

IN THE INTEREST OF HISTORY, FIFTY-SEVEN YEARS IN THE MAKING



Faye Jonason gives Maj. Gen. James A. Kessler, commanding general of Marine Corps Installations Command, a tour of the Santa Margarita Ranch House on Nov. 8, 2012. Cpl. Christopher Duncan

by Faye Jonason, Director,
Camp Pendleton History and Museum Division

There was a time in the beginning of Camp Pendleton's history when the Ranch House was the officer's club. Bachelor officer furnishings were moved in and Maj. Gen. Joseph C. Fegan had the T-O brand carved onto the back of all the chairs. Reservations were required for lunches at fifty cents and dinners at a dollar. The endeavor lasted only about eight months until the California Historical Society complained that the Marines were using the house as a beer garden. During his visit, President Franklin D. Roosevelt told Rear Admiral Ralston Holmes, Maj. Gen. Clayton B. Vogel, and Maj. Gen. Joseph Fegan that all restoration must proceed along historical lines to include furnishings, the gardens and the winery. This was the first influence of historical preservation standards on the base.

During the following two years, the Ranch House was considered a museum, so two Women Marine sergeants were assigned to serve as guides for visitors. While Lt. Gen. Harry Schmidt, the commander of the base in 1946, expressed reservations that the base could support a museum, Commandant General Alexander A. Vandegrift ordered the house maintained in a "caretaker status, not altered from present state of construction."

In September of 1965, an official Camp Pendleton Historical Museum was authorized and established by Base Commander



Faye Jonason holds a photo of 1st Sgt LaRue Ditmore with an unnamed Captain at the Woman Marine Company, and a Woman Marine uniform hat, Sept 18, 2018. Andrea Clemett/ Picket Fence Media

Maj. Gen. Lewis J. Fields. The museum was set up in two rooms of the former bunkhouse built originally for the ranch's vaqueros by Jerome O'Neill.

Base Order 5750.2A was issued by Maj. Gen. Donn J. Robertson on March 22, 1968 to establish the Pendleton Historical Committee to preserve and perpetuate the history of the rancho and the Marine camp. In this order, the Historical Committee would seek a membership of history-minded military and civilians to collect artifacts, photographs and information and to produce a written history of the area. The Committee would also be responsible to advise the Commanding General on matters related to the progress of the history museum endeavor to create a public facility to preserve and display items of interest. In this year, the Las Flores Adobe is designated a National Historical Landmark. By 1971, the Santa Margarita Ranch House is placed on the National Register of Historic Places as a National Historic Site.

An initial evening meeting was held in the Base Library in early 1975, to recruit members into the committee. Records show that William D. Taylor, first director of the base's Natural Resources, Chief of Staff Col. G. A. Merrill, Paul Campo, engineer geologist, and then-Maj. Anthony Nastri led the progress of the Camp Pendleton Historical Committee. In November of 1975, mention was made in their correspondence to also "seek to encourage the study of military amphibious vehicles to explore the available assets of those vehicles at Camp Pendleton."

Continued page 2, History

The wives of these key leaders were active in the base's Officer's Wives Club. Among them, Rita Nastri, wife of Maj. Nastri, organized a special project for the club to support the commanding general's wishes to open up the Ranch House to the public in honor of the 33rd anniversary of the base. The Club researched and found that museum guides were usually called docents so set about to establish the Rancho Santa Margarita y Las Flores Docents replete with a vaquero-influenced costume and a script from which to give tours.

The Marine Corps established History and Museum Division in Quantico, so Camp Pendleton opened an office of the same name. Base Real Estate Officer, Shirley Sullivan took on the second role of heading up the Base's new History and Museum office and coordinating the docent and tour schedules for the Ranch House.

In 1978, Marine wife Kathie Graler became the first full-time government employee to head up History and Museum formed under the Joint Public Affairs Office. The mission of History and Museum was set to collect, research, preserve, exhibit and illuminate for present and future Americans, Marines and base visitors the historical legacies of Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton and its personnel. History and Museum's purpose is to provide knowledge of the Marine Corps' hard-won experiences and history to inform, inspire and sustain Marine Corps culture, and provide an historical perspective through exhibitions, public programs and the sharing of substantiating information.

Kathie trained and led the Docents, coordinated events and tours with the generals' families who lived in the Ranch House, received, documented and displayed artifacts in the Bunkhouse. She worked on the event and ceremony whereby the Bunkhouse Museum was formally dedicated by Col. James Roosevelt, USMC (Ret) in 1978.

Kathie Graler established an outdoor display of Marine Corps vehicles at the top of Rattlesnake Canyon and Vandegrift Blvd. The display was popular and easily accessible for visitors including weekends. Descriptive text was placed beside each vehicle providing interpretive information. After 15 years of service, Mrs. Graler retired from the position and moved with her family out of California.



