



THE CHINA LAKER

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CHINA LAKE AND SALT WELLS PILOT PLANTS FEATURED IN RECENTLY ACQUIRED VIDEOTAPE

"East of Eaton", written and narrated by NAWCWD Command Historian Leroy Doig, is the latest addition to the historical videotapes available in your China Lake Museum Foundation Gift Shop. The 38-minute presentation surveys the accomplishments of the unique array of facilities that have achieved worldwide renown as the China Lake Propulsion Laboratories.

World War II-vintage photographs and motion picture footage depict the facilities' origins in Eaton Canyon, a 5-acre tract of land near Pasadena where the California Institute of Technology launched its accelerated program to develop rocket propellants for the Navy. Two years into the war, that site's capabilities were exhausted, and CalTech moved its rocket program to the wide-open spaces of the burgeoning Naval Ordnance Test Station at China Lake.

Before the viewer's eyes, the China Lake Pilot Plant rises from the barren hilltop overlooking the new base's administrative area. Within an amazingly brief timespan, the facility is meeting the urgent demand for solid propellants to power such devastating weapons as the 5-inch rocket and Holy Moses. By war's end, CLPP's experimental line has developed and is supplying large-grain propellants for Tiny Tim, the largest rocket the U. S. produced for the global conflict.

Equally fascinating is the tale of the Salt Wells Pilot Plant, a tale too secret to be widely told at the time it took place. As an element of the Atomic Energy Commission's Manhattan Project, the facility came into being early in 1945 to provide non-nuclear components for the nation's first atomic bombs. "East of Eaton" documents Salt Wells' rapid construction in just 100 days and the fulfillment of its rigorous initial task assignments; these included development of bomb-assembly and load-up procedures, and test drops of experimental bomb shapes.

The videotape reviews NOTS' assimilation of the Salt Wells facility upon AEC's departure in the mid-1950s. Through a rich variety of archival images, we then witness a cavalcade of RDT&E accomplishments as the Propulsion Laboratories evolve from their original functions in pilot production to blaze new trails in all aspects of solid and liquid propellant technology, warhead fuzing, and ordnance development.

Testing of million-pound-thrust rocket motors for the Polaris program and development of vertical-seeking aircraft seat-ejection systems are only two of the many programs illustrated in the tape's smoothly flowing visuals and commentary. "East of Eaton" can be a rewarding addition to the video collections of past and present-day China Lakers, indeed for anyone who appreciates the role that superb RDT&E has played in preserving America's freedom in the 20th century.

As indicated on the enclosed Gift Shop order blank, "East of Eaton" is priced at \$14.00, plus sales tax and shipping as appropriate.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Office Manager Jeanie Copeland reports the following new memberships since publication of our preceding edition:

- Jay & Peggy Chun (Contributing)
- John L. Cox (Contributing)
- Josephine Downing (Regular)
- Norma Fritchman (Regular)
- Oishi Hiroshi (Regular)
- Jack A. Mayers (Regular)
- Jim Mullen (Regular)
- Lovie P. Thomas (Regular)
- Robert A. Vargus (Regular)
- Tino Zerbini (Regular)

During the same period, Jeanie recorded 3 contributing and 41 regular renewal memberships.

To all: Welcome Aboard!



**ASSISTANT OFFICE MANAGER
JOINS FOUNDATION STAFF**

Debra Dyarman has come on board as assistant to the Foundation's Office Manager, Jeanie Copeland. Over the coming months, family responsibilities will reduce the number of hours Jeanie is available for Foundation service.

**E-MAIL CAPABILITY
IN THE OFFING**

Your Board of Directors plans to equip the Foundation office with e-mail capability. This will enable rapid, 2-way communication between the Foundation Office and members with Internet access.

Also, an updated directory of members' e-mail addresses can be distributed periodically with THE CHINA LAKER to facilitate electronic communication among individual members.

Board Member Frank St. George is taking the first steps to compile this directory. To be included, just e-mail a note to Frank at:

fbstg@ridgecrest.ca.us

CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS

The upward trend of attendance at the Exhibit Center is prompting the Foundation's Board to consider extending the hours the Center and the Foundation Gift Shop are open to the public. Our ability to do this hinges entirely on being able to staff the additional hours with volunteers serving as greeters and docents.

