



HEY DUDE, SEMPER FI! CAMP PENDLETON'S SURFING HISTORY - PART 1 - MARINE CORPS INFLUENCE

By David Matuszak

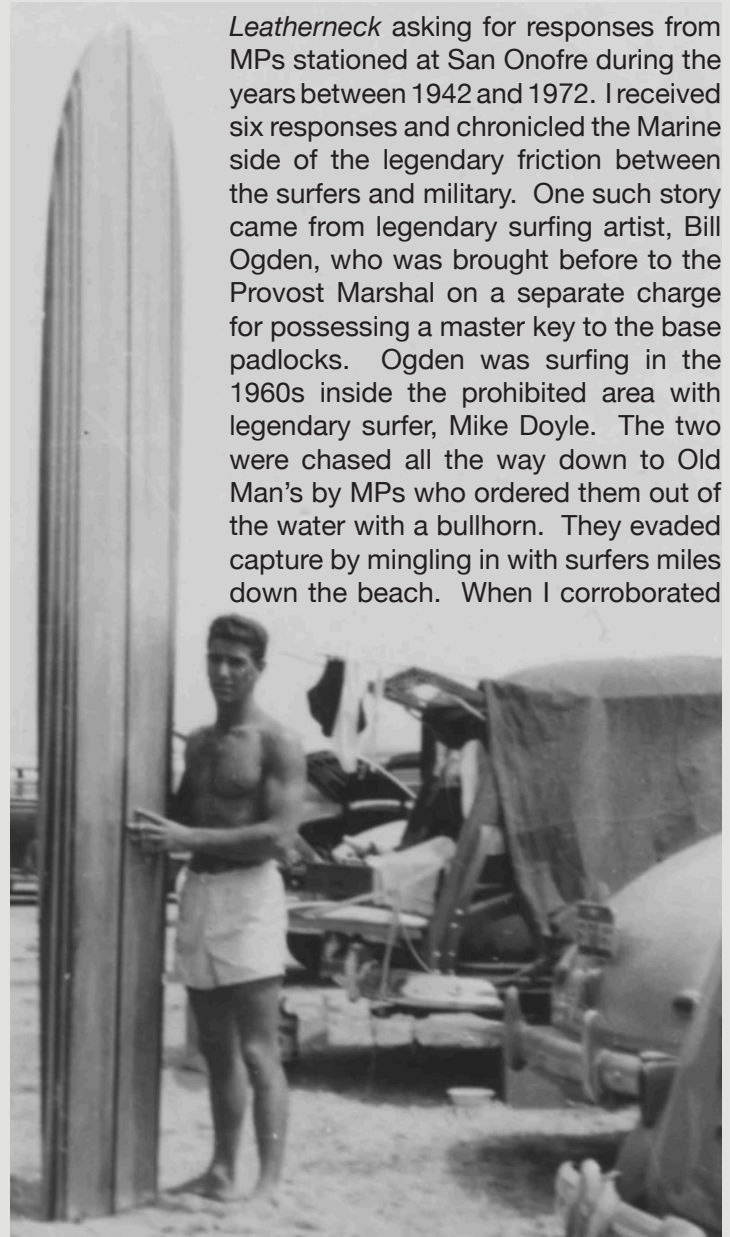
Anyone stationed at Camp Pendleton is familiar with the prominence of surfing along its shores but until now, no one ever chronicled the fascinating history of surfing there. In *San Onofre: Memories of a Legendary Surfing Beach*, the book tells the story about Camp Pendleton from its origins as Native American lands to Spanish colonists to General Pendleton's dream of a west coast amphibious landing training center, and the invasion of surfers to its shores.

After digging deep into military and civilian archives, I tied together Camp Pendleton's history and places it into historical and cultural context in relation to the one of the world's most famous surfing beaches, San Onofre, Calif. San Onofre State Park is located on Camp Pendleton and most of it is operated by California State Parks under a 50-year lease from the Department of the Navy. That lease expires in 2022 and has already been granted a temporary extension, pending a negotiated long-term lease. A portion of San Onofre, "Marine Beach" located at the "Church" surfing break, was set aside for the exclusive use of the military and their families.

San Onofre is a detailed narrative connecting the various sub-cultures that coexisted at Camp Pendleton: cowboys, farmers, Marines, and surfers. I spent years recording oral histories of members of those sub-groups and the story is often told in the participants' own words. The most colorful chapter of this history is the interaction between Marines and surfers during the early years. The "Trestles" and "Church" surfing breaks were intended to be prime landing craft training sites. Consequently, surfers were prohibited from those waters, but they refused to go quietly. Thus began a decades-long cat and mouse game of evasion, of seek and capture between the two groups.

