San Diego Business Journal and MCRD Museum Foundation
San Diego, California
Profile the History of the Marine Corps Recruit Depot and the Marine Corps Recruit Depot Command Museum
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The MCRD Museum Foundation

By Colonel Lynn A. Stuart, USMC (Ret), Executive Director

Since its founding on April 29, 1988, the MCRD Museum Foundation, originally formed as the MCRD Museum Historical Society, has had the mission to promote the historical role of the United States Marine Corps and the men and women who have served as Marines, with an emphasis on the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego. The Museum Foundation, a duly registered and chartered nonprofit organization, is the volunteer civilian vehicle that supports the MCRD Command Museum.

The original founders of the Foundation recognized that if the Museum were to expand and not be left to the whim of sometimes uncertain government funding, it would need ongoing civilian support. The Foundation contributes to the Museum in a variety of ways, beginning with fundraising through membership drives and fundraisers. Over the past 27 years, the Foundation has contributed millions of dollars and untold hours of volunteer services that have resulted in the Command Museum’s elevation to world-class distinction. With well over 200,000 visitors annually, the MCRD Museum ranks seventh in total attendance of the 28 museums in San Diego County. Beyond our fundraising activities the Foundation, through a dedicated team of volunteers, supports museum-led youth educational programs to promote and preserve Marine Corps history; awards scholarships and exceptional performance grants and honorariums; maintains an active volunteer docent program; and partners with local community service and civilian organizations to conduct a wide range of programs to honor and recognize U.S. Marines and other military veterans from various eras and world conflicts.

The MCRD Museum Foundation contributes substantially to the San Diego civilian and military communities. We believe that the study of military history is the study of American history and is essential to the development of both U.S. Marines and good citizens. We welcome partnerships and alliances with business and civic organizations which share our beliefs.

For more information on the MCRD Museum Foundation, membership, donating, or how to partner with the organization, please contact the Foundation office at 619-524-4426, or its website at www.mcrdmhs.org.

MCRD - The Legacy Begins: 1911 to 1922

Introduction

San Diego’s permanent Marine Corps base opened in 1921, joining a tradition of training young men for combat that began in 1775.

The Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD) is the oldest Marine base on the West Coast, graduating 15,000 to 18,000 new Marines annually.

Located on 388 acres northwest of San Diego’s civic center, the Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD) is the oldest Marine base on the West Coast, graduating 15,000 to 18,000 new Marines annually. With more than 2,500 local employees, it is also one of the San Diego region’s largest employers.

Since the base opened, more than a million men have trained there. They receive 12½ weeks of rigorous instruction, embracing the slogan Semper Fidelis, which means “always faithful.” When they depart from active duty, Marines trained in San Diego return to their communities, bringing with them the Corps’ values and commitment to honor and duty.

The Mexican-American War

The history of the Marine Corps in San Diego dates back to 1846. In that year, during the Mexican-American War, a detachment of Marines from the USS Cyane landed and first raised the American flag in what is now Old Town in San Diego. When the conflict ended in 1848, the Marines left and Mexico again became tense, the Marines remained in place until 1921, another temporary base.

Within a few months the Marines were withdrawn from the camp, but the brief visit began a long relationship with the city of San Diego. In 1914, when relations between the U.S. and Mexico again became tense, the Marines returned to North Island. They established Camp Howard, another temporary base.

The drive to create a permanent Marine base in San Diego was championed by William Kettner, a local U.S. congressman, and Col. Joseph Pendleton, who was in command of the 4th Regiment. In 1914, Col. Pendleton called for using San Diego as an Advanced Base staging ground for troops bound for Latin America and the Pacific. He wrote to the commandant of the Marines about the poor living conditions for Marines at Camp Howard and urged the establishment of a permanent San Diego base.

Col. Pendleton took his quest to Kettner in the spring of 1915, asking the lawmaker to lend his support.

On December 19, 1914, Marine Barracks, Balboa Park was established. It remained in place until 1921, when a permanent base was established on the present site of MCRD.

Col. Pendleton, whose background included service in Nicaragua, Santa Domingo, Guam, and the Philippines, was one of the first to recognize San Diego’s strategic military value because of its closeness to Latin America, the Panama Canal, the Hawaiian Islands, and Asia. He also recognized that San Diego’s excellent weather would enable the Marines to train outdoors year-round.

