# **Camp Pendleton Historical Society**

GROUNDBREAKER

www.camppendletonhistoricalsociety.org

Second Quarter 2013

#### President's Message

Richard B. Rothwell



With sadness I report that Linda Holmes, who has been our secretary since our earliest days, has moved out of the area and left the Board. She was a dedicated and

talented member of our team. We will miss her. Fortunately, there is also some good news. Bill Parsons has agreed to be our new secretary. You may recognize his name as the author of several articles in past editions of *Groundbreaker*. Also joining the Board is Bob Hawkins. I have worked with Bob as a volunteer in another arena and am confident that he will add depth and leadership to our Board. I welcome both men to our team and look forward to working with them to help tell and preserve the history of Camp Pendleton.

On March 15 about 15 members and guests gathered at the Camp Pendleton School of Infantry to see the Marine Battle Colors ceremony. This was one of the public events performed on the West Coast by the Marine Corps Drum and Bugle Corps, Silent Drill Platoon, and Color Guard before returning to Marine Barracks 8th and I in Washington, D.C., for the parade season. Members attended a reception in "The Bunker" after the ceremony.



(left to right) Jim Williams, Jerry Polyascko, Pat Forster, Dick Rothwell, Cal Frantz in "The Bunker"

## **Camp Pendleton Barracks Life, Then and Now**

Following boot camp graduation at Parris Island in late 1948, and a transcontinental trip by troop train, then Marine Private James C. Hitz arrived at Camp Pendleton and eventually took up residence in a "new" barracks. Newly minted Marines arriving at Camp Pendleton today also take up residence in "new" barracks. The contrast between "new" in 1949/1950 and "new" now could not be more dramatic.

This black and white photo shows the barracks that was home for Marine Hitz in 1950. The picture is from the memorabilia collection of now retired Lt.Col. James C. Hitz, USMC, and is used with permission. The barracks then consisted of open squad bays and minimal head facilities. Forty to 60 bunks per squad bay



were typical. Personal item storage was limited to a foot locker at the foot of the bunk, and maybe a small wall locker. What we now call amenities were virtually non-existent. And, as the picture shows, the surrounding terrain was quite barren. But it was home.

This second picture was taken at the dedication ceremony of the new bachelor enlisted barracks complex at Mainside in September 2011. This picture is from an article found at the KPBS.org website. The headline for the article reads "Camp Pendleton Barracks Like a Four Star Hotel." The



article goes on to say that this new facility will be home to some 800 single Marines.

# continued front page, Barracks

Two person rooms feature a microwave, a fridge, private bath, and a walk in closet. Common area amenities include a theater, laundry room with 60-inch high-definition TV, fireplace and games area, and outdoor basketball and volley ball courts, running trails, and barbecue pits. Life may be so good for Marines living here they may choose to stay aboard the Base on weekends, rather than swooping out to surrounding liberty spots. At a cost of \$130 million, these barracks make the barracks of the 1950s era look starkly primitive.

This third picture shows the latest building to go up in the new barracks construction boom at Camp Pendleton. The photo is taken from a February 2013, newspaper article 12. by Linda McIntosh of the San Diego Union-Tribune. Linda reports that this barracks, located at the School of Infantry, will house 860 Marines and cost \$44 million. It is one of more than two dozen barracks/bachelor quarters costing more than \$650 million that have been built or renovated since 2010.



In all, thirty new bachelor enlisted quarters have been built since 2008, housing some 10,670 Marines. The new School of Infantry barracks features recruit activity lounges and a drill instructors' lounge with coffee mess, TV viewing area, and the now ubiquitous internet café with wireless internet.

A truly singular difference between the old barracks and the new is the need for parking spaces. Notice in the picture from 1950 that there is not a car to be seen. In contrast, the new barracks at Mainside has parking spaces for 654 vehicles, and the School of Infantry barracks boasts a multilevel parking garage with space for 306 cars and 21 motorcycles.

