



# THE CHINA LAKER

Vol. 15, No. 1

Newsletter of the China Lake Museum Foundation

Winter 2009

## CHINA LAKE HISTORY VOLUME III PUBLISHED



*Rear Adm. David Dunaway and Scott O'Neil thank Liz Babcock for writing the third volume of China Lake history, "Magnificent Mavericks". Photo by Dan O'Connor.*

Scott O'Neil, NAWCWD executive director, presented a copy of "Magnificent Mavericks" to author Elizabeth Babcock on Dec. 10 in appreciation for her work in preserving the history of the Navy at China Lake.

"This is a momentous occasion," O'Neil said. "This book documents a very important part of our history and includes some of our most interesting characters."

"Magnificent Mavericks" is the third volume of the history of the Navy's desert installation at China Lake. It begins in 1948 when the Naval Ordnance Test Station (NOTS) was just 5 years old. Through exhaustive research and interviews, Babcock documented key contributions that NOTS made to the Navy and the nation's defense from 1948 -1958.

Volume I of China Lake's history, "Sailors, Scientists and Rockets," was written by Albert B. Christman and

chronicles the establishment of NOTS. Volume 2, "The Grand Experiment at Inyokern," was written by Christman and J.D. Gerrard-Gough. It picks up where the first volume left off with the construction and early use of China Lake's instrumented ranges, pilot plants and laboratories. Volume 3 begins with the dedication of the Michelson Laboratory in 1948 and ends about 10 years later.

"To me, my writing of this book is an example of the China Lake way of doing things," Babcock said. "In the beginning, I didn't exactly know how to write this book but I just stepped up and did it."

Babcock was presented a framed letter of appreciation signed by O'Neil and NAWCWD Commander Rear Adm. David Dunaway. The letter, in part, read, "We recognize that this was truly a labor of love for you...your initiative, dedication, passion to capture and tell these stories before they were gone is a huge contribution to naval history and the China Lake family."

Originally from Michigan, Babcock came to China Lake in 1960 and began working on the base as a writer in 1971. She began research for the book in 1987, doing more than 65 oral history interviews.

"I cherish all of the good friends I made while preparing this book, and am honored and privileged to know them," Babcock said. "This book is for those magnificent mavericks who defined the China Lake spirit. I hope they will be pleased with it."

Hard and soft cover copies of the "Magnificent Mavericks" are available for purchase from the China Lake Museum Foundation gift shop. Mail orders can be placed by calling 760-939-3530.

## China Lake Museum Foundation

P.O. Box 217 · Ridgecrest, CA 93556-0217  
760-939-3530 · [clmf@ridgenet.net](mailto:clmf@ridgenet.net) • 760-939-0564 (FAX)

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## President's Report by Bob Campbell

We are getting ready for our annual dinner auction scheduled for 30 May. Raytheon has signed up as the major sponsor for the event, as they did last year, with a donation of \$25K. We are very grateful for their support this year, and in the past years. Pat Connell is leading the team, and chairs have been established for the various committees. I hope to see you at this fun and worthwhile event. The proceeds will be allocated into our Museum Fund to support projects consistent with the vision and mission of the Museum and the Foundation.

Our goals, quite simply, are to capture and convert the stories into exhibits for the Museum and to do what is necessary to make the Museum more accessible to the public. The Museum Fund will support these activities and help cover costs for other projects ratified by the CLMF Board of Directors. We are continuing to look at Museum relocation and expansion alternatives, as well as education out reach initiatives in concert with the local school district.

## Wesley L. McDonald – China Lake Museum Foundation First Trustee

*Wesley L. McDonald dies at 84; 4-star Navy admiral led 1983 U.S. invasion of Grenada*



About 6,000 U.S. soldiers and Marines overwhelmed the 1,200 Grenadians and 780 Cubans in the waning days of October 1983. McDonald told the Senate Armed Services Committee several months later that despite inaccurate maps, problems with radio communications between different forces and the barring of press coverage during the invasion, Operation Urgent Fury was "a complete success."

In 1985, the Pentagon's inspector general was sharply critical of McDonald for failing to direct a full investigation of his subordinate, Vice Adm. Joseph Metcalf II, the task force commander of the invasion.

