



CPHS Celebrating

by Richard B. Rothwell

Since 2005 the Camp Pendleton Historical Society (CPHS) has been dedicated to helping the Marine Corps preserve and tell the history of Camp Pendleton. Fifteen years later seems a good time to reflect on how it all began. In that year I attended a meeting of the Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD) San Diego Museum Historical Society and Foundation Board of Directors, as a precursor to a possible invitation to join that group. Their primary focus at the time was to support the excellent Depot command museum, which was important for teaching recruits about the history and traditions of the Marine Corps. I was impressed. Board chairman, retired Marine Maj. Gen. Don Fulham, ran a tight, business-like meeting. The Depot command museum was testimony to the Society's effectiveness.

Driving home, the thought struck me that MCRD had a history that dated from the early 1920s. Before that it had been little more than a marshy area around Lindbergh field known as Dutch Flats. The Depot was fortunate to have a historical society to help preserve that history along with the history of the Marine Corps, so important to recruit training. In contrast, Camp Pendleton with a diverse history spanning more than 12,000 years had no similar group. There was a highly dedicated volunteer organization known as the Rancho Santa Margarita y Las Flores Docents, but its interests were on giving tours of historic Camp Pendleton properties.

Camp Pendleton is a historical treasure. When people hear or read those words, many automatically think of U.S. Marines. That's understandable. For the last 78 years Marines and Sailors trained at Camp Pendleton have answered our Country's call during the bloody Pacific island campaigns of World War II, the freezing Korean mountains, the steaming jungles of Vietnam, Kuwait's scorching

15 Years

deserts, the poppy fields of Afghanistan, the deadly city streets of Iraq, and numerous places in between. From a more distant perspective, however, the Marine Corps' presence is just the latest chapter in the long, diverse history of this land.

Marines purchased Camp Pendleton in 1942 shortly after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Before that it was part of Rancho Santa Margarita y Las Flores, the largest rancho in California. Before that it was a relatively small part of the huge Mission San Luis Rey. And, for some 12,000 years before that it was home to our Native Americans, the Indians. One of the most endearing and enduring features of the land is that unlike so much of Southern California, the people who lived all of those stories would recognize large parts of Camp Pendleton today if they could walk its hills and canyons once more.

Clearly there was a place for a historically oriented non-profit organization at Camp Pendleton to help preserve that history. I contacted retired Marine Col. James L. Williams. Jim had relieved me as commander of 3d Battalion, 5th Marines a number of years earlier and we had remained good friends ever since. Together we decided to form the Camp Pendleton Historical Society. Initially, we needed to surmount four hurdles: develop a charter and bylaws, obtain State of California designation as a 501 (c)(3) non-

Continued page 2, Fifteen Years

Fifteen Years, Cont.

profit organization, be recognized by the Marine Corps as a civilian organization authorized to operate aboard the base, and find seed money to get operations underway. After that was the daunting task of recruiting volunteers to serve on our working Board of Directors.

Drawing heavily on the bylaws from the MCRD Museum Historical Society and Foundation, I wrote our first bylaws and defined our area of interest as including not just the history of Camp Pendleton, but the long, diverse history of the land known today as Camp Pendleton, including the Indian, mission, rancho, and U. S. Marine eras. That seemed appropriate not just in a historical sense, but it would also potentially attract a broader base of supporters.

At Jim's suggestion we recruited retired Marine Col. Joe Kirkpatrick, an enrolled tax agent with an eye for detail and a facility with numbers. Joe shepherded us through the bureaucratic maze to establish our non-profit corporation status and set up a solid financial accounting system. Neither Jim nor I knew it at the time, but Joe had another valuable talent. He was a superb country and western singer. He and several of his fellow musicians formed the Older That Dirt Band that played to rave reviews at our first major fundraiser.

Obtaining authorization to operate aboard Camp Pendleton proved easier

than expected, the Commanding General of Marine Corps Installations West/Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Maj. Gen. Michael R. Lehnert, and CPHS shared common interests. He was a college history major and a Marine Corps facilities expert. He had both a personal and professional interest in the long-term future of the Ranch House. Within the limits imposed by Marine Corps regulations that prohibit commanders from favoring one civilian organization over another, Maj. Gen. Lehnert proved to be a good friend. Following retirement, he joined the CPHS Council of Advisors.

Thanks to Anthony R. Moiso, CEO of the Rancho Mission Viejo Corporation, we obtained a generous donation for seed money. Tony's mother was born as Alice O'Neill. She was a member of one of the families that owned Rancho Santa Margarita y Las Flores before the Marines purchased it in 1942. She held fond childhood memories of her visits to the Ranch House and passed them to her son.

