



# THE CHINA LAKER

Vol. 11 No. 2

Newsletter of the China Lake Museum Foundation

Spring 2005

## THE CHINA LAKE COMMUNITY - AS IT WAS

By C. John DiPol, Director Emeritus



An aerial view of the China Lake community on May 16, 1950

The China Lake community is very different today from how it was at its beginning and for several decades thereafter. How was it, then, that a community principally of civilians teamed with military personnel, was established in the first place, rather than just a place of work?

The Naval Ordnance Test Station (NOTS) was officially established in November 1943, initially to meet the needs of the Navy-Caltech wartime rocket program, but also to be a permanent post-war research, development and test center for aviation ordnance, located in the Indian Wells Valley.

The area then was sparsely populated, with the nearby hamlets of Inyokern and Ridgecrest consisting of only a small number of fami-

lies each, without the resources and infrastructure to support the imminent arrival of hundreds, and soon thousands, of personnel. Accordingly, a massive two-pronged construction program was initiated: the construction of the technical complexes, paralleled by the building of a community of homes, stores, parks, schools, recreation facilities, etc. These two major elements, technical facilities and community, were to be contiguous and integrated with each other at the China Lake site eight miles east of Inyokern.

Starting in October, 1943, temporary facilities were set up at the airfield (Harvey Field) near Inyokern for the naval air detachment, NOTS command staff and other officers, enlisted men and Caltech personnel. Quonset huts were erected for living quarters and mess hall, but there were no family quarters. The military families who arrived had to find their own places. If not in Inyokern or Ridgecrest, then in outlying communities as far as Randsburg, Kernville and Isabella. The permanent facilities, both technical and community, being built at China Lake were occupied and put into operation as fast as they were completed, with the first family housing becoming available by mid-1944.

Also, It was during this very early period that Captain Sherman Burroughs, NOTS's first commanding officer, established the foundation for the military-civilian (Caltech at the time) teamwork that was the hallmark of the post-war organization and community. (continued on page 12)



# China Lake Museum Foundation

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## **President's Report**, by Paul Homer

The China Lake Museum Foundation's 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Dinner/Auction fund raising event, which was held 5 March 2005 was a great success, thanks to the outstanding efforts of Wayne and Pat Doucette, committee leads for the event. Thanks are especially due to the many donors, businesses, and volunteers who contributed funds, auction items, and worked at the many events leading to the dinner/auction, and participating in the event.

Now, I want to talk about the weather. The rainfall recorded at the Naval Air Facility since 1 Oct. 04 to the end of March 05 stands at 9.01 inches, and of that 5.37 inches has been measured since the first of the calendar year. So, the surrounding desert is as green as it gets – greener than perhaps it has been for years. At this writing, the wild flower bloom is perhaps about two weeks from the peak, a little longer up in the canyons. The wild flowers in Death Valley peaked mid-March, and the bloom was so glorious that a national major TV network featured a

report on it in its national news program. There may be a correlation with another fairly wet year: 1952. From December 1951 to March 1952 NAF records show that 4.52 inches of rain fell during that period. The year 1952 was later proved to be the wettest year on the short record since NOTS was established in 1943. And, the desert vegetation was very green during the spring of 1952.

In reading the draft of Liz Babcock's volume 3 of the China Lake history, a book she is finalizing, the events following the 1952 wet winter are mentioned in Chapter 2, Life on the Desert:

"A rainy year had its drawbacks as well as its joys, as residents discovered to their horror in 1952, when an unusually wet spring inspired a horde of caterpillars to migrate across the blooming Upper Mojave Desert.

(continued on page 3)



**President's Report** (continued from page 2)

Without the natural selection that sparse vegetation normally exacted, the proliferating caterpillars rampaged onto China Lakers' arduously maintained lawns. Walkways at the China Lake Pilot Plant became so slippery that work stopped until corrective action could be taken. Members of the Public Works Horticultural Branch worked overtime to fight off the unwelcome intruders. Waves of caterpillars were succeeded by waves of ground beetles, which Darwin Tiemann, curator of the China Lake Museum, assured the community were "beneficial, eating butterflies and moths, though a nuisance."

(The references are contained in a footnote, repeated here): *Rocketeer*, April 30, 1952, p. 1; and June 4, 1952, p. 6; Dr. Emory L. Ellis review comments on first draft, September 21, 1998. With ample greenery to feast on, the caterpillars could afford to be selective. In a November 1992 conversation with the author, Barbara Auld remembered watching over the back fence as her next-door neighbor, Dr. Albert L. Hoyem, flushed caterpillars by the bucketful out of his well-manicured lawn. Perplexed she asked her husband, Howard, "Why does Al Hoyem have caterpillars when we don't?" Gesturing to the relatively arid Auld yard, he replied, "Well, would you eat ground round if you could have filet mignon?" (End of quote).

