



FROM TEMPORARY TO PERMANENT 1st Marine Division Headquarters

1st Marine Division Headquarters building on Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, California, May 17, 2018. The building, commonly referred to as the "white house," has been the workspace for numerous commanding generals and special staff of the 1st Marine Division. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Joseph Prado

By Cpl Cameron Fina, USMC

The building has withstood the test of time. It has seen generations of Marines enter and leave its halls. It has seen Marines off to several wars from the shores of Pacific Islands, the mountains of North Korea, the jungles of Vietnam and the deserts of the Middle East. It has served as the operational and cultural epicenter of the 1st Marine Division- the most storied and consequential Division in the United States Marine Corps. It has seen its share of history both for the division and the Corps.

The building has even been reviewed as a historical site, still bearing the simple style and white paint associated with World War II era buildings, which were originally meant to be temporary. Few of its kind are still standing across the nation, yet it remains, bold in both color and design, while its peers have been replaced over the decades. If you walk through the musty halls that were once treaded by the likes of Chesty Puller and James Mattis, you can see the artwork – paintings of past commanders, old battle scenes ripped

from the pages of history and photos of Marines from modern wars.

"It's a unique building," said Colonel Christopher S. Dowling, former Chief of Staff of the 1st Marine Division. "When it was built in 1942-1943 it was supposed to only last five years, five years – that was it."

Humanity creates things that last; tools which pass through dozens of hands before becoming worn beyond use, structures that stand strong for

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Division Headquarters, Cont.



The former 5th Marine Division Headquarters building at night, circa 1968. Photo courtesy of the Camp Pendleton Archives

decades, centuries and even several millennia. There are also occasions where we make things for a simple and easy use, where they are only meant to last for short periods of time. Building 1133 of Camp Pendleton, better known as “the white house” was one such structure. Acting as both a headquarters and administration building for the growing conflict in the Pacific, it even expanded to accommodate the needs of the 3rd, 4th and 5th Marine Divisions that also participated in World War II’s Pacific Theatre.

“The sergeant major’s office is my favorite room,” said USMC Sgt. Maj. William T. Sowers, former sergeant major of the 1st Marine Division. “The amount of detail in the wood and the fireplace gives it that really old feeling and gives off the air of a museum.”

In the early years it did not have the nickname “the white house”. It stood amongst many buildings that were painted the same cheap, bare off-

white and was not unique beyond its purpose. Styled like many of the buildings to ensure the security of the command, it served many Marines throughout the Pacific for the course of World War II.

The structure grew upon the Marines that called it home and in 1946 it was officially ordained the 1st Marine Division Headquarters building. This would lead to it being modified decades later, not once, but twice to ensure the building could continue to function and support the many Marines that passed through its halls. Though the renovations have ensured the building has stayed with both the times and technology of the era from phone wiring to internet within its walls, its overall structure and design are still the same as it was when first built.

“It was not as iconic to us during our time,” said U.S. Marine Corps Retired General Matthew P. Caulfield. “We never knew it as ‘the white house’. We

never thought about the fact it was the division command post during World War II. We simply knew it as the place we work, though we sometimes referred to it as ‘the head shed’.”

Due to the era in which ‘the white house’ was made, there were many developmental needs required of it during that time. One of the largest was the need to withstand a possible attack. A Japanese invasion of the U.S. was a realistic threat in the 40s. To ensure the safety of the command staff, the building was meant to be indistinguishable from the rest. To those born in the last 40 years, the very concept of a military attack on the U.S. is simply something that would not and could not happen. But in 1940, when Camp Pendleton was officially opened, thousands of Marines marched up from San Diego for combat exercises against a fake enemy. It caused a panic within the civilian population. People initially thought a Japanese invasion had occurred. The base’s presence even led to a drop in the housing market, a fact that is inconceivable to most Southern California homeowners today.

