

## President's Message

*Richard B. Rothwell*



I wish all members and their families a happy holiday season as we approach the end of 2010.

It has been a strong year for CPHS in terms of our support for Camp Pendleton historical programs. In earlier reports, I mentioned our donation of \$25,000 to the Marine Corps to assist with the restoration of the Las Flores adobe. We will soon increase that with an additional \$3,600 obtained from grants by the County of San Diego and the Camp Pendleton Officers' Wives Club. These gifts amounts will help bring students and faculty from the University of Vermont Graduate School of Engineering to Camp Pendleton to continue the restoration of this historic property.

Our support of the Mechanized Museum also continues. In October the Marine Corps formally accepted our offer to purchase spare parts for the museum's diesel locomotive, a 1940 era Ben Hur one-ton trailer and a 2 1/2 ton truck bed.



These items, costing some \$3,300, will further enhance the Mechanized Museum's collection.

Your Board of Directors is planning three member events for 2011: a guided tour of the private museum Only Yesterday/ Hall of Heroes, a gathering for the Marine Corps Battle Color Ceremony featuring the Marine Barracks 8th & I, Washington D.C. Silent Drill Team, and our fourth annual fundraiser.

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## Rooms of the Ranch House

*by Howard Blair*

*Contribution by Faye Jonason and Linda Holmes*

As most of you know, the Rancho Santa Margarita Adobe (also known as the Ranch House) was the main living quarters for those who owned the expansive Santa Margarita Ranch since 1841. The picture to the right is a painting of the Ranch House as it looked in the late 1800's to early 1900's.

This picture hangs in current living room (or Sala, which we will see later). Once the Marine Corps took over the ranch area, for a short time

the Ranch House became a bachelors officer quarters. It was decided that the Ranch House would be the quarters for the highest ranking general on the base and in 1947 Major General Graves B. Erskine moved in with his family. Since that time 35 generals and their families have occupied this beautiful adobe, the last being Major General Michael R. Lehnert, USMC (Ret). Maj.Gen. Lehnert then moved to the newly completed general's quarters in 2007. Today the Ranch House is maintained by the base Museums Office and is used for military sponsored functions and tours.

Many of us have spent time touring the Ranch House on the grounds of Camp Pendleton. For those of you who have not had the opportunity to feel the history of this old adobe let me take you inside and look at a few of the rooms that you would enjoy visiting.

As you enter the main entrance, to the left of the beautiful atrium sits what is now called the Presidents Room. The name comes from the fact that President Franklin Roosevelt was very impressed with this room when he visited the Ranch House on September 25, 1942. Although no sitting president stayed in this room on a visit, two former Presidents did. Richard Nixon stayed in the

Presidents Room in 1968 before he became president. George H. W. Bush stayed there in May, 1998 after he was president. George W. Bush visited during his term in office but did not stay in this room. You can see if you look at the right side of the room; on the wall are four pictures. These pictures are of the aforementioned persons as they sat in the chair near the fireplace on their visit. It is a beautiful room that looks out to the main garden in front of the main entrance. As you walk around the original four-poster bed and go to your left you would enter a 1930's bathroom.



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# Rooms of the Ranch House

*Continued from front page*



As you come back outside the President's Room and continue down the hall, you would enter a small eating area adjacent to the lovely Cowboy Room. The Cowboy room (shown here with the old wagon wheel chandelier hanging from the ceiling) had several uses before being used as a sitting room. It was once the officers mess but was redone before the house became the general's quarters. It is a very warm, quiet room today and was used as the general's formal living room. The arch that leads into the room gives it an unusual blend of formal yet casual appearance.

Continuing on through the house, you could pass the modern kitchen. The kitchen was updated several years ago and is equipped with a large cook top and four ovens. The generals did lot of entertaining and a modern kitchen was required. Today when there are large functions at the Ranch House the food is usually catered and the kitchen is not used except for staging food service.



Moving on around the Atrium you would come to a door that leads into a hall. Part of the earliest structure was the hall. The tinted glass framing both the veranda and patio entrances is characteristic of the décor in the mid 19th century. The large wardrobe in the hall was left by the Baumgartner family in 1942 when the Marines took over the property. This long hall could have been the living room in the Don Juan Forster's time because of the presence of the fireplace. A portrait of Pio Pico hangs over the fireplace, along with a picture of his brother, Andreas Pico.



As you enter the hall from the Atrium, the Sala — the historic living room — is on your right. This is a very comfortable room. You can see the painting of the Ranch House in its early years hanging above the couch. This painting was donated by Alice O'Neil Avery.



Across the hall from the living room is Ysidora's Bedroom. This room was occupied by Ysidora Pico Forster. There is a trap door in the ceiling of the adjoining room which leads to the



attic where the Indian maids and other young women were required to sleep. It is said that the bars were placed on the windows to ensure that the maids were locked in and secure from the advances of the cowboys. They "Let the serenades in but kept the serenaders out".

