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**A Brief History Of
THE MARINE CORPS BASE
and RECRUIT DEPOT
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA
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BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MARINE CORPS BASE AND RECRUIT DEPOT
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

By

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The Marine Corps Base at San Diego is surrounded by evidences of the Spanish heritage of southern California. Among the more conspicuous are the euphonious place names found everywhere, including the name San Diego itself, and the picturesque architecture that may be seen, not only in the city, but also in the permanent buildings of the Marine Corps post. This is a natural consequence of the fact that California was a Spanish possession for nearly three centuries. The region was claimed for Spain in 1542 by Juan Rodriquez Cabrillo, a Portuguese navigator in the services of Charles V and the first white man to see San Diego Bay. It remained under Spanish control until 1821, when Mexico won her independence from Spain. Thereafter, for about a quarter of a century, California was claimed by Mexico.

Geography and the westward expansion of the United States now brought the Marines into their first contact with San Diego. The town was seized by a landing party of seamen and Marines from the USS Cyane on 29 July 1846, shortly after war had broken out between the United States and Mexico. It was in this operation that the Stars and Stripes was first raised in southern California. Marines were also among the reinforcements sent early the following December to assist Brigadier General Stephen W. Kearny, USA, and his dragoons in completing the final portion of their march from Santa Fe, New Mexico, to San Diego. Despite the harassments of Andres Pico's lancers, Kearny succeeded in reaching San Diego on 12 December 1846. Hostilities in the California theater of operations ceased about a month later; and when the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo formally ended the war in 1848, Mexico ceded to the United States a large block of territory that included California.

Geography - an important element, as we have noted, in the foregoing events - has been a constant factor in the working out of San Diego's destiny with respect to the Marine Corps. Only 12 miles north of the Mexican border and possessed of an excellent harbor, the city readily recommended itself to the strategic eye as an expeditionary base on the west coast when the need for such a base became evident in the early twentieth century. San Diego was not only convenient to the Pacific approaches of Latin America, where it was apparent that trouble could be expected at intervals, but it could also serve advantageously as a port of embarkation for Hawaii and the Far East. Concrete action toward establishing a base there, however, awaited some precipitating event. Mexican

political instability was to provide the catalyst that returned the Marines to San Diego for the first time since the Mexican War and subsequently caused a permanent Marine Corps post to be established there.

This Mexican political instability resulted from the revolution of 1910, in which year, the dam of discontent with the regime of Porfirio Diaz at last broke. Though styled as president, Diaz was really a dictator; he had been succeeding himself in office continuously since 1884. His policies had strongly favored the upper classes, and by 1910, all the elements of political and social revolt were present, awaiting a leader. When Francisco Madero offered himself as the leader late in the year, the disaffected flocked to his standard, and Mexico was plunged into civil war.

Noting the turmoil in its neighbor to the south, the United States thought it expedient to make a display of armed strength, under the disguise of training exercises, as a broad hint to the Mexicans that United States nationals and property must be respected. The U. S. Army moved units on both coasts of the United States, and so did the Marine Corps. On the east coast, the 1st Provisional Brigade of Marines held training exercises at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, while a provisional regiment, commanded by Colonel Charles A. Doyen, was hurriedly assembled at the Navy Yard, Mare Island, California, for "expeditionary service on the Pacific coast." (1) Since the 1st Provisional Brigade comprised the 1st, 2d, and 3d Regiments, Doyen's unit was called the 4th Regiment - the first to be so designated. This earliest 4th Regiment was transported to North Island, in San Diego Bay, where it disembarked on 20 March 1911 and established a camp to which the name Camp Thomas was given. (2)

About two months later, the aged Diaz gave up the attempt to suppress the revolt against him and resigned on 25 May 1911 to go into exile. Following a period of some months as provisional president, Madero was elected to succeed the ousted dictator. Civil disorder having largely ceased after the fall of Diaz, part of Colonel Doyen's regiment at Camp Thomas was disbanded in June 1911; the remaining officers and men returned to their regular stations in July. (3)

Peace in Mexico was short-lived, however, for Madero had released revolutionary forces that were to keep that country in a state of ferment for many years. Madero himself, alienating numerous supporters by failing to make the reforms he had promised, soon lost out in the struggle for power. On 19 February 1913, he was forced to resign by General Victoriano Huerta, who had placed himself at the head of a conservative counterrevolution. Three days later, Madero was shot while in military custody.

Difficulties with the United States followed. Because of Huerta's usurpation and his responsibility, in President Woodrow Wilson's opinion, for the death of Madero, the United States refused to recognize Huerta as the legitimate head of government. As a result, relations between the two countries became strained. They worsened because of an incident at Tampico early in 1914, involving mistreatment of American naval personnel by Mexican officials and the refusal of the latter to fire a salute to the American flag in token of apology. Shortly afterward, information reached the United States that a vessel with a cargo of arms and munitions from Europe was bound for Veracruz. President Wilson ordered the Atlantic Fleet to prevent delivery of this cargo to the Mexicans, and a force of seamen and Marines was landed at Veracruz on 21 April 1914.

In these circumstances, it was considered desirable to have a United States force ready to land, if necessary, on the west coast of Mexico. The result was the organization of the second unit in the Marine Corps to be designated the 4th Regiment. This second 4th Regiment, destined soon to be claimed as "San Diego's Own," was assembled at Puget Sound and Mare Island Navy Yards in April 1914. Under the command of Colonel Joseph H. Pendleton, the regiment embarked in the USS South Dakota, West Virginia, and Jupiter and proceeded at once to the Gulf of California, where it stood by until the following July.(4) By this time, the prospect that it would need to land seemed remote, and the normal procedure would have been to disband it.

It was not disbanded, however, for at least two reasons. In the first place, about the time the regiment was being organized, Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin D. Roosevelt had made a trip to San Diego to inspect that area as a possible site for a Marine Corps "advance base station" for the west coast similar to the one being maintained for the east coast at Philadelphia. He had been favorably impressed with what he had seen.(5) When there seemed to be no further need to keep the 4th Regiment on board ships in the Gulf of California, the unit became available to make a beginning of a Marine Corps post at San Diego. In the second place, there was the possibility that the regiment might soon be needed again for expeditionary duty in the Far East.

