

UCSD Libraries' Exhibit "From Riflemen to Freshmen" Showcases San Diego's Military History before Founding of UC San Diego

Before blue books, rifle scorecards were the norm

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Before freshmen roamed the University of California, San Diego campus, the university's 1,200 acres of pristine coastal woodland, were populated by riflemen and other soldiers in-training who honed their marksmanship skills at the rifle, pistol, skeet and other ranges at the military bases that predated the university's founding in 1960.

In anticipation of UC San Diego's 50th anniversary celebration in 2010-11, UCSD's Mandeville Special Collections Library is holding the first of several exhibits showcasing historic photographs, documents, and other materials from the UCSD Archives. The "From Riflemen to Freshmen" exhibit documents the military activities, personnel, and facilities on portions of the property before it was transformed into the University of California's sixth general campus. The exhibit, which includes historic photographs of marine barracks, military training exercises, and military personnel, is on display adjacent to the Mandeville Special Collections Library on the second floor of Geisel Library through Jan. 3, 2010.

Highlights from the exhibit include: a photo of First Lieutenant Calvin B. Matthews (who Camp Matthews was named for); Quonset huts (later repurposed as Warren College offices and classrooms); military trainees following a punishing natural obstacle course at Camp Callan; and crew operating an antiaircraft machine gun, firing at airplane targets. While women were largely absent from daily life at the military bases, the exhibit does include one photo of a huddle of nurses, WACS, and Red Cross workers posing on the beach at Camp Callan. Also included in the exhibit, courtesy of the Marine Corps Recruit Depot Command Museum, are a number of historic artifacts from the military training that took place at Camp Matthews, including a shooting jacket, a first aid pouch, an M1 helmet, an M-1903 Springfield .30 rifle, and a rifle scorecard. Materials were also contributed by Judy P. Schulman.

Camp Matthews (U.S. Marine Corps), Camp Callan (U.S. Army), and Camp Elliot (U.S. Marine Corps, then later the U.S. Navy), had thousands of military personnel training on what is today the UC San Diego campus. From 1917 to 1964, Camp Matthews-bounded on the east by what is now Regents Road, the north by Voigt Drive, and the south by present-day La Jolla Village Drive- served as a Marine rifle training camp for more than 1 million Marine recruits and shooters. The U.S. Army base's Camp Callan, located to the west of Camp Matthews on the Torrey Pines Mesa, served as an anti-aircraft artillery replacement training center during WWII (1941-1945). From 1940 to 1946, marines were also trained for combat during WWII at Camp Elliot, located to the northeast of the campus. The property was decommissioned in 1946 and was then taken over by the U.S. Navy, which continued to use the base for military training until 1961. Today, portions of Camp Elliot are occupied by the UCSD Animal Care Program.

A transition ceremony to honor the U.S. Marine Corps transfer of Camp Matthews to the University of California occurred in 1964. At the ceremony, a monument to Camp Matthews was unveiled adjacent to the main campus flagpole in what is now known as the University Center area of campus. One of the Marine Corps' greatest proponents of rifle marksmanship, Major General B. A. Hochmuth, the commanding general of the San

Diego Marine Corps Recruit Depot at the time, fired the ceremonial "last rounds" marking the closing of Camp Matthews. He was joined by 49 other shooters, most of whom were retired Marines who had earned their place in Marine Corps history as outstanding marksmen.

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