After recording dozens of surfers' stories about being pursued, captured, and detained by MPs, I wanted to hear the Marine side of the story. So, I posted a notification in

Leatherneck asking for responses from MPs stationed at San Onofre during the years between 1942 and 1972. I received six responses and chronicled the Marine side of the legendary friction between the surfers and military. One such story came from legendary surfing artist, Bill Ogden, who was brought before to the Provost Marshal on a separate charge for possessing a master key to the base padlocks. Ogden was surfing in the 1960s inside the prohibited area with legendary surfer, Mike Doyle. The two were chased all the way down to Old Man's by MPs who ordered them out of the water with a bullhorn. They evaded capture by mingling in with surfers miles down the beach. When I corroborated



Hal Landis with board at San Onofre in 1947. The picture is among the historical photographs in *"San Onofre: Memories of a Legendary Surfing Beach"* by David Matuszak. (Courtesy Pacific Sunset Publishing)

Continued page 2, Surfing

Surfing, Cont.



Left: Charles Hitchborn at Camp Pendleton MP Headquarters in 1952 or 1953. Hitchborn was one of the Military Police that chased surfers off the base **Center:** The Pendleton Surf Club logo based on the Camp Pendleton logo derived from a rancho cattle brand. **Right:** The Basilone Road exit is the “surfing beach exit” off Interstate 5 that leads to San Onofre and the gate at the northern end of Camp Pendleton. (Photos courtesy of David Matuszak) **Bottom:** San Onofre beach and camping area in the 1960s. (Photo courtesy of Camp Pendleton Archives)

the story with Mike Doyle, Doyle replied that Ogden had left out the part about the MPs shooting at them. Doyle insisted they weren't trying to hit them, just scare them into paddling ashore but said he could see the bullets plinking in the water around them.

The surfing connection to the Marines is not just limited to the MP's control of the beach. Every aspect of Marine culture connected to San Onofre and surfing is explored. For example, I wanted every surfer to know the origins of Basilone Road, the surfing beach exit off Interstate 5 and the north base entrance gate. The contribution of John Basilone to this country should not be taken for granted by anyone. He was a war hero who deserves our thanks

and admiration.

In the 1930s, Marine Gunnery Sgt. John Basilone, a.k.a., “Manila John”, earned his nickname during his Army service in the Philippines. Following his honorable discharge in 1937, he enlisted into the Marine Corps in 1940. For his heroism on Guadalcanal in October of 1942, he was awarded the Medal of Honor. Upon his return to the states in 1943, his story appeared in Life Magazine. The government campaigned him around the country as a war hero, appearing at war bond rallies with Hollywood starlets. Before long he requested to return to combat. When his second request was granted, he arrived at Camp Pendleton for training where he met Lena Mae



Riggi, a sergeant in the Marine Corps Women's Reserve. He married her in Oceanside and shortly thereafter was assigned to Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 27th Marine Regiment, 5th Marine Division. On Feb. 19, 1945, he died valiantly partaking in the invasion of Iwo Jima. His heroic actions enabled the Marines to penetrate the Japanese defense and advance off of the landing beach during the critical early stages of the invasion. His battlefield exploits became legendary and resulted in Basilone becoming the only enlisted Marine in World War II to be awarded the Medal of Honor and Navy Cross. Gunnery Sgt. Basilone's heroic deeds are featured in the 2010 HBO miniseries, *The Pacific*.

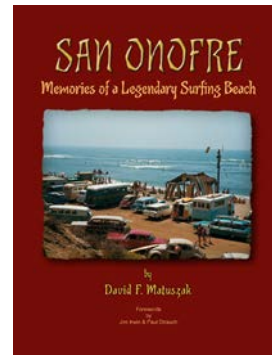
Another fascinating chapter is the story of the Church surfing break namesake. Pioneer surfers used an old San Onofre farm chapel as a landmark to line up with to catch waves. I spent two years attempting to determine the precise location of the old chapel and discover its origins. With a tip from base historian Faye Jonason, I eventually located the first image of the chapel that the surfing world had ever seen. I tracked down Dianna Semintal, a woman whose father was a farmworker there and who attended Mass at the chapel. Dianna took photos in the 1940s of her family at the chapel that had been converted from a base workshop on orders from the base commander in memory of his mother.