When the Marine Corps purchased that part of the ranch in San Diego County, the O'Neills retained ownership of some 90,000 acres in Orange County. Over the years the O'Neills thoughtfully developed parts of their property into the communities of Mission Viejo, Rancho Santa Margarita, and Rancho Mission Viejo. Inspired by family stories and his own love of history, Tony, has been a

generous, annual supporter of CPHS since our beginning and is a member of our Council of Advisors.

As with many small non-profits, CPHS found its early volunteers through personal contacts: Steve Fisher, my former executive officer; Howard Blair, a talented, hard-working, neighbor and former Marine officer; Cal Frantz, a former member of the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation Board of Directors to name but a few.

An initial task was to get CPHS known. We wrote articles about Camp Pendleton history for newspapers and magazines. We gave talks to church and civic groups. We held "friend raisers" and fundraisers. We started a newsletter, *The Groundbreaker*, for members. We solicited grants from the County of San Diego. Every year we grew a little larger and financially sounder.

By 2008 we were able to make our first significant donation in support of Camp Pendleton history - \$25,000 to help with the restoration of the Las Flores Adobe. I presented the check during a reception at the Ranch House to Col. Bo Hellman, the Camp Pendleton Assistant Chief of Staff, Facilities, who represented the commanding general. Now retired, Bo has become a vital member of our Board of Directors, managing memberships along with several other duties. He turned out to be a package deal because his talented



CPHS Board Members and Faye Jonason (left) "breaking ground" at the site of the Staff Sgt. Reckless monument, Aug. 29, 2016. Photo courtesy of Cpl. Brian Bakkala, U.S. Marines

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Years



Dedication of the Staff Sgt. Reckless monument, Oct. 26, 2016. Photo by Deb Hellman

photographer and graphics designer wife, Deb, came with him. Bo now edits the Groundbreaker newsletter while Deb arranges the layout.

Since 2008, CPHS has donated over \$183,000 in support of 21 different Camp Pendleton historical projects. The largest was a major contribution to commission a monument to the Korean conflict warhorse, Staff Sgt. Reckless. It not only reflects a proud part of Marine Corps history but also

adds beauty to the entrance of the Pacific Views Event Center.

CPHS has funded a wide variety of other projects such as refurbishing Marine combat art and Major General Pendleton's personal flag, purchasing military vehicle hulks for restoration by Mechanized Museum volunteers, and acquiring and refurbishing an 1800s wagon for display at the Ranch House. More projects are on our drawing boards.

CPHS is proud of what we have accomplished during our first 15 years and excited about our future. None of what we have done or plan to do has been or will be possible without the generous support of our members and supporters. Thank you for helping us help the Marine Corps preserve and tell the history of the land known today as Camp Pendleton.



CPHS President, Dick Rothwell, giving tour attendees a presentation about the Las Flores Adobe, Jan. 30, 2016. Photos by Deb Hellman

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Years



Dick Rothwell passing a piece of the Marine Corps birthday cake to Cal Frantz at the CPHS "Old Corps" Marine Corps Birthday celebration, Nov. 10, 2019.

President's Message

Richard B. Rothwell



With great sadness at the beginning of the Holiday Season I must report the sudden death of Board of Directors member Lt. Col. Michael E. O'Neil, USMC (Ret)

on Nov. 17. I met Mike when he was an enthusiastic, 18-year-old freshman NROTC midshipman a Miami University. Since joining the CPHS Board, his dynamic organizational and marketing skills played key roles in our success. We will miss him as a valued member of our team, as a dedicated Marine who served his country with distinction, and as a friend. Our deepest sympathies go out to his wife, Brenda.

Thanks to the hard work of the Events Committee; Mike Lewis, Mike O'Neil, and Charlie Kershaw; our 4th Annual "Golf with a Hero" charity golf tournament at the Omni La Costa Resort & Spa on Oct. 29 was a great success. Ninety-four golfers participated, more than double the highest previous number. Thanks to

all who supported that event. The Events Committee is planning to hold our 5th tournament at the Omni La Costa Resort & Spa in April 2021.

On successive weeks in October, I gave three 45-minute presentations on the history of the land known today as Camp Pendleton to residents of The Glen at Scripps Ranch. The first told the stories of the Indians, Spanish soldiers and missionaries, and the early Californios. The second presentation focused on the 100 years beginning in 1841, when the land was known as Rancho Santa Margarita y Las Flores; U. S. Marines in Southern California; and the transition from cattle ranch to Marine Corps amphibious training base. The final presentation included three separate stories: the Magee family and the Las Flores Adobe, Staff Sgt. Reckless, and the role of San Onofre Beach in the development of California beach culture.