This picture shows the trap door in the ceiling in Ysidora's Bedroom. These rooms are interesting to view, knowing how much history took place where you are standing. As you recall, Ysidora was the sister of Pio Pico and married Don Juan Forster, who later acquired the ranch.



Continuing down the hall to the end, on the right is the Pico Room. This room is one of the first rooms built in this part of the original structure. It is possible to see the walls sloping inward from the ceiling in this portion of the house. The picture to the right is the inside wall of the room looking over the bed. Behind the closed doors along the wall, you will find a complete Pullman bath with toilet, sink and shower. This is an excellent example of how it is possible to adapt a historic house to modern usage.



I would encourage all of you to visit the Ranch House and enjoy not only the rooms shown in this article, but also the chapel, bunk house and other interesting parts of the history of the Base.

# National Museum of the Marine Corps

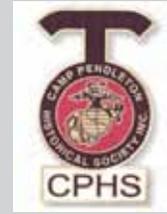
part 2 of 4 by Maj. Carl Frantz, USMC (Ret)

In 1981 when Maj. General Weller wrote, "It is clear that the Historical Branch at Marine Corps headquarters can use all the help it can get," it was an understatement. Not only were the historians laboring to chronicle the events of the long Vietnam conflict, there were some 30,000 artifacts representing the Marine Corps storied past scattered about in various substandard facilities at the Washington Navy Yard and Marine Corps Base, Quantico -- all relatively inaccessible to the public. The recently formed Marine Corps Historical Foundation was doing its part to help out, but its efforts were modest and directed toward supporting history programs; not the museums. At that time, the Marine Corps was the only branch of the military that did not yet have a significant national museum.

Some help came in the late 1980's from an unlikely source. The Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) committee in Congress began to be fearful that important service related documents and artifacts might get lost in the shuffle of base closings if they were not directed to a central location for preservation. To address this concern, each service was authorized to develop a "national facility" for maintaining service records and interpreting its history. But authorization is not funding. The Marine Corps' famously small budget didn't have the resources to capitalize on this opportunity.

In the mid 1990's, two members of the fledgling Marine Corps Historical Foundation, Colonels Jerry Turely and Jerry Thomas, raised concerns that the Marine Corp's artifact collection was in jeopardy of serious deterioration in the small, crowded and inadequate museum facilities. With the opportunity presented by Congress in mind, a vision was formulated by Jerry Thomas for a place that would be more than the usual collection of weapons, equipment and documents. He saw a center where Marines could tell their story to the American people, and where Marine's could honor their heritage and remember those who had gone before in the long history of the Corps. It was a vision born of the desire to share what it means to be a Marine.

In 1997 the idea was presented to and embraced by Marine Corps Commandant Victor Krulak. Things began to happen. An executive steering committee was established, and Reserve Marine Colonel Joe Long was called to active duty to serve as project manager. But the funding nut still needed to be cracked. That's when the Marine Corps Historical Foundation found itself in the right place at the right time. A public (Marine Corps)/private(Historical Foundation) partnership was conceived, wherein the Historical Foundation, being a private fund raising corporation, could raise the money needed to build the center. This public/private partnership was authorized by Congress in the year 2000 (Public Law 106-398 FY01 NDAA). The Marine Corps Heritage Center was now on its way from vision to reality!



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Only Yesterday/Hall of Heroes is a little known, hidden gem. It is a fantastic, private collection of vintage automobiles and World War II memorabilia impressively displayed in a 30,000 square foot museum. Admission is by invitation only.

The Battle Colors Ceremony is an annual event at Camp Pendleton as the Silent Drill Team prepares for its summer parade schedule at Marine Barracks 8th & I in our National Capital. Dates and times for these two events will be announced later.

Our fundraiser will once again be at the Ranch House. Our planned date is 25 June 2011. Stay tuned for more on all of these events.

With sadness I report that Howard Blair will leave our Board on December 31st. Howard is one of our original Board members and has managed our membership and newsletter programs as well as chaired our fundraiser committees since 2005. His considerable efforts on behalf of the Society have been keys to our success. I join other members of our Board in thanking Howard for his services and wishing him well in his future endeavors.

I am pleased to announce that Colonel Don Gressly, USMC (Ret) has joined our Board of Directors. I have known Don for many years as a dedicated, highly talented person. I welcome him to our team with confidence in his abilities to help CPHS achieve its goals.

Remember, CPHS is always looking for a few good men and women volunteers. If you or someone you know are interested in serving on our Board or on a committee let me know (rrothwel@cox.net). Together, we will find something that interests you and helps CPHS move forward.

Thank you for your continued support. Because of it we are making a difference in preserving the history of the land we know today as Camp Pendleton.

*Richard B. Rothwell*

## Membership Levels

Active duty military can join the Camp Pendleton Historical Society for only \$35 a year.

Visit the CPHS web site at [www.camppendletonhistoricalsociety.org](http://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.,  
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Other member levels are:

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

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

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