For the return trip to United States waters, the Marines on board the Jupiter were transferred to the South Dakota and West Virginia. From the latter two vessels, the 4th Regiment disembarked at North Island early in July 1914 - two companies on the 7th and the remainder on the 10th. The Marines called the living quarters they constructed on the island Camp Howard.(6)

From this time forward, there were to be Marines stationed at San Diego. Though they were soon to shift their headquarters to the mainland, Camp Howard was thus the germ from which the present Marine Corps Recruit Depot grew.

The 4th Regiment remained at Camp Howard only until the following December, at which time, it was ordered to exposition duty. The first ship had passed through the Panama Canal in August 1914, and both San Francisco and San Diego planned to mark the opening of the new era in maritime intercourse between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans with major celebrations in 1915 - San Francisco with the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, San Diego with the Panama-California Exposition. The 1st Battalion of the 4th Regiment was ordered to San Francisco and the 2d Battalion to San Diego, each to establish and maintain a model camp and to provide in various other ways a Marine Corps exhibit as part of the display.

The 2d Battalion left Camp Howard first. Its field and staff and the 25th Company moved to San Diego, presumably to the area in Balboa Park, now called the Palisades, on 11 December 1914. These units were joined by the battalion's three remaining companies - the 26th, 27th, and 28th - on 15, 16, and 17 December, respectively. The regimental field and staff moved on the 21st; it was soon, if not from the first, to be housed in one of the exposition buildings (the one then called the Science and Education Building). The next day, 22 December, when the 1st Battalion's staff and its three companies - the 31st, 32d, and 34th - boarded the USS West Virginia for transportation to the Marine Barracks, Mare Island Navy Yard, Camp Howard ceased to exist. From Mare Island, the 1st Battalion would proceed to the San Francisco exposition later in the winter.(7)

On 19 December 1914, Colonel Pendleton reported by telegram to Marine Corps Headquarters that the Marine Barracks, San Diego, had been established that date.(8) Regimental headquarters was kept separate from the post at this time, and the first commanding officer of the latter was Major William N. McKelvy, who was also the commanding officer of the 2d Battalion, 4th Regiment.(9)

As yet, the Marine Corps installation at San Diego was in a tentative or temporary status, however. No land had been acquired for a permanent station, and, apparently, no steps in that direction were being taken by the Navy Department at this time. But with Colonel Pendleton the senior officer at San Diego, this matter was not allowed to be overlooked or forgotten. Impressed from the first with the unusual suitability of that area as a location for an expeditionary base, Colonel Pendleton

had given a public address on this subject to a group of local citizens as early as September 1914, and it appears that he also submitted one or more recommendations on the subject to Brigadier General Commandant George Barnett in the course of the months that followed.(10)

In any case, progress towards a permanent base began to be made in 1915. In that year, Assistant Secretary of the Navy Roosevelt paid another visit to San Diego - to see the exposition, but also to inspect various specific sites that might serve for a Marine base.(11) After Roosevelt's return to Washington, General Barnett received orders from the Navy Department to inspect the San Diego locations and to report his opinion as to the one most suitable. This he did in August, his official report being dated the 26th of that month. Of the possibilities shown him, he wrote, the only one worthy of consideration was a certain 232.24-acre tract on San Diego Bay owned by the San Diego Securities Company. Though North Coronado Beach Island would be ideal for the purpose contemplated, the general said, the price asked for that property put it out of the question. On the other hand, the 232.24-acre tract could be bought for approximately \$250,000. This land was above high tide, he observed, and was large enough in area in its existing condition for both immediate needs and those of some time to come.(12)

The question now before the Navy Department had two parts: (1) whether, a permanent base should be established on the coast of southern California, and (2) where, if authorized, the base should be located. In addition to General Barnett's report, considerations bearing on both parts of the question supervened during the year 1915.

The need for such a base was underscored by the fact that no less than twice during that year internal conditions in Mexico made it necessary to withdraw part of the 4th Regiment from exposition duty and send it on an expeditionary mission along the west coast of that country. First, the 2d Battalion, less the 29th Company, was absent from San Diego from 17 June to 10 August.(13) Then, in November, the entire 1st Battalion was pulled out of San Francisco and joined by two companies from the 2d Battalion at San Diego; Colonel Pendleton himself, with his regimental staff, went along with this force, which was still watchfully waiting in the Gulf of California at the end of the year.(14)

As for the location of the base, should the latter be approved, the officials of San Diego contributed a new factor for consideration in the fall of 1915; they formally offered the Navy Department 500 acres of municipally owned tidelands

adjoining the 232 acres of privately owned land if the Department should purchase the latter. Josephus Daniels, the Secretary of the Navy, acknowledged receipt of this offer in November.(15)

1916 The question of whether a permanent force of Marines should be maintained in southern California was submitted to the Navy General Board; and by the first week of January 1916, the Board had so recommended, and Secretary Daniels had approved. On 8 January, Daniels wrote to General Barnett, informing him of the Board's action and of his own approval and stating that San Diego was considered to be well fitted in every way to be the station for the permanent force of Marines thus authorized. The Secretary then went on to direct General Barnett to "take the necessary steps to establish on a suitable site in San Diego a permanent Marine Corps post which will be designated as the Marine Barracks, San Diego, California," and to assign to it for permanent duty "such forces of the Marine Corps as are now, or may hereafter become, available on the west coast of the United States."(16) On the same date, General Barnett addressed a letter to Major McKelvy, appointing him the first commanding officer of the permanent Marine barracks at San Diego.(17)

Thus, the 4th Regiment, though well over half of it was actually on expeditionary duty in the Gulf of California at this time, was permanently assigned to San Diego. At the same time, the Marine Barracks was established as a permanent administrative entity. Still located in Balboa Park, it was now placed on the list of posts required to submit reports and staff returns through the assistant adjutant and inspector, Headquarters, Department of the Pacific, in San Francisco.(18) A separate barracks detachment was not provided, however, until several months later.

This last development took place when the 4th Regiment was ordered to expeditionary duty in Santo Domingo. The absent units had returned to San Diego on 3 February (at which time, Colonel Pendleton had relieved Major McKelvy as commanding officer of the Marine Barracks), (19) but the complete regiment was to serve at its newly designated permanent home for only a few months. A revolution in Santo Domingo soon created such disturbed conditions in that country that Rear Admiral William B. Caperton, commanding the naval forces in the Haitian-Santo Domingo area, requested reinforcements. The 4th Regiment was so assigned. A barracks detachment of 3 officers and 50 enlisted men, under Second Lieutenant Selden B. Kennedy, was now detailed from its personnel to remain behind at San Diego to operate the post.(20)

On 6 June 1916, the 4th Regiment departed by rail for New Orleans, whence it would proceed to Santo Domingo in the USS Hancock.(21) "San Diego's own" regiment was not to return to its home city until 1924.

