



President's Message

Richard B. Rothwell



Happy New Year to all; I hope 2011 brings each of you good health and happiness. It promises to be a busy year for your Society. Our first event will be a gathering on Friday, March 11 at the Camp Pendleton 53 Area (School of Infantry) Upper Parade Deck to see the Marine Corps Battle Color Ceremony. Stars of this performance will be the Silent Drill Platoon, Drum and Bugle Corps, and Color Guard from Marine Barracks, 8th and I, Washington D.C. If you have not seen these magnificent organizations perform, you have missed a national treasure. Those who have seen them can attest to my claim.

The Battle Color Ceremony is free and open to the public, but our Vice President, Jim Williams, has arranged special seating in the reviewing area for CPHS members and guests. Details on how to make your reservations are on page 2 of this newsletter. Please sign up quickly as our special seating is limited. The ceremony begins at 10:30 A.M. I suggest you plan to be in your seats fifteen minutes early. For those who would like to sample Marine Corps chow there will also be an opportunity to have lunch in the School of Infantry mess hall. There will be a modest charge for each meal.

Another event planned for later in the year is a free tour of several Camp Pendleton training sites used to prepare our Marines for combat operations in Afghanistan. We will visit a mock Afghan village and see several high tech simulators that help our Marines get ready for duty in hostile territory. Date and time for this event will be announced sufficiently in advance for you to make plans to attend.

Be sure to mark Saturday, June 25 in your calendar. That is the date of our Afternoon at the Santa Margarita y Las Flores Ranch House – our fourth annual fundraising event. I hope you will join us.

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Camp Pendleton... where the bison roam

Camp Pendleton, CA is one of the busiest military bases and is the largest amphibious base in the country for Marines, Navy and Army personnel as well as numerous civilian government agencies. With more than 17 miles of coastline, 125,000 acres and 200 square miles of various terrain it provides all services many opportunities to train and improve on their combat skills. The base and the Marine Corps has developed a legacy of preserving and maintaining special habitats for endanger species. Just one of numerous examples, is the American bison.



Photo courtesy Orange County Register

In the mid-1970s, the famous San Diego Zoo gave 14 bison, which it did not have space for, to Camp Pendleton. Space was not an issue for the Camp Pendleton base. The herd has now increased to approximately 150 bison but counting bison can be extremely difficult as large gatherings are normally rare. In the case of Camp Pendleton, it's more common to find groupings of several cows and several calves or even a bull and his harem.

The federal Department of Interior – which uses the bison on its seal – manages about 7,000 bison in seven national wildlife refuges and five national parks. The rest of the nation's half a million bison are mostly on privately owned lands.

American bison, sometimes mistakenly called buffalo, are related to the African buffalo and the Asian water buffalo. Meanwhile, bison roam and reproduce, just as their ancestors did the middle of the 19th century, when an estimated 20 million to 60 million roamed the Western plains.

Since the bison are not confined within the base, they can be found roaming within 38,000 acres within the central part of the base. It is felt the thick chaparral and steep terrain have kept the herd from roaming onto the adjacent Cleveland National Forest. The bison are fortunate that Camp Pendleton has plenty of grass and several spring-fed ponds. The numerous oak trees on Pendleton offer bison shade on hot days while the Base's firebreaks provide the bison with easy walking paths.

Numerous times during the year, you may find groups of bison roaming near the Basilone Road. Named after GySgt. John Basilone, a WWII hero, the road cuts through the base and has numerous isolated areas.

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CPHS Member Event

Marine Corps Battle Color Ceremony

Friday, March 11 at 10:30 a.m.

Camp Pendleton 53 Area (School of Infantry) Upper Parade Deck

Attire: Civilian Informal



Join fellow members for a free spectacle featuring the U.S. Marine Corps Drum and Bugle Corps, Silent Drill Platoon, and Color Guard performing a Battle Color Ceremony.

The event is free to the public, but for special CPHS seating contact Don Gressly by e-mail at marinedag@sbcglobal.net or by phone at **760-727-7126** no later than March 9, 2011. Provide your name and the names of the people in your party. CPHS special seating is limited. First come, first served. Attire: civilian informal.

Enter the north end of Camp Pendleton at the San Onofre gate and follow the signage. Drivers of cars without Department of Defense stickers must have a valid driver's license and registration and proof of insurance.

Following the Battle Color Ceremony, those who wish may have lunch with Marines in the School of Infantry mess hall. There will be a modest fee charged for each meal.