Metcalf took 24 captured Soviet-made rifles from Grenada, despite federal and military rules prohibiting such spoils. Lower-ranking soldiers had been disciplined for similar transgressions, but McDonald used bad judgment in allowing Metcalf to determine there was no need for an inquiry, the inspector general's report said.

Wesley Lee McDonald was born July 6, 1924, in Washington, D.C. He graduated from Washington-Lee High School in Arlington and joined the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis as a member of the class of 1947.

That class, which matriculated a year early, included President Jimmy Carter, CIA Director Stansfield Turner, Vice Adm. James B. Stockdale, who was a Medal of Honor recipient, and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman William J. Crowe.

As an ensign, McDonald served in a South Pole expedition headed by Adm. Richard E. Byrd. As a lieutenant and naval aviator, he served aboard several aircraft carriers, including the Coral Sea, which he returned to command in 1970-71.

In 1964, McDonald was commander of an attack squadron flying A-4 Skyhawks from the carrier Ticonderoga when the destroyer Turner Joy reported it was under attack by North Vietnamese torpedo boats. President Lyndon B. Johnson ordered retaliatory airstrikes, dubbed Operation Pierce Arrow, for which McDonald was the flight leader.

McDonald was commander in chief of all NATO and U.S. forces during the invasion. As a pilot, he led the first airstrike against North Vietnam in 1964 after the Gulf of Tonkin incident.

By Patricia Sullivan  
February 16, 2009

Reporting from Washington -- Wesley L. McDonald, a four-star Navy admiral who commanded the 1983 invasion of Grenada for the U.S. military and who as a pilot led the first airstrike against North Vietnam in 1964 after the Gulf of Tonkin incident, died Feb. 8 at his home in Arlington, Va. He was 84.

He had normal pressure hydrocephalus, a neurological disorder.

McDonald was commander in chief of all NATO and U.S. forces in the Atlantic when he was placed in charge of Operation Urgent Fury, the planned invasion of the Caribbean island nation of Grenada.

Ostensibly, the mission was to evacuate hundreds of U.S. medical students studying there after an internal coup of the socialist government. The Reagan administration feared a Soviet-sponsored Cuban military buildup, and some of the region's other countries asked for U.S. intervention.

Whether the ships were under attack in the Tonkin Gulf has become a matter of serious historical dispute. McDonald later said he didn't see anything in the water that night except American ships.

He rose through the Navy's ranks, graduated from the National Defense University in 1969 and, after commanding the Coral Sea, became a rear admiral and carrier group commander during the final stages of the Vietnam War.

His other posts included deputy chief of naval personnel, deputy chief of naval operations for air warfare and commander of the 2nd Fleet.

In 1982, when he was promoted to admiral, he became Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic, one of two senior commanders in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. At the same time, he assumed command of the U.S. Atlantic Command and the Atlantic Fleet.

After McDonald retired from the Navy in 1985, he volunteered for the National Aeronautic Assn., which later named its Elder Statesman of Aviation Award in his honor. Three naval aviation organizations jointly created a leadership award in his name, as well.

His first wife and high school sweetheart, Norma Joy McDonald, died in 1989.

Survivors include his wife of 16 years, Helen McDonald of Arlington; four children from his first marriage, retired Marine Corps Lt. Col. Thomas O. McDonald of San Antonio, Kathryn L. Overman of Lake Forest, Joy A. McDonald of Annandale, Va., and Toni M. McDonald of Santa Barbara; a brother; a half brother; a half sister; eight grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

Sullivan is a writer for the Washington Post, where this article first appeared.

Burrell Hays adds his comments:



**China Lake interfaced with the CNO's Air Warfare Organization during the time of Adm. McDonald's command. Some of the Center's programs during**

**that period were not fully supported by the Washington Navy, but as a rule, Adm. McDonald understood the issues and as a result he often was a strong supporter of the Lake's position and would help move our programs along. I found him to be very knowledgeable and willing to work the hard issues if he was given sufficient and accurate data. After both the Admiral and I retired at the suggestion of higher authority we became Board Directors for the Comarco Corporation. He worked hard as a Director to insure the shareholder received full value and he insisted the customer of Comarco's products received a quality product. His high ethical standards made it a real joy to know him and be his colleague. He truly was one of the good guys and it was unfortunate the system did not recognize how much he put his people first and politics second.**

