



President's Message

Richard B. Rothwell



We are publishing this special edition of the *Groundbreaker* to tell the story of the heroic warhorse SSgt. Reckless, who served with the 5th Marine

Regiment during the Korean Conflict, and to promote our efforts to place a permanent, larger than life monument to her aboard Camp Pendleton.

CPHS is partnering with author Robin Hutton and artist Jocelyn Russell to make this happen. The project will cost about \$135,000, which includes production, transportation, installation, and annual maintenance. There will be no cost to the Marine Corps.

Brigadier General John W. Bullard Jr., CG MCI West/MCB Camp Pendleton, has approved the donation and its placement in front of the main entrance to the Pacific View Events Center (formerly South Mesa SNCO Club). Because of the value of the monument, the commandant of the Marine Corps and assistant secretary of the Navy must also approve. We have every reason to believe that both officials will accept Robin's generous donation. For that reason we are pressing forward with an ambitious target installation date of November 2014.

The CPHS role in the project is to assist with publicity and fundraising. We will match all money CPHS raises, up to \$30,000, with funds already in our accounts. That means that an individual donation of \$100 becomes \$200.

I hope you will enjoy the story of Reckless and support our effort to ensure that she and her actions are remembered.

Richard B. Rothwell

Reckless at Camp Pendleton

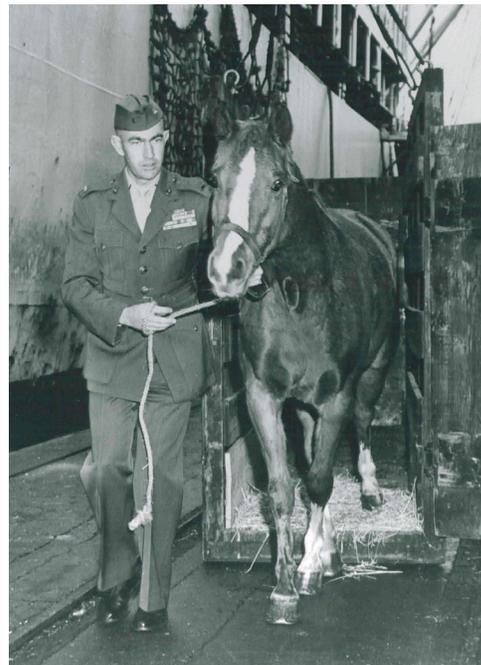
By Col. Richard B. Rothwell, USMC (Ret)

You may have heard about the heroics during the Korean War of the small Mongolian thoroughbred mix mare, Private Reckless. Purchased by Lieutenant Eric Pederson at the Seoul Race Park, her actions during one day of the Battle for Outpost Vegas in March 1953 were the stuff of legends. She made 51 trips, over 35 miles, up steep mountain trails and across open rice paddies alone and under fire carrying ammunition and supplies to her embattled fellow Marines. On return trips she transported the wounded back to the aid station. Struck twice by enemy fire, she never faltered. For her actions Pvt. Reckless received a meritorious promotion to corporal, E-3.

When the 5th Marine Regiment returned home in 1954, they brought Reckless, who had been promoted to sergeant, E-4, with them aboard ship. In an effort to protect her from the fume-laden air below, her stall was lashed to a weather deck. While the intention was noble, the placement proved problematic. For Sergeant Reckless, a landlubber at heart, it was a rocky trip. She was exposed to the elements and nearly washed overboard during a storm. The trying experience ended on November 10, 1954 when Lieutenant Pederson led her ashore in San Francisco.

By happy circumstance her arrival coincided with the Marine Corps Birthday. On that day Marines and former Marines throughout the world come together to toast the Corps and to remember those who came before them. Some gatherings might be just two Marines meeting at a local pub; others can be very formal.

The Marines Memorial Club on the corner of Post and Sutter in downtown San Francisco was the site of a formal Birthday Ball that year, a tradition that continues to this day. The celebrants must have been surprised when the elevator doors in the vestibule of the 10th story ballroom opened and out stepped Sgt. Reckless.



Reckless arrives in San Francisco, Nov. 10, 1954.

**SSgt. Reckless Benefit Gala
at the
Las Flores Adobe
Saturday, September 13, 2014
from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
See details on page 3.**

continued front page, Reckless

She joined the celebration by eating birthday cake and the flowers at the head table.



Every girl loves flowers.

From San Francisco, Reckless traveled to Camp Pendleton where she resided at the Base stables. In celebration of her first foal, Col. Richard Rothwell, commanding officer of the 5th Marine Regiment, held a naming contest with himself as the chief judge. When none of the entries met his standards, he selected his own. Rank hath its privileges. That officer was the father of the author of this article.

And so, Fearless came to be. Over the years siblings Dauntless and Chesty followed.

Reckless was never again asked to prove her bravery under fire, but she did play an important part in 5th Marines ceremonies and was recognized from time to time for her faithful service. Colonel Rothwell promoted her to staff sergeant, E-5 in 1956. A year later, Commandant of the Marine Corps General Randolph McCall Pate promoted her to staff sergeant, E-6.



CMC promotes Reckless to SSgt. E-6.