In the next issue, I'll explore early California history, the

influence of Hawaiian surfing culture on San Onofre, the San Onofre Surfing Club, and Marine Corps presence and prominence of Marine surfing.

The 1,550-page coffee-table book with 5,000 illustrations and 200 contributors includes so many Marine-related stories that they cannot be all mentioned here. *San Onofre: Memories of a Legendary Surfing Beach* is a thorough examination of Camp Pendleton surf culture and the place called San Onofre. You can purchase *San Onofre* at the Camp Pendleton San Onofre Marine Corps Exchange, Marine Beach campground store, your local surf shop, or order it online at www.pacificsunset.com.

About the Author. David Matuszak is a retired high school teacher and wrestling coach. For forty years, he taught "Advanced Weight Training and Fitness," a course he designed for students preparing for military boot camp. "San Onofre" is his ninth book. This year marks his 50th anniversary as a surfer. You can find him every week "sliding a roller" at San Onofre's Old Man's Surf Beach.



This article was originally featured in the June 2021 issue of *Leatherneck Magazine of the Marines*

President's Message

Richard B. Rothwell



While COVID still remains a threat, the CPHS has largely returned to our normal routine. Our July Board meeting was held in person for the first time in over a year.

Thanks to the hard work of Mike Lewis and his Events Committee, our Golf with a Hero tournament on April 30 was both a sellout and financial success. Some 144 golfers enjoyed their day at the beautiful Carlsbad Omni La Costa Resort & Spa. We plan to hold our 2021 Old Corps Birthday Ball there in November as well.

I am pleased to welcome Tim Anderson and Debbie Chen as Associate Directors on our Board of Directors. Tim is a recently retired Marine Corps Master Sergeant while Debbie is an insurance

agent in Oceanside; both were volunteers who helped with our Golf with a Hero golf tournament. Associate Directors perform all the duties of a Director except that they do not vote. We recently created the position to provide potential Board members an opportunity to work in a significant leadership role while they and CPHS determine if there should be a more formal relationship.

Our project to place a monument to Maj. Gen. Joseph H. Pendleton aboard Camp Pendleton is going well. After receiving a favorable endorsement from Headquarters Marine Corps, our donation offer is now at the Assistant Secretary of the Navy level. That approval is needed before we can install the monument. In the meantime sculptor Scott Streadbeck has begun the nine month process of creating the monument. A recent favorable article by San Diego Union Tribune reporter Linda McIntosh led directly to a very generous donation that has helped our fundraising. We still have a way to go, however. If you

would like to help please send your check to Camp Pendleton Historical Society, Attention: Pendleton Monument, PO Box 5497, Oceanside CA 92052. CPHS will match all donations, dollar for dollar, up to \$50,000 with funds already on hand.

Our first annual essay contest is underway. College students in San Diego County have been invited to submit essays of not more than 5,000 words on a topic related to the history of Camp Pendleton. Essays are due on Aug. 30, 2021. The winner and runner up will receive \$1,000 and \$500 respectively. My thanks to retired CPHS Director Cal Frantz, who developed the contest and is donating this year's prize money.

Once more I thank all of our members for their support. Without it we would not be able to fulfill our mission of helping the Marine Corps preserve and tell the history of Camp Pendleton.

Richard B. Rothwell



***The Camp Pendleton Historical Society
invites you to join us in placing
a permanent monument on
Marine Corps Base Camp Joseph H. Pendleton
to the Base namesake,
Major General Joseph H. Pendleton,
U. S. Marine Corps
1860-1942***

***A visionary leader who championed
a permanent Marine Corps presence
in Southern California***



Monument Artist Scott Streadbeck's rendering of the proposed General Pendleton monument (scale will be 1.25 his height)

How do I participate in the Pendleton Monument Project?

Donations

If you would like to contribute by check, please send your check to the following address:

Camp Pendleton Historical Society
Attention: Pendleton Monument
PO Box 5497
Oceanside, CA 92052

Paying by credit card or Paypal?
Donate via the CPHS Projects website:
camppendletonhistoricalsociety.org/projects

Volunteer/Fundraising

For additional information, email us at:
pendletonmonument.cphs@gmail.com

For More Information / Track our Progress

Go to the CPHS Projects website:
camppendletonhistoricalsociety.org/projects



General Pendleton raises the flag at MARBKS San Diego. 1921.



Major General Pendleton in Quantico, VA. 1924.