*Share the  
Dream*



**The China Lake Museum Foundation**  
Cordially Invites You to the  
**Ninth Annual Dinner~Auction~Fundraiser**  
In Support of

**The U. S. Naval Museum of Armament and Technology**

**Saturday May 30, 2009**  
**Kerr McGee Center**

*100 West California Avenue  
Ridgecrest, California*

**5:00 pm - Cocktails - Start Silent Auction**

**6:00 pm - Dinner catered by Farris'**

**7:30 pm - Welcome and Live Auction**

*Desert Casual    Raffle (Must be present)    Cash Bar*

**\$30 Single, \$50 Couple**

*Last day for ticket sales 5/21/09*

*(Block of 8 tickets purchased at one time  
reserves table for eight)*

**Event Sponsorship Options:**

**\$1500 Corporate Table and \$1000 Family/  
Small Business Table:** Table for 8 with dinner  
tickets, dinner wine, complimentary one year CLMF  
membership for non-member table guests, name in  
program, significant recognition in local media for  
business/corporate donors, and display of banner at  
event for corporate donors.

**\$250 Sponsorship:** Includes 2 dinner tickets,  
reserved seating, and name in program.

**FOR TICKETS:** By phone, call the Foundation at  
760-939-3530 with your reservation. By mail, from the  
China Lake Museum Foundation, P.O. Box 217,  
Ridgecrest, CA 93556. Tickets can also be purchased  
at the gift shop at the U. S. Naval Museum of  
Armament and Technology, One Pearl Harbor Way,  
Naval Air Weapons Station, China Lake, CA or the  
Ridgecrest Chamber of Commerce located at 128-B  
East California Avenue, Ridgecrest, CA

The U.S. Naval Museum of Armament and Technology is located on the Naval Air Weapons Station, China Lake, California. The Museum, which was established by the Secretary of the Navy (May 12, 2000), is a national asset with an unmatched display of naval armament and technology.



**Museum Mission:** “To document, preserve, display, and interpret an assortment of artifacts, papers, and memorabilia that depict China Lake’s history and the history of the development of naval armament and technology.”

**Museum Vision:** The Museum location on the Navy base makes it difficult for public access—which is counter to the goals of both the Navy and the community of Ridgecrest. The current facility is cramped and with outmoded displays that greatly restrict their educational value. The challenge faced by the Foundation and the Navy is to expand and modernize the Museum and its exhibits, expand its capability as a science, engineering and history educational resource, and to make it more accessible by the public.

**Auction Objective:** The proceeds from the auction will be placed in the CLMF Museum Fund to support the costs associated with achieving the overall Museum Vision and Mission.

**Benefits to the Community:** Once the new Museum is more accessible by the public, it will provide a significant tourist draw, which will directly benefit the local community. Conservative estimates indicate that more than 60,000 visitors a year could visit the museum.

**How the Community Can Help:** China Lake Museum Foundation (CLMF) membership and participation in the auction are visible indicators of the community support and provide leverage for gaining outside grant support.

### Opportunities to Participate:

#### Event Sponsorship:

**\$1500 Corporate Table or \$1000 Small Business/Family Table:** includes dinner and reserved table of eight, complimentary CLMF membership for non-member table guests, dinner wine, and name displayed in program and in the Museum, advertising in the local media for business and corporate donors, display of banner at event for corporate donors.

**\$250 Sponsor:** includes two dinner tickets, reserved seating, and name in program.

#### Recognition Opportunities in Dinner Auction Program:

\$500 – full-page

\$250 – half-page

\$125 – quarter-page

\$50 – business-card-size

#### Membership:

**Individual/Family Per Year:** \$25, Contributor \$100, Benefactor \$500, Sponsor \$33 (Individual/Family membership plus sponsors one enlisted membership), Enlisted \$8

**Business Per Year:** Member \$1000, Sponsor \$500, Contributor \$100

**Lifetime Individual/Family:** \$1000

The China Lake Museum Foundation is a 501 (c) (3) corporation. Donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

China Lake Museum Foundation  
P.O. Box 217  
Ridgecrest, CA 93556  
760-939-3530

