



Reenactor Matthew Devor, seated, is surrounded by fellow cannoneers of the 1st Connecticut Light during the Civil War Christmas in Camp Dec. 9 at Fort Ward Museum.



Reenactor John Favors with traditional Christmas desserts at the Civil War Christmas in Camp Dec. 9 at Fort Ward Museum.

# Christmas in Camp Fort Ward program highlights Civil War traditions.

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**T**he popular Civil War Christmas in Camp program returned to Fort Ward Museum Dec. 9, featuring reenactors in winter camp settings and period Christmas decorations.

The program highlights how Christmas was observed during the Civil War with interactive and living history displays throughout the camp.

“The best way to learn about history is to live it,” said John Favors, a reenactor cannoneer of the 1st Connecticut Light. “This is a living history unit and since Christmas was a special time during the war

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— Civil War reenactor John Favors

we are trying to show what it was like here at the fort.”

A Civil War-era Union Santa Claus, based on an 1863 cover of Harper’s Weekly by artist Thomas Nast, was on hand to greet visitors, who were able to tour the reconstructed Officers’ Hut and visit with soldiers in camp.



Adrian Swart with a decorated Virginia cedar tree at the Civil War Christmas in Camp Dec. 9 at Fort Ward Museum.

“We are here to pay homage to the men and the women who served here defending the nation’s capital during the Civil War,” said Matthew Devor, who portrayed a Sergeant of the Peace of the 1st

Connecticut Light. “We are just enjoying our Christmas here in camp.”

Reenactors interpreted army life in winter camps that were decorated for the season, and celebrated



Visitors enter the headquarters of Santa Claus during the Civil War Christmas in Camp Dec. 9 at Fort Ward Museum.

by opening Christmas boxes from home, singing carols of the period around the campfire, and preparing holiday meals.

Fort Ward is the best preserved of the Union forts in the extensive

system known as the Defenses of Washington. The Museum offers exhibits and public programs throughout the year.

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/FortWard>