CPHS has made two donation offers to Camp Pendleton leadership that we believe will be useful enhancements to telling and preserving the history of the Base. The first will be a larger-than-life monument

to Maj. Gen. Joseph H. Pendleton, for whom the base is named. Cost of production and installation will be about \$200,000. Because of the cost and nature of the gift offer, acknowledgement must be provided by the commanding general, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, and the Under Secretary of the Navy. We will begin production and fundraising upon favorable endorsement by the Base commanding general. The second gift will be a new desktop computer with supporting hardware and software that will help the Base History and Museum Division office digitally archive historical documents such as issues of the Base newspaper, *The Pendleton Scout*, from 1950 through 1990.

I hope that you and your families have a wonderful Holiday Season. In these trying times that includes more than traditional holiday greetings. It expresses the additional hope that we all stay well. Thank you for your continued support. I look forward to reporting to you next year.

Richard B. Rothwell



GROUNDBREAKER*

First Quarter 2007

Volume 1 Number 1

President's Message



Richard Rothwell

I am pleased to introduce our first issue of the Camp Pendleton Historical Society's quarterly newsletter, aptly named

The Groundbreaker. For that's what we intend to do. Break new ground in establishing an organization that serves the Marines and the community at large.

CPHS is dedicated to supporting Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton historical programs including significant sites and museums. Fund raising is an important part of that task. We are also committed to raising public awareness of the historical, cultural and architectural significance of the Base today.

The Marine Corps has long been a proponent of historical preservation. Unfortunately, federal funding is far below what is needed to preserve and exhibit almost 240 years of history not to mention pre-history. That is where CPHS comes in.

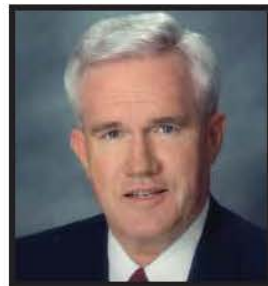
Every non-profit organization needs time, talent and treasure to succeed. We are fortunate that our founding members have an abundance of time and talent to seek the treasure it takes to sustain such an organization. There is much to do and a long way to go, but it promises to be an exciting and fulfilling journey. Welcome aboard.

Richard B. Rothwell

Introducing the CPHS Founders

All three founding officers are retired Marine colonels who have served at Camp Pendleton. Their collective resumes would fill a book let alone a newsletter. Here we offer a brief introduction to their life stories.

Dick Rothwell, President, was born in Olongapo, Philippine Islands, to a Marine family. A graduate of Annapolis, Dick also holds a masters degree and is a distinguished graduate of the Naval War College. Like his father before him, Dick commanded the 5th Marine Regiment at Camp Pendleton. After completing twenty-nine years service with the USMC, Dick started another career with San Diego Gas & Electric and Semptra Energy managing their legal administration department. He is currently on the board of Pacific Marine Credit Union. Dick and wife, Ann, herself the daughter of a Navy captain, reside in Escondido. The couple has two children and is active in preserving historic Escondido.



Jim Williams

Vice President, Jim Williams, a native son of Minnesota, made his first career in the Marine Corps. He distinguished himself during the Viet Nam War, and was awarded two Silver Stars, a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart. He currently consults for some of the descendents of the families who lived on the Rancho Santa Margarita y Las Flores. As an infantry officer and a member of the Portola Riders Club, Jim has explored much of the Camp Pendleton terrain on foot and horseback. He has been active in the Boys & Girls Clubs of San Juan Capistrano. Jim and wife, Cindy, live in Oceanside and have four adult children.



Joe Kirkpatrick

Financial Officer, Joe Kirkpatrick, is an enrolled agent practicing with a CPA firm in Vista, California. He joined the Marine Corps Reserve while still in high school, and in 1956, entered the U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland. Following graduation, his principal assignments were in the combat engineering and financial management fields. During the last of his three tours at Camp Pendleton, he was base comptroller. Joe holds an MBA, Finance, from the University of Hawaii, and two awards of the Legion of Merit. Gospel music has always been a part of his life and he is active in the music ministry of his church. Joe and his wife, Jannell, are the parents of two adult sons.