By the time the 4th Regiment left for Santo Domingo, legislation to authorize the purchase of the 232-acre tract on San Diego Bay for a permanent Marine Corps expeditionary base was well on the way to final passage by Congress. Representative William Kettner, of the Congressional district that included San Diego, had introduced a bill for this purpose in January 1916 (22) - the same month in which Secretary of the Navy Daniels had directed General Barnett to establish the permanent Marine Barracks, San Diego. The provisions of Kettner's bill were incorporated into the naval appropriation act, approved 29 August 1916. Under this act, the Secretary of the Navy was authorized to purchase the tract "for advance base, expeditionary and aviation purposes, to cost not exceeding \$250,000," on condition that the city of San Diego donated 500 acres of adjoining tideland "known as Dutch Flat...."(23)

The completion of the many details connected with the proof and conveyance of title to the two parcels of land required a period of months. All this work was at length finished, however, and the acquisition of the land by the Navy Department was consummated on 15 June 1917.(24)

The plans for the base, one of the largest projects ever authorized for the Marine Corps, called for "barracks to accommodate about 1,700 marines,...an administrative building, gymnasium, quartermaster storehouse, expeditionary storehouse, power plant, with laundry and bakery attached, dispensary, guardhouse, officers' quarters, water supply and sewerage systems, electric lighting, heating, and refrigerating systems, a sea wall, a shipping pier, and all the other accessories necessary to make the base complete in every respect."(25) The estimated cost was about four or five million dollars.(26)

A great amount of preliminary dredging and filling was necessary, and this went forward during World War I, which the United States had entered by the time the title to the land was cleared. This work continued after the war, and it was not until 15 March 1919 that ground-breaking ceremonies were held to inaugurate the first permanent construction on the site - six barracks buildings.(27)

Later the same year, the Navy Department took the first step toward the formal organization of an expeditionary force to occupy the base when it should be ready. In September 1919, Brigadier General Pendleton was ordered to proceed to San Diego to activate Headquarters, 2d Advanced Base Force. General Pendleton had served as commander of U. S. forces in Santo Domingo until October 1918. He had then assumed command of the

Marine Barracks, Parris Island, South Carolina, on 11 November 1918. It was from this post that he was detached on 25 September 1919 to duty at San Diego. He arrived at the Marine barracks in that city on 1 October and activated his new headquarters the same date.(28)

While construction of the base was going forward, the post at San Diego continued to be located in Balboa Park. Here, during the war, the barracks detachment had grown from the platoon-sized organization left by the 4th Regiment to about 10 officers and 300 men. In addition, one or two companies had been attached from time to time. After the war, there was some reduction in the size of the barracks detachment, but a senior officer remained in charge; when General Pendleton arrived, the post was under the command of Colonel John F. McGill, and two skeletonized companies, the 152d and 209th, were attached. At the end of October 1919, General Pendleton's first month at San Diego, the barracks detachment had 7 officers and 183 enlisted men, the 152d Company had 1 officer and 20 enlisted men, and the 209th Company had 1 officer and 17 enlisted men. Headquarters, 2d Advanced Base Force, was still very embryonic, with only two officers and four enlisted men. In addition to the foregoing, there was a Marine detachment of 1 officer and 41 enlisted men at the Naval Air Station, North Island, which the Navy Department had activated during the war.(29)

For nearly five years from this time, General Pendleton remained in charge of Marine Corps activities in the San Diego area. During this half decade, there were several events of importance from an organizational point of view. The 7th Regiment, which had been organized for duty in Cuba during World War I, had been disbanded in 1919. On 1 April 1921, the 1st Battalion of the 7th Regiment was reactivated at San Diego as a component of the 2d Advanced Base Force. The following November, the latter was redesignated the 5th Brigade, and on 1 December, the 1st Battalion, 7th Regiment, became the 1st Separate Battalion, 5th Brigade.(30)

These organizational changes led up to an administrative event of the first importance. On 1 December 1921, the new post was placed in commission, with Headquarters 5th Brigade as the senior command present.(31) Presumably, this marked the first occupation of the new buildings.(32)

Another event of major importance occurred somewhat less than two years later. In the summer of 1923, the Marine Corps recruit depot for the western half of the United States moved from the Marine Barracks, Mare Island Navy Yard, California, to the new post at San Diego, debarking from the USS Sirius at the latter place on 12 August.(33)

This recruit depot had been one of the original installations of its kind when it was established at Mare Island in mid-1911 along with another at the Puget Sound Navy Yard and

still others on the east coast. In 1912, Headquarters Marine Corps, concluding that one large recruit depot on the west coast would be more efficient than the two smaller ones, had closed the installation at Puget Sound;(34) from that date until it moved in 1923, the depot at Mare Island had served as the training place for all recruits from the western part of the United States. It came to San Diego as a component of the larger command there, but it was destined to grow so much in the years ahead that it would eventually crowd all other Marine Corps functions from the limits of the post on the bay and, finally, give its own name to the post.

The recruit depot had been at San Diego approximately six months before the post received the designation it was to bear for the next 24 years. On 1 March 1924, the installation, which had materialized as a result of the vision and efforts of General Pendleton and others, was officially named the Marine Corps Base, Naval Operating Base, San Diego.(35)

And now the time came for General Pendleton to withdraw from an active role in the affairs of the base. More than any other one individual he had been connected with the transformation of the idea into reality, and when he reached the retirement age of 64 on 2 June 1924, he could step back with the satisfying knowledge that the groundwork was solidly laid. He was to live until 4 February 1942, an active and public-spirited citizen of Coronado, across the bay from San Diego, and was thus to see the developments of nearly 18 years following his retirement.(36) But like Count Cavour, the great nineteenth-century unifier of Italy, who is reported to have said with satisfaction on his deathbed, "Italy is made," General Pendleton could say on the day that he retired, "The San Diego Marine Corps Base is made." Though growth would occur, the fundamentals had been established.

