



## President's Message

Richard B. Rothwell



Hello to our old friends and welcome aboard to our new ones. As we move into the second quarter of the year, your Society continues in its mission to help the Marine Corps tell and preserve the history of Camp Pendleton.

With sadness I report the passing of a prominent member of a family that played a major role in the history of Camp Pendleton from 1882 until 1942. Richard Jerome O'Neill passed away at his Orange County home on April 4, 2009. He was 85.



During its March meeting the Board of Directors authorized the expenditure of funds to support two history related projects on the Base. It granted the Mechanized Museum \$2,700 to restore two vintage Marine Corps vehicles, which are described in an accompanying article. With the concurrence of the Base Commanding Officer, the Board also authorized a contest to recognize the Base organization that best displays its war trophies. Many units publically display captured enemy vehicles and weapons. Some displays are well maintained; others have fallen into unsightly disrepair. Our hope is that by publically recognizing well-maintained war trophies, we will encourage other units to follow suit and thereby improve the overall appearance of the Base. CPHS will judge displays and purchase a trophy for presentation to the winner by the Base Commander.

With the assistance of the Marine Corps, CPHS is improving its fundraisings skills. This month and next we will send two members each to three different classes offered by the San Diego Foundation: Fundraising, Grant Research, and Grant Writing. The Base will pay for three of the six seats. CPHS will pay for the others.

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## KOREAN ERA TRUCKS ADDED TO MECHANIZED MUSEUM

The Camp Pendleton Mechanized Museum represents the labor of love and skill of a few talented volunteers who refer to themselves as the Dirty Docents. Leader of the band is MGySgt James C. King USMC (Ret). Jim and his followers salvage and restore old military vehicles for display in the museum and for use in local community parades. The Board of Directors has authorized \$2,700 for the purchase of parts to restore two vintage vehicles: the M 37 ¾ ton truck and its ambulance variant, the M 43.

The M 37 was the mainstay of the Marine Corps tactical light truck fleet in the 1950s. Built by Dodge, this six-cylinder workhorse could carry a ¾ ton payload over rough terrain and travel up to 55 mph on highways. Even on highways, you never wanted to be far from your refueling station, however, as it burned six gallons of gas per mile.



M 37 ¾ ton 4x4 Light Truck

The ambulance version of the M 37 was known as the M 43. It had the same characteristics as the truck except that its wheelbase, at 122", was 14" longer. The cargo area was configured to carry up to four liters. M 43s came off the assembly line from 1951 until 1954.

When the restoration is completed these vehicles will be fully operational. They will join the pool of vintage Marine Corps vehicles on display at the Mechanized Museum and will be available to promote the Corps' image in nearby communities.



M 43 ¾ ton 4x4 Ambulance Truck

## LAS FLORES GETS "STAND ALONE" FIRE SUPPRESSION SYSTEM

One of the many fears about historical structures is their susceptibility to fire. How many times in the past have we read where a structure of some historical significance burned to the ground? This fear includes the structure of the Las Flores Adobe.

The Adobe kind of sits off by itself, surrounded by former bean fields, and would be a great loss if it burned to the ground. Although it is an adobe structure there is still a lot of wood involve in the building. On May 14th, there will be a testing of the new, state of the art fire suppression system. This system is self contained and operates with nitrogen and water pressure.

There are seventy spray heads in the building, each with a small glass bulb at their end. If the bulb gets hot it sets off a highly concentrated mist of nitrogen and water which extinguishes any type of flame. The mist is fine enough to extinguish the fire without causing any water damage.

There will be more details about this system in the next Groundbreaker.



The white containers that are filled with water and the red nitrogen canisters.

## Before the Las Flores Adobe, what was there?

The Las Flores Estancia (also known as Las Flores Asistencia) was established in 1823 as an estancia (“station”) situated approximately halfway between Mission San Luis Rey de Francia and Mission San Juan Capistrano, very near where the Las Flores Adobe stands today. The first recorded baptisms in Alta California took place on July 22, 1769 on the banks of a nearby stream, dubbed Los Cristianos by the Spanish soldiers who accompanied the missionaries northward during the “Portola expedition.”

