

Base as the U.S. Naval Amphibious Base, Coronado, on 7 January 1946. Concurrently, its role changed from primarily training to that of providing a shore base not only for the overall support and training of amphibious units, but also facilities for research in and the testing of new amphibious warfare equipment.

Between wars there was some natural diminution of activity. But the Navy embarked on an orderly program of upgrading temporary World War II buildings and constructing new facilities to maintain the base ready for combat service when needed. This policy was vindicated during the Korean War and Vietnam conflict, when the base again became the primary amphibious warfare training and support complex in the Pacific area.

Today, NAB Coronado is a major shore activity assigned to the operating forces through the Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet. In addition to providing support and training for amphibious warfare, it also serves as home for several major tenant commands, such as the Naval Amphibious School, Coronado; Landing Force Training Command, Pacific; and Commander Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, who is the immediate superior of the base commander. The Navy continues to maintain and upgrade buildings and facilities to ensure that the base will be ready again if required to support all of the diverse combat needs of the "Alligator Navy."

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#### SAN DIEGO, CALIF., MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP JOSEPH H. PENDLETON, 1942-

The Marine Corps activated Camp Joseph H. Pendleton on 25 September 1942 to provide large-scale tactical training for entire units before they were shipped out to the Pacific Ocean battle areas during World War II. It was the logical offshoot of Marine Corps training in the Southern California area going back to the establishment of Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, in 1914 as Marine Barracks, San Diego, Calif. For some time the Marines had needed more land than was available at the San Diego site.

As the United States expanded its military forces in reaction to the wars in Europe and Asia, training overflowed the built-up Recruit Depot. Since 1934 the Marine Corps had been renting from the city of San Diego land twelve miles northeast of the city. That site was expanded to approximately 32,000 acres to accommodate the new Second Marine Division, and its name was changed from Camp Holcomb to Camp Elliott. That became the principal training site for Marine units until it also became too small.

The Marines formed a Board of Inspection headed by Lieutenant Colonel Oliver P. Smith, which studied several possible locations in Southern California. One of them was the 122,798-acre Rancho Santa Margarita y Las Flores, located

at Oceanside, Calif., approximately seventy-five miles south of Los Angeles and forty-five miles north of San Diego. Both Marine Corps and Army planners considered the Rancho, but the Army turned elsewhere. In February 1942 the Marine Corps decided that the Rancho, with its oceanfront property, was suitable for its West Coast amphibious training facility, comparable to Camp Lejeune, N.C. (q.v.), on the East Coast. From that decision has sprung an installation of over 27,319 permanent military, 3,612 transient military, and 3,580 civilian employees working or housed in over 4,000 structures using 500 miles of roads to work and live in the base, currently 125,000 acres large. (Personnel figures are as of December 1982.)

Camp Pendleton provides housing, training facilities, and logistics support for Fleet Marine Force and other units assigned to it. The Infantry Training School intensively trains recent graduates of the recruit depots in their future infantry specialties. The Schools Battalion conducts courses in amphibian equipment, amphibious small unit leadership, and Marine Corps administration. The Field Medical Service School trains members of the Navy Medical Department and Chaplains Corps in combat survival and field medical and dental practices.

The First Marine Amphibious Force Headquarters is based at Camp Pendleton. It is the senior Fleet Marine Force Headquarters in the East Pacific area. Its largest component, the First Marine Division, is also based at Camp Pendleton, as is the First Force Service Support Group, the logistical part of the Marine combat organization. Marine Aircraft Group-39, the Marine Corps Tactical Systems Support Activity, and the Navy Regional Medical and Dental Centers are also located there.