Darwin Tiemann identified two sources of the caterpillars – the whitelined sphinx moth (commonly known as the hummingbird moth), and the painted lady butterfly.

The invasion of the caterpillars was so bad that the Horticultural Branch in the Public Works Department laid down a belt of chlordane solution in a shallow trench around the entire station in an effort to keep the caterpillars out. Anti-caterpillar forces were also organized by the Ridgcrest Chamber of Commerce, headed by Dr. Harold Klaser. Several stories of the problems caused by the hordes of caterpillars, feasting on the green vegetation and then marching in search of more were to do with the slippery surface of sidewalks and streets. The China Lake Pilot Plant was closed for a couple of days because of the coating of caterpillars on the sidewalks, and another person claimed that the road

leading up the hill to the CLPP area was too slippery to get to the gate. Rudy Zagala told me that a fuel truck full of fuel slipped off the road into a boggy ditch in the G-1 Range area, and was stuck for some time before it could be retrieved.

Mrs. Leroy (Ditty) Riggs said the road going out the main gate was so slippery that it was too dangerous to drive at the then-day speed limit of 20 mph. During late May to early June 1952, the caterpillar invasion was followed by a wave of "predacious ground beetles of the Calosoma family" (*Rocketeer*, June 4, 1952). These beetles, while harmless to people, would eat the caterpillars, decaying vegetation, and even each other. And, invade the houses of the China Lakers. A last example of the huge numbers of caterpillars during the spring of 1952, Billie Raglin, a student at Las Flores School at the time, said that when the caterpillars went to the cocoon stage he collected a lunch pail full of cocoons from one desert bush. He then took them to school, and placed the cocoons inside his desk, which was the type with the top hinged so one could raise the desk top and store books and paper inside. After forgetting about the store of cocoons, and a long weekend near the end of the term, he opened his desktop on a Monday morning and a cloud of butterflies flew out into the room. Yes, Billie did get into a bit of trouble from the event.

Already as of this day, the end of March, I see a healthy increase in the "bugs on the windshield" for a short drive to Inyokern, and a few butterflies and moths around the desert flowers. So, get ready for the possibility of another caterpillar invasion during the next month.

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**Fifty Years Ago:** 1 April 1955 (*Rocketeer*)

Dr. W. R. Haseltine was appointed temporary additional duties as acting Head, Ballistics Division, replacing Dr. Ivar Highberg. Dr. Highberg was selected to become Head of the Test Department, pending BUORD approval.

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MEMORIES - RAM - The 28-Day Miracle

by O.J. Saholt, Museum Docent

# Rocketeer

VOL. VI, NO. 36

UNITED STATES NAVAL ORDNANCE TEST STATION

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 1950

## Station Schools Will Start Fall Term Tomorrow

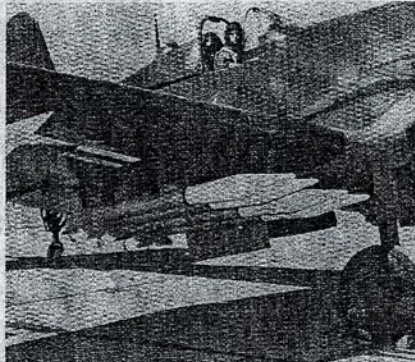
It will be back to school for some 1,870 China Lake students when the bell rings tomorrow marking the start of another fall semester.

Station schools are getting the jump on most other Kern county schools, which will not open until Monday, with the exception of Handsburg high, which opens today.

The total enrollment here has increased by approximately 100 since last September, according to Superintendent of Schools Earl Murray. The Burroughs high enrollment figure, 420, is nearly unchanged. Mr. Murray said, but the elementary schools will be bulging with about 1,450 pupils.

Construction is under way on a new lower grade facility to replace the Byrnes Street school. It will not be ready for the opening day, however, and pupils assigned to it will spend the first few weeks of the fall semester at the Byrnes Street school.

Twenty-one new teachers are included among the faculty members at the local schools, four at the high school, and 17 at the three elemen-



UNDER THE WING of this F4U Corsair are four Rams, the new anti-tank rocket developed and produced at this Station in record time. At the controls of the plane is Lt. (jg) N. L. Wheat of the Naval Air Facility. The Station's work on the Ram won it the tribute below.