To establish strong ties between the Marines and the city of San Diego, Col. Pendleton held a twice-weekly open house at Camp Howard to introduce the public to the Marines. The events included parades featuring the Marine band. The performances became popular, and a ferry service was used to take San Diegans across the harbor to the camp.

A Home in Balboa Park

The Marines soon moved from Camp Howard to Balboa Park. When the Panama Canal was completed in August 1914, the cities of San Diego and San Francisco decided to hold events to commemorate the event. San Francisco opened the Panama-Pacific International Exposition and San Diego opened the Panama-California Exposition.
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Alaska Airlines is proud to sponsor MCRD Command Museum.
The commandant of the Marine Corps ordered the 1st Battalion, 4th Regiment to exposition duty at San Francisco. The 2nd Battalion was sent to the San Diego exposition, which took place at Balboa Park. Each of the battalions established model camps for the expositions.

On December 19, 1914, Marine Barracks, Balboa Park, was established. It remained in place until 1921, when a permanent base was established on the present site of MCRD.

Col. Pendleton established regimental headquarters in the Science and Education Building at the San Diego exposition. The move to Balboa Park gave Pendleton more opportunities to convince San Diegans to support the creation of a permanent Marine base in their city. He sent the Marine band to perform concerts at the Spreckels Organ Pavilion. The battalion’s baseball team played games with civilians at the park, and the Marines provided military demonstrations and parades.

In January 1915 the Balboa Park Board of Park Commissioners wrote to Kettner asking for his help in having a regiment of Marines permanently stationed in the city. Former President Theodore Roosevelt met with Col. Pendleton and local civic leaders at Balboa Park in 1915, during the exposition. A photo of Roosevelt in front of the Brazil exhibition with Pendleton and other local dignitaries commemorates the occasion. However, it was future President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Theodore’s younger cousin, who pushed hardest for the establishment of a permanent Marine base in San Diego.

The younger Roosevelt had visited the city the previous year, while serving as Assistant Secretary of the Navy. He recommended the city as a possible Marine base location to Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels.

Not everyone was so enthusiastic, however. Marine Corps Commandant Maj. Gen. George Barnett said the only thing San Diego had in its favor to serve as a base was good weather. He argued against stationing Marines in the city permanently. He held that sending men there from the San Francisco recruiting depot would be too costly.

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MCRD - The Legacy Begins: 1911 to 1922 - continued

Maj. Gen. Barnett’s position began to soften, however. After visiting the city during the summer of 1915, he reported to Congress that San Diego was a good place to build a new base.

Moving to the Tidelands

In the fall of 1915, San Diego voters agreed to transfer 500 acres at Dutch Flats near downtown to the Navy for a Marine base. In 1916, a federal appropriation finally came through for creating a permanent Marine base in San Diego. That same year, Pendleton was promoted to the rank of brigadier general. He would go on to become a major general.

The first parcel of land for the base, 500 acres, was deeded to the federal government by the city on Dec. 1, 1916. The second parcel, 232 acres, was purchased by the government for $250,000 the following summer.

Because much of the area obtained for the base was tideland, it had to be dredged and filled before construction could begin in 1919. The Army Corps of Engineers filled the area with approximately 2 million cubic yards dredged from San Diego Bay. Today, about 367 of the base’s 388 acres rest on reclaimed land.

One of MCRD’s distinguishing architectural features is its 1,000-foot-long arcade, which is easily recognizable in early construction photos. The arcade is capped with a five-foot-tall Marine Corps emblem.

On Dec. 1, 1921, Pendleton placed the new base at Dutch Flats into commission as Marine Advanced Expeditionary Base, San Diego. Marines who had been stationed at Balboa Park marched to their new home. A photo of the event shows a child riding a bicycle ahead of a parade of Marines.

Once at home at their new base, the Marines proudly displayed a cannon that had been captured from Nicaraguan rebels in 1912. The weapon, now an antique, remains on display today at the MCRD Command Museum. With the establishment of the new base in San Diego, the Marines now were positioned, with their tenant organizations and battalions, to deploy from their operational base to various theaters, to include Santo Domingo, China, and Nicaragua.

A Distinguished Architect

The chief architect for the new base was Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, who had designed buildings for the Panama-California Exposition at Balboa Park. He used the Spanish Colonial Revival style of architecture. With its red-tile roofs and stucco walls, the new base was similar in appearance to buildings that had been erected for the recent exposition.