Those combat troops, combat service units, and schools students train in twelve separate areas, eighty-five ranges, four landing beaches, numerous helicopter landing zones, and related facilities for ground and air operations. The areas with their colorful names—Talega, Christianitos, San Mateo, San Onofre Horno, Las Pulgas, Vado Del Rio, Margarita, and Del Mar—also used to be called camps. Their names were changed recently to avoid confusion between those area names and Camp Pendleton itself. Thus Camp Pendleton represents the largest training area in the western United States where combined ground and air amphibious landings of battalion size or larger can be practiced. Its subordinate Mountain Warfare Training Center, Bridgeport, Calif. (q.v.), supplies additional training in mountain, cold weather, and survival training.

Rancho Santa Margarita y Las Flores, so named in 1844, formed the largest rancho in San Diego county. Spanish missionaries had begun cultivating the land in about 1798. Secularized between 1824 and 1835, the land passed into the control of one of California's most prominent families, that of Pio Pico, the last Mexican governor of California.

The oldest structures on the base, the chapel (built 1810) and the ranch house (probably built after 1827) are still in use. The chapel has been restored to its original use, and the ranch house is the quarters of the base's commanding general. The bunk house, dating from a later period, is the post museum. The

Las Flores adobe area, built in the 1820s, is a boy scout camp site. Those structures are on the National Register of Historic Places. Additional archaeological sites on the base are also subjects of scholarly interest.

Concerned also with natural resources, Camp Pendleton in 1955 established a Wildlife Management Unit in cooperation with the California Department of Fish and Game. That unit watches over the more than 200 species of birds and animals resident in Camp Pendleton's 196 square miles. The specialists are concerned with both species preservation and hunting and fishing activities.

A system of reservoirs, wells, infiltration ponds, and effluent reclamation replenishes the groundwater basins to prevent saltwater intrusion and provides wetland habitats for waterfowl as well as water for the base itself. Its beaches, hills, marshes, valleys, and mountains rising 3,254 feet above sea level make the base the largest undeveloped area between San Diego and Los Angeles, thus preserving a natural area in a growing megalopolis. The installation has won several conservation awards for its program. But all of this lay ahead when in the summer of 1942 the federal government used emergency war powers to purchase the rancho.

Lt. Gen. Thomas Holcomb, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, decided on 27 February 1942, two-and-one-half months after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, that the Marine Corps needed the rancho. The Second War Powers Act of 27 March 1942 gave the federal government the powers necessary to condemn the land for immediate use while it negotiated a fair price with the reluctant owners. The courts completed the condemnation process on 12 April 1943, paying \$4,110,035 for 121,387 acres. Later purchases expanded the total acreage.

However, the Marines moved with wartime speed to develop the new facility even before those ownership proceedings were well underway. They laid out campsites and began construction in May 1942. Plans changed under wartime pressures, and Maj. Gen. Clayton B. Vogel, Commanding General, Amphibious Force, Pacific Fleet, appointed the Santa Margarita Planning Board, later the Camp Pendleton Development Board, under Brig. Gen. Joseph C. Fegan.

Meanwhile, Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Joseph H. Pendleton had died in San Diego on 4 February 1942. Widely popular with Marines, the 81-year-old general had spent the last ten years of his career promoting San Diego as the ideal location for Marine Corps activities. After retirement he had become mayor of Coronado, Calif. and continued promoting cooperation between the Corps and southern California communities. Because the Army already had a Camp Pendleton in Virginia, this camp was given General Pendleton's full name for its own to distinguish it from the older Army installation.

With President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Mrs. Joseph H. Pendleton ("Aunt Mary") participating, the Marines dedicated the new camp on 25 September 1942. General Fegan, now a major general, was the first commanding general. Demonstrating the urgent need for the new facilities, the Ninth Marines under Col. Lemuel Shepherd, a future commandant of the Marine Corps, had begun training on 4 September 1942.

The Third Marine Division, built around the Ninth Marines, was activated on

16 September 1942 at Camp Elliott. It went on to fight in the Bougainville, Northern Solomons, Guam, and Iwo Jima campaigns. The Fourth Marine Division was activated 16 August 1943 at Camp Pendleton. After training there, it departed 13 January 1944 to sail directly into combat at Roi-Namur in the Marshall Islands. It also participated in combat on Saipan, Tinian, and Iwo Jima. Shortly after it left Camp Pendleton, the Marine Corps activated the Fifth Marine Division on 21 January 1944 at Pendleton. After additional training in Hawaii, the 5th Division went into battle on Iwo Jima. Other combat units also trained at Camp Pendleton.