***CPHS is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation dedicated to helping the Marine Corps preserve
and tell the history of Camp Pendleton. Tax ID #83-0443585.
Consult with your tax advisor about listing your donation as a tax deduction.***

RECKLESS HAS A SPA DAY



By Robin Hutton

In September 2020 I was at the 70th anniversary of the Inchon Landing celebration at the Camp Pendleton Pacific Views Event Center. While there I'm always eager to see my girl, Staff Sgt. Reckless. However, this visit disturbed me. Instead of seeing this beautiful bronze monument, I saw how weathered she had become in the four short years at her post. The extensive exposure to the sun, wind, and salty air had aged her dramatically. Instead of her beautiful patina, she was starting to turn a crusty green. (see before pictures).

I quickly called Jocelyn Russell, the artist, on my way home and asked her what to do. She said Reckless desperately needed a cleaning and a wax, and recommended Sculpture Services of Colorado (SSC).

SSC is a family affair out of Loveland, Colorado. Two siblings, Jo, an art historian, and David, an artisan, DeDecker travel around the United States rejuvenating bronze monuments. Another sister, Mary Casey, also travels and works with them.

I called Jo DeDecker and sent her the pictures. She gave me a bid and said COVID permitting, they would be in the area cleaning other monuments in Paramount and Carlsbad, and could fit Reckless right into their schedule. I quickly reached out to the Camp Pendleton Historical Society, our partner in bringing the Staff Sgt. Reckless monument to Camp Pendleton, to see if they could help with the cleaning. They didn't hesitate to jump in and support her. So, on Jan. 30, 2021, Reckless finally had her spa day. The whole treatment was done in a flash!

It started out with a power wash. After that, blowtorches were used to open up the pores in the bronze.

BEFORE



AFTER



Finally, the team carefully applied a heavy coat of museum wax. What happens is, as the bronze cools down, the wax is sealed into the pores and protects the bronze. Very simple, very effective, and should last for at least eighteen months. So here she is – as stunning and majestic as always - ready to greet her Marines and other admirers.

The DeDeckers will be back in a year or two to do it again. While they are in the area, if you or someone you know wants to preserve a bronze monument, contact Jo DeDecker at sculptureservices@gmail.com. Their website is www.WeCleanSculptures.com. They are fast, fair, and fantastic!

Additional images from the Spa Day can be found on the CPHS website at:

<https://bit.ly/3jr39IY>

5th “Golf with a Hero” Golf Tournament



By Mike Lewis

The Camp Pendleton Historical Society (CPHS) 5th Annual “Golf with a Hero” Golf Tournament was held at the Omni La Costa Resort & Spa (Carlsbad, Calif.) on April 30, 2021. Although the COVID-19 pandemic was still making it difficult for events to take place in Southern California, CPHS was able to make this tournament happen with the assistance of Gavin Parker, Resort Head Golf Professional at Omni La Costa.

The tournament was played on the beautiful Legion Course at Omni La Costa; 131 golfers, including 31 active-duty Marines and 2 Wounded Warriors, played in the tournament; one of the participants was two-time member of the U.S. Women’s National Hockey Team and 2014 Team USA Olympic Silver Medalist, Molly Schaus.

We had 32-foursomes play in the tournament. The first place team shot a score of 54; the team consisted of retired Marine Brig. Gen. Paul Lebidine, retired Marine Lt. Col. Doug Robert, Mic Dannon and Brendon Mai. The second place team shot a score of 56; the team consisted of Madehania Baheta, Kevin Stamm, James Smith, and Maj. John L. Williams, USMC. Congratulations to the winning teams and great playing by all golfers. Fun was had by all.

A silent auction was also conducted; some of the items of note in the auction consisted of wooden flags and front door solar light stands,

handmade and donated by retired Marine Lt. Col. Mike Linehan.

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 partner, 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.

The two title sponsors for the golf tournament were Frontwave Credit Union and Astuno Law PC. Frontwave Credit Union has been our title sponsor for all five “Golf with a Hero” events; this was the first year for Astuno Law PC. We sincerely appreciate and

thank both Frontwave Credit Union and Astuno Law PC for their support of this annual fundraising event.

In addition, we had ten hole sponsors which consisted of Mike Linehan, G&W Truck Accessories (Oceanside), San Diego District Attorney Investigators Association (SDDAIA), Veterans Association of North County (VANC) (Oceanside), San Diego & Imperial Counties Chapter Peace Officers Research Association of California (PORAC), Pendleton Memorial Golf Association (PMGA), JL Wennes CPAs (Carlsbad), Advance Financial Solutions, Allstate Insurance, and SurfCoins (surfcoins.com). Thanks for all of your support.