## **Auction ..... Auction ..... Auction ..... Auction**

**Remember the All New Auction & Dinner Program will be 30 May 2009**

Your Foundation's Planning Committee is creating a new program for the dinner and auction. The program promises to be bigger and better each year, so don't miss it! The main event and evening's excitement will be the Live and Silent Auctions, which are planned this year to ensure everyone can participate and take home outstanding and top quality items. The Auction and Dinner Program is a main fundraiser for the Foundation and for it to be successful we not only need your participation at the Auction & Dinner, but we need your donations of items to be auctioned off. Therefore:

**START NOW CONSIDERING WHAT YOU CAN DONATE TO THE AUCTION. May 30 IS LESS THAN THREE MONTHS AWAY, SO DON'T DELAY IN GETTING THOSE GOOD DONATIONS UNDER WAY!**

Suggestions are:

- Fine art of which you have grown weary (great tax deduction!)
- Great, but not needed, Christmas gifts (another great tax deduction!)
- Items you loved to purchase for the thrill of shopping
- Good stuff in the house or stashed in the garage that you have outgrown
- Great hobby collection or crafts
- Antiques
- Notable books
- Historical items

In other words, get creative and use your imagination!



Bring donations to the Museum or call and we will pick them up. If you have ideas for making this our most successful event ever, or if you would like to volunteer to participate in preparing for the Dinner Program, please call:

Pat Connell at 760-378-2142

[paconnell@hughes.net](mailto:paconnell@hughes.net)

Alice Campbell at 760-377-0056

[alicerbob@verizon.net](mailto:alicerbob@verizon.net)

or

Call Chris McKinley at the Museum

760-939-3530

[clmfl@ridgenet.net](mailto:clmfl@ridgenet.net)

## !!!! We Need You !!!!

The China Lake Museum Foundation is seeking volunteers to help plan the upcoming Annual Dinner Auction Fundraiser on May 30.

Volunteers get to meet new people, learn new skills, create deep friendships, and never say "I am bored and have nothing to do"!

We have volunteer opportunities large and small in the areas of advertising, publicity, donation solicitation, auction planning, program planning, logistics, data base input and

management, decorations, invitations, program publication, reservations, and more!

We also need additional volunteers to serve a couple of hours a day in the Gift Shop – in order to cover the staff's lunch break, and additional volunteers to serve as greeters and docents.

Please come be a part of this opportunity to help "Share the Dream" of our future Naval Museum of Armament and Technology building

### Contact:

Pat Connell 760-378-2142 [paconnell@hughes.net](mailto:paconnell@hughes.net)

OR

Paul Homer 760-382-8020 [phomer@ridgenet.net](mailto:phomer@ridgenet.net)

OR

Alice Campbell 760-377-0056 [alicerbob@verizon.net](mailto:alicerbob@verizon.net)

## WILLS AND TRUSTS

The China Lake Museum Foundation now has a process by which you can include consideration of the Museum as a part of your will or estate. It is a fairly simple and straight forward process which involves adding a sentence stating your attention to your will or trust with an appropriate witness (not a Foundation officer or staff member). Please consider providing a gift to the China Lake Museum Foundation in your will and/or estate. Gifts can include monetary (fixed dollar amounts or percentage of residuary estate), property items, artifacts. Tax benefits can be realized through the reduction of the size of your taxable estate. Family needs are met first. Special instructions can be stated. Otherwise the donation will be applied to the general fund, which can be used to support new facilities, exhibits, operations and education initiatives. If you have any questions, please call the Foundation office. The process was provided courtesy of the law office of Steve Boster.

## Commemorative—Memorial Brick Program

The China Lake Museum Foundation has a brick purchase program. We have several donors who have purchased bricks as part of this program. We are currently working to place our first order and proceed with the display of the purchased brick at the Museum. The bricks are an excellent way of lasting recognition. They will be moved to the new museum once it is in place. Prices for the bricks are \$100 for a 4x8 brick with three lines of inscription. For \$250 one can purchase an 8x8 brick with more lines of inscription. Please contact the Museum Office for details.

## Congress Renews IRA Rollover Provisions

The IRA charitable rollover was a tax incentive in effect in 2006 and 2007 that allowed individuals aged 70-1/2 and older to donate up to \$100,000 per year from their Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) and Roth IRAs to public charities without having to count the distributions as taxable income. This provision was extended as part of the "bail-out" legislation for distributions made in 2008 and 2009. For further details, please check with your tax advisor."