In Memoriam - Lt. Col. Mike O'Neil, USMC (Ret)



Michael Edward O'Neil passed away unexpectedly on Nov. 17, 2020. He moved on to his heavenly home to be reunited with his parents Edward and Victoria O'Neil. His beloved wife, Brenda (McNeil), lost her "miracle man." Family, friends and colleagues lost a loving brother, uncle, friend, champion, and mentor. The Nation lost a devoted patriot. Although Michael's passing was sudden, his impact on the lives of many began during his youth and grew as he became the fine man that God created.

As indicated by Michael's football days at Bay Village High School, his 'Rockets' teammates lovingly referred to him as "full go." And as his brother describes: "This 'keep-giving' man gave his all to everyone." As an Eagle Scout, Michael

continued developing leadership skills. Michael attended Miami University of Ohio (Oxford, Ohio) and through the NROTC program, commissioned into the United States Marine Corps. A combat veteran of Operation Desert Storm/Desert Shield and recipient of the Bronze Star, his list of accomplishments speaks volumes to his character - including a master's degree from Naval Postgraduate School (Monterey, Calif.).

Following 23 years of proud and honorable military service, Michael retired to work for The Boeing Company (Huntington Beach, Calif.) and later, General Dynamics Land Systems (Rochester, Mich.). He enjoyed many years of educational experiences, professional growth and development, where he made many lifelong friends and colleagues. In June 2016, Michael kept a promise to Brenda, moving her and her mom "Miss Billie" to Carlsbad, Calif., where they retired.

Sadly, Michael's life was cut short, but leaves an important legacy behind. As a "giver" throughout his life, he was able to continue that generosity as an organ donor (Lifesharing), giving the gift of life to two people needing kidney transplants. His legacy continues, influenced by his positions on the Board of Directors at

both NROTC Miami University of Ohio and Camp Pendleton Historical Society. Michael always found a meaningful way to give back to those institutions where lifelong friendships were made and his character and moral fiber were shaped.

Michael is survived by his beloved wife, Brenda; and siblings: Ed O'Neil (Janet), and "Missy" Krock (Don), niece and nephews: Shannon, Mike, Gregg and Wes. Michael and Brenda believe that heaven is a family reunion and will continue to repeat their nightly ritual: "I love you heart, mind, and 'Bear.'" Rest in peace my wonderful "miracle man" and "forever hero." "Well done, thou good and faithful servant...enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." -Matthew 25:21

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation, in honor of Michael, to one of the organizations he supported: NROTC Miami University of Ohio Midshipmen Leadership Development Fund or Camp Pendleton Historical Society.

A celebration of his life with full military honors will be held at the 11 Area Parade Field, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton at 10 a.m. on Jan. 6, 2021. Due to COVID restrictions, please contact Mike Kelley (makelley060@gmail.com) if you are interested in attending.

		<p><i>Camp Pendleton Historical Society</i></p> <h3>2021 Essay Contest</h3>			
	<p>Who is eligible? College Students Enrolled in a College/University that is located in San Diego County.</p> <p>What is required to compete? Seeking papers on the history of Camp Pendleton both pre and during Marine Corps ownership. The scope includes the pre-history (archeology) of the land, its Native American occupants, the Spanish exploration and mission era, the rancho era, and the history of the Camp as a significant cultural and economic institution in San Diego County since 1942. Not included in the scope is military history of Marine Corps units stationed at the camp.</p> <p>When are the deadlines for submissions? Initial applications are due by March 1, 2021, and Papers are due by Aug. 31, 2021.</p> <p>What can you win? \$1,000 - 1st Place, \$500 - 2nd Place</p> <p>For more information, please visit:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">camppendletonhistoricalsociety.org/education</p>				
					

CPHS “Golf with a Hero” Golf Tournament (Oct 2020)

The CPHS 4th Annual “Golf with Hero” golf tournament was held at the Omni La Costa Resort & Spa (Carlsbad, Calif.) on Oct. 29, 2020. Although the COVID-19 pandemic was still making it difficult for events to take place in Southern California, the Camp Pendleton Historical Society was able to make this tournament happen with the assistance of Gavin Parker at the Omni La Costa.

The tournament was played on the beautiful Championship Course at Omni La Costa; 94 golfers played in the tournament which included 26 active duty Marines and 4 Sailors and one soldier (US Army). One of the participants was a former Professional Golfers’ Association of America (PGA) tour professional, Dennis Paulson, who played on the PGA tour for 12 years until injuries sidelined him from playing.