## A Letter from Admiral Sherman

The letter which follows was forwarded to the Station last week by Rear Admiral Albert G. Noble, Chief of the Bureau of Ordnance, who added his own congratulations:

It has come to my attention that the 6.5-in. aircraft anti-tank rock-

## Second Trailer Court For Station Okayed

Approval was received this week for development of a second house trailer area on the Station. To be situated south and west of the Decatur-Knox intersection, it will be on land formerly designated as a community recreation area. Completion of the project has been set for Dec. 1.

## Three Local Men On Casualty Lists From Korean Front

One former Station Marine has been killed, and two other servicemen from this locale, a Marine and an Army infantryman, have been reported wounded in action in the battle for Korea.

Pfc. Charles A. Astley, Jr., who served with the Station Marine detachment from Nov. 5, 1949, until July 7, 1950, was killed.

He is survived by his wife, the former Nina Eloene Johnson, of China Lake, and his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Astley, Sr., of Seattle, Wash.

Mrs. Astley, Jr., a graduate of the

The Community Council is now inspecting other available sites for use as a recreation area.

Development of the 11-acre area, including the construction of six centrally-located buildings for toilet and laundry facilities, will cost an estimated \$100,000.

Authority also was given for the purchase of 150 wheelless trailers for \$291,813.

Space will be left for approximately 100 employee-owned trailers. Seventy persons are on the present waiting list to bring their trailers onto the Station, according to John O. Richmond, community manager.

Rental fees, either for those owning trailers or for those wishing to make use of the Navy-owned dwellings, have not yet been decided.

It is planned to give first opportunity for trailer rentals to those

The September 6, 1950 issue of the *Rocketeer* carried a front page photograph of Project Ram warheads on rockets mounted on an F4U Corsair aircraft. Accompanying the picture is a congratulatory letter from Rear Admiral Sherman, Chief of the Bureau of Ordnance, on a job well done.

In mid-July 1950 a special classified meeting was called at the Station Theater for designated program groups. I was in one of those groups. It was announced that the Russians had introduced a new heavy tank, with reported 18-inch armor, into the Korean conflict. Our existing rocket warheads were not effective. We were tasked to correct this situation in a crash program. The presenter made the point that a large number of casualties would result from this deficiency. This was our incentive program.

Management established the overall guidelines and then divided the tasks into sub-projects. Mine was to design and oversee the construction of dummy warheads to be utilized in creating the necessary ballistic tables. These "warheads" must duplicate all of the physical

flight characteristics of the real thing. These were unguided rockets that required accurate aiming by the pilots. For two weeks I slept at my desk with a few trips home to shower and get fresh clothes. Food was brought in as required. The dummy warheads were made and painted in the Public Works carpentry shop. Fortunately, it was decided to use an existing 5-inch rocket motor.

The "real" metal parts were made in the machine shop and the warhead components were made and assembled in the normal explosives areas of Propulsion Department. The fuze and battery were assembled by volunteer personnel working at tables set up in the main hall of Michelson Laboratory.

(continued on page 14)



## A CHINA LAKE ORIGINAL – DICK DeMARCO



and accepted employment at China Lake. A partial reason for this selection was that he wanted a warm climate for his ill father. He did not, however, realize the extent of the warm climate. Upon arrival in July 1954, he was assigned to Dorm 10 for living and Tom Hayes of the Design Engineering Branch (Code 4554) for work. Later his fiancée became his wife and he brought her and his father to a three-bedroom home at China Lake.

Perhaps his most interesting assignment at China Lake was involved with the Moray, deep diving submersible, in the late '50s and early '60s. They not only had to solve current problems as they emerged but they were working with entirely new processes and ideas. They had several firsts, which were generally unknown and considered unachievable by many in the world of submersibles. The China Lake "can do" philosophy ignored these obstacles and the Moray was successfully deployed.

Dick continued his work at China Lake with Shrike, free fall weapons and other systems. After retirement, he worked seven years for a contractor (Comarco) on Navy programs in his field of expertise. He took time to devote some efforts to the U.S. Naval Museum of Armament and Technology from its origination. His first contribution was to design the layout for the gift shop of the museum, which is still essentially in its original form today.

Dick now enjoys his association with the museum as a docent. In this capacity he can pass on to others his knowledge of the projects developed and carried out at China Lake. In particular, he enjoys relating the special creativity and innovation that is so typical of the Navy Laboratories here. He feels these past accomplishments give a good indication of how future China Lakers will meet and anticipate the operational requirements of the fleet. He and his wife, Charlotte, enjoy living in the area and celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in September 2004.

