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# Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego



A few weeks after establishing Camp Howard on North Island in San Diego, Col. Joseph Pendleton, on September 6, 1914, was the guest speaker at the U. S. Grant Hotel in downtown San Diego. The subject of his speech was "San Diego, An Ideal Location for a Permanent Marine Corps Base." The drive behind his lecture was the unsatisfactory conditions and the less than convenient location of his men and staff at Camp Howard. About this same time, Col. Pendleton wrote to the Commandant of the Marine Corps at Washington D. C. about the deplorable conditions at Camp Howard and presented the idea of the possible establishment of a permanent Marine Corps base in San Diego.

The Navy General Board approved the establishment of a base on January 8, 1916 and the Marine Corps' base on the bay tidelands called the Dutch Flats was authorized by a Naval appropriation bill of August 29, 1916, in large part due to the efforts of Congressman William Kettner. Groundbreaking on 232 acres took place on March 2, 1919. Construction and occupation of the base took place from 1919 through 1926. On December 1, 1921, Pendleton (now a General), placed it into commission as the Marine Advanced Expeditionary Base, San Diego. In 1923, the Marine Recruit Depot for the west coast relocated from Mare Island Navy Shipyards in Vallejo, Calif., to its new home at the San Diego Marine Base. On 1 March 1924, the base that had been developed as a result of the vision and efforts of General Pendleton became, officially,

Marine Corps Base, San Diego, and would be known by that name for the next twenty-four years. The base now consisted of approximately 388 acres, of which some 367 acres had been reclaimed tidal area. Throughout World War II, the principal activity of the base, recruit training overshadowed all other functions. After the war, the recruit training detachment remained the principal tenant. Marine Corps Base San Diego has been home to the 4th, 6th and 10th Marine Regiments, the Fleet Marine Force and the 2nd Marine Division. However, the main focus of the base has always been training and "the making of Marines." On 1 January 1948, Marine Corps Base, San Diego was officially renamed Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego. The Recruit Training Command grew from three to eight battalions to handle the troop requirements for the Korean War. More than 700 Quonset huts were erected to handle the influx of recruits, some of which are still standing today. The Vietnam War caused the next period of major expansion. A 100-tent cantonment had to be erected to handle the overflow of recruits. Five new recruit barracks, a new dining hall, new bowling alley, a new Regional Dental and Medical Clinic were constructed on the depot.

In the 1970's the focus increased to include the recruiting effort and the Depot became Headquarters, Western Recruiting Region.

Today the Recruit Depot provides its nation's Corps with basically trained Marines to fight in the current conflicts in both Iraq and Afghanistan. The depot has the responsibility to train all male recruits who reside west of the Mississippi River to serve at the call of the nation.

Known for its unique Spanish colonial revival style appearance, the overall site and specific building plans were developed by renowned architect, Bertram Goodhue, who also designed the buildings built in San Diego's Balboa Park for the 1915 Panama-California Exposition. Twenty-five of the Depot's buildings are on the National Register of Historic Places.

Thirteen buildings have been named for famous Marines, such a Daly Barracks, Pendleton Hall, McDougall Hall, and Day Hall.

Today, the depot has 388 acres and 25 buildings listed on the national register of historic places.

