

Spring Revolutionary War encampment to be held at Fort Phoenix May 23 and 24



The Revolutionary War era will come to life again in Fairhaven during a two-day historical encampment scheduled for Saturday and Sunday, May 23 and 24, 2015, at Fort Phoenix.

Members of the Fairhaven Village Militia and the Fairhaven Office of Tourism will live in an authentic period camp the same way it was done more than 230 years ago. Men, women and children dressed in period clothing will reenact life in 1778 and talk about the history of the fort. They will also be demonstrating campfire cooking, fire starting with flint and steel, musket ball casting, military drilling, loading and firing flintlock muskets and rifles, 18th-century dentistry and medicine, cannon firing and more. You might even happen upon Ezekiel Boggs who performs magic and pitches his

medicinal cure-all. Visitors may try their hand at tomahawk throwing and children's games of the period. The highlight of the weekend will be the firing of the fort's five large cannons, scheduled for dusk, approximately 8:00 p.m., on Saturday. When fired near sundown, the cannons' plumes of flames and smoke make a spectacular sight.

The Fairhaven Village Militia began as a small volunteer group in 1999. Made up of members who are interested in local history of the Revolutionary War period, they hold historical encampments in Fairhaven and nearby communities and host educational programs. The group's commander, Ellsworth Sylvaria Jr., is a descendant of Bartholomew West, whose home was burned by the British in 1778. Member Wayne Oliveira was originally a member of the Fourth Old Dartmouth Militia group that was started by the late Donald R. Bernard before the nation's Bicentennial. Emily Richard, now 14 years old, has been involved with the militia since she was five weeks old and took part in the group's first encampment when she was three.

"Since we started programs at the fort, thousands of people, including hundreds of school children, cruise ship passengers, visitors and local residents have visited us at Fort Phoenix," says Tourism Director Christopher Richard. "They find our presentations are both educational and entertaining." The militia has also taken part in events at Fort Taber in New Bedford, has set up camp in Mattapoisett, Dartmouth and Acushnet. Last summer the group fired the fort's cannons to welcome the whaleship Charles W. Morgan into the harbor. You can learn more about the Fairhaven Village Militia by visiting <http://FairhavenVillageMilitia.blogspot.com>

At the encampment, the group is depicting camp life during the Revolutionary War period. There will be regular demonstrations of military drilling and musket firing, but there will be no large-scale battle re-enactments. Both the cannon firing and the overnight encampment will be cancelled in the event of

heavy rain. Weather permitting, the militia's camp will open to the public from 9:00 a.m. until sunset on Saturday and from 9:00 a.m. to mid-afternoon on Sunday.

For more information, call the Office of Tourism at 508-979-4085 or email Fairhaventours@aol.com.