The threat of attack from the skies influenced much of what would become Camp Pendleton as we know it today. The camps on base are spread wide across the camp’s more than 195 square miles, originally designed to protect the base from being crippled in one decisive airstrike, according to Dowling. In the attics of “the white house” and other buildings from the era, there is still evidence of



1st Marine Division Headquarters building, circa 1970s. Official USMC Photo

Division Headquarters, Cont.



Marines and Sailors of 1st Marine Division in formation in front of the Division Headquarters building at a morning colors ceremony at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., Nov. 1, 2018. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Robert G. Gavaldon

the original plywood roofing used. Pressed wood was used at the time for two reasons: actual wood planks were in immediate need to build and replace decks of Navy ships, and pressed wood was less likely to create deadly wood debris if the buildings were struck by a Japanese bomber.

"The white house" was designed by Myron B. Hunt, Harold C. Chambers and E. L. Ellingwood. Their firms handled the development of several buildings across Camp Pendleton during the 1940s. Based on the U.S. Navy B-1 barracks, which was a common design to further make the building indistinguishable from other building on base at the time, making it less of a target for Japanese bombers after Pearl Harbor. Few of these barracks are still left standing after the 70 plus years since their development. The B-1, much like its sibling structure, "the white house" was only a temporary design meant to last for the duration of the war. In 1983 congress would pass the Military Construction Authorization Bill of 1983, which demolished many of the older temporary structures of World War II in favor of new designs. Some structures were renovated due to their historical significance. "The white house" interior was included in these renovations. The building underwent changes to its exterior but maintained its current shape with only a few minor changes.

Since its construction many people have entered "the white house" and many more have driven past it. It is

an iconic symbol of the 1st Marine Division with dozens of memorials surrounding it, capturing the sacrifice of every Marine who fought with the Division during its many battles through our history. From officers arriving at its doors in 1940 Ford staff cars, to 1968 Volkswagen Beetles, and even more recently, a 2018 name your make and model. When one steps out of their vehicle, they would gaze up at the white building marked by the iconic blue diamond and the battle streamers the division has earned.

In the old days it would support the entire command staff, but now much of the command is spread out across Camp Pendleton. Many Blue Diamond alum have even thought of making it into a museum, given the many historical pieces that already line its halls. It gives off that feeling of having entered a place engrained with history.

"The iconic building of the 'Blue Diamond,' it is the division," said Sowers. "Many people assume that this is the main command post for the Marine Expeditionary Force or even the Marine Corps Installations West."

Many of the older veterans were not used to dealing with the commands of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, said Sowers. When they thought of "the white house" they'd think of the

commanding general who presided over all they knew of the Marines on the West Coast at that time.

Generals, majors, sergeants and lance corporals have walked its halls over the last 70 years. Some still live amongst us while others have given the ultimate sacrifice. Their memories and actions live through both the 1st Marine Division and "the white house" itself, which has been an unchanging monument to the Marines of the 1st Marine Division. No matter the age in which one served the Division, all have known that building in one way or another. It is a testament to both the Division and the Marines that have served. Our ideals have become engrained into its very structure and it has become a permanent member in both the hearts and minds of the Marines of the 1st Marine Division.



U.S. Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Robert F. Castellvi, commanding general, 1st Marine Division (MARDIV), presents an award to a 1st MARDIV Marine during a morning colors ceremony at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton Nov. 1, 2018. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Robert G. Gavaldon

President's Message

Richard B. Rothwell



Through the hard work and careful planning of Board members Mike Lewis and Mike O'Neil, CPHS sponsored two very successful events during April.

On April 12 we partnered with the non-profit corporation Pro Kids / The First Tee to hold our second Military Children's Golf Clinic at the beautiful Pro Kids / The First Tee facility in Oceanside adjacent to the Oceanside Municipal Golf Course. Youngsters from six to thirteen received top-notch introduction to the basics of golf while rotating through driving, pitching, and putting stations. At a fourth station, Rancho Santa Margarita y Las Flores Docent Richard Leste gave the children an exceptionally well received lesson about the history of Camp Pendleton.