Active-duty service members who played in the tournament were afforded that opportunity free of charge due to numerous donors. Our donors consisted of Monserate Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution; San Juan Capistrano Historical Society; San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians; retired Marines Col. Jerry Polyascko, Col. Jim Williams, Lt. Col. Joe Fegan, and Sgt. Maj. Tim Soboleski; and Judith Burns, Ray Donegan, Cal Frantz, Willis King, Bob Leonard, Scott and Kathy McEldowney, Nita Rodriguez, Fred Rose, Charles St. Laurent, Vaughn Tunstall, Scott Webb, and Shawn Wennes.

Thanks to Gavin Parker and his staff at the Omni La Costa Resort & Spa for making this tournament possible and for putting on an incredibly



Members of the first place team pose with their award. Pictured (L to R) Lt. Col. Doug Robert, Mike Lewis, Brig Gen Paul Lebidine, Mic Dannon and Jim Williams. Photos by Deb Hellman

Upcoming Events

Save
the
Date!

CPHS Events - 2021

The Camp Pendleton Historical Society is currently planning the following event:

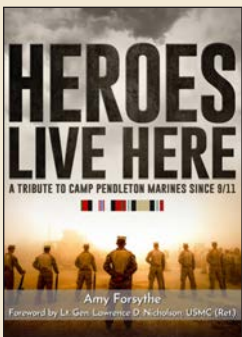
2nd Annual "Old Corps" Marine Corps Birthday Celebration

Date: Nov. 6, 2021

Location: Omni La Costa Resort & Spa

For more information, please contact the CPHS Events Committee at cphs.events@gmail.com. Additional information about the event will also be posted on the CPHS Facebook and web pages and broadcast via Eventbrite and separate digital communications.

Coming this Fall:



Amy Forsythe, a Marine veteran and former combat correspondent, is planning to release a book titled *Heroes Live Here: A Tribute to Camp Pendleton Marines Since 9/11* this Fall.

More than 150 full-color photos of memorials at Camp Pendleton grace the pages of *Heroes Live Here*, along with a detailed monuments map for sightseeing enthusiasts. Reflections and remembrances are highlighted from those who were stationed at Camp Pendleton over the past two decades and who continue to have strong ties to the base.

The book features beautifully arranged vignettes and serves as a love letter to the men and women who have and continue to serve at Camp Pendleton, as well as those who deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom since the tragic 9/11 events in American history.

Pre-orders are available today by emailing: heroesliveherecp@gmail.com. Purchase includes a signed hardcover book and shipping costs.

About the Author: Amy Forsythe is an award-winning military journalist who served five combat tours and been sent on assignment for several overseas missions. As a Marine combat correspondent and Navy public affairs officer, her imagery from covering worldwide military operations has been featured in numerous international and national media outlets and continues to be used for historical purposes. She currently serves in the U.S. Navy Reserve as a public affairs officer and is involved in supporting various local veteran service organizations in north San Diego County.

Golf, cont.

special event! CPHS would also like to thank the following businesses for their support of the tournament: Allstate Insurance; Carlsbad Golf Center; Emerald Isle Golf Course; Handel's Homemade Ice Cream; Jersey Mike's Subs (Carlsbad), and Señor Grubby's.

The next CPHS golf tournament will be held at the same venue, Omni La Costa Resort & Spa in April 2022 (date TBD). We hope to see you there, supporting our active-duty Marines and Sailors.

For additional event golf photos go to <https://bit.ly/3DqJTDK>



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OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
OR ANY OF ITS COMPONENTS AND IT HAS
NO GOVERNMENTAL STATUS.*

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

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

Irma Diaz
David Price
Richard Shope

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

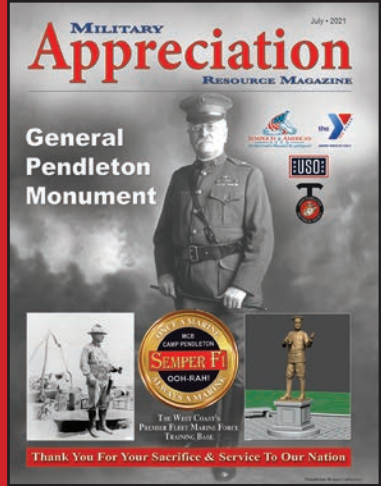
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Check out the July issue for the article on Maj. Gen. Pendleton and the monument:
<https://bit.ly/3Bpn811>



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of **900** likes



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