Faye Jonason, center, conducts a tour of photographs in the exhibit "Images at War's End", chronicling life in the huge resettlement camp on Camp Pendleton in 1975 for the thousands of Vietnamese, April 9, 2010. Don Bartletti / Los Angeles Times

In 1993, the Base suffered significant flooding. The Ranch House, situated on a hill above the Santa Margarita River's waters, received less damage than the Bunkhouse Museum and the Ranch House Chapel. In fact, two walls of the chapel washed away, taking beautiful stained-glass windows away. Mr. Hunter Newman, a Korean War veteran, led the Facilities Maintenance Department to work to restore the Chapel. The windows were recovered from the mud by docents and other dedicated volunteers. These same volunteers worked to create Adobe Days in which the community came together to make replacement adobe bricks to restore the chapel. Of the eight windows, only the St. George window was not found. In later years, the Docents would replace the St. George window and Kathy Williams, an interested civilian Docent member, repaired and recovered the flood-damaged chairs from the John Barrymore estate. Wayne Donaldson of the American Institute of Architects together with several San Diego area organizations, presented the 1996 Orchid to the Santa Margarita Chapel at Camp Pendleton for its Historic Preservation after the flood.

Historic preservationist and archeology professor Nicholas Magalouhis, in 1993, took the job heading History and Museum for the base. His written archeological work can be seen at the Online Archive of California, a University of California Libraries service. Soon after the flood, he made oral history video tape recordings of O'Neill descendant Alice O'Neill Avery as she visited the damaged areas of the Ranch House complex.

For at least a year beginning in 1994, Cpl. Carrie Maffei carried responsibilities for managing History and Museum as the Staff Non-commissioned Officer (NCO), coordinating Ranch House tours, Docent events, and artifact management while still writing and photographing for Joint Public Affairs. Advertisement had gone out to fill the museum specialist position at Camp Pendleton, but no one had been hired.

In October of 1995, Faye Jonason filled the History and Museum position to head up the interpretive program for Camp Pendleton's history. She inherited a small closet of artifacts, a file cabinet of photographs, and a few documents.



Docents with recovered stained-glass window from Ranch House Chapel, 1993. Images from Camp Pendleton Archives



Docents participating in the natural wreath workshop at the Ranch House; Faye Jonason is in background to the left.

Cpl. Maffei continued in the office and Gunnery Sgt. Carver soon took over as Staff NCO. Cpl. Maffei and Gunnery Sgt. Carver worked together in the same office with Faye Jonason sharing one computer long before the current use of Common Access Card (CAC) access. The two History and Museum Marines helped the Docents, like Ann Rothwell, Janet Hammes and Kayona Roper, and other officers' wives, provide the new branch head with tour training in the existing Docent-led Ranch House tour program. Kathy Williams shared her experience and knowledge as did Marnie Mifflin, who later encouraged her husband, retired Master Gunnery Sgt. Bob Mifflin, to become the first male Docent in the group. At that time, General and Mrs. Zinni lived in the Ranch House and accommodated the many scheduled tours of fourth grade classes and public visitors.

The Christmas season became a highlight of Faye's training, as the Docents enthusiastically worked to decorate the Ranch House. Gardener Rob Young delayed his trimming of evergreens in order to provide the trimmings to Kayona Roper's annual workshops of creating natural wreathes and festoons.

The first oral history Public Affairs asked Faye to conduct was for John Peter Baumgartner, brother of the author of Rancho Santa Margarita Remembered, Jerome W. Baumgartner. He was visiting the Rancho where he had spent many weekends and summers as a boy. He told how he and another boy stood atop the granite hill overlooking the railroad, since replaced by Vandegrift Blvd., to aim pebbles down the smokestack as the train went by. He related how "Auntie We," Louisa Magee, would dote on the family's children and be upset with the adults if they did not tell her when their youngsters were coming to the ranch. Another fond memory was as a child following around Sing Young, the cook, and helping him feed the pigs.

Within the next five years, History and Museum activities expanded to include oral histories of World War II (WWII) veterans and new volunteers joined the office to work in Archives. Connie Knutson became interested and involved during a Questor's tour and their donation event at the Las Flores Adobe. Connie dedicated her focused research, interpretation, and transcription skills to rancho-era records and

ephemera. Bill Freeman, a former Navy officer whose wife, Susan, was a long-time Docent, joined the office to skillfully organize, catalogue, and document the growing wide-ranging image collection consisting of film prints, negatives, and 35mm slides.