Two weeks later we held our third annual "Golf with a Hero" golf tournament at the Camp Pendleton Marine Memorial Golf Course. Each foursome included an active duty Marine who played for free. It was a great success for all who

participated. A tip of the hat to Kathy and Scott McEldowney who for the third year in a row drove from Garden Grove to help run the check-in desk. Many thanks to our corporate sponsors: Frontwave Credit Union, Mossy Nissan of Oceanside, Señor Grubby's Restaurant, and Lincoln Military Housing. And, a special thank you to two very generous individual sponsors, Tony Anthony and Vernon Magee. Tony is a member of our Council of Advisors. Vernon is not only a life member of CPHS but has the impressive distinction of having served in all five of the United States uniformed armed forces, retiring from the Coast Guard as a chief warrant officer. Last, but certainly not least, thanks to Deb Hellman who seemed to be everywhere memorializing the tournament with her camera.

On May 17 Cal Frantz, CPHS acting secretary, arranged and served as master of ceremonies at an event at which retired Marine Captain Ron Burton donated his collection of sketches that he drew during his long career as an officer and enlisted Marine. His art depicts scenes of life in the Corps as he saw it over many years. CPHS will lend the collection to Camp Pendleton

for display.

Incidentally, after many years of dedicated and extremely valuable service to CPHS, Cal Frantz will leave the Board at the end of 2019. Our vice president, Jerry Polyascko, is conducting a search for a volunteer to replace Cal as our Board Secretary. If you are interested in joining our leadership team, please contact Jerry at polyascko@aol.com.

Mark your calendar for Nov. 10 and plan to join CPHS as we celebrate the Marine Corps' 244th birthday at the beautiful Omni La Costa Hotel and Spa in Carlsbad, Calif. As many of you may know, Congress provided a great service to Marines by designating the next day, Nov. 11, a national holiday - Veteran's Day. Additional information about this event will follow but plan to join fellow Marines and friends of the Corps in a traditional Marine Corps birthday celebration.

Thank you for your continued support. I look forward to reporting to you next quarter.

Richard B. Rothwell

Operation Appreciation - May 18



Richard Leste (left), Bo Hellman (center), and Mike Lewis (right) speak to an event attendee who stopped by the CPHS booth. Photo by Marcy Browe

Board members Mike Lewis and Bo Hellman manned the CPHS information booth at the 2019 Operation Appreciation event

that took place in downtown Oceanside on Saturday, May 18.

The annual event, sponsored by the Oceanside Chamber of Commerce and supported by many local businesses, was an excellent opportunity to engage with over 4,000 people who attended the event which recognizes active-duty military personnel stationed at Camp Pendleton and nearby military bases.

Joining Mike and Bo were Diane Brooks and Richard Leste of the Rancho Santa Margarita y Las Flores Docents. The combination of the two historical organizations at the CPHS booth proved very beneficial to both as many people stopped by to learn and discuss the 250-year history of the Camp Pendleton land area.

Copies of the CPHS tri-fold information brochure along with the recent CPHS collaborative publication, "Women Marines on Camp Pendleton - Celebrating 75 Years", were provided to those who were interested in learning more about the history of Camp Pendleton and the role that CPHS (and the Docents) plays in preserving and promoting that history.

Historic Drawings Join CPHS Artifact Collection

By Cal Frantz

Capt. Ron Burton, USMC (Ret) donated the last of his original drawings of Marine Corps life to CPHS at a reception on May 17. The reception was hosted by and took place at Las Villas de Carlsbad senior living community where Ron is a resident. Ron's children and grandchildren were on hand to help celebrate his Marine career and his gift to CPHS, along with nearly one hundred residents, guests and friends. The host provided live music and good wine for the Friday afternoon occasion and local businesses provided hors d'oeuvres and snacks for the crowd's enjoyment.