As a matter of fact, no major construction was to take place after General Pendleton's retirement until 1939, though minor improvements were made. Among the latter was the beautification of the grounds. Since there was a high content of alkali and other salts in the sand dredged up from the channel in San Diego Bay and used to build up the tidelands, it was necessary to haul in dirt to cover this sand in areas where grass was to be sown or plants or trees set out.(37) Minor construction work was also done, such as the completion of the paving of the parade ground in 1930.(38)

Major development of the base, however, was described as being at a halt in January 1926.(39) As of that date, the following were listed as completed: a building converted for administration, a large power plant, an ice plant, a laundry, a bakery, carpentry and machine shops, a quartermaster storehouse, seven barracks buildings, and five sets of officer's quarters. One writer gave the total area of the reservation

as "600 odd acres." (40) A more specific figure, 676 acres, was given by others in 1932 and 1933. On this land in 1933, there were 23 buildings. Though more than four million dollars had been spent on the base by this time, it was estimated, in terms of the original plans, to be still only about 60 percent complete. (41) But, as the 1926 writer pointed out, the important installations were there, and expansion in case of emergency could readily take place. A sudden large increase in personnel would require no more than the construction of a cantonment. (42)

Recreational facilities had not been neglected in the development thus far. Free motion pictures were shown three times weekly, and the Marines could play baseball, football, basketball, tennis, and handball and could box, wrestle, or workout in a small gymnasium. Other entertainment was provided at intervals by smokers, band concerts, and dances; music for the latter was furnished by an orchestra consisting of several members of the Post Band. (43)

The 4th Regiment was welcomed back from Santo Domingo to its home city and station, with appropriate celebrations, on 25 August 1924. (44) It soon absorbed the other infantry troops being maintained at the base for expeditionary purposes, but its strength was allowed to decrease to skeleton size in the course of the following year. (45) Even so, some of its men were detailed by the base commander to special duty to assist the base operating force, which, at this time, consisted of two companies with strengths inadequate to cope with the responsibilities assigned. (46)

Toward the end of 1926, the men of the 4th Regiment had an opportunity for something more exciting than garrison routine. A recrudescence of robberies of the United States mails, featured by a particularly brazen and bloody attack on a mail truck at Elizabeth, New Jersey, on 14 October 1926, led to a request by the Post Office Department for the services of the Marine Corps to bring the situation under control. The Marines had been called upon once before to guard the mails, when a similar situation had developed in the fall of 1921, and they had quickly put a stop to the robberies. There had been virtually no incidents after the Marines had entered the picture on that occasion, and after they had been withdrawn in the spring of 1922, the Post Office Department, having provided itself with civilian armed guards, had been able to carry on satisfactorily for some four years.

In 1926, when the Marines were called on the second time, the country was divided into an eastern and a western mail-guard zone, with Brigadier General Logan Feland commanding in the east and Brigadier General Smedley D. Butler in the west. Most of the personnel for the eastern zone came from the east-coast expeditionary force at Quantico, Virginia. The western

mail-guard zone was manned by the west-coast expeditionary force from San Diego - that is to say, by the 4th Regiment.

Although it was a change from life at the base, mail-guard duty on this occasion proved to be scarcely more exciting. No incidents occurred after the Marines began guarding trucks, railway cars, and various strategic points in the handling of the mail.(47) These quiet conditions, however, made the withdrawal of the Marines feasible sooner than would normally have been the case, when a need for their services on expeditionary duty outside the United States arose at the beginning of the new year.

The early withdrawal was considered necessary because of conditions in Nicaragua and China, where American interests were endangered by civil strife. The east-coast expeditionary force, reinforced, was sent to Nicaragua, where, under the command of General Feland, it was designated the 2d Brigade. Similarly, the west-coast expeditionary force (4th Regiment), reinforced by various other units, was to become the 3d Brigade in China, commanded by General Butler.

The China-bound units were assembled and embarked at San Diego in the largest operation of this kind at that base before World War II. The first contingent sent out consisted of the 4th Regiment (less the 2d Battalion), which left for Shanghai on 3 February 1927 aboard the USS Chaumont. It was thought at the time that these troops would be sufficient, but reinforcements were soon requested. Thereupon, the 6th Regiment (less the 3d Battalion), the 3d Brigade Headquarters and Headquarters Company, and Service Company, one battery of the 10th Regiment (Artillery), and a Marine aviation squadron were embarked on board the USS Henderson, which sailed from San Diego on 7 April. General Butler had already arrived in Shanghai on 25 March, having sailed from San Francisco, where he had maintained his headquarters while commanding the Western Mail-Guard Zone.

Additional units were sent on board the SS President Grant, a commercial vessel chartered for the purpose, to Olongapo, Philippine Islands, to be held in reserve: but they soon afterwards joined the 3d Brigade at Shanghai. These units included the 3d Battalion, 6th Regiment, the 2d Battalion, 4th Regiment, the 1st Battalion, (less one battery), 10th Regiment, one light tank platoon, the 5th Company of Engineers, and part of another Marine aviation squadron, the remainder of which was to be picked up at Guam en route.(48)

In all, more than 4,000 Marines were staged and embarked at the Marine Corps Base, San Diego, for this operation.(49) As a result, the base was to be short of personnel for some years thereafter, with nothing approaching an expeditionary force in being. Though San Diego was still the permanent home

of the 4th Regiment, that organization was never to return. It was the only component of the 3d Brigade that had not been disbanded by mid-1929.(50) Left in Shanghai when the rest of the 3d Brigade moved to Tientsin in 1927, it contributed greatly to the peace of mind of the residents of the International Settlement.

Ten years later, history almost repeated itself, when the Headquarters 2d Brigade (Brigadier General J. C. Beaumont) and the 6th Marines, with a battery of antiaircraft artillery, were rushed out to Shanghai in August 1937 from the Marine Corps Base at San Diego. Their mission was to help 4th Marines and certain European troops (principally British and Italian) keep the warring Chinese and Japanese out of the rich International Settlement. By the following February, the fighting had passed west of Shanghai, and the Brigade Headquarters and 6th Marines returned to San Diego. The 4th Marines stayed in Shanghai until November 1941. By then, only a week or so before the Japanese attack on the United States in World War II, the war clouds had become so threatening that the 4th Marines was evacuated to Olongapo, on Subic Bay in the Philippines, lest it be trapped in China.

