

Adventure for a special seven-year-old comes true

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A Civil War Adventure for a special seven-year-old comes true



Chris Semancik, AHEC Small Arms Curator describes a military handgun to Make-A-Wish recipient Eric Felix during his tour of the Army Heritage and Education Center on July 6. Photo by Charity Murtorff.

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July 10, 2009 -- After a day as a Civil War Soldier in the July Reenactment of the Battle of Gettysburg, a 7-year-old California boy surrounded himself with stories, papers and guns of Civil War Soldiers when he spent a day at the Army Heritage and Education Center in Carlisle, Pa.

AHEC opened the doors to its special collections for Eric Felix's Make-a-Wish Civil War Adventure in historic Pennsylvania.

In a behind-the-scenes tour of AHEC collections, Eric checked out historic uniforms, maps and extensive collection of military firearms not routinely seen by the general public, like Gen. Bradley's D-Day map and his ivory-handled Colts.

Especially excited about visiting the Weapons Room, Eric identified the MP-40 machine gun as one of his favorites among the weapons on display.

The AHEC part of his Civil War Adventure was an opportunity to add to the 3rd grader's remarkable knowledge of the Civil War and World War II. He told everyone around him about the weapons used, the battles fought, and the players on both sides of the battles.

"I don't know how he knows all this," said Eric's mother, Mabelinda, who described the Make-a-Wish trip as a once-in-lifetime opportunity to be a Soldier in battle.

Eric points to video games as one of his sources of information.

Eric traveled from Long Beach, Calif., to Pennsylvania with his brother, George, and parents Steven and Mabelinda. They completed Eric's soldiering adventure on the Army Heritage Trail's outdoors exhibits, walking the World War I trenches, visiting the World War II barracks and Sherman tank, and riding a modern 'Humvee.'

"I think I will come back next year," he said.

Diagnosed with a rare form of leukemia three years ago, Eric received his final chemo treatment in April. In

remission now, he will continue with medical check-ups and start third grade this coming school year.

The Make-A-Wish Foundation “grants wishes to children with life-threatening medical conditions to enrich the human experience with hope, strength and joy.”

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