The 5th Marine Division Association Auxiliary requested, late in the 1990s, to establish a monument to their WWII veterans of Iwo Jima. An Iwo Jima monument was already in place to honor Iwo Jima Marines of 3rd, 4th, and 5th Marine Divisions on what was then the Staff NCO Club (and is now Pacific Views Event Center) grounds. History and Museum consulted with Facilities staff concerning the feasibility of using the small undesignated lot across from the club next to the new housing in the area. They said there were no plans for that site and sketched out a possible garden design. When Maj. Gen. William Bowden became base commander, he used his discretionary funds to pay for garden landscaping and paving of walkways. The 5th Marine Division Auxiliary selected a stone for their monument, and it was dedicated. The plans for the garden included a river rock area. History and Museum ensured there would be water for the new garden and an entrance gate by negotiating with Base Facilities to release river rocks to Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) Facilities which would otherwise have to be purchased. The money saved enabled the gate and water system to be installed. Maj. Gen. William Bowden dedicated the Veterans Memorial Garden in 2002. Bob Warrick, a Nebraska rancher, and his wife Gudrun, joined the Docents and replanted the Camp Pendleton Veterans Memorial Garden during the following years, resulting in a native plant garden beautiful enough that wedding parties use it.



Volunteer, Connie Knutson



Volunteer, Bill Freeman



Faye Jonason adjusting historical artifact in the display case used in the Korean War 50th anniversary, 2000.

Early in 1996, a call came from then-Gunnery Sgt. James King to the History office requesting permission to restore a Mechanical Mule vehicle. After some discussion, the little vehicle became the first of several vehicles to be repaired, restored, and placed on display at the 1st Marine Division's Camp Margarita parade deck. After a few years, the Division commander expressed that this collection would soon need to find a new home.

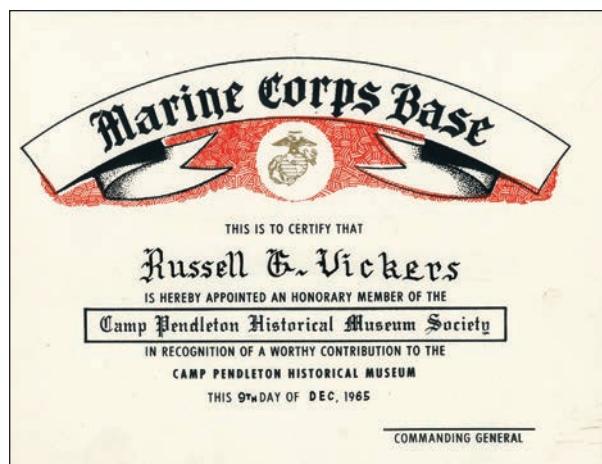
Mr. Tony Ray of Public Works encouraged History and Museum to provide a presentation of its future vision to a group of Base leaders. As a result, one-third of building 2612, an old rail-access hospital warehouse, was later offered to History and Museum to store and exhibit the vehicle collection. Maj. Gen. Bowdon agreed with History and Museum to invite Marine veterans, who had originally marched onto the Base in 1942, to stand with him to dedicate the vehicle display in 2612 as the new Marine Corps Mechanized Museum. As the general's honored guests, these veterans became part of the Base's 60th anniversary celebration at the Officer's Club ballroom. Although it rained that day, the ceremony and the celebrations were popular and successful.

In the May of 1997, the History and Museum officer was asked to give a history program brief about Camp Pendleton to the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps and his advisory committee at the Washington Navy Yard. About 20 binder copies were made of the brief for all the committee members, complete with photos and statistics. While at the Washington Navy Yard, the History and Museum officer visited the Marine Corps Archive and Art collection, then met with then History and Museum Director, retired Marine Col. John Ripley to discuss possible support for Camp Pendleton's history program. The visits resulted in acquiring a full copy and negative set of the 1943-1944 Camp Pendleton map and the follow-on certification of Camp Pendleton's History and Museum program as a Provisional Command Museum in 2002. This provisional Command Museum status remained in effect until 2012. If the Base had authorized three more museum professionals as government employees, then History and Museum would have qualified to reapply for Command Museum status.

The Docents became more organized and held their meetings in restaurants out in town. Iwo Jima veteran Pappy Young joined the Docents to volunteer as Docent at the Ranch



Above: Image from article announcing formation of Camp Pendleton Society of Marine Corps History from November 1975 issue of the Pendleton SCOUT newspaper. **Below:** Camp Pendleton Historical Museum Society certificate, Dec. 1965



House Bunkhouse until he died at age 97. There, he told how he had witnessed the flag-raising on Mount Suribachi and collected aluminum from Japanese Zero aircraft to make bracelets marked "Iwo Jima" for his fellow Marines. A small exhibit in the Bunkhouse includes some of the unique items he had made.