The outbreak of the war found the regiment at Subic Bay, and by Christmas of 1941, it had been transferred to the command of General MacArthur and assigned by him to defend the beaches of Corregidor.(51) When the last bastion of the Philippines fell, the 4th Marines ceased to exist as an official unit of the Marine Corps. Its traditions were to be carried on, however, by a new 4th Marines organized early in 1944 from Marine raider battalions in the South Pacific. The new 4th Marines was to capture Emirau, in the St. Matthias Group of the Admiralties, in March 1944, to land on Guam the following summer, and later to form a component of the 6th Marine Division when it helped take Okinawa.(52)

Though the 4th Marines was never to come back to San Diego, the base at that city was to have a prominent role in the events of the 1930's, as the Marine Corps took the necessary steps to realize one of the most important developments of its entire evolution as an amphibious force.

The initial step became possible as a result of the withdrawal by 1933 of the last of the force sent to Nicaragua. Sufficient officers and men were then available for a major reorganization of the Corps with respect to its mission and its relationship with the Navy in carrying out this mission. Major General John Russell drafted for the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Major General Ben H. Fuller, a set of recommendations setting forth the form this reorganization should take. Approved by the Commandant and the Secretary of the Navy, these recommendations were promulgated on 7 December 1933 as Navy Department General Order No. 241, creating the Fleet Marine

Force. The key provision of the order was that the Fleet Marine Force should be an integral part of the fleet. Its establishment meant that the Marine Corps had "finally and unequivocally committed itself to the doctrine that its paramount mission in wartime was to serve the fleet by seizing bases for naval operations and in peacetime to prepare for the successful execution of that function."(53)

The Fleet Marine Force was to have two principal components: one on the east coast, at Quantico, Virginia, and the other on the west coast, at San Diego. The headquarters was established at Quantico in 1933. It was doubtlessly advantageous during the formative years of the new command that its headquarters should be near Washington and Marine Corps Headquarters; but by 1935, General Russell, who was now Commandant, was convinced that it had become far more important for the headquarters of the Fleet Marine Force to be in close contact with the fleet. Since the bulk of the fleet was based on the west coast, the next step was obvious. Headquarters Fleet Marine Force was transferred to the Marine Corps Base, San Diego, in September 1935.(54)

Also in 1935, the east- and west-coast components of the Fleet Marine Force were given the status of brigades - the 1st and 2d Brigades, respectively. As of 30 June 1935, the component at San Diego consisted of the 6th Marines (less the 3d Battalion), the 2d Battalion (less Battery F) of the 10th Marines, and Aircraft Two.(55) With the approach of war, the 1st and 2d Marine Brigades were to become the 1st and 2d Marine Divisions in February 1941.(56)

Meanwhile, the base had been functioning in the other half of its dual capacity; that is, while it operated as an expeditionary base and (later) as one of the Fleet Marine Force Bases, it was also operating as a recruit depot.

The length of the recruit training period and the amount of time apportioned to various subjects varied from time to time; but since the essentials did not change, a good idea regarding the nature of the training given recruits at San Diego in the twenties and thirties can be obtained from the program in effect in 1932.

In that year, the course for recruits was of eight weeks' duration. The first three weeks were devoted to basic indoctrination in such subjects as Marine Corps history and customs and to drill, first without arms then with arms. Following this, three weeks were spent on the rifle range, after which the final two weeks were used for instruction in the bayonet and practice in guard duty, company drills, ceremonies, etc.(57)

After basic training, selected recruits were given four additional weeks of instruction in the Sea School, which was

organized in 1923 shortly after the recruit depot moved to San Diego. Here, the purpose was to prepare them for duty with one of the Marine detachments on board vessels of the fleet. They were taught elementary gun drill, military and naval etiquette, duties of orderlies and messengers aboard ship, functions they might have in emergency drills at sea like fire, abandon ship, or collision, what the routine would be like aboard ship, the fact that ships have decks rather than floors, overheads instead of ceilings, and bulkheads in lieu of walls, that right is starboard and left is port, that kitchens are galleys, that fountains are scuttlebutts, that permission to smoke is conveyed by the statement that the smoking lamp is lit, and various other things strange and perhaps wonderful to most landlubbers' ears.(58)

Like the curriculum of basic training, that of the Sea School varied from time to time in duration and emphasis. In 1932, it was a four weeks' course, but the demand for Marine replacements in the fleet was so urgent at that time that most men completed no more than one week there before being transferred to a ship. It even happened, occasionally, that men with no Sea School instruction at all were sent to the fleet, but only when it was unavoidable.(59)

By 1940, it was possible to enforce higher standards of preparation for sea duty, and prior to such assignment, all enlisted Marines who had not had previous sea duty were required to pass the course at the Sea School. The majority of the students still came from the recruit depot, but now, there was a sprinkling of noncoms among them. The requirements for entrance, which varied with the exigencies of the service, were, in general, the following: (1) the man, if a recruit, must stand in the upper third of his platoon at the recruit depot, (2) be recommended by his instructor, (3) be at least 69 inches tall, (4) be qualified with the rifle, and (5) must express a desire to go to sea.(60)

In 1940, the course lasted only three weeks, with an attendance at any one time of about 90 men. Although the course was scaled to the average intelligence and every effort was made to help students who applied themselves, as of June 1940, about 13 percent of those accepted for entrance were failing to make the grade.(61)

The approach of war resulted in a great enlargement of the facilities of the base. Emergency expansion of these facilities began in September 1939, the month in which World War II broke out in Europe, and resulted in the construction of a base depot of 27 storehouses, a defense-battalion barracks, mess facilities, hundreds of 16-men huts for the recruit depot, a post exchange, a recruit parade ground, a neuropsychiatric building, dental and dispensary buildings, new roads, and even a railroad. Later construction included

an addition to the officers' mess, some bachelor officers' quarters, several handball and tennis courts, a long-needed swimming pool, an amphibian tractor shed, a communications school, a new administration building, and a new auditorium. The last two structures were ready for use in January and February of 1943.(62)

