

“Manhattan Serenade”
Fort Hancock, NJ

“Wreaths Across America” / “A Soldier’s Christmas”
Fort. Mott, Pennsville, NJ

On the evening of 9 December 2011, members of Army Ground Forces Association (AGFA) supported the SOAR Productions performance of “Manhattan Serenade” presented at the Post Theater at Fort Hancock, New Jersey. To learn more about this theater company <http://www.soarproductions.org/> .

AGFA members who supported SOAR Production’s “Manhattan Serenade” at Fort Hancock were 2LT Lutkenhouse, LTC Welch, our special young friend Joey, SSG Weaver and PVT Meiselman.



The next day, 10 December 2011, AGFA members gathered to support Fort Mott State Park’s hosting of “Wreaths Across America” at noon. This special annual event, in which natural evergreen wreaths are placed on veterans’ graves, is one of many like it across the United States and was made possible by the coordinating efforts of Andy Grant, Historian at Ft. Mott State Park.

From 5PM till about 9PM, AGFA members served as escorts for the public as they toured the vignettes of soldiers’ lives at holiday times in different eras of American military history of “A Soldier’s Christmas” hosted by Fort Mott State Park. The members of AGFA that participated in the Saturday events were Andy Grant, Max Kaiserman, Anne Lutkenhouse, Gary Weaver, and Shawn Welch

In the photo below, members of the 9th Infantry Division Historical Association gather at Finns Point National Cemetery for the raising of the colors prior to the start of "Wreaths Across America" ceremony.



Unlike 2010, many different organizations supported the "Wreaths Across America" event at Finns Point National Cemetery.



Below members from several different organizations prepare to raise the colors for "Wreaths Across America".



In the evening, AGFA members CPT Grant (Fort Mott historian), LTC Welch, 2LT Lutkenhouse, PVT Bonacorsi, SSG Weaver and PVT Kaiserman prepared to serve as escorts for public visitors to "A Soldier's Christmas".



The "Soldier's Christmas" consisted of several different locations throughout the park in which different time periods were represented giving the public a view into soldiers' lives in different eras of American history from the American Revolution to the Korean War. In the photo below, 2LT Lutkenhouse leads a group to a "Jaeger" and his encampment as he prepared to go to barracks for the winter. A Jaeger was a German mercenary who fought on the side of the British during the Revolutionary War.



In the photo below a group of living historians representing American soldiers in Italy in 1944, read mail from home and stay warm by a fire. As can be seen by the attire of all, the night was quite cold at Fort Mott and would have been similarly cold in the Italian mountains in 1944.



The 9th Infantry Division WWII Historical Preservation Society (<http://www.9thdivision.com>) presented a vignette about US soldiers in the Ardennes in December 1944 being ordered to the front to stop a German breakthrough. It was a most interesting and well-rehearsed presentation.



Inside the switchboard room for Fort Mott the 9th Infantry set up their command post with period equipment and a functioning BD-72 switchboard. You really did step into 1944 when entering this room.



One of the most interesting presentations was that provided on Polish soldiers in WWII. The couple below provided detailed information about Polish Christmas customs and unit actions during WWII.



In addition to WWII, another member of this Polish History organization represented the 1600's.



No Soldier's Christmas is complete without a Civil War interpretation. Here a group provides a view into Christmas activities at Fort Delaware in the 1860's that included period music and song and a release of Confederate POWs on Christmas Day.



Another very interesting station was that of a U.S. Navy sailor and his kit while home on leave for Christmas. Here 2LT Lutkenhouse leads the public to his station that was hosted inside the former steam boiler room at Fort Mott.



SGT Turner and CPT Grant both confer at the entrance to the Post Headquarters building at Fort Mott as a visitor enters to get a cup of hot cider and see how soldiers lived in garrison during Christmases past.



The members of AGFA were honored to have been able to assist Fort Mott State Park in hosting "Wreaths Across America" at Finns Point National Cemetery and support "A Soldier's Christmas". We all look forward to supporting Fort Mott and Fort Hancock again in 2012.

For more information, visit the Army Ground Forces Association Website <http://armygroundforces.org>