CPHS president Dick Rothwell and wife Ann; directors Jim Williams and wife Cindy and Bo Hellman and wife Deb, along with directors Mike O'Neil and Cal Frantz represented CPHS at the reception. Deb Hellman produced a professional eight-page pamphlet for the event, containing a brief biography of Capt. Burton and reproductions of some of the donated drawings. The event was a hit with everyone there and was especially appreciated by Ron and his family. In prepared remarks, Cal Frantz formally thanked Capt. Burton for his gift and pointed out the historical significance of his drawings because they capture the mood, feeling and certain details of enlisted Marine life in the early 1950s.

Faye Jonason, Camp Pendleton History and Museum Division Director, brought several artifacts from the CPHS inventory for display at the reception. Ron's drawings will join the CPHS collection and have been loaned to Faye for use in support of various historic programs and events aboard the Base. Faye presented a brief description of Camp Pendleton museums and notable buildings and invited all to visit these historic sites.



Capt. Ron Burton, second right, with his daughter, Julie Burton and granddaughter Sammie Burton. Behind them is his son, Eric Burton and his wife, Kelly. Far right is Cal Frantz, CPHS board member who helped organize the event where Burton presented his sketches to CPHS. Photo by Deb Hellman

Darcy Clevenger, Sales Director at Las Villas de Carlsbad, coordinated the logistics for the event and was the master of ceremonies on behalf of the host. At the conclusion of remarks by Cal Frantz and Faye Jonason, Darcy offered an opportunity for Capt. Burton to make some remarks of his own. Ron basically said he didn't think he deserved all the fuss but wanted to thank everyone for coming and helping him and his family celebrate his Marine career and his decision to donate his drawings to the Camp Pendleton Historical Society.

There are ironies in this story. The drawings Ron donated to CPHS were drawings he had sent home to his mother during the early days of his Marine career. Capt. Burton actually produced many drawings of Marine life throughout his career, capturing things that caught his attention along the way. When a friend or associate saw his work and complimented his talent, he happily gave his drawings away. Thus, we have only a fraction of his output as an artist. Further, the drawings he gave to CPHS were literally rescued from the trash by his brother and subsequently sent to him. In a final irony, Ron's family who were at the reception didn't even know the drawings existed until they came to Carlsbad for the May 17th event.



Left: Christmas Eve, 1953. Above: MCRD Parris Island, S.C., 1952

History is indeed a fragile thing.

Children's Golf Clinic - April 12

On April 12, CPHS, working with Pro Kids / The First Tee of Oceanside, conducted the 3d Military Children's Golf Clinic at the Pro Kids / The First Tee campus in Oceanside. The clinic included four separate stations, which will include instructional periods on putting, chipping and driving, and a separate seminar on the history of Camp Pendleton. Each child was paired with golf professionals in order to enhance



CPHS President Dick Rothwell talks to the children participating in the golf clinic. Photos by Mike Lewis

that child's golf skills and provide a better appreciation of golf as a life sport. The history of Camp Pendleton was presented by Richard Leste, CPHS Speakers Bureau.

This event was conducted during the Spring break of the Oceanside Unified School District to ensure no interference with school activities.

Pro Kids / The First Tee of Oceanside is a non-profit organization that has evolved from an organization originally established by Ernie Wright after his successful NFL career with the then San Diego Chargers. The mission of Pro Kids / The First Tee is to challenge youth to excel in life by promoting character development, life skills, and values through education and



Docent Richard Leste presents a history lesson about Camp Pendleton to the children attending the golf clinic.

the game of golf. The Oceanside chapter is also partnered with Callaway Golf and TaylorMade Golf, who have helped them develop a world class golf training facility and six-hole, par-3 course adjacent to the Oceanside Golf Course.

Further registration details on this event will be forthcoming in early fall via the CPHS website and Facebook page, and via several other venues.

