



President's Message

Richard B. Rothwell



The light at the end of the tunnel is growing brighter. Construction of the SSgt Reckless monument, which began on Aug. 29,

is now complete.

It truly looks beautiful, but will remain covered until the dedication ceremony on Oct. 26. The Camp Pendleton commanding general, Brigadier General Kevin Killea, has graciously designated that ceremony as a command event, a kindness that he did not have to grant. CPHS is very grateful that we did because it means that we can use the talents and resources of his staff in planning for it. With that help it will be a more elegant affair.

Thanks to the generosity of over 350 individual, family, and organizational donors CPHS has contributed over \$92,000 toward the design and construction costs of the monument. Our partner, the Sergeant Reckless Memorial Fund, has paid the remainder along with other project expenses.

All members should receive an invitation to the dedication ceremony. If you did not get one, please let us know by email at cphsmembership@gmail.com. I hope many of you will be able to attend. Regardless, please indicate your intention by email to the address in your invitation. It is important that we have a reasonably accurate

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Mechanized Museum: A Historic Building Worth Saving

By Faye Jonason



CPHS Board Members inside the Mechanized Museum on Sept. 15, 2016.

In the last few years, at least three circa 1942/1943 warehouses aboard Camp Pendleton have had structural failures and collapsed.

These wartime "temporary" wooden structures were part of the accelerated construction of Camp Pendleton designed by famous American architect, Myron Hunt. Original plans called for plywood-based roofs but wartime needs diverted plywood to New Orleans to be used in the construction of Higgins Boats. An adaptation of at least 8" of gypsum board (sheet rock) was used to replace the plywood. Naturally, the gypsum board became soaked with nearly 75 years' worth of rain resulting in collapsed warehouse roofs.

The Mechanized Museum is also one of those original World War II (WW II)

wood construction warehouses, with a unique story. It was coded an "H" building, designating it as the Base Hospital's warehouse, and was also used to process troops to and from war. In January 1946, a photo was taken of this building documenting that "thousands" of service members had disembarked from the train, completed processing through this building, and were loaded onto vehicles to take them to their final discharge destinations. These were Marines and Sailors finally returning from the Pacific Theater of War. Near one of the big green barn-style sliding doors, the 1944 and 1945 dates remain where these veterans had carved them.

In 2013, this Myron Hunt-designed building was saved from possible and probable collapse with more
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than \$100,000 worth of engineering fixes including roof drains and metal structural support posts.

As reported in the last issue of the Groundbreaker, the Base funded more than \$300,000 for essential repairs. The museum now boasts a new front entrance that faces toward Lake O'Neill versus the previous one facing Vandegrift Blvd. The contractor generously worked beyond requirements of the contract, thereby satisfying more of the museum's needs than expected.

For those unaware of the museum's history, the museum began in 1998 when then-Gunnery Sergeant Jim King phoned the History Museum office requesting to restore a Korean war vintage Mechanical Mule vehicle; Jim found a neglected Mule military vehicle in a bed of weeds on Mainside. In 2002, the History Museum Office obtained only a small portion of the building, which was dedicated as a "museum" by the Base Commanding General, MajGen Bowdon III, as part of the Base's 60th Anniversary celebration. Several of the original Marines who had marched from Camp Elliott in Sept. 1942 to become the first troops on this new base were honored guests at the museum's opening. The History Museum



MajGen Bowdon dedicates the Mechanized Museum with a ribbon-cutting ceremony in 2002.



The Mechanized Museum circa 2002.

Office assumed responsibility for the remainder of the building in 2006.

Today, the Mechanical Mule is one of the 64 pieces identified by the National Museum of the Marine Corps to be preserved as Marine Corps Heritage Assets; others include a WW II vintage M29 "Weasel" donated by the Camp Pendleton Historical Society and the self-propelled M50 Ontos Anti-Tank vehicle recently restored by volunteers. Amassed since 1998, the collection is made up of more than 160 vehicles and artillery pieces, saved, restored, and preserved over the last 18 years by Master Gunnery Sergeant Jim King, USMC (Ret) and his group of "Dirty Docent" volunteers. If it were not for these enthusiastic, patient, and hard-working volunteers, the Museum's collection nor its associated programs would not exist.

As a requirement of preservation, the identified Heritage Assets (vehicles and artillery pieces) must be housed to protect against rain, wind, and other environmentally deteriorating factors. Though currently coded by Base Facilities as a "Q4-Failing Facility" and identified for demolition/elimination, the Mechanized Museum building at 2612 Vandegrift Boulevard provides that level of protection against those deterioration factors.