Known at one time as the “San Pedro Rancho,” the property featured a tile-roofed chapel (visita) and a hostel (both built by

the native population), the latter for the use of traveling clergy. The buildings formed three sides of a square, 142 feet by 153 feet, all roofed with tile. A portion of the south wing had a second story, and the campanile (bell tower) was utilized as a navigational aid by early sailing ships. The chapel was visited by residents of two nearby Indian villages, Chumella and Quesmille. Mission San Luis Rey was raising sheep at Las Flores as early as 1810. To sustain the installation barley, maize, and wheat, were grown and cattle were grazed



Las Flores “San Pedro Chapel” as it appeared around 1850. The structure, along with its adjoining buildings, were constructed in 1823.

at nearby Las Pulgas; also notable was the production of hides and tallow.

(Source: Wikipedia free encyclopedia)



Above, all that is left of the Estancia is a small mound of adobe. There is hope, however, that many artifacts can be found from archaeological diggings around the area.



To the right, the plaque placed on the site in September, 1983 making the Asistencia a historical landmark.

To the left, the approach to the Estancia. As one can see, it was built on top of a hill.



## More memories from Maj. Randall L. Mitchell, USMC (Ret.)

### Early inspection of the Women Marine Barracks

In mid January 1943, I arrived at Camp Pendleton as a brand new Second Lieutenant from Quantico, full of ‘p and v’ and ready for duty. I joined the Training Unit to depart to other Marines my newly found knowledge of Field Artillery, which I had learned at Quantico after receiving my reserve commission.

If my memory hasn’t failed me that was about the time the first Lady Marines arrived at the Base.

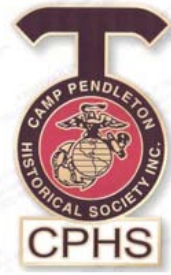
In any event, during one of the many tours at Camp Pendleton I found myself on a white glove inspection of the Women Marines barracks. This was before the Base had built barracks for women. After checking living quarters and personal gear, the

inspection team made its way to the ‘head’ area. This facility *had* been built for male personnel, not female.

The ladies, in using their exceptional skills of coping with a male organization, obviously had not lost their sense of humor. The women had carefully placed a blooming geranium plant in each of the urinals that lined the bulkhead, so that a field of red welcomed us when we entered the room. It wasn’t easy to keep a straight face as we informed them that they had passed the inspection with flying colors.

*Editor’s note: We appreciate letters and articles from readers. The opinions expressed by the writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect those of Camp Pendleton Historical Society (CPHS). CPHS neither endorses nor disagrees with such views. Moreover, CPHS makes no representations as to the accuracy or completeness of the information provided by the writers.*

## LAPEL PIN FOR MEMBERS...



The Camp Pendleton Historical Society (CPHS) has designed and secured a lapel pin for its members. The pin, pictured, is a replica of the CPHS logo, with the addition of the initials CPHS on the bottom. Each member will receive this pin in appreciation of their support of the society and its mission. We hope when the pin is worn people will see it and ask you what the CPHS stands for. This will give you a chance to explain how you are supporting the society and its goals, and perhaps generate interest for new members.

Please wear it proudly and once again, thank you for your support.

## HELP NEEDED...

The Camp Pendleton Historical Society is looking for a volunteer to hold the position of Publicity Director. If you have some time, or know someone who may be interested, please contact Howard Blair at hgblair@cox.net. Below is an outline of the job that is needed.

### JOB DESCRIPTION -- VOLUNTEER

Position: Publicity Director

Organization: Camp Pendleton Historical Society

Works With: Marketing Director

Primary Responsibilities:

The Publicity Director (PD) shall be responsible for the following:

- Develop any advertising deemed necessary to increase awareness and membership of the Camp Pendleton Historical Society (CPHS).
- Become knowledgeable about local media to determine how and when to submit articles for general publication.
- Work with the Base History and Museums Officer when required to ensure publicity is in keeping with Base requirements.
- Develop and publish all publications that depict and illustrate CPHS activities to internal and external audiences. Such actions will include direct mail and e-mail communications.
- Promote visits to the Camp Pendleton museums by military unit and reunion groups.
- Be responsible for the quarterly CPHS news letter to be issued to members once a quarter.

