

# Camp Pendleton's 2/4 celebrated in San Clemente



Members of the 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines, nicknamed “The Magnificent Bastards,” toast each other in the ballroom at Bella Colina Golf Course in San Clemente, which adopted the battalion in 1996, during a Mess Night banquet on Thursday, April 2, 2026. (Photo by Jeff Antenore, Orange County Register/SCNG)



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It was a raucous night at Bella Collina Golf Club in San Clemente as the beachtown’s adopted Marine battalion celebrated camaraderie and the city commemorated its 30th anniversary of support for the unit headquartered just south of the city limits.

The recent [mess night](#) included more than 100 officers and staff non-commissioned officers from the 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines, who participated in a sort of roast of Marines, a custom steeped in history. It is second only to the Marine Corps birthday celebration among the branch's oldest traditions.

The Marines appeared in their service greens, and the event followed a theatrical script meant to build camaraderie, brotherhood, and Esprit de Corps. The event was entertaining, drawing boisterous hoots, oorahs and a regular chorus of "Say it ain't so" from those gathered.

"Tonight we celebrate the legacy of the Corps, the legacy of this great battalion," said Lt. Gen. Christian Wortman, who said he first stood in a platoon formation of the 2/4 in 1992. He is now the commanding general of the I Marine Expeditionary Force on Camp Pendleton and was the event's keynote speaker.

"For those that bestowed that legacy upon us, those that carry it today, and those that carry the sacred honor and responsibility to sustain and raise it, that will follow in our footsteps," he said. "As we raise the glass today, let's do it with purpose. For the Marine Corps we love, never given, always earned, and for the brothers and sisters that we serve with. Best of luck on the deployment, cheers from the MEF command deck, and jealous as hell I can't embark with you in September."

The night also celebrated the anniversary of the city's adoption of the battalion in 1996, an effort spearheaded by former mayor Wayne Eggleston, who created the Heritage of San Clemente Foundation to benefit local Marines. He began his efforts to get official recognition for local Marines in the early 1990s, after San Clemente hosted a parade for troops returning from combat deployments to the Persian Gulf.

[Eggleston](#) is also responsible for creating Park Semper Fi, a permanent reminder of Marines at the Pier Bowl. The grounds overlooking the ocean just north of San Clemente Pier host Marine Corps and Navy celebrations, including Veterans Day events, memorial services, weddings and reenlistment ceremonies.

A life-sized bronze of a Marine was dedicated at the park on Nov. 12, 2005, in commemoration of the Marine Corps' 230th birthday.

Eggleston also helped organize the mess night and it was supported by local groups, including the San Clemente Chamber of Commerce, the San Clemente Exchange Club, the Marine Corps League, South Coast Detachment 22, and Mark Zane, who owns the golf club hosting the event.

Zane has hosted Marines at the golf club since 2008 and says he does it because it's the right thing to do.

On Sunday, more than 150 Marine families from the battalion were his guests for the club's very popular Easter brunch.

"It hits home, it's not just kids playing with guns," Zane said, recalling his son's friend, who was an Army medic assigned to a Marine scout unit and killed in Iraq. "When you can do something nice, you should."

For Eggleston, the evening is also a reminder of the continued bond between the city and the base, especially with the current war against Iran.

"It's important for us to celebrate the 2/4 and its heritage and tradition," he said. "It's important to celebrate 30 years of our adoption."

Near the end of the ceremony, Mayor Rick Loeffler presented a plaque to Lt. Col. Matthew Perry, commanding officer of the 2/4 battalion. The plaque recognized the exemplary conduct of the men and women who serve in the unit.

"It was an honor to share this incredible experience with Gen. Wortman, Col. Perry, and the men and women of the Marine Corps," he said. "The spirit and camaraderie demonstrated among the Marines was unmatched. We are proud that so many Marine families have chosen San Clemente as their home and recognize that we are truly a 'Marine town.'"