An original? Yes. Unique? No. Typical of the creativity and problem solving China Laker of the past – and, hopefully, the future. Dick DeMarco says the value of the U. S. Museum of Armament and Technology is to exhibit the creative problem solving capability and creativity that has typified China Lake since its early days. This environment presages the future and all that can be accomplished in this special and unusual environment.

Dick earned an Associate Degree in Mechanical Engineering in June of 1942 and enlisted in the military where his main assignment was to build the famous Burma Road -- the winding, dangerous route connecting India through formidable mountains and jungle, to Burma and eventually all the way to China. After returning home, he used the GI Bill to attend college at the University of Illinois – where he discovered he had to start all over again because of the excessive elapsed time since his previous studies.

He received his degree in June of 1954



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October 13, 2004

China Lake Museum Foundation  
1 Pearl Harbor Way, Bldg 500  
Ridgecrest, California 93556

Dear China Lake Museum Foundation:

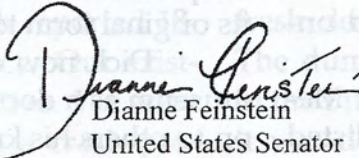
I am honored to offer my warmest wishes as you pay tribute to the brave men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our Nation and China Lake.

The names of the individuals listed represent the very best of what our country has to offer and the values we stand for. Their lives represented the epitome of courage and dedication. The fact that they were so willing to risk their lives to protect others is a real testament for those who have answered the call to duty and have selflessly sacrificed their futures for our country.

I commend the courageous men and women of China Lake for all that they have done for the state of California, the Nation, and the world. I wish nothing but good luck and continued success on all your future endeavors to protect and keep The United States of America strong.

With warmest personal regards.

Sincerely,

  
Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator

The China Lake Memorial adjacent to the airpark northwest of the museum, was dedicated in October 2004 as part of the 50th Anniversary of ARM Technology and the Shrike missile. At that time the foundation received letters of recognition for the memorial from all of our elected representatives federal, state and local. Some of these were published in the Winter 2005 edition of the *China Laker* and we will continue to publish them on a space available basis until all have been published.



## MISTY DAWN WARREN – NAVY TEST PARACHUTIST

compiled from the Rocketeer, June 10, 1999  
www.nativewomenveterans.org and www.laketraavis.txed.net/LTE/special-pict/Deverel\_project)

Seven-year-old Deverel Duncan's teacher Mrs. Jennifer Monshaugen, gave his class the assignment of writing about an American Hero. Deverel immediately thought of his baby sitter from a few years before – Misty Dawn Warren. Misty had attended the same Lake Travis Elementary School in Austin, Texas, graduating in 1993 as an honor student.

Deverel wrote as follows in his own newly learned handwriting:

"Misty Dawn Warren was in the US Navy. She worked with NASA. She tested parachutes for the pilots. She chose this field because she liked adventure. Misty is a Real Hero! On June, 1999 she gave her life for her country in the line of duty to enable our service men to do their best in defending our country. God Bless Misty and all our service men and women."

Aircrew Survival Equipmentman Airman (PRAN) Misty Dawn Warren was a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. She was athletic and involved in sports and many other school activities. Her comrades in the Native Women Veterans organization describe her as "a person who wanted to do everything and did."

Misty enlisted in the Navy in 1998 and received her basic training at the Naval Training Center in Great Lakes. She trained as a parachute rigger in Pensacola and was then selected as Test Parachutist Candidate. She earned her Basic Parachutist Jump Wings in 1998 at Fort Benning, Georgia.

NASA selected her to test equipment fitted for female astronauts. She also participated in the NASA Space Shuttle Recovery Systems Surveillance Test Program in Houston. Her dream was to join the space program after she completed her Navy training.

Misty arrived at China Lake in August of 1998 where she was one of ten parachutists in the Parachute Operations Branch of the Crew Systems Department. Test Parachutists must first

complete training as parachute riggers and make a qualifying parachute jump. Progressing beyond that point is on a voluntary basis. Candidates complete more than a dozen different types of jumps – water landings, free fall, various kinds of parachutes.

Misty, age 24, had equipment failure during her 75<sup>th</sup> jump. She gave her life for her country on June 15, 1999. Misty was one of only eight women designated as Naval Test Parachutist at the time and possibly the only Indian woman to achieve this distinction.