Pappy's daughter, Mickey Urlie, began a gift cart with items for tour guests to purchase. Eventually the cart gave way to a Bunkhouse giftshop which allowed guests purchase to the book, "Rancho Margarita Remembered," mugs with a Ranch House image, and magnets showing the beautiful Chapel windows. It was around this time that the Docents elected retired Marine Lt. Col. Paul Durrance as their first Chairman. Today he continues to lead the Docents, now commuting from Arizona.

In 2006, History & Museum became part of the G-3/5 or Operations, Plans, and Training. The office was moved to lower-level rooms in Building 1160 with more space for artifact and archive collections and a separate office for the Marine staff. Retired Marine Col. Bo Hellman, who volunteered in the Archives at History and Museum for

almost a year, was then hired as a contracted archivist for five years until funding ceased. During his tenure, he was able to greatly increase the space dedicated for archives processing and care as well as to develop and implement computerized accession records.

The larger Archives space permitted workspace for volunteers such as Bill Parsons to meticulously organize, record, and digitize volumes of historic records and associated documents. Bill continues to make this information accessible for researchers and has been inspired to write historical articles for the Camp Pendleton Historical Society Groundbreaker newsletter. Several outstanding archive student interns came to organize the many documents, maps, plans, and photographs in the process of earning their Masters degree in Archives. Dawn Rocha came from Northern California and volunteered beyond standard archival work by helping to select and install imagery from the unique Operation New Arrivals photograph collection for an exhibit on Southeast Asians on Camp Pendleton. Sarah Thornton also came to tackle the mass of incoming photographic and document collections. After several years, Sarah returned after a military overseas tour with her Navy Chaplain husband to fine-tune the organization of the much larger Archives which now includes

more than 8,000 documents, maps, plans, and significant pieces of ephemera in addition to more than 10,000 historic images.

Also in 2006, History and Museum was granted the larger remainder of building 2612. Master Gunnery Sgt. James King headed a volunteer corps, the “Dirty Docents”, to research, repair, and renovate vehicles and artillery pieces being added to the museum’s collection. Today the 22,000 square-foot Marine Corps Mechanized Museum houses a large part of the more than 120 historical mechanized artifacts ranging from transport and battle vehicles to artillery. The collection is billed as the world’s largest collection of U.S. Marine Corps vehicles from WWII to the Global War on Terrorism.

In 2007, Maj. Gen. Lehnert and his wife became the last to live in the historic Ranch House. The vacated general’s quarters were ideal for the installation of exhibits especially since no other secure space existed on Base for such use. Special exhibits were installed utilizing the home’s original picture rails such as with the combat art display of paintings and prints by retired Marine Col. Charles Waterhouse and others. The exhibits illuminating Marine Corps and Camp Pendleton history were popular and successful such as the Vietnam era, “Images at War’s End,” early Base history “Post Cards of Pendleton’s Past,” an exhibit about the development of Camp Pendleton’s Fire Department, and the history of women serving on Camp Pendleton as Marines in “So Few, So Proud.”

More recently, exhibition banners have been developed for the Marine Corps Mechanized Museum illustrating the general history of the Base, Marines on Iwo Jima, Women Marines on Camp Pendleton, and the Global War on Terrorism. Smaller banner sets of these exhibits have also been created for loan to units.

Over the years, History and Museum hosted a variety of VIP visitors at the Ranch House, the Las Flores Adobe and the Mechanized Museum. The San Juan Capistrano Historical Society came with O’Neill and Forster family and friends regularly visiting the Ranch House. Some of the Oral History collection gives voice and image to the pioneers, such as Louisa Foussat, the Luiseno elder who worked on the Las Flores lima bean ranch as a girl; matriarch Alice O’Neill Avery who told us the Ranch House windows were originally covered with shutters, not drapes; and Lena Basilone, a WWII Marine cook on Base, who married a Guadalcanal hero to lose him to the battles on Iwo Jima. They could not all be recorded, but during visits from Richard O’Neill and Tony Forster, so much of their family’s memories of the rancho were shared.

The History and Museum of 2025 has developed greatly from the vision of the initial group of advisors of 1968. Today History and Museum’s Archives is sought out for its information, SCOUT newspaper collection, photographs, numerous oral histories, and rancho and Base records. Camp Pendleton’s artifacts have been on exhibit in museums in Balboa Park in San Diego, are on display in the Marine Corps Installations West commander’s offices, the Mechanized Museum, the Ranch House, and are on exhibit loan to unit commanders around the Base. The Veterans Memorial Garden continues

to be managed by the Docents. Bob Warrick has negotiated its bridged connection to the newer Naval Hospital with hospital volunteer help and an expanded garden area. The Mechanized Museum and its Dirty Docents have initiated a new image of the museum by opening it on a weekend evening for the estimated 70,000 Marines, Sailors, civilian employees and their families, with the hope that it can continue that service in the future.