Two of the 24 teams tied for first place; Team 1 consisted of Steven Dias, Juan Leon, Jarrett Leon and Maj. David Miller, USMC and Team 2 consisted of Michael Joe, Greg Corlin, Tom Malone and Chief Warrant Officer Matthew Boutwell, USMC. Both teams had a score of 56. One of our active duty Marines, Master Gunnery Sgt. Linkston Dawkins had closest to the pin on a par 3. What a great shot he made, inside 6 feet from the pin! Congratulations to both first place teams and great playing by all golfers! Fun was had by all who participated in the event.

A silent auction was also conducted; some items of note in the auction consisted of wooden flags and front door solar light stands, made and donated by Lt. Col. Mike Linehan, USMC (Ret).

As part of the golf tournament, CPHS partnered with The Hero Program, which helped raise funds for CPHS as well as supported various veterans’ programs. The Hero Program raises money for veterans and first

responders programs. Their four charity partners, 4 The Fallen, Vets4Life, Athletes for Vets, and American Heroes Foundation provide advanced prosthetics, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) counseling and suicide prevention, service dogs, help for homelessness, family financial aid, and scholarships. Golfers who donated were able to demo Krank Golf’s Hero Driver as part of this Program.

Our title sponsor was Frontwave Credit Union, which has been our title sponsor for all four of our annual golf tournaments. We sincerely appreciate and thank Frontwave Credit Union for its continued support of this annual fundraising event.

Active duty Service members who played in the tournament were afforded that opportunity free of charge due to numerous donors including CPHS Advisors Maj. Gen. Vincent Coglianese, USMC (Ret), Wayne Donaldson, Anthony Joseph, and Anthony Moiso; CPHS Board Members Charlie Kershaw, Mike Lewis, Mike O’Neil, Jerry Polyascko, and Jim Williams; and CPHS Members Cal Frantz, Scott and Kathy McEldowney, and Bartley Moore.

Thanks to Gavin Parker and his staff at the Omni La Costa Resort & Spa for making this tournament possible and a very special event indeed! We would also like to thank the following businesses for their support of the tournament: Señor Grubby’s, Carlsbad Golf Center, Gregorio’s Restaurant, Emerald Isle Golf Course, BJ’s Restaurant & Brewhouse, Handel’s Homemade Ice Cream, Cold Beers and Cheeseburgers, and Yard House.

The next CPHS golf tournament will be held at the same venue, Omni La Costa Resort & Spa, on April 30, 2021. We hope to see you there and supporting our active duty Marines and Sailors.



Golfers practice on the putting green prior to the start of the “Golf with a Hero” golf tournament at the Omni La Costa Resort & Spa. Photo by Deb Hellman

Upcoming Events

Save
the
Date!

CPHS Events - 2021

The Camp Pendleton Historical Society has planned a number of events throughout the coming year. These events are part of the continuing effort of CPHS to preserve and promote the rich and colorful history of the land that is now Camp Pendleton, spanning the history of the region, to include:

- The Native American phase (ending in 1769)
- The Spanish mission phase (1769 - 1850)
- The Ranch phase (1850 - 1942)
- and finally, the United States Marine Corps ownership since 1942

The following are the currently planned events:

5th Annual "Golf with a Hero" Golf Tournament

April 30, 2021

Location: Omni La Costa Resort & Spa

2nd Annual "Old Corps" Marine Corps Birthday Celebration

TBD (Oct - Nov 2021)

Location: Omni La Costa Resort & Spa

Detailed information for the above events will be communicated via the CPHS Facebook page, CPHS web page, Eventbrite, and separate digital communication.



Closest to the Pin winner, Master Gunnery Sgt. Linkston Dawkins



Team 1: Steven Dias, Juan Leon, Jarrett Leon and Maj. David Miller, USMC



Team 2: Michael Joe, Greg Corlin, Tom Malone and Chief Warrant Officer Matthew Boutwell, USMC

Event photos can be found
on the CPHS website:

[camppendletonhistoricalsociety.org/
past-events](http://camppendletonhistoricalsociety.org/past-events)



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

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IS A NON-FEDERAL ENTITY. IT IS NOT A PART
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
OR ANY OF ITS COMPONENTS AND IT HAS
NO GOVERNMENTAL STATUS.*

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

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

Amy Forsythe

Many thanks to our loyal members for their recent membership renewal:

Rick Darnall
Col. A. B. Diggs, USMC (Ret)
Julie DiGrazia
Elizabeth Draper

Curtis and Lauren Hill
Bartley Moore
Bob and Lois Newkirk

Commander's Circle Level:

Michael Ryerson

A special thanks to our donors:

Eleanor Burton (in honor of Mike O'Neil)
Deborah Parks (in honor of Mike O'Neil)



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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**Help us get to our next goal
of 900 likes**



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