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General Roy S. Geiger.



Location of the proposed Tent Camp.



Camp Geiger in 2002.



Camp Geiger in 2002.



Ground breaking for the construction of Tent Camp, 1941.



Tents on platforms at Tent Camp No. 1, 1941.

These days, much of Marine Corps Base, Camp Lejeune—think of Hadnot Point, Courthouse Bay, the Stone Bay Rifle Range—looks a lot like it did when it was built half a century ago during World War II as "the world's most complete amphibious training base." Camp Geiger, however, which first hosted Marines in 1941, has been transformed—and more than once!

Today's Marines in training at Camp Geiger's School of Infantry enjoy modern classroom buildings and dormitory-style accommodations in a campus-like setting of grass and trees. Marines of the 1st Division who arrived here in the spring of 1941, on the other hand, were greeted with a sprawling cantonment of 6-man canvas tents. Marines arriving in early 1942 had somewhat "better" luck — they were quartered in 16-man huts constructed from panels of compressed cellulose, called Homosote, that a Marine could easily put a fist through.

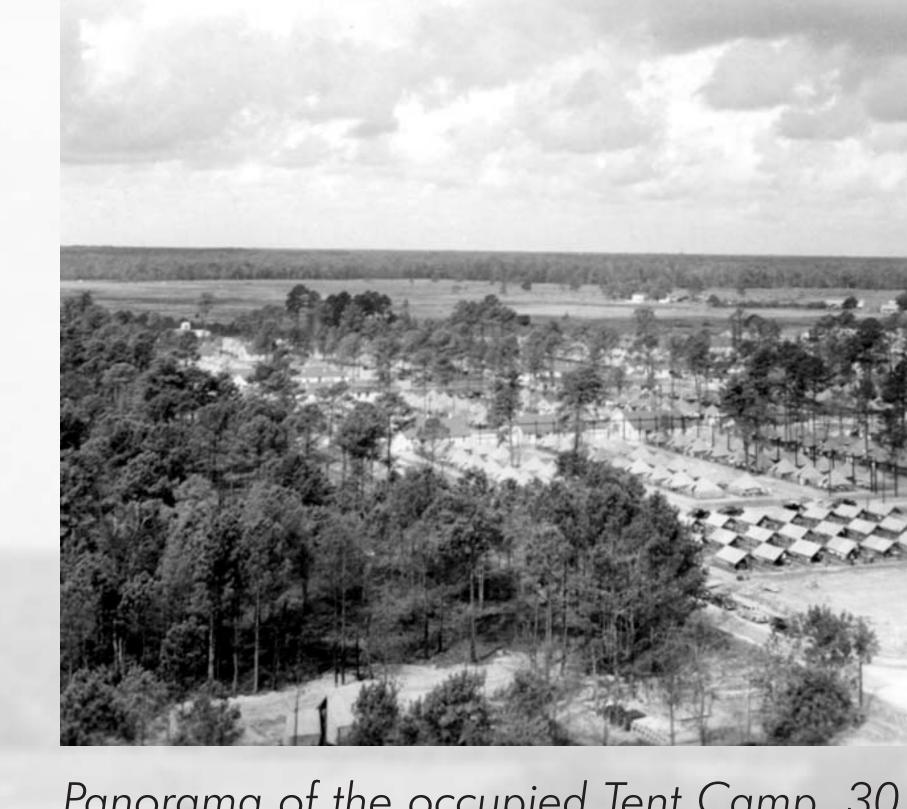
Tent Camp it was called, and Tent Camp it remained (although quonset huts replaced the tents in 1945) until 1951. That year, Tent Camp became Camp Geiger. It was named in honor of Gen. Roy S. Geiger, who enlisted in 1908 and by 1917 had become the fifth Marine officer to be designated an aviator. During World War II, he led the fighting at Guadalcanal, and then led the 1st Marine Amphibious Corps in the invasion and capture of Guam and Okinawa.

The new name was not the camp's only change. The homosote huts disappeared. In their place rose a whole new cantonment of concrete block barracks, warehouses and classrooms, with heading supplied from aboveground steam lines like those that can still be seen today at Courthouse Bay. It wasn't very scenic, but certainly more comfortable than flimsy tents and huts.

In the past 30 years, the School of Infantry has gradually transformed Camp Geiger into the attractive campus of today. The quonset huts are gone, and nearly all the concrete block facilities that served Marine infantry trainees in the Korean War and early Vietnam War eras. And those Marines who "enjoyed" the "privilege" of living in Tent Camp during World War II would surely be impressed!



Tent Camp No. 1, ca. 1941.



Panorama of the occupied Tent Camp, 30 September 1941.



Hospital.



Aerial View of Tent Camp No. 2, 1942.



Construction of Enlisted Men's Washrooms, Tent Camp No. 2, 17 January 1942.



Construction of Tent Camp No. 2 Mess Hall, 17 January 1942.