



FORT DAVIS NHS

### READ ALL ABOUT IT!:

- The newsletter is back and your feedback will keep it coming
- It's already February in 2018 so we have lots to share
- We have many people to thank for such a wonderful 2017
- Look for the new rack cards at local visitor centers
- 5K fun run March 17, 2018



## Hospital

Back in 2005 an Environmental Assessment was done on the hospital to gain public information about restoring the structure. With a wonderful grant from Save America's Treasures and support by the Friends of Fort Davis, multiple field schools fabricated windows, doors, floors, and conserved original plaster. Five years later in 2010 we began working with Mystic Studios to develop exhibits which would entice visitors to tour the hospital and learn about ailments which were common on the frontier. This design included instruments and hands-on activities.

Recent completed projects include the surgeon's office and we are happy to announce the completion of the north ward since late fall 2017.

Our current hospital project is the dispensary, a room requiring



### Come see the newly furnished north ward!

repairs from floor to ceiling, just ask our carpenters! Our facilities staff is working on making sure the historic flooring can be preserved while supporting the weight of desks, counters, and medical bottles. The historic fireplace is also in need of restoration in addition to the

ceiling which is very important in keeping critters like bats and snakes out. Yes, I said snakes they like to climb into the rafters and dine on the bats, but don't worry these are non-venomous and also like to eat mice! The dispensary should be fully complete by 2019.

Side note: Many items were found and purchased by Harpers Ferry Center and have been stored until repairs are fully completed.



## Prescribed Burn

When this newsletter reaches you FODA will have conducted a prescribed burn in two units of the park. The purpose of these burns is to restore the natural landscape of the units. From when the fort was active up until the 1950s the area was heavily grazed. This resulted in the spread of many native yet invasive species of plants.

These include various acacia like catclaw and mesquite. Much of the mesquite has the ability to grow into moderately tall, mostly thorn-less trees. However, lack of management practices we utilize today caused most of the mesquite to grow as spiny shrubs with an expansive root system making them almost

impossible to remove. We now know burning and treating with herbicide will reduce the population over a few years. This will make the post more visible for locals and visitors alike. Also, will restore the landscape to similar conditions that existed in the 1870-80s



Chief of Interpretation John Heiner impresses visitors atop Dudley.

*“I want to thank the thousands of visitors who travel to this remote area of Texas for recreation, education, and vacation.”*  
 -Superintendent Barney Riley

## Visitation

2017 was another great year to travel and visit our nation’s national parks. Fort Davis NHS saw 60,910 visitors—only about 900 fewer than our record setting 2016 Centennial year.

Another number we must highlight is that 75% of those visitors received programs or secondary contacts outside of the visitor center. Those included: roving rangers answering

questions, formal interpretive programs, artillery demos and more. Many of our visitors comment seeing another employee or volunteer outside of a park fee station is rare, but Fort Davis is never one of those!

Visitors support local economies in many ways including hotels, grocery, gas and restaurants. Country wide, park visitors spend over \$18 billion in local gateway regions per year

contributing to the gross domestic product of our economy.

Park Superintendent Barney Riley says “I want to thank the thousands of visitors who travel to this remote area of Texas for recreation, education, and vacation. Also, thank you to the many service industries of Fort Davis for providing lodging, food, and necessities to these guests.”

## New Roofs and Storage Remodel

The original barracks have received a facelift with the installation of new roofs to help preserve the adobe fabric for future generations. With our relatively new museum we now have a new roof to complete it.

Across the parade grounds one of the officer’s homes

used for storage was cleaned up, repaired, repainted and reorganized.

Finally the “Church Camp” structure was upgraded to house many items our maintenance team needs to efficiently continue the excellent job they do.

A big shout-out of thanks

to the administration, curation, and facilities divisions for making this possible!

## Park Olympics & Night Tour

Hundreds of people of all ages were able to participate in the fun events we held this year. Our 5K Fun Run in March drew 50 runners and about the same number of onlookers. The third annual run is set for March 17th starting at 10:00AM.

The Park Olympics hosted students from five school districts for days full of historic games and competition. The general consensus from both teachers and students was to make it an annual event!

