



President's Message

Richard B. Rothwell



Once again our annual fundraiser was a tremendous success with guests enjoying a delightful afternoon at the beautiful and historic Ranch House.

Attractions included a display of vintage vehicles from the Mechanized Museum, live music, a Mexican buffet, and a silent auction. Beyond being an enjoyable experience, it was also a financial success. Due to limited space available, in this edition of the Groundbreaker, our 4th Quarter, 2012 Groundbreaker Newsletter will contain pictures of the 2012 CPHS Fundraiser.

Net proceeds exceeded \$6,800, our second highest amount on record. I would like to extend a special thank you to our sponsors who helped make that possible: the Rancho Mission Viejo Corporation, Pacific Marine Credit Union, the Issa Family Trust, and an anonymous member.

Special thanks goes to Board member Don Gressly, who chaired the organizing committee.

I am pleased to report that we completed our signage project at the Las Flores adobe in July.

With a \$3,000 grant provided by the County of San Diego and the good work of volunteer Cal Frantz, CPHS

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From Main Line, to Branch Line, to Oblivion *Camp Pendleton's Railroad to Nowhere*

by William Parsons

Most of us, as we've travelled east from Camp Pendleton's main gate toward Munn Field on Vandegrift Blvd., have noticed the rust covered, weed infested railroad tracks on the left. Ever wonder about those tracks? Why are they there? What was their purpose? For answers we have to step back in time to the later part of the nineteenth century when the area was Rancho Santa Margarita y Las Flores; long before it became MCB Camp Pendleton.

Starting in the mid-1850s a man named Frank Kimball, a major mover and shaker from National City, was determined to make the small town south of San Diego the region's railway hub.

Late in 1879, after several failed attempts to get a railroad directly from the east into San Diego, Kimball's unrelenting efforts finally produced an agreement with the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Co.

The Company had agreed to build the main line of the California Southern Railroad between Barstow and National City. The route would travel from National City north through San Diego to the Fallbrook Junction – today about a mile north of Oceanside near Interstate-5. Here the line would turn north and east following the Santa Margarita River, across what is today Camp Pendleton, to the Fallbrook Station located at the bottom of Temecula Canyon about a mile and a half from Fallbrook.

The line continued through the canyon to Temecula, Riverside, San Bernardino and on to Cajon Pass. Eventually it terminated at Barstow where the rail line would join the Atlantic & Pacific line becoming the western end of Santa Fe's transcontinental line from Chicago.

Shortly after agreement was reached the route and design of California Southern was being mapped out. However, due to a major design flaw the fate of the railroad would be decided before a single shovelful of dirt was turned. Design engineers were sent from the east to determine the exact path of the rails through Temecula Canyon.

They chose to ignore local experts when told of the depth water levels could reach, through the sheer walled canyon, when rains came to Southern California. As a result, tracks were placed at the bottom of the canyon just feet from Santa Margarita's dry riverbed.

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In May 1881 workers began grading the rail bed at the National City terminus. By the Spring of 1883 construction had been completed as far north as San Bernardino and regular operation was beginning. Unfortunately, and fatefully, rains during the winter of 1883-84 were particularly intense washing out miles of rail through Temecula Canyon and bringing a halt to railroad operations. In short order, rail lines were rebuilt along the original route and California Southern was fully functional within months.

Operations continued normally until the winter of 1891 when heavy rains once again washed out the rail line between Fallbrook Station and Temecula. This time the decision was made not to rebuild the line between the two stations.

It was also decided that California Southern Railroad north from Temecula was fully functional and would continue to operate as before. Even today, this railroad is one of the busiest in the nation. The line from Fallbrook Station to Fallbrook Junction, a distance of about 20 miles which included crossing Rancho Santa Margarita property, was given the designation Fallbrook Branch.

The line would intersect with the original line from National City and with a new line continuing north from the junction to Santa Ana.

Operations would continue as they had in the past only the new designations and responsibilities would be utilized. Things went well for 25 years. Then in 1916 heavy winter rains wreaked havoc on Temecula Canyon and Fallbrook Station. Floods waters would wash away much of the railroad property as well as the stock and, this time things would have to change.

Santa Fe Company, owners of the railway, formed a partnership with James Flood, Jr. and Jerome O'Neill, owners of Rancho Santa Margarita y Las Flores (Camp Pendleton), to rebuild Fallbrook Branch.

The route would run from Fallbrook Junction east to the historic Santa Margarita Ranch House along the line of the original route. Beyond the Ranch House, there would be a new roadbed leading up a steep grade and over the hill directly into the town of Fallbrook. In 1923 a new train depot was built in Fallbrook on Alvarado St. which supported train service to the town.

Over the years trains continued to service Fallbrook moving produce from the area while bringing supplies and taking passengers both directions. As time passed the frequency of trains travelling to and from Fallbrook would diminish but the weekly trips continued until the 1970s. Fallbrook's train depot was demolished in February 1971. Not long after, the railway company began removing tracks from the streets of Fallbrook. In June 1981, Fallbrook Branch was officially abandoned (closed).

Today, as you travel along Vandegrift Blvd. the tracks are readily visible as far east as the Mechanized Museum at Vandegrift and Rattlesnake Canyon. As the line moves on toward Fallbrook there are many points where tracks have been removed or covered over or even washed away by seasonal rains.