Coupled with support from two base-recognized non-profit 501(c)(3) organizations, Rancho Santa Margarita y Las Flores Docents and Camp Pendleton Historical Society, the Camp Pendleton History and Museum Division earnestly continues its mission to collect, research, present, exhibit, and illuminate the historical legacy of Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton and its personnel for present and future generations in alignment with its vision as the preferred and most trusted West-coast Marine Corps heritage resource center.

Faye Jonason’s Biography



Faye Jonason is the Director of the History and Museum Program for Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton. First serving as Head Teacher for the Neglected Delinquent Program in northern California, her museum career began as Assistant Curator of Collections for the California State Railroad

Museum in Sacramento. As an NEA Fellow, she studied the interpretation of the American Industrial Revolution using American art. She headed up the school outreach program at the Marine Institute in Dana Point. In 1984, Ms. Jonason joined the California African American Museum in Los Angeles where she served as Registrar of Collections for 11-1/2 years.

With a focus to create compelling educational history experiences, she took her current position at Camp Pendleton in 1995 with responsibilities for interpretive programming and exhibits at the Santa Margarita Ranch House National Historic Site and later, the Marine Corps Mechanized Museum. Ms. Jonason’s work to create the Camp Pendleton Archives, Marine Corps Mechanized Museum, and the Camp Pendleton Veterans Memorial Garden resulted in their official dedication in 2002. She is especially proud of exhibits highlighting histories of Combat Artists in Wartime Vietnam, Development of the Base Fire Departments, Camp Pendleton and its Establishment, Maj. Gen. Pendleton, Military Working Dogs, Black Women in the U.S. Military, and Women Serving as Marines Aboard Camp Pendleton.

Farewell To A Long-Time Friend And Advisor

by Col. Richard B. Rothwell, USMC (Ret)

After 30 years as the steward of Camp Pendleton history, Faye Jonason is retiring as the History and Museum Division Director. Her many responsibilities included serving as a trusted and valued ex officio member of the CPHS Board of Directors. As President Emeritus and on behalf of our Society, I thank her for her many contributions to CPHS and Camp Pendleton.

Faye has held an important but by no means easy position. Marines tend to lean forward in their saddles. Except for special occasions such as such as Marine Corps Birthday celebrations, they do not spend a lot of time looking over our shoulders. We tend to focus on the present and future. Historians, in contrast, constantly look over their shoulders, not because of nostalgia, but to record and preserve what has happened. Without professionals who concentrate on the past, the present will soon fade away. In thinking about the challenges Faye faced, I am drawn back to my early days in the Corps.

It was Fall 1961, early in my training at The Basic School in Quantico, Virginia. I was sitting in bleachers at the Camp Barrett football field with my fellow brown bar classmates listening to a grizzled, weather worn major. He said in a rough voice, "Welcome to the Marine Corps, gentlemen. You have joined a mighty fine nickel-dime, fighting outfit." He went on to explain that the Corps was revered not only for winning battles, but, also for its modest cost-to-taxpayer reputation. He continued on to his punchline:

"You will learn that Marines do things a bit differently from what you may have experienced and you may ask, Why? To avoid any confusion on your part, I will answer that question right now: BECAUSE."

Unfortunately, Faye did not have a grizzled major to answer one of the fundamental questions about life in the Corps. She had to learn on the job under stringent financial constraints while competing for scarce resources on behalf of her division that, to some Marines, had the unfamiliar tendency to look backward. Fortunately, Faye was up to the challenge. She became a hard-working, innovative, tenacious and forward-thinking professional, qualities that all Marines can admire. Here are a few examples.

At one point Faye mentioned that she needed articulated mannequins to display period Marine uniforms. CPHS set about trying to help, but the only articulated mannequins we could find were female – womannequins if you will. Faye was not fazed. She said that after she worked on them, no one would tell the difference. She was innovative, making do with what was available.

The Camp Pendleton Mechanized Museum was originally a logistics building built during the early days of World War II. My father, as XO of 2d Battalion, 24th Marines, may have boarded a train at that building that took his Marines to amphibious shipping in San Diego in preparation for the amphibious assault on Roi Namur. Some 50 years later, that building



Camp Pendleton Historical Society Board Members breaking ground for the Staff Sgt. Reckless monument; pictured are Steve Fisher, Faye Jonason, Cal Frantz, Jerry Polyascko, Jim Williams, Dick Rothwell, and Bill Birnie.

became home to the Marine Corps Mechanized Museum, an extensive collection of tracked and wheeled military vehicles and crew served weapons.

Time had taken its toll on the building. The roof leaked and the foundation was unsteady. Similarly aged buildings on Base were collapsing. In an effort to provide a temporary fix, CPHS recruited several experienced carpenters who volunteered to help shore up the building's foundation. All that we needed was Marine Corps approval. Disappointingly, the answer was "No." The unspoken reason was, you guessed it, "Because." It brought back memories from The Basic School bleachers.