In May 1944 the Marine Corps merged Camp Elliott with Camp Pendleton, which brought the headquarters Fleet Marine Force, San Diego Area, to Pendleton. That headquarters shortly thereafter became the Marine Training and Replacement Command, San Diego Area. As Camp Pendleton built to its 1944 peak of activity, the Marines still needed four subordinate installations to Camp Pendleton to complete training and logistics requirements. They were: Camp Robert H. Dunlap, an 114,331 acre artillery firing range, approximately three miles from Niland, Calif., in the Imperial Valley; Camp Gillespie, 688 acres near Santee, Calif., used for parachute training; the Cuyamaca Training Area of 28,000 acres near Lake Cuyamaca, about 35 miles east of San Diego, for use as a jungle warfare center; and the Base Depot, a logistics facility that remained at Camp Elliott after the remainder of Camp Elliott was turned over to the Navy.

Camp Pendleton became an example of the diversity of the Marine Corps as it continued to grow. The first ninety-five women Marines reached the camp in October 1943. Their strength eventually exceeded 1,000. Black Marine units, such as the Fifty-second Defense Battalion, stopped at Camp Pendleton for additional training on their way from the East Coast to the Pacific Ocean war zones. Royal Netherlands Marines also trained at Camp Pendleton. The World War II population peaked in 1944 at 86,749 Marines, sailors, and civilians.

The training was rough and varied. Replacements as well as new units heard live ammunition being fired over their heads as they crawled through the 150-yard-long infiltration course. The Combat Conditioning and Amphibious Training Courses further prepared the men for battle.

In September 1944 the Marine Corps asked the Navy to designate Camp Pendleton as a permanent Marine Corps establishment. The Commandant, Lt. Gen. Alexander A. Vandegrift, argued that what the Marine Corps would need on the Pacific Coast after the war was an amphibious training base that was capable of conducting all types of Marine Corps training in one location. On 14 October 1944 Camp Pendleton became a permanent Marine Corps base.

Meanwhile, the film industry had already begun to make good use of both the terrain and the Marines and equipment available at Camp Pendleton for its movies. In 1943 *Guadalcanal Diary* became the first of many films about the Marines to be made at the base. *Tarawa*, *Sands of Iwo Jima*, and war movies made for television such as *Baa Baa Black Sheep* represent the combat movies filmed at Camp Pendleton.

On 14 August 1945 Japan surrendered, ending World War II in the Pacific.

Reversing direction, Training Command became the Redistribution Regiment, as all organized Marine Corps units in the Pacific returning to the United States came back to Camp Pendleton. As many as 2,000 to 3,000 Marines returned at the same time, either for immediate separation, soon to peak at 200 per day, or to be sent on to another separation station for discharge from the Marine Corps.

By July 1946 the Tracked Vehicle School Battalion was the only training organization left at Camp Pendleton. But that month the Signal Communication School was transferred there to relieve the congestion of Marine Corps training on the East Coast. In the peacetime budget cuts of the postwar years, the Marine Corps combined the two battalions in 1949 into the Signal and Tracked Vehicle School Battalion. In 1950 that became the Supporting Arms Training Battalion, which was upgraded to regimental status during the Korean War. In 1956 the unit became simply the Schools Regiment, and in 1958, as Schools Battalion, it began to assume the organizational structure that would take it into the 1980s.

In June 1947 the First Marine Division returned from North China occupation duty to its new permanent home at Camp Pendleton. On 7 July 1947 Camp Pendleton formally became a Marine Corps base. This change pointed out the fact that it did more than train new Marines and that it was independent of the San Diego area commands.