Despite the new construction begun in 1939, the facilities of the Marine Corps Base were inadequate to enable it to continue in its dual capacity as a Fleet Marine Force base and a recruit depot. Bordered as it was on the north by a developed part of the city of San Diego, on the east by the municipal airport (Lindbergh Field), and on the west by the Naval Training Station, it could obtain continuous acreage for expansion only by reclaiming tidelands in San Diego Bay, a process that had gone as far as it could. It had been necessary from the beginning to maintain a rifle range off the base, and a small tract of land a few miles northeast of La Jolla had been rented from the city of San Diego for this purpose through the years. In 1934, additional land was rented from San Diego in the Kearny Mesa area, 10 or 12 miles north and a little east of the city, to be used mostly for artillery and machine-gun practice. After World War II began in Europe, the Marine Corps began to construct buildings in the Kearny Mesa area, referring to them collectively as Camp Holcomb. By the middle of 1941, the President had declared an unlimited national emergency. Volunteers were pouring into the recruit depot, the 2d Division of the Fleet Marine Force had moved from the Marine Corps Base to the camp in the Kearny Mesa area, and the name of the camp had been changed from Camp Holcomb to Camp Elliott.(63)

During the months after the attack on Pearl Harbor had brought the United States into the conflict, the training of individual replacements and units for duty against the Japanese in the Pacific was greatly expanded. In March 1942, the Navy Department announced the acquisition of approximately 132,000 acres of the Rancho Santa Margarita y Las Flores, which had once belonged to the Pico brothers, Andres and Pio, prominent in California history before, during, and after the War with Mexico, 1846-48. The construction of Camp Joseph H. Pendleton was immediately begun on a part of this huge reservation, some eight miles from Oceanside, some 45 miles north of San Diego. Camp Pendleton, which was ready to be occupied by troops the following September, was to provide large scale tactical training for organizations before they were shipped out to the Pacific; its immense area and varied terrain were near ideal for this purpose.(64) Camp Elliott, which by September 1942 had become the home of the Fleet Marine Force Training Center, West Coast, had the principal mission of training individual replacements for combat units overseas.(65)

This expansion, of course, was outside the limits of the Marine Corps Base proper, and it was not confined to the two installations mentioned. There were, for example, Camp C. J. Miller, which was built at the former Del Mar Race Track and which was used for a concentrated athletic and conditioning program; Camp Gillespie, which opened in May 1942 to give paratrooper training to Marines, who thus became "Paramarines;" Camp Dunlap, near Niland, California, for special artillery training; and the Marine Corps Air Station, El Toro, for instruction in aviation.

During the war, practically all instruction after basic training thus came to be furnished in installations supplementary to, or at least separate from, the Marine Corps Base proper. Basic training itself, shortened to seven weeks, continued to be provided by the latter, and the Sea School continued to function there. In addition, the Marine Corps Base operated the Signal School, which taught radio and field-telephone work, the First Sergeants' School, and the Motor-Transport School, which conducted a mechanics' course and a course for drivers (principally driving without lights at night and driving in convoy).

Training in the San Diego area was never to shrink back to its prewar dimensions. Preparation for service with the Fleet Marine Force was to remain separate from the Marine Corps Base proper. Most of the installations that sprang up during the war were to be closed in the postwar period, but Camp Pendleton and the Marine Corps Air Station, El Toro, in particular, were to be made permanent and to constitute important posts of the Marine Corps establishment after World War II. In addition to its other activities, Camp Pendleton was to operate various schools in the postwar period; for example, by mid-1947, the Communications School and the Cooks' and Bakers' School had been transferred to it.(67)

With the surrender of Japan in 1945, it became necessary to set up a procedure in the San Diego area to help demobilize wartime strength of the Marine Corps. At the Marine Corps Base, the 1st Separation Company and the West Coast Reclassification and Redistribution Center were set up to handle casualties, while Camp Pendleton processed units returning from the Pacific for demobilization. In September 1946, upon transfer of the 1st Separation Company to the West Coast Reclassification and Redistribution Center, all separation work at the Marine Corps Base was consolidated.(68)

After World War II, as during the war, the principal activity on the Marine Corps Base proper was that of the recruit depot. At length, official cognizance was taken of this fact in the form of redesignation of the base, effective 1 January 1948, as the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego.(69)

This step had been taken 13 months earlier with respect to the east-coast recruit depot, when the Marine Barracks, Parris Island, had been redesignated the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island. With this change at San Diego, the two coasts showed a symmetry in Marine Corps organization they had never possessed previously. Just as the two recruit depots were now balanced against each other, Camp Pendleton had an opposite number on the east coast in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, and the Marine Corps Air Station at El Toro, California, matched the similar station at Cherry Point, North Carolina.

When the Communists made their attack in Korea on 25 June 1950, the San Diego area was ready to do its share to meet the emergency. The Recruit Depot, which by this time had lengthened the basic-training course to about 10 weeks, streamlined the course to eight weeks and began turning out as many as 14 platoons at a time as compared with the two or so previously.(70) The 1st Marine Division, based at Camp Pendleton, and the 1st Marine Air Wing at El Toro, were readied for action, and both these posts became training places for reservists called to active duty.

Few physical changes have occurred at the Recruit Depot at San Diego in recent years, but as at Parris Island, training procedures and techniques have been modified to produce the best possible type of recruit graduate. Drill instructors have been picked with extreme care and thoroughly indoctrinated in the procedures required to assure the proper mental and physical training of each recruit. Three instructors are provided each recruit platoon, with each DI receiving additional pay of \$30 per month to help compensate for the long hours the job requires. The drill instructor utilizes example and other leadership techniques to gradually bring his platoon from the recruit status to that of a Marine ready for whatever may be required of him. Like Parris Island, the San Diego Recruit Depot produces Marines possessed of the best of past experience together with the mental and physical dexterity provided by the latest Marine instructional techniques and equipment.(71)

Since Korea, the Marine Corps Recruit Depot at San Diego and its allied installations have not been called on to meet any special emergency. But they stand ready, with the rest of the Marine Corps, to do their part any time in honoring the tradition of their service as "the first to fight."