At her Memorial Service, her fellow parachutists spoke these words, "Misty, we love you and you will always be missed. May you always have calm seas, fair winds and blue skies."

We at the U.S. Naval Museum of Armament and Technology and all China Lakers wish the same for Misty and all the other American heroes whose names are on the Memorial Rock located near the museum at China Lake.





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**Membership and Donor Programs**

by Alice Campbell, V.P. for Membership

The Foundation has a total of 444 members as of 1 April 2005, down from our high of 478. A sincere thank you goes to all you members for this support which is so important for successful daily operations. We would appreciate your support in soliciting your friends to join this worthy and fully tax deductible organization. You may be wondering why we have started a Donor Program in addition to Membership. A year round cash flow is critical to sustaining any organization. The Foundation needs at least one paid employee to oversee and perform daily operations, including keeping the books, maintaining the Gift Shop, and supporting the Navy in keeping the doors open, arranging for Museum tours and Docents, and some funding of new displays. Membership provides funds to support these functions as does the Gift Shop. The Annual Dinner Auction has raised the necessary additional funds in the past to sustain operations for the year, along with a special donations appeal in December of 2003.

The Building Fund is the other major fund to support development of the new building to be located outside the Main Gate. So far, the Build-

ing Fund is growing very slowly. In order to build up that Fund and begin to show progress on the new building plan, this year the Board decided to give 90% of the Dinner Auction profits to the Building Fund. The Dinner Auction was a record fundraiser this year, and the large attendance and donations from the community and IWV businesses were outstanding and added a fresh new dynamic. To balance this change, this year we are emphasizing our new Annual Donor Program as a way to keep the cash flow for operations at a sustainable level. Several of our Life Members have mentioned a willingness to support such a program. For example, fifty people, donating annually at the \$200 level to help sustain operations, would free us to focus on growth--the new building, new displays, and new educational programs. Annual donations at the \$200 level and up will be recognized in the Quarterly Newsletter and annually in the Museum. When these donations have accumulated to \$1000, permanent recognition will be established on the Donor Wall in the Museum, surrounding the Zabel Sidewinder 50<sup>th</sup> painting.



**Message From The Director**

By Debbie Rios, NAWCWD Museum Director

Hi All,

Well the Naval Museum of Armament and Technology (NMAT) Team has been together for our first quarter and we are moving right along. We have a number of irons on the fire right now. We have been given an opportunity to develop an exhibit to place in the Michelson Laboratory's north lobby. The team is currently working on designing an exhibit that will fit in the space allotted as well as lure more visitors to our museum. Keep your eye on the lobby to see our exhibit.

The team is also working with the China Lake Museum Foundation (CLMF) to develop a "Donor Wall" to honor the major contributors to CLMF. A preliminary design has been proposed and we are hoping that by the next quarter we will have the wall completed and be able to include a photo in the newsletter.

We are also looking toward our next major exhibit. Walleye has been proposed and is seriously being considered. We are looking for volunteers who have Walleye experience, special talents, or interests. If you would like to help out please call me at 760-939-0414 or Eric Bengtson at 760-939-2219.

The NMAT team also works with Charlie Cass and Jimmy Price, to clean and restore our airplanes and helicopters. Charlie heads up two current helicopter projects, one to restore a HH-1K Helicopter Gunship, and one that is a TH1L that will be a Search And Rescue (SAR) Memorial. Jimmy heads up two current airplane projects as well, one is the clean up of a RF-4B Phantom, and the other is the retrieval and restoration of an AD-4N Sky Raider. We do have a number of aircraft that are in need of cleaning and restoration, and there has been recent pressure to complete these aircraft so they can be put on display. We are looking for volunteers to work on our current projects, or to develop new projects with our aircraft. If you have any proposals, suggestions, or a special love for aircraft and would like to volunteer please call me at 760-939-0414 or Leroy Doig at 760-939-2027.

We are also trying to work out the logistics of opening the Museum on Saturdays. I am sure if we are able to open our doors on Saturdays we will get a lot of visitors. The CLMF is currently looking for volunteers to work in the museum during the week and on weekends. If you have any suggestions, ideas, or would like to volunteer please call me at 760-939-0414 or Dotsy Cronin, the Foundation Volunteer Coordinator, at 760-371-7527.

I look forward to meeting all of our Foundation members either here at one of our new quarterly "Potluck" lunches, or by email or phone, my email address is [debra.rios@navy.mil](mailto:debra.rios@navy.mil). Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions, suggestions, or we can always use a new Volunteer!