Plans are under way to arrange the vehicle collection into time-period displays in observance of the Base's 75th Anniversary celebration; several

displays will include diorama scenes and artifacts. The Dirty Docents plan to have several monthly weekend open house tours from February through September 2017. To begin the new exhibit series, MajGen Pendleton's cannon has been restored and placed in the museum entry area along with a likeness of General Pendleton whose idea was to establish a West-coast Marine Corps base. Exhibits reflecting Marine Corps involvement in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan will follow.

Since the Department of Defense has an award system encouraging the demolition of old buildings, the Mechanized Museum building has been identified as part of the temporary 1940s wood structures now being scrutinized for demolition. Information substantiating the Mechanized Museum building's unique history, important architect, and preservation usage requirements has been submitted to the Headquarters Marine Corps Review Committee with hopes that this building will be spared the wrecking ball.

The Mechanized Museum is open Monday to Thursday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Fridays from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m.; it is closed for all Federal holidays and designated Marine Corps Special Liberty periods. Tours and special events can be requested by email at MCBCAMPEN_history@usmc.mil or by calling (760) 725-5758.

CPHS Members Spend a Full Day with the Assault Amphibian Marines

Twenty-one members and guests of CPHS participated in day-long activities on Sept. 23 hosted by the Amphibious Vehicle Test Branch (AVTB), 3rd Assault Amphibian Battalion (3d AA Bn), 1st Marine Division, and the Assault Amphibian School (AAS) Battalion, all located at Camp Del Mar aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton.

The day's activities started at the AVTB Conference Room with an exceptional detailed briefing on the history of the AAV acquisitions, Amphibious Combat Vehicle (ACV), and AAV Survivability Upgrade programs. The briefing was followed by a walking tour of the AVTB ramp and discussion of the various projects that were in progress.

From AVTB, the group headed to the Camp Del Mar (21 Area) Mess Hall where everyone enjoyed the abundance and excellent selection of food. Most of the "old timers" experienced for the first time civilians running the Mess Hall vice Marines. We were received by extremely motivated and professional civilian personnel that went out of their way to make us



WWII/Korea LVT Museum at Camp Del Mar.

feel at "home" and everyone had a good meal.

Our next stop was to the Headquarters of 3rd AA Battalion where we had the opportunity to talk with the Amphibious Assault Marines (crew and maintenance personnel) on the "ramp" as they brought us up to date on the current issues with the AAVP (Personnel), AAVC (Command) and AAVT (Recovery) vehicles.

Next on the tour was AAS Battalion; we were briefed on student training issues and challenges. While at the "school house," we were able to test the School Battalion's new driver's simulators and were able to appreciate how important the

simulators played in reducing budget costs while also improving efficiency and accuracy costs.

Ending the day's activities, we visited and toured the WWII and Korea LVT Museum. After the Museum Tour, a reception was held for members and guests and Marines - a good time was had by all.

The visit to the Camp Del Mar Amphibious Assault units would not have been possible without the assistance and cooperation of Major Hohl, Captain Lambuth, and CWO-2 Thyder from AVTB; Major Berendsen from 3d AA Bn; and Major Petronzio (AAS Bn).

YAT YAS!

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count of expected guests. It is also important that Camp Pendleton has the names of all guests in advance to facilitate ease of passage through Base security.

Our Speakers' Bureau has two presentations scheduled for December. Director Mike Lewis will address the Santa Margarita Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution and I have been invited to speak to the Rotary Club of Escondido. If you belong to an organization near Camp Pendleton that would like a guest speaker to tell the historical stories of Camp Pendleton, please contact our Secretary at cphs.secretary@gmail.com.

Jim Williams will step down as vice president in November. Jim and I co-founded CPHS in 2005 and he has been both a great friend and valuable contributor ever since. Fortunately, he will remain on our Board. Director Jerry Polyascko, who has done a terrific job as the Special Events Committee Chair, will succeed Jim as vice president. Our Society is fortunate to have such a capable replacement.

Lt. Col. Joseph C. Fegan III, USMC (Ret) has joined our Council of Advisors and is already taking an active role in our event planning. Joe's grandfather, MGen Joseph C. Fegan, supervised the construction

of Camp Pendleton in 1942 and was the Base's first Commanding General. Welcome aboard, Joe.

I hope to meet many of you at the SSgt Reckless monument dedication on Oct. 26 and thank you personally for your support. If you are there, please introduce yourselves. Whether or not you can attend, please know how much I appreciate your membership. You are critical to our ability to help the Marine Corps preserve and tell the story of the land we know today as Camp Pendleton.