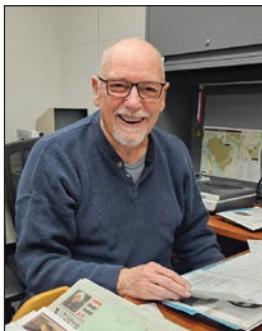
We were all upset, but Faye had learned two valuable lessons during her on the job training. First, don't give up. Second, if you follow Lesson #1, you will find that the system eventually works. Year after year, Faye fought to obtain funding to make the necessary repairs and save the historically important rolling stock inside. Finally, in 2013, the long-delayed project reached the top on the priority list. Three years later, thanks for Faye's tenacity, needed repairs were completed.

By training, historians tend to look backwards. But sometimes looking backwards can also be forward looking. In 2016, CPHS had completed its role in helping place a monument to America's Warhorse, Staff Sgt. Reckless, aboard Camp Pendleton. It had been our first major project and, as president, I was looking for another challenge to keep our momentum going.

Faye joined us during a board meeting at Camp Las Flores. As we discussed potential new projects, Faye casually mentioned that Camp Lejeune had a monument to its namesake, but there was nothing substantial aboard this base to commemorate Maj. Gen. Joseph H. Pendleton. Her offhand remark provided an inspiration that led to our highly successful and most ambitious project at that time: the Maj. Gen. Pendleton monument that now stands tall at the 11 Area parade field.

Demonstrating both appreciation for her counsel and wisdom regarding our Society's future, the Board of Directors has invited Faye Jonason to be its advisor. I join our Board and members in thanking Faye for her service and expressing the hope that she will continue to help guide CPHS for many years to come.

Reflections from Volunteers - History & Museum Division



by Bill Parsons

Faye has been and still is an inspiration to me, as well as a friend. Initially, I quickly learned that she was a person who knew her subject well. She set the standard for excellence in the History and Museum Division. Faye has often served as a guide to help others reach her standards and their potential. In my

case, she allowed me to learn at my own pace, always encouraging, but never demanding. Faye's mentoring, her support, and her oversight gave me the confidence to begin writing research papers. She has been right there, advising and supporting me all the way. I can say, with complete confidence, it would not have been done without her support.

Her contributions, as a historical scholar, are widely recognized throughout the community that is Rancho Santa Margarita. To this day, Faye's participation in video programs on

Ranch history can be seen on TV. She is, without question, the go-to person for the area's history.

It has been my pleasure to have worked beside Faye for these last 10 to 12 years, and to have gotten her in-depth perspective of the Ranch and of Camp Pendleton. I wish Faye all happiness in her new career as retiree. I hope she and Ron get to travel widely, and they get to enjoy their kids and grandkids. I hope the sun always shines down on them, and it only rains deep in the dark of night.



by Sarah Thornton

Over the last several years of volunteering for the History & Museum Division, Faye has impressed and inspired me so much. Back in 2017, I approached Faye's office with the hope of gaining some hands-on experience working with historical collections while I worked on a degree that would allow me to eventually work in archives. It became clear to me very quickly that, while a formal education would be useful in some ways, it would not cover all the skills one would need to do Faye's job. There are so many unseen aspects of the work that she has been doing, and so many unseen challenges. As anyone who has worked with the military knows, it's not always an easy environment to get things done. I've watched and learned from the ways Faye has navigated challenges to advocate for what the departments need, from resources to visibility. I've been so impressed by the deep diversity of skills that Faye uses every day to get things done.

But mostly I've been impressed by how

deeply Faye cares. Faye cares about the "stuff" of history — the objects in the collections, the photos, the uniforms, the buildings. And she cares very much about the stories. In the last few months, as I've been helping more with the collections, I've been opening boxes and going through drawers, often asking Faye, "What is this?", and "where did this come from?" When you answer those questions for the sake of cataloging an item, the answer is brief: "This is a photo," or "This was donated to us on this date by that person." But the answers Faye has for each item usually involves telling a story: the story of the person who donated an item — who they were, how they are associated with the base, where they live now, where they acquired it, and what it meant to them; or the story of the item itself — where it was made, why it was made, and how it ended up in Camp Pendleton's collections, why we should keep it, and how it can be useful in an exhibit, to help tell a story. For Faye, even buildings have stories, especially those that are no longer standing.

Even more than the "stuff" of history, though, I've seen how Faye cares about people. She carries the names and stories of the people she's worked with along the way, whether docents, donors, military leadership or other Camp Pendleton employees. It's clear that people — past, present and future — are the heart of things for Faye. Everyone who has lived or worked on Camp Pendleton/Rancho Santa Margarita Y Las Flores has memories

and stories about the place. Faye has made sure that the History & Museum Division is a place that can collect the "stuff" of the past, because objects tell stories and carry the memories that people want to share.

