



CHINA LAKE MUSEUM FOUNDATION

P.O. BOX 217

RIDGECREST, CA 93556-0217

(619) 939-3530

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NEWSLETTER

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Board of Directors: Burrell Hays, President; Milton Burford, Secretary; Steve Sanders, Treasurer. *Members:* Capt. Ken Dickerson, USN, (Ret), John DiPol, Harold Manning, Dick Murphy, Hugh Drake, Bill Porter, and Eleanor Johnsen. *Trustee:* Admiral Wesley McDonald, USN (Ret).

From the President, Burrell Hays

The China Lake Museum Foundation Board has been in operation for just over a year. Much has happened in a relatively short time. The China Lake Museum Foundation is incorporated in the State of California for educational purposes. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) recognizes the Foundation as a 501 (c)3 publicly supported organization. As such, donations to the Foundation are tax-exempt to the extent allowed by law. The current membership of the Foundation is noted in the newsletter.

We are extremely pleased to have the China Lake Naval Command actively and cooperatively supporting Foundation efforts to establish a first-class museum. The Command has established an Advisory Committee headed by Scott O'Neil to provide the official interface between

Command and the Foundation. Command has provided office space for the Foundation in the China Lake Exhibit Center (the former Officers' Club). We are most appreciative of Command's support and cooperation.

The purpose of the Foundation is to provide a continuing educational forum and vehicle for the development of an armament museum at China Lake. The Foundation has two principal objectives:

- To develop and maintain a close relationship with the military/civilian organization at China Lake and with all Navy, working in parallel with historical and educational requirements regarding armament and related technology
- To develop a membership and sponsorship relationship with private individuals, grant organizations, corporate America, and others to provide the

means to house, preserve, exhibit, and interpret the heritage of the technological achievement of the naval armament community

We have a challenging and exciting future ahead of us, and have only just begun. The goal is to build a 100,000-square-foot building to house and display China Lake's operational weapon systems and varied technological advances. We have started fund-raising activities to realize this goal through your membership donations and purchases of the *Secret City* videos and Zabel artwork. Plans are underway for major fund-raising activities in the near future. We will keep you posted on such activities through this newsletter. Membership donations, information on purchase of the extraordinary video *Secret City*—a History of the Navy at China Lake videos and Zabel artwork, and other matters of interest are provided in this newsletter.

Thank you for your support and participation in this great endeavor. I wish you and your family the happiest of holiday seasons and best wishes for the New Year!

Membership

Those of you who attended China Lake's 50th Anniversary Celebration in November 1993 may remember that we started our initial membership drive at the Celebration. We have a membership form in this newsletter for those of you who were unable to join the week-end or for persons who wish to renew their membership contribution. Take advantage of the

end-of-the-year tax benefits for our Foundation can offer you. We appreciate your donations!

Zabel Artwork for Sale

Western artist Larry Zabel was commissioned by the Foundation to produce a series of four paintings that is thematic and representative of China Lake's first 50 years. Limited-edition fine prints of the paintings are available for purchase. The project was made possible by the generosity of the Boeing Company, CTA Incorporated, ASI Systems International, McDonnell Douglas, and Northrop Corporation. The original artwork is the property of the Foundation for now, and will ultimately be transferred to the Navy and the China Lake Armament Museum.

Larry Zabel worked at China Lake for 20 years and is now a nationally renowned artist living and painting in Montana. *On a High Desert Point* shows a band of wild horses overlooking the Indian Wells Valley with the Sierra Nevada Mountains in the background and a small, single-engine plane flying at low altitude. *Secret City—China Lake, California* is a montage of images of the Old West and the new technology that created the China Lake of today. *50 Years of Navy RDT&E* captures in one burst of images, emanating from a central fireball of rocket exhaust, the products and technology provided to the Fleet by the China Lake military-civilian team. *Where Rams and Hornets Meet* depicts a band of desert bighorn sheep in a mountain canyon on China Lake's test range watching a flight of

F/A-18 aircraft. Each of these paintings, in a limited edition of 500 signed and numbered fine prints and 50 artist's proofs, are available for purchase. Each limited-edition image size is 11 inches by 22 inches, with 1 1/2 inches of trim, and optional mats, glass, and frame. You can purchase individual prints or the entire series. The paintings are also reproduced and available for purchase on high-quality framed ceramic tiles, about 6 1/2 inches by 8 inches. More detailed information and order forms are available in a descriptive brochure. Contact the China Lake Museum Foundation, P.O. Box 217, Ridgecrest, CA 93556-0217 or call (619) 939-3530.