Secondary Responsibilities:

- Assist the Marketing Director of CPHS as necessary.
- Attend CPHS Board meetings as when necessary.
- Work with the Marketing Director to develop an annual advertising plan to include an estimated budget for publicity activities.
- Other activities deemed necessary by the Board or the Marketing Manager that will enhance the awareness of CPHS.

Necessary Qualifications:

- Individual must be able to communicate both orally and verbally
- Individual must have a positive attitude and enjoy working with people
- Individual must have a working knowledge of Microsoft Office (or equivalent) which would include Word, Excel and PowerPoint.

Desired Qualifications:

- Individual has a working knowledge of the military, especially the Marine Corps.
- Individual has a working knowledge of the Base Public Affairs Office.

## CPHS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Col. Richard Rothwell, USMC (Ret.)

*President*

Col. Jim Williams, USMC (Ret.)

*Vice President*

Col. Joe Kirkpatrick, USMC (Ret.)

*Financial Officer*

Linda F. Holmes

*Secretary*

Howard G. Blair

*Director of Marketing*

G. Wayne Eggleston

Robert "Taffy" Stauss

Col. Stewart Navarre, USMC (Ret.)

## COUNCIL OF ADVISORS

*A distinguished group of advisors is helping to guide us as we grow. We are pleased to acknowledge their support.*

Lt.Gen. M. T. Cooper, USMC (Ret.)

L. Patrick Forster

Anthony B. Joseph

Lt.Gen. Anthony Lukeman, USMC (Ret.)

Mary Lou Lukeman

Maj.Gen. J. J. McMonagle, USMC (Ret.)

Anthony Moiso

Maj.Gen. Wilbur Simlik, USMC (Ret.)

## NEW MEMBERS

### General's Board Level

1st.Sgt. James Anderson, USMC (Ret.)

### Vaquero Level

Lt.Col. David Cooper, USMC

Harry P. Gantz

Michael & Mary O'Donnell

Wanda Prosser

Glen L. Roosevelt

Barbara Woodbury

## GROUNDBREAKER STAFF

### VOLUNTEER PUBLISHER

Howard G. Blair

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### GRAPHIC DESIGN

Jerry Broeckert

*Continued front page, Message*

In addition, the Marine Corps has generously agreed to send one of our members to the National Museum Association Conference in Philadelphia this May. Our expectation is that after attending classes and networking with potential grantors he will be better prepared to move us forward in that direction.

Planning for two exciting events is well underway. We intend to invite local members and potential members to join us for an outing to San Juan Capistrano during June. The SJC Historical Society will act as our hosts. Plans are not firm, but the concept is that members will arrive in SJC by car or train in the late morning, take a guided tour of old SJC, enjoy lunch at one of several restaurants, followed by a tour of the mission in the afternoon. We are also planning for our second annual Hoedown fundraiser. Those who attended our first Hoedown last October had a great time. The date for our 2009 edition will be August 29. Mark your calendars! More information on both events will follow.

Once again, I thank you for your support. Loyal members are absolutely critical to our success. Please pass the word about CPHS to friends who might enjoy joining in our adventure.

*Richard B. Rothwell*

Howard G. Blair  
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## **Save the Date - August 29** **ANOTHER HOEDOWN** **AT THE LAS FLORES ADOBE**

The Camp Pendleton Historical Society is planning another Hoedown at the Las Flores Adobe, similar to the one they had last October. This one is scheduled for Saturday, August 29th. The details are still in the planning stage but the time will probably be between 2:00 pm and 7:00pm. Another BBQ is planned with tours of the Adobe, Western Entertainment, Western Music, buckboard rides and much more.

Please save the date and plan on joining us for this "Restore Las Flores" fundraiser. More details will be forthcoming.

### **Get on Board**

One of the keys to building awareness of CPHS is networking with our friends. To help members become familiar with our story, we are offering two brochures for distribution. Please order your free copies by e-mail to [hgblair@cox.net](mailto:hgblair@cox.net) or phone 858-583-0067.

### **Stay Tuned**

We invite our readers to contribute stories of their experiences aboard Camp Pendleton for publication in future issues. Humorous pieces would be particularly welcome. Please e-mail your 300 words or less to [hgblair@cox.net](mailto:hgblair@cox.net), subject line "CPHS." Submissions may be subject to editing.



**Preserving a Rich and Colorful History**

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

Camp Pendleton Historical Society, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)(3)