



Ranch California Horsemen Association Favorite Trail Rides

Camp Pendleton submitted by: Stevie Somes email: ssomes@iinet.com

Location of Staging Area: Rodeo Grounds at Vandergrift Road entrance to MC base

Length of Ride: In and out ride - approximately 1-1/2 hrs each way

Degree of difficulty: Easy to medium - sloping terrain with good footing (my horse is barefoot)

Water Crossings?: Y/N (sometimes) Water for Horses?: Yes – at Rodeo Grounds Water for Riders? Yes, at Golf Course Coffee shop

Toilets?: Yes, Porta Potties at Rodeo Grounds, Men's and Ladies rooms at Golf Course

Directions: From Temecula, South on Interstate 15 to Hwy 76 and go West towards Bonsall. Go approx. 9 or 10 miles, then turn right on Douglas Drive. Next turn right on N. River Road and follow this road until it becomes Vandergrift Road. Vandergrift will dead end at the MC Base gate. After you enter the base, drive about ½ mile to the Rodeo Grounds, on your left. There is plenty of room to park and turn around.

Additional comments:

You will need to show ID at the gate, and sometimes they will randomly pick folks out of line to pull over and go inside the guard shack to register. Always be sure you have your current Drivers License, Proof of Insurance and Vehicle Registration. You could be asked to show one or all of these documents. Your reason for being there is obvious if you are pulling a horse trailer so they most likely will not ask. There is a large horse boarding stable on the base just passed the Rodeo Grounds.

Update: New 2009 Guidelines - They now require a phone call to Debbie at 760-725-5094 a day or so before you arrive, when you enter the base as well as when you leave. Also, one person in your group must have an active or retired military ID. As many as 10 rigs are alright as long as one person shows a military ID.

There is lots of fun riding out on the base and it is wide open. It is approximately 200,000 acres and you will pretty much have the run of the place (except for restricted areas, of course, and they are well marked). The Hart Ranch rotates their ranch stock to graze out on the open range and they are just loose. It is a kick to ride among them as they are gentle, sweet horses (most of them anyway). You can't really get lost out there as you can see for miles in any directions and it is easy to get your bearings. The most fun ride is from the Rodeo Grounds to the Golf Course. There is a nice wide trail heading West that will get you there. You will find a nice, large corral to tie up the horses when you get there. It is fun to go in and have a burger and brew in the Coffee Shop at the Golf Course. If you ride East (through the tunnel under the road) you will find more challenging trails leading from the boarding stable. I have ridden on the base many times and it is always great fun!