3d "Golf with a Hero" Golf Tournament - April 26

On April 26, CPHS, partnered with the Marine Memorial Golf Course, planned and executed the 3d "Golf with a Hero" Golf Tournament. With this tournament, each foursome was composed of one (1) active duty Marine and three (3) other golfers. This provided many the opportunity to converse with Marines who have recent experience in every clime and place carrying out the missions of the Marine Corps. This tournament theme differentiates this tournament in San Diego County, where 1,000 charity golf tournaments are conducted annually.

Fifty-six golfers hit the links, with the field composed of 42 civilians and military retirees, and 14 Marines. Regarding recent deployed experience of the military members, several active duty golfers had recently returned from supporting Operation

Inherent Resolve in Syria and Iraq.

CPHS members, Scott and Kathy McEldowney, volunteered to provide significant support to the execution of this golf tournament by manning the registration desk and assisting with the silent auction.

The tournament benefitted from the support of this distinct group of sponsors: Frontwave Credit Union, Emerald Isle Golf Course, Omni Hotels and Resorts La Costa, Mossy Nissan, and Señor Grubby's Restaurant.

CPHS is planning on the 4th "Golf With A Hero" Golf Tournament for April 2020.



Group photo of the golfers, sponsors, and CPHS Board members at the event. Photo by Deb Hellman

Upcoming CPHS Events

The Camp Pendleton Historical Society Events Committee continues to plan a busy schedule of events for the rest of the year. The remaining planned 2019 events include:

Señor Grubby's/ CPHS Partnership Night - Aug. 21

Support CPHS by dining at Señor Grubby's (311 N. Tremont St., Oceanside) on Aug. 21 from 6-8 pm. A portion of the proceeds from sales during those hours is being donated to CPHS. Meet CPHS Board members and get acquainted with the work CPHS does in preserving and promoting Camp Pendleton history all while having an awesome meal at Señor Grubby's!

"History of..." Dinner Program - Sept. TBD

CPHS is working with local restaurants to host historical presentations and dinner. Our first such event will be held at the Bluewater Grill (417 Carlsbad Village Dr, Carlsbad); the topic will be "Surfing at Camp Pendleton". We're currently working out the details for a date in September 2019; information with regards to date, speaker, and cost are forthcoming."

The "Old Corps" Birthday Celebration - Nov. 10

This event will occur at the Omni La Costa Hotel on Nov. 10 from 5 pm to 10 pm. This celebration will be similar to a typical Marine Corps Birthday Ball, which many are familiar with. Tickets are \$150 per person and can be purchased online at Eventbrite - <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/old-corps-marine-corps-birthday-celebration-tickets-64943291132>



Military Children's Golf Clinic - November TBD

The 4th Military Children's Golf Clinic will be conducted in November 2019 at the Pro Kids / The First Tee campus in Oceanside (821 Douglas Drive, Oceanside). This clinic will parallel the agenda and purposes from the Spring clinic.

Holiday Event - December 2019

A holiday event with the theme of Tun Tavern, the birthplace of the U. S. Marine Corps, will occur in December. This event is being designed to share holiday spirit and our appreciation for the CPHS membership. The location for this event has yet to be determined.

Further detailed information on the above events will be communicated via the CPHS Facebook page (www.facebook.com/camppendletonhistoricalsociety/) and separate email and electronic invitation communication.



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MEMBERSHIP NEWS

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

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Chris and Sherry Crawl
David Hanrahan
Jeffrey Harris
Ralph Haynes
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Many thanks to our loyal members for their recent membership renewal:

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A special thanks to our donors:

Jack and Valerie Cumming
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**VOLUNTEERS
WANTED**

CPHS is looking for volunteers from our membership to be part of our various committees from Events to Speaker's Bureau and others.

If you are interested in sharing your time and talents, please send an email to cphs.secretary@gmail.com. Your assistance benefits CPHS in advancing its support of Camp Pendleton historical programs.



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