In the end, the California Southern Railroad main line in San Diego County was, due to circumstances such as poor planning bad timing and urban growth, forced to become a short branch line which has eroded away to a few rails and a faded memory of what once was.

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.

Camp Pendleton Military Construction Continues

The Marine Corps and Camp Pendleton in particular continues to enjoy the much needed building boom within the Department of Defense (DOD). This construction boom is not only good for the Marines, sailors, dependents and civilian employees but it also provides needed jobs for the local construction companies and supply vendors.

There has certainly been a need to upgrade old buildings and facilities at Camp Pendleton as WW II, Korea and Vietnam era structures were in dire need of being refurbished or replaced. The renewal comes amid one of the largest DOD building programs in history.

The DOD budget has more than doubled its budget for military construction and, on top of that, federal stimulus funds has pumped \$7.4 billion into the Pentagon budget, most of it for military construction, renovation and energy projects through 2013.

Overview of the New Camp Pendleton Hospital

On September 1, 2010, Navy Facilities Engineering Command Southwest (NAVFAC) awarded a firm-fixed price design-build contract to Clark /McCarthy, to build the 500,000-square-foot Replacement Naval Hospital at Camp Pendleton that will replace the existing Naval Hospital.

Two years later, hospital construction team is 70 percent into the build, with more than \$270 million worth of work in place.

The Replacement Naval Hospital falls under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, and represents the largest Recovery Act Project in the Navy, having a base contract value of \$394 million and incorporating a planned modification for turnkey medical equipment valued at approximately \$55 million.

This project is estimated to employ between 700 to 1,000 construction workers daily and provide a large economic stimulus in the area. Project completion is targeted for early 2014.

The replacement of Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton is the largest American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) project within the Department of the Navy.

With the inclusion of planned modifications for furnishings, fixtures and equipment and for land bank mitigation credits, the total contract amount is \$455 million.

These improvements including new and/or remodeled barracks, warehouses, new child care centers and solar powered generators. This boom started in 2001 and is expected to last through 2013.

In addition to Camp Pendleton's overdue needs for new barracks, office spaces, warehouses, medical/dental clinics, Naval Hospital, Marine Corps Post Exchange (MCPX), family housing for navy and Marine Corps personnel stationed at Camp Pendleton, Wounded Warrior Facilities and an additional billion dollars has been budgeted for other Pendleton utility improvements.

Because of space limitations, other construction articles and pictures on the Camp Pendleton Exchange and the Wounded Warrior Facilities will be provided in the 4th Quarterly 2012 Newsletter.

Located on 70 acres near the Main Gate of Camp Pendleton, the new 500,000 sq-ft multilevel hospital will feature facilities to provide a variety of medical services for inpatient medical facilities, surgery, patient overnight stays, dental care, intensive care, and general medical and emergency care.

Outpatient medical facilities, ancillary departments, primary and specialty care clinics, and support spaces are also included in the hospital. Additionally, the new hospital will include healing gardens and outdoor rehabilitating equipment, an on-site pharmacy and solar energy capabilities throughout the hospital and parking garage.

The project will include a central utilities plant, a 2,500 space multilevel parking structure, surface parking, and site development.

The new facility will replace the existing naval hospital located in Building H-100 on Camp Pendleton.

The new hospital will address deficiencies in the existing facility including: inefficient space utilization; shift from inpatient-based care to an outpatient-based care delivery model; non-compliance with current Anti-Terrorism/Force Protection (AFTP) code requirements; non-compliance with latest seismic code requirements for progressive collapse of a structure with inpatient occupancy.

A Current Review of the Existing Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton Procedures

NHCP was designed in 1969 with construction completed in 1974. The original design focused on inpatient services consistent with the technologies used at that time. Today's healthcare practices typically require a shorter inpatient stay, with many surgical procedures performed in an outpatient or ambulatory setting.

- The facility supports a beneficiary population of 151,000 comprised of active duty military, retired military and their family members.
- Staffing: 2,100 Military and Civilians.
- Typical Day At The Camp Pendleton Naval Hospital Consists Of:
 - 1,968 Ambulatory Visits
 - 131 Emergency Department Visits
 - 14 Surgeries Procedures
 - 2,354 Laboratory Procedures
 - 19 Admissions
 - 5 Deliveries
 - 610 Radiology Procedures
 - 2,880 Prescriptions Dispensed

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erected a permanent case to display posters that explain the historical significance of the property.

In separate gifts to the Marine Corps CPHS purchased six museum quality mannequins for the Base History and Museum officer that will help make historical exhibits more appealing to visitors and a custom designed display case for the Mechanized Museum. In combination these items represent donations of over \$4,000.

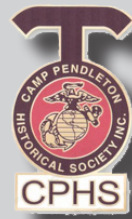


Len Hayes left our Board in September. On behalf of his fellow Board members I want to thank Len for his good work and faithful service. While I hope to announce the addition of two new Board members in our next newsletter, we are in great need of volunteers to serve on the Board or to support us in other areas. If you have the time and interest, please call me directly at (760)-747-1046.

Richard B. Rothwell

www.camppendletonhistoricalsociety.org
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