With almost 50 volunteers the Night Tour was a huge success! Attendance reached

up to 300 visitors with some good donations to keep the fun going.

Lastly, we held our December Education Day for over the 20th time last year. We can’t do any of these programs without the help of all of you!



Students marching with Living History Soldiers. These students are ready to enlist!

# Superintendent's Corner



Being one of the newest employees at Fort Davis, I thought why not use this opportunity to give you a little information on the new guy. Unlike many long term NPS employees I had a couple of careers before joining. I served 10 years as a US Army Engineer Officer, worked in the private sector as a construction project manager, owned a small business, worked as a park manager for Oregon State Parks and finally landed in the Na-

tional Park Service as the Facility Manager at Saguaro NP and then Redwood NP. I'm always up for new adventures so when the opportunity to move to West Texas and be the Superintendent at Fort Davis came along I jumped on it. Best move yet! On a more personal note, the National Park Service gets into your blood, and must be infectious as my wife is a former NPS employee and my son works as a seasonal park ranger at a park in Oregon. Fort Davis is a very

special place and I am fortunate to be allowed to work here. I have a dedicated and professional staff that deeply cares about this park as well as a supportive community and many partners.

**What is something you are excited to see at Fort Davis this year?**

## 2018 a new year of Fun & Excitement

1. Now that 2018 is here we have big plans to share! The park has received the funding for a park video to use online in classrooms and at the park highlighting the Buffalo Soldiers. This will be roughly 10 minutes long which gives us the ability to mail with traveling trunks or for teachers to download that their leisure.

2. In the next couple of years our park main office is going to be remodeled resulting in some temporary shifts in work space. This will pose some unique challenges while staff continues running, maintaining, and keeping the park fully functional but rangers are experts at thinking on their feet!

3. With no official statements yet there are a few staff members who have begun pondering retirement. There will never be a way to replace years of institutional knowledge that they bring to the table. We have been lucky to work as a family together making Fort Davis what it is today. I'm also happy to share many will still lend a hand where needed!

## The Lone Ranger

With hiring freezes and budget questions nationwide we made it a priority to help out our fellow parks. From as far as Sitka, Alaska to our neighbor Big Bend, rangers Barney Riley, Marti Stebbins, Regina Heiner, and Bill Manhart went to other parks to assist the various divisions.

Each spent around 3 months at a different park assisting while maintaining their duties to Fort Davis. One special assignment included Barney Riley assisting with the hurricane recovery of Virgin Islands National Park after two storms did devastating damage to this wonderful territory of the U.S.

Each of these four rangers appreciate the staff whom continued to run day to day operations here at the fort, during their absence.



One hat to hold down the fort.

# Friends of Fort Davis

The Friends group has been busy this year helping host many school children from the Park Olympics in the spring to the Christmas Education Day— and let's not forget the incredible night tour that couldn't be accomplished without them! They received and purchased the new pre-civil war fort waysides thanks to a donation by Mr. Kolhaus from El Paso.

The board has approved many donations to complete projects around the park.

## Social Media

The group's new and improved website and Facebook pages have been actively spreading park news and encouraging philanthropy in the parks. If you haven't checked them out yet, please do!



We want to thank the Friends of Fort Davis for their continued support of programs, purchases, volunteer support and so much more!! If anyone would like to help the park in another active way please look into this wonderful group.

They make so much at Fort Davis NHS possible.

[www.fofdnhs.org](http://www.fofdnhs.org)

<https://www.facebook.com/fofdnhs/>



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We're on Facebook!

[www.facebook.com/FortDavisNHS](https://www.facebook.com/FortDavisNHS)

A key post in the defense system of west Texas, Fort Davis played a major role in the history of the Southwest. From 1854 until 1891, troops stationed at the post protected emigrant, freighters, mail coaches, and travelers on the San Antonio-El Paso Road.

Historians today regard Fort Davis NHS as one of the best surviving examples of a southwestern Indian Wars era frontier military post.

It is a vivid reminder of the significant role played by the military in the settlement and development of the western frontier.

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