What would Marine Hitz think of the new digs that await Marines arriving at Camp Pendleton these days? Hard to say. We do know what he thought of his home back in 1949 and 1950. From an unpublished memoir, he has this to say: "Liberty, chow, companions, barracks were all good. ... We had a full training schedule with summer demonstrations for the USMCRs, air landing ops at San Clemente, fighting fires in the hills, LVT & LCVP training, and a biggie called Demon III. And I progressed up the corporate ladder from BARman to rifleman to fire team leader. Even fired Company high expert with the M1. Couldn't be happier!"

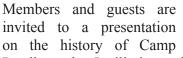
But the good life at Camp Pendleton was not to last. At 4:00 a.m., Sunday, 25 June 1950, the North Koreans began crossing the 38th parallel. Soon thereafter, fire team leader James C. Hitz, USMC, was on his way to the Pusan Perimeter aboard the *USS Henrico*. Thus was demonstrated the one common denominator between barracks then and barracks now. They are but temporary homes to Marines, who may suddenly find themselves on the battlefields of far off places with strange names like Nicaragua, Belleau Wood, Guadalcanal, Chosin Reservoir, Khe Sanh, and Helmand Province.

### Do you have a good Camp Pendleton story?

We welcome personal memoirs of experiences at Camp Pendleton for publication in future issues. Please email your story (500 words or less) to calfrantz@verizon.net. (Submissions are subject to editing.)

## continued front page, Message

Another member event took place on April 26, when members and guests attended a recruit graduation parade and ceremony at Marine Recruit Corps Depot, San Diego. The ceremony was followed by lunch in the mess hall and a docent-led tour of the very impressive Depot Museum.





(left to right) Robert Hawkins, Larry Richie, Dick Rothwell, Michael O'Donnell, Cal Frantz, Jerry Polyascko, Don Gressly, Tony D'Angelo, and Cpl. Contois (MCRD liaison)

Pendleton that I will give at the beautiful Casa Romantica in San Clemente on July 11. In addition to hearing my stories, you will have an opportunity to see this fantastic venue that overlooks the ocean and San Clemente pier. The event begins at 7 p.m.; admission is \$10. Casa Romantica is located at 415 Avenida Granada. You can learn more from its website: www.casaromantica.org.

Please mark your calendars for Sunday, August 3, and join us for An Afternoon at the Ranch House. This will be our sixth annual fundraiser. It is a great opportunity to enjoy the beautiful Santa Margarita y Las Flores Ranch House and to support our cause. There will be food, docent-led tours, music, displays of vintage military vehicles, and an auction with fabulous prizes. More information will follow.

As always, I thank you for your continued support, which plays such a vital role in our efforts to help the Marine Corps preserve and tell the history of Camp Pendleton.

Richard B. Rothwell



We mourn the loss of CPHS member Randal Mitchell. who died at age 92 in February. Randal was a retired Marine living in Oceanside, California, who joined the Camp Pendleton Historical Society in 2008. True to the Marine Corps motto, Semper Fidelis, he loved the Corps throughout his lifetime. May he rest in peace.

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Lisa Adlam STAFF GRAPHIC DESIGN Jerry Broeckert

### **CPHS EVENTS SCHEDULE 2013**

AUGUST	CPHS Fundraiser Location: The Ranch House	Saturday. August 3 Start 2 p.m., End about 5 p.m.	Our annual fundraiser at the Ranch House is coming up on Saturday, 3 August. An event flyer coming out in early July will provide deta Always a good time, be su to put this on your calenda
SEPTEMBER	3rdMAW, Miramar; Osprey/F-35 Overview; Lunch, Free Time to Check Out Outdoor Aviation Museum	Date and Time TBD	
DECEMBER	Docents Holiday Decorations Location: The Ranch House	Date and Time TBD (On a Friday)	

### **CPHS MEMBERSHIP LEVELS**

Active duty military can join the Camp Pendleton Histocial Society for only \$35 a year. Visit the CPHS website at www.camppendletonhistoricalsociety.org for more information.

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



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### **EVENT ALERT**

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