Debbie Rios



**THE CHINA LAKE COMMUNITY - AS IT WAS** (continued from page 1)



China Lake Fire Department personnel making a presentation to school children October 10, 1951. Note the temporary school facilities in the background.

The hectic pace of the wartime years did not abate with the end of the war in August, 1945. Heavy construction continued; however, it was a time of transition. Caltech was phasing out of the rocket program. Many of its staff remained at China Lake and converted to civil service employment. So did many of the naval personnel, officers and enlisted alike, when separated from the Service. The China Lake community was growing.

At this point it might be well to comment on the similarity between China Lake and the Los Alamos Laboratory in New Mexico. Both were established in remote locations; both had well defined objectives: Los Alamos to design the atomic bomb and China Lake to apply rocket propulsion technology to air armaments; both had a large civilian workforce, highly scientific, technical and teamed with military personnel; both were established in wartime and both continued on a permanent status postwar; and in both cases all personnel lived side by side in a relatively confined community, initially under austere conditions. And, both have been eminently successful.

Through the latter part of the 1945, the growth of civilian employment continued to keep pace with the expansion of the technical programs. Recruitment of civilian employees was aggressively pursued. But conditions at China Lake, while improving, were still austere, with only nominal and basic amenities. No big department stores and shops, etc. And the "termination winds": rolling clouds of sand and

air which first appeared with the scraping of the desert floor during the construction period. Accordingly, the recruiters soon learned to fully brief the wives of conditions so that there would be "no surprises" upon their arrival. But the workforce and residents at the time were very young people; the senior officers and Caltech professors in their early and mid '40s were the "old people" and all learned, more or less, to accept and adjust to the existing conditions.

By the end of the 1940s there were hundreds of military and over 3,000 civilian employees, all living on-base. Housing was a chronic shortage, even with the construction of hundreds of units in the '50s and '60s. Military families, both officer and enlisted, were interspersed with civilian families. Even with the inevitable transfers, long-lasting friendships were made, many of which endure to this day. Single enlisted personnel and civilian employees lived in barracks and one-story dorms, with newer and more modern facilities constructed in the out-years. In 1950, the population of the base was increasing rapidly due to the requirements of the Korean conflict, as well as graduates from the GI bill entering the economy. By the late '50s and early '60s, the total population of China Lake reached 10,000 to 12,000. And the number of housing units was 3,200 at its maximum.

A whole range of community services was provided: schools (operated by the state), a bank (B of A), commissary store and Navy Exchange (the privilege of use of both was extended to civilian employees), post office (1948), barber and beauty shops,

(continued on page 13)



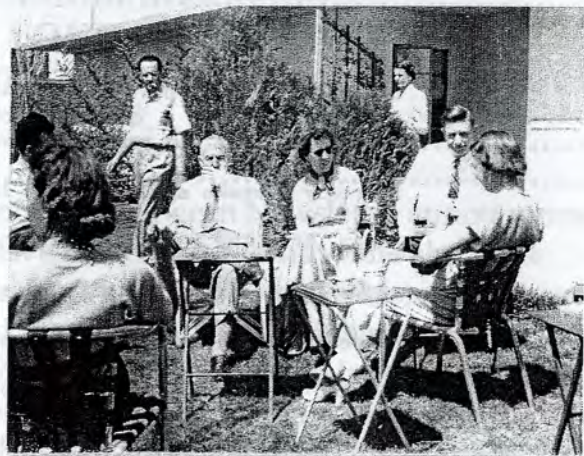
**THE CHINA LAKE COMMUNITY - AS IT WAS** (continued from page 12)

Community library, the All Faith Chapel, recreational facilities, and many others. Bennington Plaza was the "downtown" area. The theater, open to all, was 10 cents. The Navy, in the form of Public Works, was the landlord. You had trouble in your quarters? Plumbing problem, AC, broken window? Call the PW trouble desk. Remember the phone number? How could you forget: 7177.