Those years of peace before the Korean War also saw two major disagreements between the base and the surrounding communities. In the fall of 1948 Oceanside school officials asked Maj. Gen. Graves B. Erskine, commanding general, for the use of an on-base building as a school. Erskine, interested in developing Camp Pendleton as a community, decided to establish and operate the school under Marine Corps control with Marine Corps funds. The school officials objected that the school was outside the control of the local school board. Three years later Congress forbade the use of Marine Corps funds to operate schools, and the Oceanside School District now operates public schools on the base.

The second dispute arose in 1949 between the base and the town of Fallbrook over water rights to the Santa Margarita River Basin. A civilian attorney in the Justice Department, William Veeder, studying a proposal from former Congressman Phil D. Swing for a division of scarce water between Camp Pendleton and the town of Fallbrook, ruled that the government was entitled to exclusive use of the water. Swing's proposal called for a 60 percent–40 percent division between the Marines and the town. Veeder asked the government to file a quit title suit to confirm its rights to the water. After years of preparation the subpoenaing of thousands of land owners, a propaganda campaign waged by businesses who feared that a precedent in that case might hurt their chances to gain control of oil in U.S. tidal waters, and two trials of over 250 days, the courts ruled against the federal government. Finally, in 1966 the federal government agreed to a division of the water on the same 60 percent–40 percent ratio between the Marines and Fallbrook.

On 25 June 1950 North Korea unexpectedly invaded South Korea. On lean peacetime budgets Camp Pendleton's population was only the 9,000 Marines of

the First Division and the maintenance and schools staffs. On 2 July Gen. Douglas MacArthur, commanding American forces in the Far East, asked the Joint Chiefs of Staff to send him a Marine Regimental Combat Team and a supporting air group. Working around the clock with reinforcements continuously arriving, the Fifth Marines of the First Division shortly left for Korea, arriving in the Pusan Perimeter on 2 August. The rest of the division followed soon thereafter. President Harry S. Truman had authorized the Marines to call up reserves, and Congress had extended enlistments, so the manpower problem was quickly solved, but Maj. Gen. Oliver P. Smith, the new division commander, still had problems. He had to rebuild and expand his staff after part of it departed with the units sent to Pusan. Training time was short. Most training centered around weapons and physical fitness. Equipment came from the Marine Corps Depot at Barstow (q.v.).

In early August 1950 Women Marines returned to duty at Camp Pendleton. The departure first of the Pusan reinforcements, then of the rest of the First Division, did not end the chaos. Reservists, officers and enlisted, continued to pour in without knowing their future assignments or having anything to do while waiting for them. Many Marines were shipped out with abbreviated training, which triggered a visit of a presidential fact-finding panel. Satisfied that the training was all there was time for, the work of the panel marked a reduction in complaints.

Training did expand. The Training and Replacement Command constructed "combat town" for realistic training in a mock North Korean village. In the later war in Southeast Asia, new Marines trained against a Vietnamese village. Since that war both Marines and Army soldiers have an urban replica against which they can practice their street-fighting skills.

After the events of the Korean War, the landing at Inchon, advancing into North Korea, retreating from the Chosin Reservoir, and fighting in more static positions, the First Marine Division returned in 1955. Elements of the division deployed to Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, and to the Caribbean during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. But the division stayed home until the fighting in Vietnam heated up; then it deployed to that country between July 1965 and May 1966.

During the Korean War Maj. Gen. Oliver P. Smith returned from Korea to command Camp Pendleton in June 1951. Concerned with training Marines for possible combat in Korea, his administration activated the First Advanced Infantry Training Regiment to provide four weeks of combat training for new graduates of recruit training, still held in their recruit platoons. That winter the Marine Corps located its cold-weather training at what was to become the Mountain Warfare Training Center.

On 7 January 1953 the Third Marine Division was reactivated at Camp Pendleton. Because of the priority given to sending replacements to the First Marine Division, then fighting in Korea, the Third Division needed a long time to build to combat strength. While the process was going on, the division took advantage of Camp Pendleton's facilities to train intensively. During August 1953 the

division redeployed to Japan. Between 1950 and 1953 just under 200,000 Marines passed through Camp Pendleton to the Far East.