The design of the base was judged widely to be an important accomplishment. One of MCRD’s distinguishing architectural features is its 1,000-foot-long arcade, which is easily recognizable in early construction photos. The arcade is capped with a five-foot-tall Marine Corps emblem.
The emblem features an eagle, a globe and an anchor. The eagle represents the United States. The globe represents the Marine Corps’ global mission. The anchor reflects the Marine Corps’ close ties to the U.S. Navy.

MCRD was only one of architect Goodhue’s many achievements. He went on to design structures at Rice University, the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, the California Institute of Technology, and the Los Angeles Public Library.

Twenty-five buildings built during the foundation years are on the National Register of Historic Places. Thirteen buildings have been named for Marines who have distinguished themselves. Among them is Pendleton Hall. Congressman Kettner said it wasn’t possible to give too much credit to Pendleton for getting the base built. Pendleton ended his career as a major general. After his retirement, the general went on to serve as mayor of Coronado from 1928 to 1930. He died in 1942 at age 81.

Thank you.

Moss Adams is proud to support our military, the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, and the MCRD Command Museum.

To all those men and women who make up our armed forces, thank you for your service and dedication to our country.
Early Years: 1923-1939

In 1923, the Marine Recruit Depot for the West Coast relocated from Mare Island Navy Shipyards in Vallejo, California, to San Diego. By mid-August of 1923 there were five platoons of 65 men each in training.

The new recruits were called “applicants,” because their permanent status had yet to be determined. These men were instructed to watch others train, then allowed to take part if they had not changed their minds about joining the Marines. At that time, training lasted eight to 10 weeks. Today the duration is 12½ weeks.

As the nation began to prepare for war in 1939, priorities changed. The base became mainly a staging area for troop deployments to the Pacific and Latin America.

Since West Coast recruit training moved south to San Diego in 1923, it had been a secondary mission of an operational base. The base was mainly a staging area for troop deployments to the Pacific and Latin America.

On-the-Job Training

In the beginning of the Marine Corps’ history, recruit training was conducted by non-commissioned officers. Instruction was brief, so much remained to be learned on the job. There were no centralized recruit depots to standardize and refine training programs. Commandant Franklin Wharton, who headed the Corps from 1804 until 1818, recognized the need for better organization, so he created a school at the Marine Barracks in Washington, D.C.

In 1911, Maj. Gen. William P. Biddle established four recruit training depots. They were located in Philadelphia, Norfolk, Virginia, Puget Sound, Washington and Mare Island, California. Mare Island became the only West Coast training depot in 1912.

In 1915, East Coast recruit training was moved to Parris Island, South Carolina. In 1923, the West Coast training center was moved from Mare Island to San Diego. In 1924, the San Diego facility officially became Marine Corps Base, San Diego. In 1948, it would be renamed the Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD).

Protecting the Mail

On Nov. 7, 1921, the Marine Corps began providing armed guards for the U.S. Mail. More than 2,000 Marines served on trains across the country. With the leathernecks riding the rails, the robberies quickly ended. None of the shipments guarded by Marines were robbed. In March 1922, railway guard duty was discontinued.

During the early years, aircraft squadrons were a part of the base. By 1926, there were four Marine air squadrons. They consisted of a fighter squadron and three observation squadrons. By 1931, the squadrons had 43 pilots, and 18 observation and fighter planes, all at North Island.

Continued Growth

That same year the base had a total of 50 officers and about 1,000 enlisted men. There were detachments at a rifle range in La Jolla, a destroyer base, and at the Marine Corps Aviation Force at North Island. The Recruit Depot had a staff of 33 Marines who were authorized to train up to 270 recruits at a time.

The base became headquarters for the Fleet Marine Force (FMF) in 1935, part of a change in the mission of the Marine Corps. No longer only a land-based expeditionary force, it began to assume a new identity as a battle-ready strike force, on call for deployment with the Navy.

At the start of the 1930s, Marines shared training facilities with the Army. They were located at Camp Kearny in northern San Diego. As signs of war surfaced in Europe and the Pacific, the Marines decided to create a dedicated gunnery training area. In 1934, Fleet Marine Force units relocated from the base to Camp Holcomb in the Kearny Mesa area. In 1940, it was renamed Camp Elliott.