Richard B. Rathwell

Artifact Donation - Maps

David Smollar, former Los Angeles Times writer who covered Camp Pendleton between 1981 and 1985, visited the Santa Margarita Ranch House in Sept. 2016 and met with the History Museum Branch Director, Faye Jonason, after participating in a tour of the Ranch House complex, conducted by the Rancho Santa Margarita y Las Flores Docents.

David brought some WWII cartography treasures in the form of both censored and uncensored 1943 Automobile Club of Southern California (ACSC) maps of Orange and San Diego counties. The censored civilian versions are devoid of any military installation annotations. David donated the original ACSC maps, as well as a 1943 Union Pacific Railroad Military Map, depicting all military installations across the United States in combination with the railroad lines.

In October, David stopped by the Base History Museum Branch bringing numerous ACSC and other road maps, dating from 1915 through 1947 and showing the ranch/base region. He also brought copies of numerous articles he wrote for the Los Angeles Times about Camp Pendleton. He allowed the Base Archivist to scan the maps and newspaper articles, thus having them become a permanent (digital) part of the Archives collection.

Thanks to David for his generosity and the great stories he had to tell while we went through his collection of maps and clippings.



Donation of maps by David Smollar.

CPHS Working Committees Progress:

As reported in the 2nd Quarter 2016 edition (Volume 10, Number 2) of the Groundbreaker newsletter, the then-newly formed committees have been busy meeting and working on various initiatives. The following is an update of their progress:

MOU Committee (Chairman, Steve Fisher): In September, members of the MOU Committee met with the MCIWest - MCB Camp Pendleton Staff Judge Advocate (SJA) to gain insight on developing a MOU between CPHS and Camp Pendleton; the SJA is very supportive of our MOU effort. The Committee is currently in the process of preparing a draft MOU for the requisite Base staffing action.

Bylaws Committee (Chairman, Bill Parsons): The Bylaws Committee has met numerous times since March 2016, conducting detailed reviews of the current CPHS Bylaws and making appropriate revisions to the bylaws document. The Chairman has incorporated the last of the recommended changes and plans to present the revised bylaws to the Board of Directors at the November 2016 Board meeting.

Strategy Committee (Chairman, Mike Daily): The Strategy Committee had drafted an initial organizational strategic document in March 2016 and has been refining that document through a series of meetings since then. The Committee will be meeting with a number of key stakeholders and Base Staff agencies during October and November to discuss processes, procedures, and projects; the Committee plans to present a draft strategy document to the Board of Directors in December in preparation for the Board's strategic discussion meeting in January 2017.

Member Spotlight



CPHS Member Lauren Kelly-Hill has been interested in the deep-rooted history of Southern California since arriving here in 1990.

A Texas native, her interest is primarily on San Diego and Orange County areas. Besides CPHS, she is a member of the Fallbrook Historical Society and has been a member of several historical societies including Orange County, Costa Mesa, and Dana Point.

Lauren and her husband, LtCol Curtis Hill, USMC (PAO, MARFORPAC), were married in the Ranch House Chapel in 2006. Lauren looks forward to being more involved with the CPHS and the Rancho Santa Margarita y Las Flores Docent program.

Welcome to our newest Advisor

The CPHS Board of Directors is pleased to announce the addition of LtCol Joe Fegan III, USMC (Ret) to its Council of Advisors. Grandson of MGen Joseph C. Fegan, USMC, the first Commanding General of Camp Pendleton, and son of LtGen Joseph Fegan, Jr., USMC, Joe was career Marine (1969-1992) who served as an Infantry Officer in all four Marine Divisions, with his last assignment before his retirement from the Corps having been here at Camp Pendleton. He and his family live in Vista, California.

Joe recalls as a young boy he would visit the Magees (at the Las Flores Adobe) who were caretakers for Rancho Santa Margarita and also his godparents. "When the Magees would babysit my sister and me, Mr. Magee, who had one of the first televisions in the area, would place

a piece of colored plastic wrap on the TV screen and tells us that we were watching color television!



Joe Fegan sharing photos of the Magees at Las Flores. Photo by Deb Hellman

Vietnam Era Combat Art Exhibit



Examples from the U.S. Marine Corps Combat Art Collection are currently on display until Dec. 20, 2016 at the Ranch House, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton.