The China Lake Museum Foundation appreciates your continuing support of the CLMF, and now is an especially important time for us since we are raising funds for the purpose of moving the Museum to a building in Ridgecrest and all the associated costs of that, including supporting the construction, completing the Museum displays on the inside, and raising additional monies through professional solicitation organizations.



**Donor's Circle**  
\$50,000 and up

Jacobs Naval Systems Group

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**Double Platinum Plus**  
\$25,000 – \$49,999

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Scott & Ruth O'Neil  
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Janet & Steve Crawford,  
in memory of Jack Crawford  
Wayne & Pat Doucette  
Paul & Pat Homer  
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Harold Manning, CPA  
Hon. Kevin McCarthy, U.S. Congress  
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Clarita, Joan & Paul Woodworth,  
in memory of Woody Woodworth

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\$3,000 – \$4,999

Advanced Transmission  
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Jerry & Sandy Bradley  
Coldwell Banker Best Realty  
Kathy Vejtasa  
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RADM Bill Harris USN (Ret)  
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Sears - Terry & Frank Bellino  
James Simmons  
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T&T Alignment  
Systems Application &  
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TOSS/ServiceMaster  
Ron Kicinski & Sharon Girod  
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Wal-Mart  
Fred Weals &  
Donna Malone-Weals  
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Zabel Publishing, Larry Zabel, in Memory  
of Sharon

**Silver**

\$1,000 – \$2,999

Beth & Jerry Allen  
Inyo Dreams  
Anonymous  
Roy Ashburn, CA Senator  
Skip & Jan Bennett  
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Curt & Gretchen Bryan  
Frank & Debbie Buffum  
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Dennis Carroll  
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Coffman Specialties  
James Colvard  
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RDML David & Sheryl Marie Dunaway

VADM Joseph Dyer, USN (Ret)  
Electronic Warfare Associates  
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Dale & Cheryl Gates  
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Skip Gorman Metal Fabrication  
Leonard & Barbara Haugen, David & Susan  
Lesta Hays  
Home Depot  
Mark Hoppus  
Ken Kelley USN (Ret) & Jeanette Bournival  
Kern County Community Foundation  
LaCarra's Body & Paint  
Jack & Joanne Latimer  
Robert & Sara Lumpkins

**Silver (contd)**  
 \$1,000 – \$2,999

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 Bill & Jean McBride  
 McDonalds, Sierra II, Ridgecrest, CA  
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 Don & Pat McLean  
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 Mickey's Pub & Grill  
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 Tom Neely, Neely Accountancy  
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Senn Family Trust,  
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 Seldon & Fran Staniloff  
 State Farm Insurance, Gary Charlon  
 Tokyo House  
 Union Bank of California  
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 Wienerschnitzel/Tastee Freez/  
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**2008-2009 MEMBERSHIPS AS OF FEBRUARY 15, 2009**

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*Business Members (\$1,000.00 Annually)*

Alta One Federal Credit Union - Ridgecrest CA  
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 Ridgecrest CA  
 Raytheon Company - Ridgecrest CA  
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 - Ridgecrest CA  
 The MIL Corporation - Lexington Park MD

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 Coso Operating Company - Inyokern CA  
 Daniel T. Kus, D. D. S. - Ridgecrest CA  
 Edward Jones Investments/Vincent Avalos - Ridgecrest CA  
 McDonald's, Sierra II, Ridgecrest, Inc. - Ridgecrest CA  
 Neely Accountancy Corp. - Encino CA

Ridgecrest Area Convention & Visitors Bureau -  
 Ridgecrest CA  
 The Swap Sheet - Ridgecrest CA  
 TOSS - Ridgecrest CA  
 Wienerschnitzel/Tastee Freez - Ridgecrest CA