If you look closely at her promotion picture you will see Fearless standing in the background.

Traditionally, newly promoted Marines host a wetting down party to celebrate their good fortune. Sometimes they can become quite raucous. Being a mother, SSgt. Reckless chose to observe the occasion in a more dignified manner.



A quiet promotion celebration.

When Reckless died in 1968, she was buried with full military honors at the Camp Pendleton stables. With the placement of a permanent monument to this fabled Marine aboard Camp Pendleton, her wonderful story will endure. Please consider joining CPHS by giving a donation to help make this happen.

Our Partner

CPHS is partnered with Robin L. Hutton, president of the Sgt. Reckless Memorial Fund, for the purpose of raising funds to support her offer to place a Sgt. Reckless memorial monument at Camp Pendleton. Robin is an author and entrepreneur who, together with artist Jocelyn Williams, is responsible for the SSgt. Reckless memorial monument dedicated at the National Museum of the Marine Corps last summer. She is the author of the about to be released book *Sgt. Reckless: America's War Horse*; and is the undisputed authority regarding the history of this famous Marine hero of the Korean War. She is pictured here delivering her remarks at last year's Sgt. Reckless memorial dedication ceremony at Quantico.



**SSGT. RECKLESS BENEFIT GALA
LAS FLORES ADOBE
Saturday, September 13, 2014
11 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

By Don Gressly



Mark your calendar for this splendid event! Our events director, Jerry Polyascko, is putting together a program of special exhibits, demonstrations and entertainment that is sure to capture your imagination and delight all comers. And all proceeds from this gala will go to our Sgt. Reckless Monument Fund!

- Meet our partner, Robin Hutton, who will be signing her new book, *Sgt Reckless: America's War Horse*.
- Tour the magnificently restored Las Flores Adobe with one of the very knowledgeable Rancho Santa Margarita y Las Flores Adobe docents.
- Learn how the restoration of the adobe was done from Professor Doug Porter, University of Vermont, who has supervised the nine year restoration effort for Marine Corps Base, Camp Pendleton.
- Enjoy mounted riders who will be roaming the grounds in full western regalia, and a petting donkey for the youngsters.
- Be amazed at a Marine War Dog demonstration.
- See a Western theme exhibit with skits performed by local re-enactors.
- Check out demonstrations and exhibits of Indian basket weaving and jewelry, saddle making, horse shoeing, and Marine Corps vehicles from the Mechanized Museum collection.
- Take a chance on an opportunity drawing.
- And, finally, enjoy live musical entertainment, and food and beverage sales.

Cost: \$20 per person advanced reservation. Advanced reservations requested by September 6, please. \$30 at the entrance. Children under 12 free.

For advanced reservations, please make your check out to CPHS and mail to: Jerry Polyascko, 177 Pamela Drive, Fallbrook, CA 92028.

Proceeds to Benefit the SSgt. Reckless Monument Fund

Donations to the fund will be accepted at the event, and may be included in your advanced reservation as well. If you are not able to attend, please consider making a donation directly, either by mail as above, or using PayPal on our website at www.camppendletonhistoricalsociety.org.

CPHS has established the following special categories:

- **Patron Level:** \$1,000 and above. Includes four tickets for the admission fees and your name prominently displayed on our Sponsor Donation Board.
- **Sponsor Level:** \$500 to \$999. Includes two tickets for the event and your name displayed on our Sponsor Donation Board.

Directions To Las Flores Adobe

- Freeway/Interstate 5 to Camp Pendleton Las Pulgas exit.
- Camp Pendleton Las Pulgas Gate: (If your vehicle does not display a DOD pass, have your drivers license, insurance coverage and car registration available in case there may be a "Security Alert.") After passing through the gate follow the road to the first intersection (less than a mile) and turn right. Entrance to Las Flores adobe is immediately on the right. CPHS signage will be displayed at entrance.
- Follow signs/parking attendants' direction for parking.

www.camppendletonhistoricalsociety.org
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WWII Marine Early Donor to Reckless Fund

Bob Williams, the Camp Pendleton trained WWII Marine whose story was featured in our 1st Quarter, 2014, *Groundbreaker*, made a donation of \$100 to the SSgt. Reckless Monument Fund well before we launched our fund raising campaign. Bob read about our plans for the SSgt. Reckless monument at Camp Pendleton in CPHS President Dick Rothwell's message, and was inspired to act. Thanks, Bob, for leading us off!!

CPHS Launches Re-Designed Website

CPHS has a completely re-designed website thanks to the great work of our graphic designer, Jerry Broeckert. The new site features the SSgt. Reckless Monument Fund, with PayPal links for donations to the fund as well as for CPHS dues payment and other contributions. Standard features of the site include information about the historical structures and programs aboard Camp Pendleton that we support, the short video "Friars, Vaqueros, & Marines: A History Worth Preserving," and an archive of all past *Groundbreaker* editions. Check us out at www.camp Pendletonhistoricalsociety.org.

SSgt. Reckless Benefit Gala Las Flores Adobe



Saturday, September 13, 2014. See page 3 for all the details for the gala. All proceeds will benefit the SSgt. Reckless Monument Fund.



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