

Spring Revolutionary War encampment to be held at Fort Phoenix May 26 and 27

FAIRHAVEN, MA-- The Revolutionary War era will come to life again in Fairhaven during a two-day historical encampment scheduled for Saturday and Sunday, May 26 and 27, 2012 at Fort Phoenix.

During that weekend, 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. 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 7:45 p.m., on Saturday. When fired near sundown, the cannons' plumes of flames and smoke make a spectacular sight.

The Fairhaven Village Militia, which is sponsoring the event along with the Fairhaven Office of Tourism, is 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. Other members have served as volunteer guides at the fort for the Office of Tourism. Members range in age from four years to seventy-something.

"We have been holding encampments at Fort Phoenix since 2003" says Tourism Director Christopher Richard. "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. They find our presentations are both educational and entertaining. The militia has also taken part in events at Fort Taber in New Bedford, has camped in Mattapoissett and participated twice in Dartmouth Day at Alderbrook Farm and at Acushnet's sesquicentennial events.

"At the encampment, the group is depicting camp life during the Revolutionary War period. There will be regular demonstrations of 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 until sunset on Saturday and from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Sunday.

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