

SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## LOCAL MILITARY HISTORY EXAMINED

What became Camp Pendleton could have been an Army base



**"Camp Pendleton was the engine that drove the Marine Corps' presence in the Pacific theater."**

— Richard Rothwell, retired Marine Corps Col. and president of the Camp Pendleton Historical Society

By Fred Swegles  
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If things had worked out differently in the months leading up to World War II, Orange County could have had an Army base for a neighbor instead of Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton.

When Germany invaded Poland in 1939 and America pondered being drawn into war in Europe, the Marines looked at ranch land between Oceanside and San Clemente as a possible training ground.

It was decided the land was too far from the Marines' facilities in San Diego, retired Marine Corps Col. Richard Rothwell told the San Juan Capistrano Historical Society on Sunday.

Instead, the Army began negotiations to purchase the cattle ranch, Rothwell said. But officials decided the terrain wasn't suitable for the military branch's needs.

Then Japan's Dec. 7, 1941 attack

on Pearl Harbor thrust the United States into war and the Marines decided 17 miles of pristine beaches between Oceanside and Orange County would be ideal for practicing the new form of warfare destined to be fought in the Pacific.

"The Marines learned that unlike the first world war, when they had fought alongside the Army in Europe, in this war they would be training very closely with the U.S. Navy," Rothwell said. "The two services would be charged with developing and perfecting a new form of warfare — amphibious warfare — that required us to project military power across thousands of miles of hostile ocean and heavily fortified Japanese islands, with the ultimate goal of invading the Japanese homeland."

In 1942, the government purchased 125,000 acres for \$4.2 million, said Rothwell, president of the Camp Pendleton Historical Society.

It proved to be a wise decision.

BASE » PAGE 5

Richard Rothwell recounts the history of the base at a meeting Sunday.  
FRED SWEGLES — STAFF

The Marine Corps selected 17 miles of coast between Oceanside and San Clemente as the site for Camp Pendleton, a training base whose history is intertwined with San Juan Capistrano's.  
JOSHUA SUDOCK — FILE PHOTO



SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO

## Analysis of River Street proposal could emerge in February

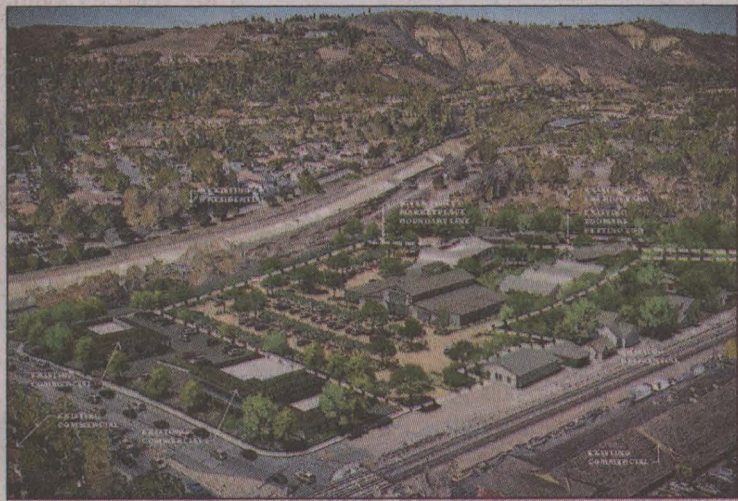
City Council selects a pair of consulting firms to perform studies

By Fred Swegles  
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A traffic study and an environmental analysis could help the City Council decide in 2018 whether a 61,000-square-foot commercial venture is a good fit next to the Los Rios Historic District.

The City Council selected a pair of consulting firms on Nov. 7 to perform the analyses at a cost of \$235,284. Developer Dan Almquist, who is asking the city to amend the Los Rios Specific Plan to allow his River Street project, is required to pay for the studies.

Commissioning the studies



COURTESY OF FRONTIER REAL ESTATE INVESTMENTS

This is developer Dan Almquist's vision for a 5.6-acre River Street Marketplace next to Los Rios Historic District in San Juan Capistrano.

does not bind the City Council to approving a project, city staff told the council.