Bison

Continued from front page

Even though the bison are protected by federal law there are mitigating circumstances that impact on both humans and bison. Vehicles speeding and bison roaming during day and night, can be extremely dangerous to both parties. Although infrequently, accidents between humans and bison occur. When you consider a bull can weight 1,400 pounds and a cow 800 pounds, serious damage can be afflicted and be fatal to both parties. On firing ranges, the base only intervenes when the bison periodically wanders into target areas. In this case, the base uses air horns to encourage them to move out of harms way.

The University of Texas A&M tested the Pendleton herd in 2008 and the results were good. It showed the herd was disease free, with no heavy metals in their system (despite being on a military base) and no signs of inbreeding were found. The Pendleton herd appeared to be healthy animals. In order to ensure the bison herd remains healthy, the base will continue their testing.

National Museum of the Marine Corps

part 3 of 4 by Maj. Cal Frantz, USMC (Ret)

With the formation of the public/private partnership between the Marine Corps and the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation in 2000 (the Historical Foundation having renamed itself to reflect the broader mission now before it), a division of labor was put in place. Essentially, the Marine Corps would take on the challenge of designing the exhibits that would be put on display, contracting for their design and installation, and then taking operational control of the facility once it was opened. The Heritage Foundation became the fund raiser and contracting activity for physical construction of the building, with the intent of donating the facility to the Marine Corps upon completion of all construction activity, to include payment of any construction loans needed for such a capital undertaking. Together the Marine Corps and the Heritage Foundation held design competitions for both building construction and exhibits. 30 architectural firms submitted qualifications in the first round of competition; four were selected for the next phase and were awarded \$50,000 to develop preliminary designs. Colorado based Fentress Bradburn Architects won the final competition with a dramatic design concept whose exterior shape evokes the WWII Iwo Jima flag raising that has been a hallmark of the Corps ever since. Concurrently, Christopher Chadbourne & Associates were selected as the museum exhibit designers.



At this point the Heritage Foundation was operating at a fever pitch of activity. Under the leadership of Lt. Gen. Ron Christmas (who had joined the Heritage Foundation pro bono as its president upon retirement from the active duty in 1997), the Foundation simultaneously conducted a capital fund raising campaign, awarded and supervised the various contracts needed for the construction effort, landed a construction loan, and organized several gala events to promote the development of the Heritage Center. All this was done with what Gen. Christmas called his “fire team,” a staff of no more than four principals. They achieved near miracles. Over \$60 million was raised, and the Heritage foundation was transformed from a small membership of about 2,000 to a donor base of dedicated supporters numbering over 60,000. Perhaps the most spectacular feature of the fund raising effort was the commemorative coin. On May 25, 2005, the U. S. Mint struck the first 230th Marine Corps anniversary commemorative silver dollar, the only such coin ever authorized for a military service. When the coins went on sale, the full 600,000 lot was sold out almost immediately. The Mint’s sale price was just over \$30. The Heritage Foundation received \$10 per coin – an instant \$6 million for the construction of the museum!

Construction went quickly after the 2003 ground breaking; and all was ready for the opening ceremonies on November 10th, 2006 – the 231st birthday of the Corps. President George Bush presided over the ceremonies, which drew nearly 10,000 visitors. Most inspiring was the huge number of older Marine veterans who attended the dedication, many of them wheel chair bound. They sensed why the museum had been built, they knew it was a place where Marines could honor and remember those who had worn the eagle, globe and anchor in times gone by -- the fulfillment of Jerry Thomas’s vision. Jerry was there in spirit only, as he suffered a severe stroke and passed away in September of 2003, just weeks after the ground breaking ceremony at Quantico.



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Continued front page, Message

The Ranch House is a beautiful historic home aboard Camp Pendleton that is worth seeing in its own right. Your patronage will also enable your Society to continue its support of Camp Pendleton historical programs. Speaking of which – I am pleased to report that work to continue the restoration of the Las Flores adobe will begin this month. CPHS has contributed \$28,000 in support of this project.

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. Together, we can make a significant contribution to telling and preserving the history of Camp Pendleton.

Richard B. Rothwell

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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 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: Don Gressly, 1840 Goldenrod Lane, Vista, CA 92081-5341*

Vaquero \$ 50 donation
Ranchero \$ 100 donation
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Information on the different levels is also available on the Society web site.

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 marinedag@sbcglobal.net, subject line "CPHS." Submissions may be subject to editing.



Preserving a Rich and Colorful History

www.camppendletonhistoricalsociety.org
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