## GENERAL MEMBERSHIPS

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Ashworth, VADM Frederick L.* & Ercy, USN (Ret.) - Santa Fe NM	Godett, Jack & Joy - Ridgecrest CA
Auld, Howard & Barbara - Ridgecrest CA	Gould, Robert A. - Ridgecrest CA
Avalos, Vincent & Gloria - Ridgecrest CA	Guenther, Dr. Andrew - Ridgecrest CA
Bazemore, Les & Zindi Lou - Bakersfield CA	Hamel, Carlton & Virginia* - Ridgecrest CA
Bengtson, Eric & Kathy - Ridgecrest CA	Harris, Donald W. - Ridgecrest CA
Bennett, Skip & Jan - Ridgecrest CA	Hays, Burrell & Lesta - Ridgecrest CA
Boyd, Mallory & Patricia - Ridgecrest CA	Henry, CAPT Doug, USN (Ret.) - Thayne WY
Bryan, Curt & Gretchen - Ridgecrest CA	Herigstad, Don & Lela - Ridgecrest CA
Bullard, Charlotte - Greenville TN	Higley, Hugh* & Mary J. - Menominee MI
Burford, Milton & Jane - Bakersfield CA	Homer, Paul B. & Pat - Ridgecrest CA
Burkhalter, Robert & Ellen - Ridgecrest CA	Hopkins, Elvy R. - Ridgecrest CA
Burklund, Vernon & Eloise* - Ridgecrest CA	Hoppus, Tex & Marti - Ridgecrest CA
Cabe, Georgia - San Diego CA	Jeter, Edward L. & Carol - Ridgecrest CA
Campbell, Bob & Alice - Inyokern CA	Johnsen, Dick & Eleanor - Ridgecrest CA
Campbell, Jim & Eleanor - Kernville CA	Johnston, Bert & Beverly - Chaptico MD
Chapman, Stephen & Suzanne - Boston MA	Jones, Allen W. & Bonnie J. - Stateline NV
Chesney, John & Christel - Ridgecrest CA	Kleine, Mike - Pacifica CA
China Lake Women's Golf Club - Ridgecrest CA	Kline, Denny & Mary Jane - Ridgecrest CA
Clavet, Joseph & Beverly - Ridgecrest CA	Knemeyer, Franklin H. - Ridgecrest CA
Colvard, James E. & Joy H. - King George VA	Lakin, Lee* & Arlee - Ridgecrest CA
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Crews, Luke & Julie - Ridgecrest CA	Lehman, John - New York NY
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Dotson, Alston - Ridgecrest CA	Manning, Janet K. - Bakersfield CA
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Doucette, Wayne & Pat - Ridgecrest CA	Markarian, Frank & Joyce - Ridgecrest CA
Dragovich, Jack & Nancy - Ridgecrest CA	Marquardt, LeRoy D. & Norma - Inyokern CA
Etoch, Fred & Barbara - Ridgecrest CA	McCarthy, Congressmen Kevin & Judy - Bakersfield CA
Fallgatter, Cal* & Linda - Ridgecrest CA	McLean, William* & La V* - San Diego CA
Faust, Brian & Rhonda - College Station TX	Miller, Gerald & Hazel - Fredericksburg VA
Federico, Frank A. - Inyokern CA	Miller, Ray & Minnie - Ridgecrest CA
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Foremaster, Mel & Barbara - Fallon NV	Murphy, Richard W. & Virginia - Sparks NV
Forseth, Dave & Holly - Chandler AZ	Nilsen, Charles M.* & Hazel* - Ridgecrest CA
Friedman, Donald - Santa Barbara CA	

## GENERAL MEMBERSHIPS (contd)

## Lifetime Members (\$1,000.00), contd

Manning, Janet K. - Bakersfield CA	Seaman, CAPT Jim & Betty, USN (Ret.) - Ridgecrest CA
Maples, Crill & Theresa - Sparks NV	Seeley, Leonard & Nancy - Grass Valley CA
Markarian, Frank & Joyce - Ridgecrest CA	Seibold, Joe & Joyce - Ridgecrest CA
Marquardt, LeRoy D. & Norma - Inyokern CA	Sewell, Robert & Carrol - Ridgecrest CA
McCarthy, Congressmen Kevin & Judy - Bakersfield CA	Simmons, James & Betty - Walnut Creek CA
McLean, William* & La V* - San Diego CA	Simonovich, Sheldon - Ridgecrest CA
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Drummond, CMSGT Luis - Edwards AFB CA	Payne, SSGT Sean & Jennefer - San Diego CA
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Lyon, SKC Dana - Minneapolis MN	Stites, AO2 Nathan A. - Ridgecrest CA
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Biery, Bud & Cecile - Ridgecrest CA	Crozier, John - Ridgecrest CA
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