As would be expected, the people in the community were from very diverse backgrounds. Not only were they military and civilian, but they were from different parts of the country, with a broad spectrum of talents and skills: professionals, technicians, administrators, office personnel, artisans, mechanics, heavy equipment operators, researchers, on and on. And, perforce, the housing assignments were made, in a large part, on the basis of rank in the military and rating and position grade of the civilians. With these divergent elements, one would think that there would be social stratification. Not so. There were forces at work to create a great sense of community and blend the residents into essentially a homogeneous whole. For example, by the late '50s, there were nearly 200 different clubs and group organizations. Everyone belonged to some, often several. These included traditional military clubs such as the O'Club, CPO and Acey-Deucey, all with both military and civilian membership, plus athletic leagues, hobby clubs, cultural associations, Boy Scout and Girl Scout units, WACOM (Women's Auxiliary of the Commissioned Officers Mess formed to promote the arts, education and philanthropic enterprises) and many more. And then there was the All-Faith Chapel. Both the Protestant and Catholic Congregations were very large. The Hebrew Congregation, although not as numerous, had regular services led by student rabbis. The school system was another unifying factor. Most China Lake adult residents were young, hence many children were about, and parents were heavily involved in school affairs.

Some were teachers, others school-board members, PTA members and athletic event volunteers.

And then there was the work. To paraphrase Shakespeare: "*The work is the thing*". It was a point of intense focus that permeated the fabric of everyday life, and rightfully so. It was what the community was all about. Without a doubt, the motivation and productivity of all employees was enhanced when all lived on-base. All lived only a short distance from the work sites and often return to the lab, shop, office, airfield on their own time to struggle with a particular urgent problem. If there was a turf squabble on the job with someone who also was a neighbor, it often was settled over the fence on a Saturday morning. At Christmastime, as well as on other occasions, many people hosted open-houses. At these gatherings, invariably, the ladies would be in the parlor, the snacks on the table and the men in the kitchen near the punch bowl talking shop, not just telling "sea stories", but discussing technical problems, possible solutions etc. The informal communications network that evolved complemented the formal workplace organization, which was designed and managed to optimize the integration of all elements of the



An early day lawn party in the community of China Lake. Note the shirts and ties on the gentlemen and heels on the ladies!



**THE CHINA LAKE COMMUNITY - AS IT WAS** (continued from page 13)

workforce, to close-couple the support groups with the more glamorous research and technical elements so that each employee, from the most humble position to the most exalted, felt that he or she was a full participant and directly contributed to the output of the whole enterprise.

And so, the China Laker took great pride in his place of work and home. He knew it was unique, different; a special place. Morale was high.

A sense of loyalty to his work prevailed. His children grew up in a wholesome environ-

ment, with benefits flowing from a close knit community and the bonding of many friendships. And today he can look back to those years and feel, with a great sense of satisfaction, of how terrific they were.

(Postscript: The video film "Secret City" contains clips of community life at China Lake. If you have a copy, view it again. If not, you may purchase one at the museum store.)

**MEMORIES - RAM - The 28-Day Miracle** (continued from page 3)

The first lot of these new weapons was delivered to the war zone along with the required training personnel. The first Russian tank was knocked out exactly 28 days from the first sighting. Our tests showed that we could expect penetration of 24-inches of armor.

Inspection of the wrecked Russian tank showed an armor thickness of less than a foot. The results were wonderful!

Attached is a copy of a news broadcast on the subject.

Remarks of Fleetwood Lawton, 7:15 a.m. news broadcast over KFI, Los Angeles, 17 August 1950:

Information used by Mr. Lawton appeared on Associated Press wire dispatch, date line, New York.

**TEXT**

American airman are today revealed to be employing a newly developed weapon against Communist armor. The weapon is a rocket 6½ inches in diameter far more powerful than its predecessor, but the remarkable feature is that the production was first ordered by General Hoyt Vandenberg scarcely 4 weeks ago, after he learned, during his visit to air bases in Japan, that the 5 inch rocket then used did not veritably disable enemy tanks even when direct hits were scored. The job of producing a handier rocket with the utmost speed was assigned to the Naval Ordnance Test Station at Inyokern; whereby dint of hard work by day and night the weapon was actually placed in the hands of our airmen in Korea in less than a single month. That is truly a magnificent accomplishment for which all hands at the Inyokern station deserve a richly earned "well done."



**Museum Happenings** by Barry Lowry, CLMF Museum Manager

It's spring and "termination winds" are with us once again!

The museum continues to be a popular venue for meetings, luncheons, tours both official and public, and many other activities. A check of visitor numbers shows us with about 200 more visitors in the February-March time frame than we had in the same period in 2004. Our dedicated crew of volunteers continues to lead tours for all types of groups on all of the days of the week.

Who says the desert isn't a fertile place? The substantial winter rains this season have produced a bumper crop of weeds in most everyone's yard, and similarly a bumper crop of wildflowers in the surrounding areas including Death Valley to our east. The Death Valley bloom has gotten wide attention in the local, regional and national media as well as on the Internet. The resulting traffic from wildflower tourists has been very good for local businesses as well as for the museum. A significant number of people have called from the highway with the admonition that they were either going to or coming from Death Valley and they wanted to know about visiting the museum. The result of this activity has been evident in both the museum visitor logs and in museum store sales figures. As of this writing, museum store sales are 27% ahead of this point last year!