In this way, I think of Faye as Camp Pendleton's memory-keeper. Most job descriptions can't possibly list the variety of skills one needs, or the diversity of tasks one performs, to be a memory-keeper. It's a role accumulated over time, whereby a person is transformed by doing the work, learning the stories, collecting the "stuff" and caring deeply about what it all means to people. The base will be hard-pressed to find someone who can fill that role. As a memory-keeper, Faye is simply irreplaceable.



Faye Jonason, March 1996.

President's Message

Jay Bullard



Dear Members and Supporters,

On Friday, Nov. 7, we held our 250th Marine Corps Birthday celebration and combined it with a membership appreciation social. We had great attendance and thank everyone for participating in our celebration. Special thanks to Maj. Gen. Tony Jackson, USMC (Ret), who was our guest speaker, and to Marine Corps Community Services who hosted our social. Everyone had a wonderful time and requested we continue this event next year. If you missed it this year, please join us next year as we will continue this tradition.

Twenty years ago, Camp Pendleton Historical Society was formed. The founders, Dick Rothwell, Joe Kirkpatrick, and Jim Williams, with support from the Base Commanding General, Mike Lehnert, designed Camp Pendleton Historical Society as a 501(c)(3) non-profit to preserve and share the history of Camp Pendleton and Rancho Santa Margarita y Las Flores. We continue with the original vision to promote pride and patriotism through an understanding of the history of Camp Pendleton as Native American homeland, as Spanish mission land, as a large Southern California working ranch, and as the world's largest amphibious warfare training base. Our outreach to local schools and communities increases public awareness in preserving Camp Pendleton as a national treasure and provides an important illustration of California history.

Another milestone in history is the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Chosen Reservoir. Between Nov. 27 and Dec. 13, 1950, Camp Pendleton's 1st Marine Division, later nicknamed "The Chosin Few", were encircled and attacked by about 120,000 Chinese troops. The battle was fought over some of the roughest terrain during some of the harshest winter weather conditions of the Korean War. 1st Marine Division along with the UN forces were able to break out of the encirclement and withdraw to the port of Hungnam in what U.S. historians described as the "greatest evacuation movement by sea in U.S. military history".

As you look out into the future, our 10th Annual "Golf with a Hero" golf tournament will be held on Friday, May 8, 2026 at the Marine Memorial Golf Course on Camp Pendleton. This is our primary fundraiser as well as an opportunity for active-duty Marines and Sailors from Camp Pendleton to golf with members of the community. Each foursome will include one active-duty Marine or Sailor who plays at no cost. We will send out notifications in March. Please come on out and have a good time in supporting the base and CPHS.

In closing, I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season; we sincerely appreciate everyone's continued support. Our story is a story worth telling and sharing with future generations.

Jay Bullard



Visitors to Mech Museum stopping to look closer at the 1944 2.5 ton Cargo Truck.



Santa greets the children upon his arrival to the event.



Visitors were provided with an assortment of appetizers by the Afa'ese family who graciously catered the event.

Night at the Mechanized Museum

The “Night at the Mechanized Museum” event was an overwhelming success, achieving its primary objective of increasing the museum’s visibility and accessibility. Conceived by Faye Jonason to accommodate working individuals and families, the event drew a crowd of nearly 700, far surpassing the estimated 150 attendees. Key contributions from the Afa’ese family team for catering and the 1st Marine Division’s jazz musicians for entertainment were instrumental to the evening’s success.

The collective effort was a testament to the leadership and vision of individuals like Faye, Larry Engel, Cpl. Ruhimbana, and museum co-founder retired Marine Master Gunnery Sgt. James King, alongside a dedicated team of docents and volunteers. The event effectively showcased the museum’s treasures and garnered significant praise from military and civilian leaders alike.

A notable highlight of the evening was the official retirement ceremony for Faye Jonason, which included the awarding of the Meritorious Civilian Service Award and presentation of a certificate of retirement, U.S. flag, and ceremonial gladius sword by retired Marine Col. Russ Woody, Deputy G-3/5 for Marine Corps Installations West.



Russ Woody, Faye Jonason, and Jeff Williams during the retirement ceremony.



Above: Faye Jonason surrounded by current and former Combat Camera/COMMSTRAT Marines and Civilians that have worked with Faye. Left: Rancho Santa Margarita y Las Flores Docents at the Mech Museum; I to r: Dania Caudell, Kaz Kishimoto, and Shelley Mangram



Marines from the 1st Marine Division Band Jazz Ensemble



A long line of visitors filing past the historic vehicles on display at Mech Museum.