Marine Corps Base, San Diego played an important role in turning the Marines into a highly mobile amphibious assault force. The base grew in 1935 to about 100 officers and 2,000 enlisted men and became headquarters for the Fleet Marine Force (FMF).
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Early Years: 1923-1939 - continued

The formation of the FMF was part of a change in the mission of the Marine Corps. No longer only a land-based expeditionary force, it began to assume a new identity as a battle-ready strike force, on call for deployment with the Navy.

Revamping the Marine Corps

A key proponent of creating this new identity for the Corps was Maj. Gen. John Henry Russell Jr., who took the idea to the Navy’s top brass in 1933. That same year, the withdrawal of Marines who had been stationed in Nicaragua meant that more personnel were available to prepare for the Marines’ new role with the Navy.

During this period, most training on the base took place in an area between San Diego Bay and the base’s parade ground. It was common for men to be taken to nearby foothills outside the base for training hikes.

In the base barracks, enlisted men lived on the second level and slept in double-decked beds. Officers lived on the ground floor. Married officers and NCOs lived outside the base in civilian housing. Training was hard, but life at the base wasn’t all work and no play. Officers and NCOs each had their own clubs. Dances were held on Saturdays and from time to time variety shows were held.

The Marines and Hollywood

Marines at MCRD have a longstanding relationship with Hollywood and the motion picture industry. The base often has been used as a location for filming.

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Marines at MCRD have a longstanding relationship with Hollywood and the motion picture industry. The base often has been used as a location for filming.
The first movie filmed at the base was “Tell It To The Marines,” a silent picture starring actor Lon Chaney as a tough but understanding drill instructor. Because of his realistic performance, Chaney was chosen to be an honorary Marine. Chaney was the first motion picture actor to receive the honor.

Movies that featured MCRD as a filming location often used Marines or recruits as extras. In these films, Marines were portrayed as brave and patriotic young men. In addition to “Tell It To The Marines,” films with scenes shot in San Diego include:

- “Moran of the Marines” in 1928
- “Devil Dogs of the Air” in 1935
- “The Marines Fly High” in 1940
- “Marine Raiders” in 1944
- “Pride of the Marines” in 1945
- “The Outsider” in 1961

On weekends, many Marines made the short trip from the base to downtown San Diego to take in all that the city had to offer. They enjoyed the nightlife under the watchful supervision of the shore patrol.

In addition to enjoying nightlife, Marines had a passion for sports. Marines believed that sports were reflective of their competitive spirit. Marine football teams, for example, were crowd favorites, and often brought thousands of civilian spectators out to the games. During the 1930s, Marines from San Diego competed against many college football teams. One could say that they were the early “Rose Bowls” of the day.

### Serious Business

Enjoying sports didn’t prevent Marines from focusing on their combat role. In the summer of 1937, Marines from the 4th Regiment stationed in Shanghai, China, were involved in a conflict between Japanese and Chinese forces. To aid the Marines, San Diego became a staging area for the 2nd Marine Brigade that was sent to Shanghai to aid the regiment. In 1938, after the conflict moved away from Shanghai, the brigade came home to San Diego.

In the following year, the brigade’s duties turned from combat to construction, as it helped build Camp Nimitz on San Clemente Island.

One unique group attached to MCRD during the early years was the 2nd Signal Company, which was organized in 1931. Marines judged to have a high aptitude for working with electronics received 21 weeks of training. They learned about electricity, code, radios, and field equipment.

### A great expansion of the base began in 1939 as it became apparent that World War II was approaching.

### The Expansion Begins

A great expansion of the base began in 1939 as it became apparent that World War II was approaching, as priorities aboard the base began to change. Thousands of those who joined the war effort received their basic training in San Diego.

Rapid construction brought the base many new structures, including a new administration building, warehouses, barracks, mess facilities, dental and medical buildings, a parade ground, a railroad, and new roads.
The Sycuan Tribe and its affiliated business enterprises celebrate the United States Marine Corps and the history of the Marine Corps Recruit Depot Command Museum.

SEMPER FI!
Expansion Years: 1940-1971

As Americans rushed to enlist in the military at the beginning of World War II, the pace of construction at the San Diego base quickened.

**New arrivals were housed first in tents and then in hundreds of wooden huts that were built during the war.**

New arrivals were housed first in tents and then in hundreds of wooden huts that were built during the war. The tents on the southern portion of the parade ground were removed at the end of World War II, but a smaller version of the tent city would spring up during the Korean War, and later for the Vietnam War.