An initial study should be completed by February, Assistant City

RIVER » PAGE 2

DEVELOPMENT

## City officials order cleanup of Historic Town Center Master Plan

City staff will propose code amendments to correct inconsistencies

By Fred Swegles  
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A plan San Juan Capistrano leaders adopted in 2012 to guide development in the core commercial area has instead led to lawsuits, legal threats and general confusion, City Council members say.

On a 5-0 vote Nov. 7, the City Council ordered a cleanup of the Historic Town Center Master Plan.

City staff will propose code amendments to correct inconsistencies between the master plan and the San Juan Capistrano General Plan. Under

state law, the general plan is the city's primary planning document, and any other documents must be consistent with it.

The City Council's decision comes after Councilman Derek Reeve called for repeal of the master plan at a council meeting Oct. 17.

At a future meeting, city staff are expected to detail what needs to be corrected, such as inconsistencies or ambiguities over building heights, lot coverage and housing in the downtown area. The council then will consider initiating General Plan and zoning amendments that could take a year.

"There is no greater priority," Councilman Brian Maryott said.

PLAN » PAGE 2



## SPORTS

# Students sign on to play college sports

By Heather McRea  
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Schools across Orange County celebrated last week their seniors destined to play for college teams.

At ceremonies with coaches, families and peers the students signed their letters of intent to play for colleges during the annual Fall Signing Day. Some of the students have received their commitment letters from Ivy League schools and military service academies.

Here are the students from local schools the paper has learned about:



KEVIN SULLIVAN — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Andrew McSweeney, center, signs to play volleyball at UC Santa Barbara, during a ceremony at Capistrano Valley High.



KEVIN SULLIVAN — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Cross country runner Alyssa Bautista, a UCLA commit, poses with friends after a ceremony at Capistrano Valley High School for athletes signing National Letters of Intent on Nov. 8.

## CAPISTRANO VALLEY

**Alysa Bautista:**  
cross country/track,  
UCLA

**Ryan Daugherty:**  
baseball, St. Mary's

**Madi DeVries:**  
lacrosse, University  
of Findlay

**Blake Fitzgerald:**  
baseball, UC San Diego

**Jasmine Freed:**  
softball, Oregon

**Haley Herberg:**  
cross country/track,  
Oklahoma

**Andrew McSweeney:**  
volleyball, UC Santa  
Barbara

**Connor Martin:**  
baseball, UC Riverside

**Dane Nakatsuka:**  
baseball, UC San Diego

**Josh Solomon:**  
baseball, Columbia

**Bryce Willits:**  
baseball, St. Mary's  
College



COURTESY OF CAPISTRANO VALLEY CHRISTIAN

Capistrano Valley Christian held a signing day ceremony on Nov. 8 to celebrate the signings by Kahely Jaeke (volleyball, Washington College (Maryland), Carson Matthews (baseball, BYU) and Alec Arnone (baseball, UC Riverside).



KEVIN SULLIVAN — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Madi DeVries signs to play lacrosse at the University of Findlay in Ohio during a ceremony at Capistrano Valley High.



KEVIN SULLIVAN — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Softball player Jasmine Freed, a University of Oregon commit, poses with her 10-month-old brother, Jett, and friends.



MICHAEL FERNANDEZ, CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

JSerra student-athletes, Preston Miller, left, Jake Reed, Carly Townsend and Pat Vorenkamp sign to play college sports Nov. 8 at JSerra High School.



MICHAEL FERNANDEZ, CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

JSerra students and athletes join friends as they watch them sign their National Letters of Intent to play college sports.

## CAPISTRANO VALLEY CHRISTIAN

**Alec Arnone:**  
baseball, UC Riverside

**Carson Matthews:**  
baseball, BYU

**Kahely Jaeke:**  
volleyball, Washington  
College (Maryland)

## JSERRA

**Caroline Kennedy:**  
volleyball, Bryant Uni-  
versity (Rhode Island)

**Joel Mensah:**  
boys basketball,  
San Diego State

**Jordan Alvarado:**  
boys basketball,  
University of Puget  
Sound

**Preston Miller:**  
boys basketball,  
University of San Diego

**Jake Reed, baseball:**  
University of San Diego

**Carly Townsend:**  
diving, Wisconsin

**Caitlin Lewis:**  
softball, Southern  
Nazarene

**Pat Vorenkamp:**  
boys volleyball,  
UC Irvine

## SAN JUAN HILLS

**Gabby Bellizzi:**  
girls volleyball, Cal

**Lauren Fairchild:**  
softball, Concordia  
(Irvine)

**Gracyn Houmis:**  
softball, Towson

**Katie Lukes:**  
girls volleyball,  
University of San Diego

**Gavin Spencer:**  
boys tennis,  
University of Arizona



MICHAEL FERNANDEZ — CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

JSerra's Joel Mensah (San Diego State) poses with his host family, Zach Eberling, left, Nate, Tracy and Lydia.