Jasper, age 6, talks with Santa. Photos by Deb Hellman

CPHS Marine Corps 250th Birthday Celebration

Guest of Honor,
Maj. Gen. Tony Jackson,
USMC (Ret)



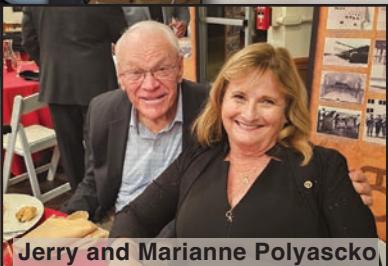
Event narrator,
Jerry Blandford



Bo Hellman, Faye Jonason, Brig. Gen. Jay Bullard, USMC (Ret)



Carlos Veintimilla Jr. and
Events Chairman Mike Lewis



by Mike Lewis, Events Chairman

On Nov. 7, 2025, Camp Pendleton Historical Society (CPHS) hosted and celebrated the Marine Corps 250th Birthday Celebration at the Windmill Canyon Restaurant at the Marine Memorial Golf Course Aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton. Seventy-two CPHS members and guests attended the Birthday Celebration event.

The ceremonial portion of the Birthday Celebration started with the playing of the National Anthem. Our Guest of Honor was CPHS Advisor, Maj. Gen. Anthony Jackson, USMC (Ret); his remarks to the assembled guest focused on the founding of the Marine Corps and the future of the Marine Corps.

The ceremony continued with the reading of the traditional Birthday message from the 13th Commandant of the Marine Corps, Maj. Gen. John A. Lejeune. The Birthday message from the current Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Eric Smith, was also read.

A Marine Corps Birthday Cake was prepared by Mrs. Megan Slaton and presented to the CPHS President, Brig. Gen. Jay Bullard, USMC (Ret) and our Guest of Honor. Traditionally, the birthday cake is cut with a Mameluke sword; the mameluke sword used in the cutting of the cake belonged to Maj. Gen. Joseph Fegan, USMC. On Sept. 25, 1942, General Fegan became the first commander of Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton. The first piece of cake was given to the Guest of Honor with the next two pieces of cake being given to the oldest Marine present, Sgt. David Crippen, who served from 1955-1965, and the youngest Marine present, Sgt. Joe Corraccio, an active-duty Marine with Marine Corps Installations West who joined the Marine Corps in October 2014.

Once ceremonial portion of the event was completed, our guests enjoyed the remainder of the evening meeting with other Marines and guests, reminiscing about their experiences in the Marine Corps. These Marine Corps Celebration events were held across the globe, drawing Marines together to celebrate the birthday of our Corps.

Special thanks to the Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) team at the Marine Memorial Golf Course, who made certain that their expert event planning and setting up created the intended ambience, coupled with a spectacular array of hors d'oeuvres and attentive service, assuring that our event would be a most memorable one - and it was! We are planning to host the 251st Marine Corps Birthday Celebration event at the same location in 2026.

Happy Birthday and Semper Fidelis, Marines!

Guests stand during the ceremonial portion of the birthday celebration.

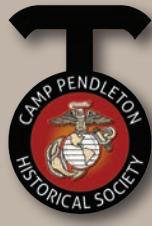


“Save the Date”

10th Annual “Golf with a Hero” Golf Tournament

Camp Pendleton Marine Memorial Golf Course

Friday, May 8, 2026



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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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Happy Retirement!

Congratulations to Faye Jonason on her long and illustrious career as Camp Pendleton History and Museum Director, encompassing three decades of dedicated and superior service to Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton and the United States Marine Corps! Fair winds and following seas!



Dusk portrait of Faye Jonason at Luiseno Park that's adjacent to the San Luis Rey Gate of Camp Pendleton. She is retiring after 30 years as head of history and museums at Camp Pendleton. (Charlie Neuman / For The San Diego Union-Tribune)

Read more about Faye's career and lasting contributions to preserving and promoting the history of the Camp Pendleton land area by going to the San Diego Union Tribune through the following link:

<https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/2025/12/30/camp-pendletons-head-of-history-and-museums-retires-after-30-years>

You can also access the article
via the following QR code:



www.camppendletonhistoricalsociety.org
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Noteworthy News

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

Hoa Pham
Jon Wagner

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

Carol Childs
Janet Coley
Rick Darnall
Peter House
James Johnson
Bob and Lois Newkirk
Willa Schlegel

Commanders Circle Level:

Tom Ostensen
Michael Ryerson

Ranchero Level:

Michael & Carolyn Bray
Charles and Victoria Crawford

Donations:

Calvin Frantz



Ring the

Ranch House bell!

For 30 years, Faye curated a whole lot of history ... from collecting valuable oral histories, giving and attending historical tours, etc.

Best wishes to Faye and Ron!

**Remember to follow us
on Facebook
and visit our website:**

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