As the base grew, the city outside MCRD’s gates also changed. The San Diego economy was booming with the growing war effort, and the community was losing its identity as a quiet little town near the U.S.-Mexico border.

The city’s aircraft manufacturing industry began operating around the clock, as thousands of civilian workers arrived in town to fill jobs. The San Diego History Center records that by the summer of 1941 San Diego’s population had increased to more than 300,000 from 203,341 a year earlier.

**Women’s Reserve Battalion**

In late 1943, a Women’s Reserve Battalion was formed. While at the base, the women worked in such positions as office clerks, secretaries, and drivers.

Women’s Reserve Battalion

The war effort brought many changes to MCRD, including the arrival of women. In late 1943, a Women’s Reserve Battalion was formed. Women were assigned to their own area of the base, on a former sports field.

By 1944 the base was home to about 700 women reservists, who took many of the jobs that had been held by men who had gone to war. While at the base, the women worked in such positions as office clerks, secretaries, and drivers. They lived apart from the men, ate at their own chow hall, had their own medical center, and enjoyed separate sports facilities.

Following the surrender of Japan and the end of World War II, the Marine Corps began to demobilize the Women’s Reserve. In May 1946, the women’s battalion was disbanded, but women continued to serve as Marines elsewhere. In mid-1948, Congress passed the Women’s Armed Services Integration Act, making women a permanent part of the Corps.

During the war, the appearance of the base changed greatly. The cream-colored Spanish Colonial Revival buildings took on hues of green and khaki. The goal was to camouflage them and protect them from aerial bombardment. An attack on West Coast military bases by the Japanese was considered to be a very real possibility. The buildings were repainted their original color once the war ended.

**The Code Talkers**

During World War II, the Marines brought in a highly specialized group of men for training. They became known as the Navajo Code Talkers. These Native Americans were recruited in hopes that the enemy would not be able to decipher a code based on their native language, as they passed messages over the radio.

They trained in secret. In the beginning, not even the Navajos knew what they would be doing. They were told only that they would be specialists. Following their basic training, they were eventually moved to Camp Pendleton, north of Oceanside, California.
Expansion Years: 1940-1971 - continued

Recreation

In 1942 the base opened an outdoor theater that held 5,000 Marines. This was needed because the base auditorium was no longer large enough to accommodate the swelling ranks. When the theater opened, Jeanette McDonald, a popular singer and movie star of the era, was there to lead the crowd in singing the national anthem.

Sports have a long history at MCRD.

The base opened an indoor theater in 1943. Seating more than 2,500 people, it became the home to both radio shows and live entertainment.

Sports have a long history at MCRD. Several Marines who served at the base during the expansion years went on to have Major League baseball careers. Among them were Boston Red Sox pitcher Earl Wilson, who played at the base in 1957 and 1958.

The organized baseball and football programs ended in the 1960s, but intramural sports continued to be popular throughout the expansion years.

On Jan. 1, 1948, Marine Corps Base, San Diego was renamed Marine Corps Recruit

Women Marines softball team, 1945. (Official USMC Photo)
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Expansion Years: 1940-1971 - continued

Depot, San Diego. The Recruit Training Command grew from three to eight battalions during the Korean War, and hundreds of Quonset huts were built to handle the growing population.

The need for drill instructors was so great during the Korean War that Marines who had only recently graduated sometimes were assigned to train recruits. This practice ended in 1954. New regulations required that only non-commissioned officers serve as trainers.

A Peaceful Era

When the Korean War ended and the need for combat-ready troops lessened, the Marine Corps greatly reduced its personnel. Graduation classes shrank in size. Between the end of the Korean War and the buildup for the Vietnam War, things at MCRD were relatively tranquil.

A major event during this period was the visit from President John F. Kennedy on June 6, 1963. Today there is a memorial at one of the spots where the president stood during his visit.

A part of the Commanding General’s quarters was remodeled to accommodate the president. The library was turned into a bedroom and used as a place for the president to relax while at the depot.

A shower was not part of the original design, but shortly before the president’s arrival, a closet was converted into a shower.

According to base lore, these workers were in such a hurry to complete the job that they reversed the hot and cold water faucets. The faucets were labeled with large letters to make sure the president would not have trouble regulating the shower temperature.

Between 1964 and 1969, MCRD was a filming location for the television program “Gomer Pyle USMC,” a popular situation comedy starring actor and singer Jim Nabors. The TV production crew was given broad access to the base.

