of ferries that pass the Island many times throughout the day.

After a hearty meal that the students prepared, they put on an extra jacket for a five-mile night hike to the top of Mt. Livermore, the highest peak on the island. Of course, in 1864, the bridges and lights of the City did not exist, so the children discussed the future and what might be in view someday.

Throughout the night, the soldiers took shifts for 'night watch' where they patrolled the perimeter of the barracks with model rifles. In the morning, after breakfast and chores, and before heading back to civilization, Major Andrews returned to inspect the camp and then led the students outside to shoot the canon - a highlight for many of the soldiers.

In the words of one student, "Angel Island was the most fun field trip I have ever experienced. We worked very hard and gained so much knowledge from just one trip! I will never forget it."

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