China Lake's 50th Anniversary Celebration

What a successful celebration—a great 3 days of enjoyment and reminiscing! We still hear from people about what a great time they had. We thought you might be

interested in reading a report from Milt Burford on a conversation he had with Capt. Thomas F. Pollock during the 50th. Capt. Pollock served at China Lake as the first Commanding Officer of Aviation Ordnance Development Unit One in 1944-47. The report is included in this newsletter.

Newsletter

We plan to publish this newsletter quarterly to keep you informed and up to date on what is happening with the Foundation and to gain your continued support. We had decided to name the newsletter *The Rocketeer* because the Naval Air Weapons Station at China Lake was going to rename its publication. However, we just got word that NAWS China Lake will continue publication of its newspaper, happily still named *The Rocketeer*. If you have ideas for a name for our newsletter, please let Eleanor Johnsen know by calling (619) 446-2381 or write at 925 N. Jessica St., Ridgecrest, CA 93555.

A 50th Anniversary Conversation with Capt. Thomas F. Pollock by Milt Burford

I met Capt. Tom Pollock, USN (Ret), at the 50th Anniversary Celebration on the day of the picnic. We had an interesting discussion on some of the new efforts at China Lake, and Tom was amazed at some of the new facilities and laboratories we were using and had under construction. The conversation led to Tom's explanation of the need for a Navy laboratory in the Mojave Desert. Tom followed up on his discussion with a letter, November 9, 1993, repeated here to further describe the founding of China Lake.

A bit of background would be useful in setting the stage. When my HEDRON 14 Experimental Unit began firing forward-firing rockets in 1943 the submarine threat in the Atlantic was at its peak. With the British success in sinking German subs with rockets, our Chief of Naval Operations ordered thousands of aircraft to be equipped with rockets. Within three months we

had squadrons being equipped. Our range facilities at Salton Sea and Goldstone Lake were entirely inadequate to handle the training of Fleet squadrons. Captain Burroughs came by my HEDRON 14 hangar at North Island one day and told me about a plan for a Naval Ordnance Test Station in the desert area near Inyokern and said that my unit could become the aviation facility of the station.

The facilities for developing weapons for naval aircraft were very limited. Naval Station Dahlgren was overtaxed in developing ship-board ordnance, and the facilities at Philadelphia and other places were involved with other projects. Large land areas where there were few people were hard to find on the East Coast.

The Aviation Ordnance Development Units (AODU) were formed. AODU One was charged with the development of rockets and associated antisubmarine warfare (ASW) weapons, and AODU Two was charged with the development of other aviation ordnance material. AODU One was to become the Air Facility at NOTS.

Captain Burroughs recognized the need for an aviation ordnance facility that would be of a permanent installation that would continue to be a primary development station for the future. With the outstanding coordination and the most important contributions of the scientific community, it was apparent that adequate laboratory facilities were necessary not only to support the war effort but to provide a means of having this scientific effort on a permanent basis after the war was over. There was also a requirement of many square miles of airspace and land areas where there were no people living who could be endangered by live ammunition from weapons fired from the air. The weather is always a factor where aviation activities are in progress, so it was evident that any place chosen for an air facility had to have a high percentage of flying days per year. Another requirement was that such a station should be within reasonable distances from sources of supplies for the aircraft armament development needs and for the thousands of people who would be living there.

The China Lake area was considered to be an outstanding choice as it was handy to CalTech [the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena], it was near to aircraft manufacturing facilities in the L.A. area, and it was not too far from Navy and Marine Corps installations for military support.

That's the word from one of the earliest China Lakers.

Foundation Office

The China Lake Museum Foundation office is located in Room 3, China Lake Exhibit Center, Building 500, Essex Circle, China Lake, California 93555-6002. The mailing address remains P.O. Box 217, Ridgecrest, California 93556-0217. The telephone number is (619) 939-3530, and the fax number (619) 939-0564. Hours of operation are 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Monday through Friday (except Flex Fridays). The office is staffed by one volunteer, Jane Burford. Our thanks to you, Jane, for your terrific

support, and we promise to get you some relief and help soon. We are looking for some good volunteers to help us out. If you are interested, please contact Jane at (619) 939-3530.

Thanks again for your help and support. Until next time, take care, and have a wonderful New Year!

Eleanor Johnsen, Editor

The China Lake Museum Foundation

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