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The Marine Corps Recruiters School was launched at MCRD in October 1971 and in August 1972 replaced a recruiter school at Parris Island, South Carolina. Several years later the commanding general assumed command of the uniquely formed Western Recruiting Region.

Recruiting was a challenge during the 1970s, due to the anti-war movement that came in response to the Vietnam War, but Marine recruiters persevered.

Another Expansion

The Vietnam War triggered the next big base expansion, and a 100-tent camp was built to handle the recruit overflow. During that war, construction included new barracks, a dining hall, a bowling alley, and a dental-and-medical facility.

During the expansion years, MCRD recruits who graduated in the top third of their class could be selected to attend Sea School. Being assigned to a ship was considered to be an honor.

In addition to learning the basic skills they would need to serve at sea, the seafaring Marines practiced gunnery drills. One of their main duties aboard ship was operating guns, particularly the increasingly important anti-aircraft batteries. The school closed in December 1987, when Marines were no longer assigned to ships for sea duty.
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Continuing Legacy: 1971 to Present

MCRD is part of a proud Marine Corps legacy. Marines have served in every one of the United States’ military conflicts, from the Revolutionary War to recent actions in the Middle East. In its role of making Marines, MCRD teaches recruits about traditions and values.

MCRD starts young Marines on the path to becoming part of America’s rapid-response force. From humanitarian missions to combat operations, Marines are prepared to do their duty at a moment’s notice. Their motto, Semper Fidelis, means “always faithful.” Even when they leave the Corps, they remain Marines.

An Ever-Expanding Base

Construction at MCRD ebbs and flows, but never truly ends. During WWII, the Korean War, and the War in Vietnam, MCRD used metal Quonset huts to house swelling ranks of recruits. In the 1970s, after the Vietnam War came to an end, these huts were torn down to make room for more modern structures.

In the 1970s the old Quonset huts from the 1940s started to come down and were replaced by modern three-deck recruit squad bays. Today, only five Quonsets remain. Designed by the Seabees early in the 1940s at their new base at Quonset Point, Rhode Island, these buildings served well in WWII and beyond.

Between 1980 and 1989 there were 17 new buildings erected. It’s hard to tell the new structures from the old ones because the Spanish Colonial Revival style used by Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue was adapted for new structures. Construction methods have changed, but the final products are buildings that honor the history and character of the originals.

Curators of a Proud Legacy

The MCRD Command Museum, one of the original structures, is on the National Register of Historic Places. Originally a barracks, the

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Continuing Legacy: 1971 to Present - continued

The Command Museum brings the legacy of MCRD alive for new recruits.

Building today is known as Day Hall. Opened as a museum in 1987, the facility’s main focus is the history of the Marine Corps Recruit Depot from 1921 to the present, along with the history of the Marines in Southern California.

The museum receives more than 200,000 visitors each year. It showcases artifacts and equipment that span the history of the Corps in San Diego. The museum isn’t only for the enjoyment of visitors to the base. It also plays an important role in recruit training. On the 56th day of training, recruits come to the museum to take a course in the history of the Corps. The teachers are the museum’s docents. The museum enlists docents who have a positive attitude and a strong interest in the base’s past. Their lessons help recruits gain a better understanding of the traditions they will he asked to uphold.

Part of the legacy of MCRD is a history of good stewardship of the environment.

Since its opening, the museum has continued to add to its galleries and exhibits. It also maintains a reference center that includes an archives and a research library. The center welcomes all researchers at no charge, but requests appointments. The museum is supported by the MCRD Museum Foundation. The Foundation is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit...
organization dedicated to preserving the history and traditions of the United States Marine Corps.

**Sustainable Energy**

Part of the legacy of MCRD is a history of good stewardship of the environment. According to the Marine Corps’s official website, MCRD has made great progress toward conservation. Since 2009, it has reduced solid waste by an average of 61 percent through a recycling program that exceeds Department of Defense and California state requirements.

In addition, the base has changed out more than 14,000 lights with energy-efficient compact fluorescent bulbs. It also has installed “smart” electronic metering to monitor energy use.

Other conservation steps save more than 650 megawatt hours (Mwh) annually. The depot has installed 3.6 megawatts of photovoltaic solar panels projects that annually produce over 6,000 Mwh. Onsite photovoltaic generation accounts for approximately 34 percent of MCRD’s annual electrical consumption. Furthermore, the base has installed a steam turbine system to capture excess steam pressure resulting in an additional 6 percent savings. Combined these projects account for 40 percent of MCRD’s annual electrical consumption from the 2009 benchmark.