COMMANDERS OF MARINE CORPS ACTIVITIES AT
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA, 1914-1962

Marine Barracks, U. S. Naval Station,
San Diego, California

Maj	William N. McKelvey	19 Dec 1914 - 16 Jun 1915
	None designated	17 Jun 1915 - 13 Jul 1915
Capt	Ellis B. Miller	14 Jul 1915 - 7 Jan 1916
Maj	William N. McKelvey	8 Jan 1916 - 2 Feb 1916
Col	Joseph H. Pendleton	3 Feb 1916 - 5 Jun 1916
2dLt	Seldon B. Kennedy	6 Jun 1916 - 15 Jun 1916
1stLt	Seldon B. Kennedy	16 Jun 1916 - 28 Sep 1916
2dLt	Earl C. Long	29 Sep 1916 - 22 Oct 1916
1stLt	Earl C. Long	23 Oct 1916 - 18 Dec 1916
Capt	Thomas C. Turner	19 Dec 1916 - 21 Jan 1917
1stLt	Earl C. Long	22 Jan 1917 - 28 Jan 1917
Capt	Thomas C. Turner	29 Jan 1917 - 15 Mar 1917
Maj	Thomas C. Turner	16 Mar 1917 - 18 Oct 1917
LtCol	Carl Gamborg-Andresen	19 Oct 1917 - 14 Oct 1918
Maj	David M. Randall	15 Oct 1918 - 4 Apr 1919
Col	John F. McGill	5 Apr 1919 - 25 Jul 1921
	None designated	26 Jul 1921 - 24 Oct 1921
LtCol	James McE. Huey	25 Oct 1921 - 3 Jan 1922
Maj	Eugene P. Fortson	4 Jan 1922 - 7 Mar 1922
LtCol	Giles Bishop, Jr.	8 Mar 1922 - 29 Feb 1924

Marine Corps Base,
San Diego, California

MajGen	Joseph H. Pendleton	1 Mar 1924 - 31 Mar 1924
Col	James McE. Huey	1 Apr 1924 - 11 May 1924
MajGen	Joseph H. Pendleton	12 May 1924 - 1 Jun 1924
Col	John T. Myers	2 Jun 1924 - 9 Apr 1925
LtCol	William H. Pritchett	10 Apr 1925 - 12 May 1925
Col	John T. Myers	13 May 1925 - 31 Oct 1925
Col	Alexander S. Williams	1 Nov 1925 - 24 Feb 1926
BriGen	Smedley D. Butler	25 Feb 1926 - 12 Mar 1926
LtCol	William H. Pritchett	13 Mar 1926 - 9 May 1926
BriGen	Smedley D. Butler	10 May 1926 - 3 Mar 1927
Maj	Benjamin A. Moeller	4 Mar 1927 - 31 Mar 1927
LtCol	William H. Pritchett	1 Apr 1927 - 8 Aug 1927
Col	Charles H. Lyman	9 Aug 1927 - 24 Jun 1928
Maj	Benjamin A. Moeller	25 Jun 1928 - 9 Jul 1928
BriGen	Dion Williams	10 Jul 1928 - 4 Apr 1929
Col	Harry R. Lay	5 Apr 1929 - 30 Jan 1930
BriGen	Robert H. Dunlap	31 Jan 1930 - 25 Dec 1930
BriGen	John H. Russell	26 Dec 1930 - 22 Nov 1931
Col	Charles H. Lyman	23 Nov 1931 - 6 Dec 1931
BriGen	Frederick L. Bradman	7 Dec 1931 - 29 Jan 1932

Col	Harry R. Lay	30 Jan 1932	-	26 Feb 1932
BriGen	Frederick L. Bradman	27 Feb 1932	-	17 Dec 1933
Col	Rush R. Wallace	18 Dec 1933	-	6 Jan 1934
BriGen	Frederick L. Bradman	7 Jan 1934	-	24 Mar 1934
Col	Rush R. Wallace	25 Mar 1934	-	6 Jun 1934
BriGen	Frederick L. Bradman	7 Jun 1934	-	30 Apr 1935
Col	Rush R. Wallace	1 May 1935	-	5 May 1935
BriGen	Douglas C. McDougal	6 May 1935	-	29 Jan 1937
Col	Alley D. Rorex	30 Jan 1937	-	25 Feb 1937
BriGen	Douglas C. McDougal	26 Feb 1937	-	18 May 1937
MajGen	Louis Mac. Little	19 May 1937	-	14 Mar 1938
LtCol	Harry L. Smith	15 Mar 1938	-	12 Apr 1938
MajGen	Louis Mac. Little	13 Apr 1938	-	15 Aug 1939
BriGen	Clayton B. Vogel	16 Aug 1939	-	31 Aug 1939
BriGen	Richard P. Williams	1 Sep 1939	-	19 Sep 1939
BriGen	William P. Upshur	20 Sep 1939	-	7 Dec 1941
Col	William H. Rupertus	8 Dec 1941	-	18 Mar 1942
Col	Matthew H. Kingman	19 Mar 1942	-	2 Apr 1942
Col	James L. Underhill	3 Apr 1942	-	18 Aug 1942
BriGen	James L. Underhill	19 Aug 1942	-	31 Mar 1943
Col	William C. James	1 Apr 1943	-	31 Jan 1944
Col	Roswell Winans	1 Feb 1944	-	15 Feb 1944
Col	William C. James	16 Feb 1944	-	28 Mar 1944
Col	Roswell Winans	29 Mar 1944	-	11 Apr 1944
Col	William C. James	12 Apr 1944	-	16 Apr 1944
Col	Roswell Winans	17 Apr 1944	-	26 Apr 1944
BriGen	Matthew H. Kingman	27 Apr 1944	-	8 Aug 1944
BriGen	Archie F. Howard	9 Aug 1944	-	12 Jun 1945
Col	John Groff	13 Jun 1945	-	12 Jul 1945
MajGen	Earl C. Long	13 Jul 1945	-	23 Jan 1946
Col	Miles R. Thacker	24 Jan 1946	-	25 Apr 1946
Col	Harry B. Liversedge	26 Apr 1946	-	2 Jun 1946
Col	Gilder D. Jackson, Jr.	3 Jan 1946	-	28 Jul 1946
BriGen	Leo D. Hermle	29 Jul 1946	-	5 Dec 1946
MajGen	Leo D. Hermle	6 Dec 1946	-	31 Dec 1947