COURTESY OF SAN JUAN HILLS HIGH

San Juan Hills' Gabby Bellizzi (volleyball, Cal), Lauren Fairchild (softball, Concordia-Irvine), Gracyn Houmis (softball, Towson), Katie Lukes (volleyball, University of San Diego) and Gavin Spencer (tennis, University of Arizona).

## Base

FROM PAGE 1

"Camp Pendleton was the engine that drove the Marine Corps' presence in the Pacific theater," Rothwell said. Marines who trained on the world's largest amphibious base fought pivotal battles across the Pacific, culminating with Iwo Jima, Okinawa and victory over Japan.

Rothwell addressed a historical society meeting at the San Juan Capistrano Community Center as part of the Marines' celebration of 75 years at Camp Pendleton. Since Memorial Day weekend, San Juan Capistrano's historical society has hosted an exhibit celebrat-

ing the base's history. The exhibit's final day is Friday, Nov. 17. Call 949-493-8444 to arrange to see it.

What some attendees at Sunday's talk may not have realized is the histories of Camp Pendleton and San Juan Capistrano are intertwined.

"If we scrape away the last 75 years, our two communities are very similar," Rothwell said. "We both have our roots with the Spanish mission system, and we both owe a great deal of our history to a very large and wonderful cattle ranch."

Some history, related by Rothwell:

San Juan Capistrano and Camp Pendleton share a heritage of thousands of years of indigenous culture.

Villages inhabited what are now San Juan Capistrano and San Clemente in Orange County, as well as Las Pulgas at I-5 and Vandegrift Boulevard at Basilone Road on Camp Pendleton.

European settlement of San Juan Capistrano began in 1775 with Mission San Juan Capistrano. European settlement of what is now Camp Pendleton began in 1798 with Mission San Luis Rey.

In 1841, California's governor deeded what was known as Rancho Santa Margarita to its administrators, brothers Pio and Andres Pico. It grew into Rancho Santa Margarita y Las Flores.

In 1846, as war broke out between the United States

and Mexico, Pio Pico, the last Mexican governor of California, fled to Mexico, having been vocal against Americans who were settling in California unwilling to become Mexican citizens and convert to Catholicism, as required by Mexico.

The United States took control of California, and the Pico brothers became U.S. citizens and owned the ranch together until 1863, when Andres sold to his brother. Pio Pico later sold the ranch to his brother-in-law, John Forster.

Forster, an Englishman who became known as Don Juan Forster, had become a Mexican citizen and converted to Catholicism, marrying into gentry — the Pico brothers' sister Ysidora.

Forster acquired lands in Orange County including Mission San Juan Capistrano, where his family lived for a time.

When Forster died in 1882, the family sold the ranch to Richard O'Neill, an Irishman. O'Neill had a silent partner, financier James Flood. When they died, their sons owned the ranch together. Then both sons died, within a day of each other, in 1926.

The Floods wanted to sell the ranch and split the money. The O'Neill family wanted to keep it as a cattle ranch. The ranch was partitioned. When the government purchased the San Diego County lands to create Camp Pendleton, the O'Neill family retained a vast Orange County cattle

ranch.

The Marines strategically located Camp Pendleton's major installations inland — out of reach of potential shelling by Japanese submarines — and spread out buildings haphazardly to make them a harder target.

"Fortunately," Rothwell said, "it was never put to the test."

Marines from Camp Pendleton have continued to serve the nation from Korea to Vietnam, Kuwait, Iraq, Afghanistan and wherever called, he said.

Until about 10 years ago the ranch's main house was the base commander's quarters. Today it is a museum and events venue.

See camppendletonhistoricalsociety.org.