As with any museum, volunteers are the life-blood that makes the operation possible. USNMAT and the CLMF are no exception. Dotsy Cronin, our stalwart Volunteer Coordinator and museum store overseer, is still looking for volunteers with a desire to work a couple of shifts a month in the museum store. Call Dotsy if you or your friends, relatives, kids or spouses would find it interesting to help out with our museum store operations.

With space at a premium in this issue this is all I have for now folks. Until next issue....



Dotsy hard at work in the Business Office!

**CLMF MEMBERS – WE NEED YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS  
IF YOU HAVE ONE**

from Alice Campbell, V.P. for Membership

To keep you better advised of socials and other happenings in between Newsletter announcements, we would like to send you an email. If you did not receive two emails recently, one about the Christmas party and one about the Dinner Auction, we don't have your email address. Please email Alice Campbell at [alicerbob@verizon.net](mailto:alicerbob@verizon.net) and I will add you to the CLMF Members Email List in our Membership Database. If you don't have email and would like to be contacted by phone about such events, call Alice Campbell at 760-377-0056. For those of you who would prefer to receive the quarterly Newsletter by email rather than bulk mail, let us know that too. Reducing the number of mailings saves money and trees, and is more reliable time wise than Bulk Mail with the US Postal Service. Thank you for your support of the Museum and the Museum Foundation.



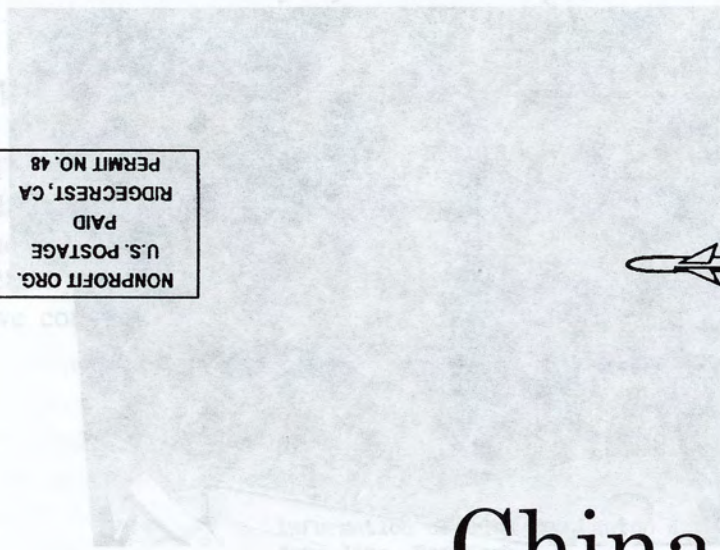
# THE CHINA LAKE COMMUNITY - SAW IT AS IT WAS

As with any museum, volunteers are the life-blood that makes the operation possible. USNMA and the CLMF are no exception. Dotsy Cronin our stewart, Volunteer Coordinator and museum store overseer, is still looking for volunteers with a desire to work a couple of shifts a month in the museum store. Call Dotsy if you or your friends, relatives, kids or possess would find it interesting to help out with our museum store operation.

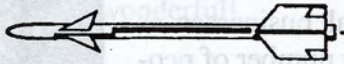
With space at a premium in this issue, I will all I have for now folks. Until next issue. A

It's spring and "renovation winds" are with it. A spring window opened with them once again! The museum continues to be a popular venue for meetings, lunches, one tour both official and public and many other activities. A check of visitor numbers shows us with about 200 more visitors in the February-March time frame than we had in the same period in 2004. Our dedicated crew of volunteers continues to lead tours for all types of groups on all of the days of the week.

Who says the desert isn't a fertile place? The substantial winter rains this season have produced a bumper crop of weeds in most everyone's yard, and similarly a bumper crop of wildflowers in the surrounding areas including Death Valley to our east. The Death Valley bloom has gotten wide attention in the local, regional, and national media as well as on the internet. The resulting traffic from wildflower pic have called from the highway with the admonition that they were either going to or coming from Death Valley and they wanted to know about visiting the museum. The result of this activity has been evident in both the museum visitor logs and in museum store sales figures. As of this writing, museum sales are 27% ahead of this point last year.



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# China Lake Museum Foundation

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