Marine Corps Recruit Depot,
San Diego, California

MajGen	Leo D. Hermle	1 Jan 1948	-	31 Aug 1949
MajGen	William T. Clement	1 Sep 1949	-	21 Apr 1952
BriGen	William J. Whaling	22 Apr 1952	-	12 Sep 1952
MajGen	John T. Walker	13 Apr 1952	-	30 Jan 1954
MajGen	John C. McQueen	31 Jan 1954	-	25 Jul 1956
MajGen	Thomas A. Wornham	26 Jul 1956	-	26 Oct 1959
BriGen	Bruno A. Hochmuth	27 Oct 1959	-	30 Nov 1959
MajGen	Victor H. Krulak	1 Dec 1959	-	14 Feb 1962
MajGen	Sidney S. Wade	15 Feb 1962	-	

NOTES

- (1) CMC, Report...in Annual Reports of the Navy Department for the Fiscal Year 1911 (Washington: Navy Department, 1911), p. 530, hereinafter CMC Report with year.
- (2) Ibid., p. 531; Muster Rolls, 4th Regiment, Mar11.
- (3) CMC Report, 1911, p. 531; Muster Rolls, 4th Regiment, Jun11; Muster Rolls, Provisional Battalion, Camp Thomas, San Diego, Jul11.
- (4) CMC Report, 1914, p. 470.
- (5) Army and Navy Journal, v. LI, no. 35 (2 May 1914), p. 1099.
- (6) Muster Rolls, 4th Regiment, Jul14.
- (7) Muster Rolls, 4th Regiment, Dec14; Official Guide Book of the Panama-California Exposition (San Diego, 1915), p. 8; Edward J. P. Davis, The United States and U. S. Marine Corps at San Diego (San Diego, privately published, 1955), p. 52; The Marines in San Diego County, "Union Title-Trust Topics", v. VII, no. 3 (May-June 1953), p. 4.
- (8) See Orders Section in case file of Pendleton, Joseph H., 0753-2.
- (9) Muster Rolls, 2d Battalion, 4th Regiment, Dec14.
- (10) Davis, op. cit., p. 53; "Marines in San Diego County," Union Title-Trust Topics, loc. cit.
- (11) Davis, op. cit., p. 53.
- (12) Correspondence of the Office of the Secretary, 1897-1926, File 16721-95, General Records of the Navy Department, National Archives.
- (13) CMC Report, 1915, pp. 762-763.
- (14) CMC Report, 1916, p. 766.
- (15) Davis, op. cit., p. 54.
- (16) Correspondence of the Office of the Secretary, 1897-1926, File 16721-95, General Records of the Navy Department, National Archives.
- (17) See Commandant Barnett letter in case file of McKelvy, William H., 0634.

- (18) Marine Corps Orders, No. 9 (Series 1916), 1 March published in Marines Magazine, v. I, no. 4 (Apr 1916), p. 31.
- (19) See Record of Military Service Section in case file of Pendleton, Joseph H., 0753-1.
- (20) Muster Rolls, Barracks Detachment, Marine Barracks, San Diego, Jun 16.
- (21) CMC Report, 1916, p. 764.
- (22) Davis, op. cit., p. 54.
- (23) For the text of the appropriation act see Elwin A. Silsby, comp., Navy Yearbook, 1920-1921: ...Resume of Annual Naval Appropriation Laws from 1883 to 1921, Inclusive... (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1922), p. 436.
- (24) CMC Report, 1917, pp. 110 and 847, respectively.
- (25) Navy Department, Bureau of Yards and Docks, Activities of the Bureau of Yards and Docks, Navy Department, World War, 1917-1918 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1921), p. 93.
- (26) Ibid., for an estimate of "approximately \$5,000,000;" "Report of the Chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks," in AnnRepts of NavDept, 1918, p. 431, states "about \$4,000,000."
- (27) CMC Report, 1919, p. 2649; San Diego Federal Writers Project, Works Progress Administration, State of California, San Diego, A California City (San Diego: San Diego Historical Society, 1937), p. 68.
- (28) See Record of Military Service Section in case file of Pendleton, Joseph H., 0753-1; for the spelling of Parris Island, see Marine Corps Orders, No. 27 (Series 1917), 22 June, par. 303 and No. 32 (Series 1919), 3 May, par. 554.
- (29) Muster Rolls, Marine Barracks, San Diego.
- (30) Muster Rolls of organizations noted.
- (31) See Record of Military Service Section in case file of Pendleton, Joseph H., 0753-1.
- (32) "The Story of San Diego," Leatherneck, v. XV, no. 6 (June 1932), p. 10, states that the newly completed barracks were first occupied in December 1921 by Marines who moved in from Balboa Park; "To Open New Barracks at San Diego, California," Leatherneck, v. IV, no. 18 (March 1921), p. 1, states that the six barracks were to be opened on 15 March 1921.

- (33) Muster Rolls, Recruit Depot Detachment, San Diego, Jul23.
- (34) CMC Report, 1911, pp. 523-524; CMC Report, 1912, pp. 578-579.
- (35) Muster Rolls, Headquarters Company, 5th Brigade, Marine Corps Base, Naval Operating Base, San Diego, Mar24.
- (36) See Record of Military Service Section in case file of Pendleton, Joseph H., 0753-1.
- (37) Marine Base Weekly (San Diego), 8 June 1926, p. 1; CMC Report, 1927, p. 1204.
- (38) Marine Base Bulletin, v. I, no. 3 (11 July 1930), p. 5.
- (39) Col Alexander S. Williams, USMC, "The San Diego Marine Base," Marine Corps Gazette, v. XI, no. 2 (June 1926), p. 83.
- (40) Ibid.
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- (42) Williams, op. cit., p. 83.
- (43) Ibid., pp. 84-85; "The Marine Corps Base at San Diego," Leatherneck, v. XII, no. 4 (April 1929), p. 53.
- (44) "San Diego Welcomes the Fourth Regiment Home," Leatherneck, v. VII, no. 38 (September 1924), p. 2; CMC Report, 1925, p. 1229.
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- (53) Ibid., pp. 33-34. Isely and Crowl erroneously give 8 December 1933 as the date Navy Department General Order No. 241 was issued.
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- (55) Ibid.; CMC Report, 1935, p. 1.
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- (69) Muster Rolls, Recruit Depot, San Diego, Jan48.
- (70) TSgt George Burlage, USMC, "MCRD, San Diego," Leatherneck, v. XXXIV, no. 1 (January 1951), pp. 37-38.
- (71) MSgt Clay Barrow, USMC, "San Diego Recruit Depot," Leatherneck, v. XLIV, no. 3 (March 1961), pp. 17-25, 79.