After the Korean War, the Marines settled into their peacetime training routines, such as practicing landing from the Pacific Ocean with Naval and Marine Air support from El Toro Marine Air Station (q.v.). At other times the Marines went to the Mojave Desert to participate in nuclear tests. The base commanders during those years had responsibility for housing the First Marine Division and related units, the Infantry Training Regiment, several schools, and a replacement unit. Relations with the local communities improved. But construction money for new permanent buildings was scarce, and the Marines had to continue using many World War II temporary structures.

A conflict with the civilian community now arose over the open land that makes up so much of Camp Pendleton. The first major loss came in 1964 when political pressure forced the Marine Corps to yield 84 acres on the northwest waterfront corner of the post at San Onofre for a nuclear power plant.

By 1965 Marines at Camp Pendleton were training in both guerrilla warfare and counterinsurgency operations. After the First Division deployed to Vietnam, the Marine Corps reactivated its Fifth Marine Division at Camp Pendleton for duty in Southeast Asia on 1 March 1966. The base received appropriations for new construction during those years, and the Schools Battalion rapidly increased both its courses, faculty, and student output. The primary need in Vietnam was for replacements, not new units. The Staging Battalion was the funnel of the pipeline for new Marines going to Vietnam. The Battalion had fifteen days to process the men and give them intensive combat training, including mock Vietnamese villages, tunnels, and trails.

The Twenty-seventh Marines of the Fifth Division became the first combat unit to return to Camp Pendleton in September 1968. Other units followed, and in April 1971 the First Marine Division returned.

As the war in Southeast Asia wound down, President Richard M. Nixon began his program to transfer custody of excess federal land to other owners. He started by offering approximately six miles of Camp Pendleton's beaches and 3,400 inland acres to the state of California for parks. After lengthy discussion the state leased five and one-half miles of beachfront and 2,380 inland acres for recreational purposes. Even after that loss of land the Marines have had to defend their need for large amphibious training areas.

The war in Southeast Asia ended in April 1975, and thousands of refugees were evacuated from Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam to the United States. On 26 April Brig. Gen. Paul G. Graham, the base commander, was notified that Camp Pendleton was being considered as a possible temporary camp to house the refugees coming to the United States. On the morning of 28 April Washington told General Graham that the first refugees would arrive at Marine Corps Air Station El Toro the next morning. Both base staff and the First Marine Division and First Force Service Regiment turned out in a total effort to provide housing, feeding, medical, communications and other facilities to house 18,000 people,

very few of whom spoke English. The Marines erected the basic necessary facilities in six days. The refugee camp was established in an isolated part of Camp Pendleton, and the Cambodians and Vietnamese were separated. Over 25,000 refugees passed through the refugee camps before the program officially ended on 15 November 1975.

Tensions in the larger society were reflected at Camp Pendleton at least from the time of the war in Southeast Asia on. Various Marine units emphasized civil disturbance control training in response to outside riots or demonstrations. In November 1976 there was a small racial clash between black and white Marines, which resulted in the discovery of a Ku Klux Klan chapter on base. That chapter was quickly disbanded.

Through the years Camp Pendleton has become important as a major amphibious training base where both new and experienced Marines can practice. Its conservation and environmental programs have not only preserved a large natural area amidst major population growth, but created problems by making its land desirable to developers. Responsive to both combat and humanitarian crises, Camp Pendleton remains a valuable part of the Marine Corps heritage.

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#### SAN DIEGO, CALIF., MARINE CORPS RECRUIT DEPOT, 1914-

Several geopolitical factors came together in the early twentieth century to make the harbor of San Diego, Calif., of interest to military and naval planners. San Diego is only twelve miles north of the Mexican border. The United States, between the war with Spain in 1898 and the opening of the Panama Canal in