During weekends and on holidays, there is net zero percent energy draw from the San Diego electrical grid.

**Water Conservation**

Required to reduce water consumption 26 percent from its fiscal year 2007 baseline by fiscal year 2020, MCRD has already attained an average annual reduction in excess of 40 percent.

The base has 16,000 square feet of synthetic turf and 42 smart irrigation controllers. New barracks have a “gray water” recycling system, which collects waste water from sinks and shower drains. The system then recycles the water through a filtration system. The water is used to flush toilets and urinals. Any excess treated water is available for limited landscaping and irrigation.

MCRD is the test site for the first Department of Defense black water (waste from toilets) living filter machine. This system has completed testing and received Defense Department and state of California’s approval for sub-surface irrigation. The recycled water from this system will be tied into a recently developed associated sub-surface irrigation project that will support a parcel of MCRD’s green space.

“Smart Landscaping” at the base has replaced vegetation with artificial grass, non-watering ground covers and drought tolerant vegetation. This has created a yearly reduction of more than 357,000 gallons of water.

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**Thank You**

**to the Men and Women for Your Service in the Military.**
Continuing Legacy: 1971 to Present - continued

In addition, the base has replaced close to 90 percent of its vehicle support fleet with carts that use alternative energy sources.

The current mascot is Pfc. Smedley Butler, named after Maj. Gen. Smedley Butler, who was the most decorated member of the Marine Corps during his lifetime. The general also introduced the bulldog as the Marine Corps’ official mascot.

The Mascot Tradition

The tradition of canine mascots is another part of MCRD’s continuing legacy. The first mascot at MCRD was James Jolly Plum Duff, a bulldog who arrived at the base in 1939 at age two. The current mascot is Pfc. Smedley Butler. He replaced Cpl. Belleau Wood, who retired after five years of service.

Smedley was born in Escondido, California, in February 2014 and named after Maj. Gen. Smedley Butler, who was the most decorated member of the Marine Corps during his lifetime. The general also introduced the bulldog as the Marine Corps’ official mascot in 1922.

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Current Recruit Training

Times change, but the mission of a recruit depot remains constant: the making of Marines.
Today the 12½ weeks of basic training that recruits experience at MCRD is the most rigorous of all branches of the U.S. military. To earn the title “Marine,” recruits must rise to the challenge. The role of Marines is a demanding one and so is their preparation.

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The depot has the responsibility of training all male recruits west of the Mississippi River. More than half of the young men who enlist in the Corps — between 15,000 and 18,000 annually in recent years — are sent to MCRD. Recent graduates have gone on to serve in conflicts in both Iraq and Afghanistan.
MCRD also is home to the Marine Corps’ only Recruiters School and to a U.S. Coast Guard command.

Earning the Title “Marine”

The privilege of serving in an elite group of warriors must be earned. Every recruit must pass a fitness test, and not everyone emerges from training as a Marine. Recruits are drilled in discipline, teamwork, marksmanship, overcoming obstacles, and hand-to-hand combat.

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“Drill instructors of Receiving Company, Support Battalion, instruct a recruit to respond louder during receiving at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego.”

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New recruits of Golf Company, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, move quickly to the amnesty room during receiving at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego.

Official USMC Photo

have preceded them, they understand that not everyone in their group will be with them when it is time to graduate. To be a member of the world’s greatest battle-ready fighting force, they must survive a life-changing experience that will test their minds and physical abilities.

Their transformation from recruit to Marine begins when a drill instructor explains the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Recruits are issued their gear and are given a series of medical tests. They must pass an initial strength test before they can head to their barracks and meet their assigned drill instructor. Over the next 12 ½ weeks, the DIs supervise their training and push them to exceed their own expectations.

The initial strength test consists of pull-ups, stomach crunches and a timed run. Recruits also must meet requirements for acceptable weight. Marines who are not physically fit are considered to be detrimental to fellow Marines. To increase their chances of succeeding, the Marine Corps suggests that young men who plan to enlist begin an exercise routine before they arrive at MCRD. Their success will require a high level of physical fitness.

Current Recruit Training - continued

Recruits also must learn to function as a unit. The goal is to teach them to work as a team while solving problems.

