



President's Message

Richard B. Rothwell



I hope that the New Year has started and will continue to go well for all. It should be an exciting year for your Society that will include a major donation in support of Camp Pendleton

historical programs. At its last meeting the Board of Directors approved a gift of \$25,000 to further the ongoing restoration of the Las Flores adobe. This amount represents the net proceeds from our 2008 and 2009 Hoedown fundraisers plus an amount that the Board of Directors been earmarked for that purpose in 2007. We are working with the Camp Pendleton leadership on the timing of the gift.

There has been a recent, significant event regarding the long-term future of the Ranch House and Las Flores adobe. You may recall that the outlook for those historic properties has been unclear since the Commanding General, Marine Corps Installations West vacated the Ranch House in October 2008. Since then, it has served as a temporary work space for the Base History and Museum office and has been available for guided tours and special events while the Marine Corps developed a permanent solution. Marine Corps Installations West submitted several options to the Commandant of the Marine Corps for consideration. In January 2010 the Commandant approved an option that proposes a solicitation to hire a qualified third party vendor to develop and manage both the Ranch House and Las Flores adobe. A number of issues remain that could take up to one year to resolve, but finally the direction has been set. Once a vendor is selected, your Society plans to work closely with it to help preserve and tell the history of Camp Pendleton.

In each of the last two years we held highly successful fundraisers at the Las Flores adobe. We plan to change the venue this year to the Ranch House. Our intent is to give supporters a greater awareness of the broad history of Camp Pendleton.

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Camp Pendleton Mechanized Museum

by Richard B. Rothwell

On a November day in 1998 Faye Jonason, the Camp Pendleton History and Museum Officer, answered her phone, little realizing what was to follow. The caller identified himself as Gunnery Sergeant James King, the 1st Marine Division Logistics Readiness Evaluation Inspector. The gunny explained that he had noticed an old, dilapidated, and apparently abandoned mechanical mule near her office and wanted permission to restore it. He said that he enjoyed working on old military rolling stock and would do it on his own time at no cost to the Marine Corps.

Not having extensive experience with Marine Corps equipment, Mrs. Jonason went to look for herself. Sure enough, there stood a small, flat, cab-less vehicle in obvious ill repair – a M274 mechanical mule designed in the 1950s to carry supplies and crew served weapons for Marines and soldiers wherever they could walk.



M274 Mechanical Mules

That telephone call about a down and out workhorse led to a fruitful relationship between Jonason and King that continues today and to the establishment of what has become the Camp Pendleton Mechanized Museum. Today, the museum is the showcase for 72 military vehicles, carefully restored by some 11 volunteers under the leadership of now Master Gunnery Sergeant James C. King, USMC (Retired). A number of old vehicles sit in the near-by restoration park waiting their turn to shine once more.

The Museum is open to the public Monday through Saturday. Groups of up to 200 visitors come to view the displays of historical, rolling stock. Some are serious history buffs. Others just want to have fun.

Guests and volunteers at the museum on a Saturday in December highlighted the diversity of interests that bring people to the Mechanized Museum.



This visitor needed a seat adjustment

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Camp Pendleton Mechanized Museum



Lorne Sugar (above), who served in the U.S. Army in the 1960s as a crewman on a M60A1 tank, was there to see an example of his old friend and to donate several metal Marine Corps recruiting posters. He may soon become a CPHS member.



Alan Gobel, (above with a friend) soon to retire after working 36 years for the Santa Fe Railroad, was there helping to get the museum's 1950s era, 80-ton diesel locomotive running smoothly.

Many people do not recognize the historical link between the Camp Pendleton and the railroad. In the 1880s, when Camp Pendleton was known as Rancho Santa Margarita y Las Flores, the only train route between San Diego and Los Angeles ran through the ranch. Passage required an unusual ritual. Trains from San Diego would stop at the boundary fence for a crewman to open the gate. After passing through they would stop again to close the gate behind them. The process was repeated on the east side of the ranch as it passed on to Fallbrook and then to San Bernardino from where one could make a connection to Los Angeles. Later, during World War II, the 4th Marine Division loaded its equipment on railroad cars at Camp Pendleton for transport to ships preparing to sail directly for the assault on Roi-Namur in the Kwajalein Atoll.

Jerry Cook (below) is a semi-retired medical doctor from La Jolla, California with a passion for restoring old military vehicles. Jerry travels the world visiting museums and fellow enthusiasts. He volunteers his time and experience to the Mechanized Museum to help with its restoration efforts.



While the volunteers worked on their projects, Jim King (below) conducted a tour of the museum and its repair facilities for 21 members of the Only Yesterday Private Collection group.



MGySgt King (right) with 16" projectiles from South Dakota class battleship.



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Mechanized Museum

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Camp Pendleton Mechanized Museum

While visiting the museum repair facility, tour members viewed two military ambulances being restored (right) with the help of \$4,485 donated to the Mechanized Museum by the Camp Pendleton Historical Society.



When the task is complete, the ambulances will join other vehicles on display.

While many of the display vehicles would be familiar to current and former service members, some are truly bizarre. Take the XM 759 M7V for example (right).

It was an experimental vehicle developed in the 1960s to carry troops and supplies from amphibious ships to the shore and then inland across rough ground. Unfortunately, it never lived up to expectations. Its tracks of independently rotating rubber wheels proved too complex and vulnerable to failure for use in modern combat.



Camp Pendleton Mechanized Museum volunteers not only authentically restore historical vehicles for static displays of interest to both serious historians and the general public, but also take their show on the road. They drive some restored vehicles in near-by civilian community events, providing a visual reminder of the Marine Corps role in protecting our country. This museum is just one of the historical programs on Camp Pendleton that CPHS, through the dues and donations from its members, is proud to support.

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Wayne Eggleston, a member of our Board of Directors and San Clemente City Counsel member, has arranged a special trip for CPHS members to visit historic sights and displays in San Clemente. Among the stops will be a special exhibit of World War II memories at beautiful Casa Romantica, the former home of Ole Hanson, founder of San Clemente. We will also visit the San Clemente Pier, Park Semper Fi and The Marine Monument, the historic village of San Clemente, and Ole Hanson's Beach Club. Lunch will be at Casa Romantica. I hope that many CPHS members will be able to join us. Tentative dates are 5 or 6 April. Additional information will follow.

Thank you for your continued support, which is vital to our mission of helping the Marine Corps preserve and tell the history of Camp Pendleton. To those living near Camp Pendleton, I hope to meet you at one of our events this year. To those living afar, I will continue to keep you informed of our progress. To all, best wishes for 2010.

Richard B. Rothwell

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New Membership Level for Active Duty Military

Active duty military can now join the Camp Pendleton Historical Society for only \$35 a year. Visit the CPHS web site at www.camppendletonhistoricalsociety.org for more information or send your check with your name, rank, branch of service, street address or post office number, city, state, zip code, and email address to:
*Camp Pendleton Historical Society, Inc., Attn: Howard G. Blair,
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Other member levels are:

Vaquero	\$ 50 donation
Ranchero	\$ 100 donation
Commander's Circl	\$ 250 donation
General's Board	\$ 500 donation

Information on the different levels is also available on the Society web site.

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 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, subject line "CPHS." Submissions may be subject to editing.



Preserving a Rich and Colorful History

www.camppendletonhistoricalsociety.org

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