Camp Pendleton Facts: Housing

Family Housing:

- Family Housing Areas: 22
- Family Housing Units: 7,545 homes (add'l 250 homes being built, available mid-2017)

Bachelor Housing:

- Bachelor Housing Areas: 14
- Bachelor Enlisted Quarters (BEQ): 188 (including 33 Quonset Huts and 20 Trailers)
- Capacity: 38,000+



Quonset Hut Family Housing, Camp Pendleton (1946). Image courtesy of CPEN Archives

Save the Date Year!
2017

Celebrate with your Marine Corps



SSgt Reckless: From Groundbreaking to Installation



Faye Jonason, Cal Frantz, Jerry Polyascko, Jim Williams, Dick Rothwell and Bill Birnie pictured at the SSgt Reckless Groundbreaking ceremony on Aug. 29. Photo courtesy of Cpl. Brian Bekkala, U.S. Marines

CPHS Board Members, author Robin Hutton, Base Commanding General, Brig. Gen. Kevin Killea, and SSgt Reckless veterans and supporters were at the Pacific Views Event Center on Aug. 29 for the

groundbreaking ceremony of the SSgt Reckless monument.

Less than a month later, on Sept. 24, a significant project milestone was reached when the bronze



Check out the Oct. 6 issue of California Horsetrader for a nice article on Sgt. Reckless

<http://content.yudu.com/htmlReader/Aoy9u/Horsetrader/reader.html?page=14>

SSgt Reckless statue was placed on the monument pedestal for its succeeding installation.

The construction phase of the project was completed on Oct. 7.



Above: SSgt Reckless statue being lowered onto the monument base on Sept. 24. **Right:** Dick and Ann Rockwell, Jerry Polyascko, Jocelyn Russell and Robin Hutton pictured in front of the statue on Sept. 24. Photos by Deb Hellman



Keep your eye out for ...



We are looking for Camp Pendleton photos from March to Dec. 1942 to include the construction of the base. If you or someone you know has



photos to donate or would allow us to scan them, please contact us at cphs_info@yahoo.com. We can provide a CD with the scanned images.



Vintage Camp Pendleton photo courtesy of the CPEN Archives

Upcoming CPHS Events



Wednesday, Oct. 26, 2016

The ceremony to officially dedicate the SSgt Reckless Monument will be conducted on Wednesday, Oct. 26, 2016 in front of the Pacific Views Event Center (PVEC), MCB Camp Pendleton; the official ceremony begins at 10:00 a.m. with a pre-

ceremony concert by the 1st Marine Division Band starting at 9:40 a.m. Invitations were mailed out the week of Sept. 26; please ensure that you RSVP for the ceremony by Oct. 19. A reception will be held at the PVEC following the dedication ceremony.

Saturday, Feb. 11, 2017

The CPHS Annual Awards Dinner / Ceremony / Live Auction gala on Feb. 11, 2017 is shaping up to be a grand event.

Individual tickets are \$100 and are available for sale starting in November; contact the Events Director at cphs.events@gmail.com. Sponsorship packages are also available. Besides the dinner, awards ceremony, and live auction, two and

four-person golf packages at the Camp Pendleton Golf Course will be raffled off. Marine Corps uniforms, with weapons and equipment used by Camp Pendleton Marines from 1942 to present, will be on display.

Author Robin Hutton ("Sgt Reckless: America's War Horse") will speak about the Reckless statue initiative being planned for South Korea. Look forward to meeting you at the event!

Camp Pendleton Historical Society



Annual Awards Dinner Ceremony Live Auction

Assemblymember 76th District,
Rocky Chavez (Col, USMC (Ret))
to speak

Saturday, February 11, 2017

Pacific Views Event Center
Building 202850
MCB Camp Pendleton, CA



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Faye Jonason
Ex Officio Member

Danielle Page
Ex Officio Member

COUNCIL OF ADVISORS

A distinguished group of advisors is helping to guide us as we grow. We are pleased to acknowledge their support.

Brig.Gen. John Bullard, Jr., USMC (Ret)

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MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Welcome aboard to our newest members who recently joined our cause.

BGen Jay Bullard, USMC (Ret) - Lifetime Member

Patrick Brent

Charles Clements

Laura Dietz

Mark Sheehan

Many thanks to our loyal members for their recent membership renewal and continuing support of our efforts to tell the Camp Pendleton story.

Maj Robert Crabtree, USMC (Ret)

Col. James Fulks, USMC (Ret)

Lauren Kelly-Hill

Christine Livengood

Ronald McCarville

Scott and Katherine McEldowney

Vytautas Mockus

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Volunteers Needed

CPHS is still looking for volunteers



Oral History Program



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of **500** likes...we are only six away!



Camp Pendleton Historical Society

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...preserving a rich and colorful history*