New recruits must learn regulations for hygiene and protocol for caring for their equipment. Recruits also must learn to function as a unit. The goal is to teach them to work as a team while solving problems.

Being Reborn

As part of their introduction to their new life, recruits have their heads shaved. This helps them lose their personal identities. It also creates a sense of belonging.

Part of the role of a Marine is striving for perfection. Recruit uniforms must pass regular inspections. In combat, Marines are trained to fight with any weapon at their disposal or, if necessary, with only their hands and feet. However, their primary weapon is the rifle. A recruit’s rifle becomes an extension of himself. Marines must

Recruits from company A execute the command “stack arms” with their M16A4 rifles as part of their final last graded event of recruit training.

Photo by LCpl. Sarah Candrian

Recruits maneuver through the Dirty Name obstacle, part of the Confidence Course at MCRD. The purpose is to get recruits over the fear of heights and improve their fitness.

Photo by Sgt. Walter D. Marion

The new 60 ft. tower features a modern stairway versus the ladder to the old wooden tower and a separate position for “fast rope” training which is a method used to exit helicopters and MV-22 Osprey tilt rotor aircraft.

Recruits practice the forward thrust knife techniques during a Marine Corps martial arts program session.

Photo by Cpl. Jericho Crutcher

Recruits in the contraband room where they will empty their pockets of any civilian items.

Photo by Sgt. Whitney N. Fraiser

Recruits from India Company, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, climb a steep hill carrying a combat load and simulated ammunition for the Basilone’s Challenge event during The Crucible on Edson Range at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton.

Official USMC Photo

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Marine recruit on the 60 ft. tower at San Diego.

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the men, women and families of the military for their service to our country.
Current Recruit Training - continued

keep their rifles clean. They also come to know their rifles so well that they can assemble and disassemble them quickly, even in the dark.

One of the essential skills Marines must learn is how to use a gas mask. During recruit training, recruits are taught to put on protective masks quickly, use them properly, and remain calm at all times. Maintaining composure is important in order to function on the battlefield. The recruits are exposed to a non-lethal CS gas, which often is used by police for riot control. Those who fail to use their masks correctly experience coughing and burning eyes.

Because the Marine Corps relies on the mobility of the U.S. Navy, Marines must be able to swim, overcome obstacles in the water, and survive emergency situations. Combat water survival training teaches them to tread water dressed in full gear. A qualified swim instructor conducts the training.

In addition to following orders, recruits must learn to lead. As they hone their skills, recruits lead their teammates through challenges on obstacle and confidence courses. The goal is to create Marines who can lead others with confidence.

Conquering The Crucible

On the 11th week of training, recruits face The Crucible, a simulated combat test involving 54 hours of difficult physical and mental challenges. This phase of training requires recruits to use all of the skills they have acquired at MCRD. The Crucible was introduced in 1996 as a way to make training tougher and to help recruits learn to rely on each other.
The challenge is designed to find out if recruits have the desire and the ability to pull together in order to succeed. There is little food or opportunity to sleep until the challenge is over. Recruits are given tasks that must be solved by working cooperatively.

At the end of The Crucible, recruits attend a ceremony in which platoons are presented with the Marine Corps Emblem: the eagle, globe, and anchor. For the first time, they are addressed as Marines.

The day before graduation, recruits host a Family Day. They introduce their families and friends to the people they have trained with. Some parents find the bearing and appearance of their sons to be so changed that they don’t immediately recognize them.

The Tradition Continues

Marines have now been part of the fabric of San Diego for over 100 years, and in that time both the city and the Marine Corps have changed. The city has grown from a small town to a world-renowned city of technology and innovation, while the Marine Corps has evolved from a small expeditionary force to the world’s premier war fighters. Two things have not changed; the Marines’ resolve to be worthy of their core values of Honor, Courage and Commitment, and San Diego’s strong relationship with and affection for “its” Marines.

Semper Fidelis

Recruits of Charlie Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, navigate through the Weaver obstacle during The Crucible Confidence Course at Edson Range, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton.

Photo by Sgt. Benjamin Woodle

Recruits of Lima Company, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, wait for their next drill command during Final Drill at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego.

Official USMC Photo

During the land navigation event recruits are put in teams of five with a compass, map, protractor and pen, and have to find a specific location.

Photo by Cpl. Eric Garza

Recruits of Charlie Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, march to meet families and friends prior to beginning liberty call at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego.

Official USMC Photo

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Acknowledgments

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