If you reside in the Indian Wells Valley, please give serious consideration to helping the Foundation in this vital endeavor. To volunteer your services or to get more information, contact one of the following:

- Dick Tolkmitt (Volunteer Services Coordinator).....375-4378**
- Frank St. George (Board Member).....375-4957**
- CLMF Office.....939-3530**

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Thu., 5 Nov. 1998

Lin and I just received our Fall 1998 edition yesterday. ...I continue to believe "any method of improved communications is beneficial." This belief continues with the idea of hooking the Foundation into the internet system. You all have the technology to set up a web home page with updates and continuing information updates. Even us "Ordies" have our own. If you look hard, one might even see information and application for scholarships (my idea and chairman.) Our home page might give you all some ideas, and our webmaster might be able to assist you all with some guidance and "lessons we learned." You can catch them on line at: "www.aaordies.org".

Say "hi" to all and give [Bill] & Mrs. Davis our regards also. Keep in touch when you can.

Have a Great Day!

*Linda and Ed Scott
Egunner@Lightspeed.net*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I'm glad to report some encouraging progress in the month of January toward securing official Navy Museum status for our proposed China Lake Armament and Technology Museum. Mr. Mark Wertheimer, from the Naval Historical Center in Washington, D.C., visited China Lake to confer with the NAWCWPNs Museum Committee chaired by Scott O'Neil. The discussions focused on formatting the proposed operating plan for the Museum along official Navy lines. We've been informed that the meeting went very well, yielding agreement on follow-up steps for submitting and implementing the plan.

Later the same day Foundation Board Member John DiPol and I joined in the discussions with Mr. Wertheimer. We gained important insights into the specific commitments that the Office of Naval Operations and the Naval Historical Center require from NAWC/NAWS, plus what is expected from our China Lake Museum Foundation in the way of Museum support. We see the expectations as reasonable; they call for judicious management support and fundraising functions that are well within the Foundation's means of accomplishment.

We were given to understand that the operating plan is now on its way to NavAir for forwarding to OpNav. Mr. Wertheimer said he would recommend to Dr. Wil-

liam Dudley, Head of the Naval Historical Center, that the plan be accepted and that the request for official Navy Museum status be passed to the Secretary of the Navy for approval. He estimated that the request would probably reach SecNav within the next 6 to 9 months.

We've learned to be cautious about timetables, but it is encouraging to see signs of growing support for the Museum in official Navy circles.

Curator Designated

The operating plan contemplates that Leroy Doig, NAWC Command Historian, will be designated as Museum Curator. The Foundation will work directly with him to support the creation of new exhibits, maintenance of the Museum facility, and day-to-day management operations.

Board Member Bill Porter is in the process of reactivating the Foundation's Capital Fund Campaign Committee, intending to build over the coming 6 to 9 months to a full state of readiness at the time that SecNav approval of official status is granted.

Meantime, thanks are due to several Foundation members for their ongoing efforts on behalf of the Foundation. These include Dick Tolkmitt for building and coordinating the pool of volunteers available to serve as Exhibit Center greeters and docents and in a variety of other support roles.

We're also grateful for the publicity chores performed by Jack Russell. He has recently helped get coverage in the local newspapers and has updated the Exhibit Center flyer distributed to visitors via Indian Wells Valley motels and offices of the Ridgecrest Chamber of Commerce and the Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Our very best wishes go out to veteran Foundation supporter Bill Davis for a speedy recovery from hip surgery he underwent in early February. We've missed Bill's attendance at recent Board meetings and his helpful input of cogent advice.

We're very glad to welcome Patti Lawson onto our Board of Directors, especially since she's agreed to assume the duties of Treasurer, following in Dick Boyd's able footsteps. Patti's innovative attitude and time-tested management skills promise major benefits to your Foundation. (See **NEW BOARD MEMBER**, p. 5.)

Now that passes are readily available at the main gate, Exhibit Center attendance is again growing. Group visits by school classes and other organizations are increasing. All of this whets our eagerness for the day when official Navy Museum status will finally be in place and your Foundation can swing into full-spectrum action to preserve and communicate the story of China Lake's unique contributions to our nation's greatness.

NOWADAYS AT NAWC

JSOW MIDEAST SUCCESS SUSTAINS CHINA LAKE TRADITION

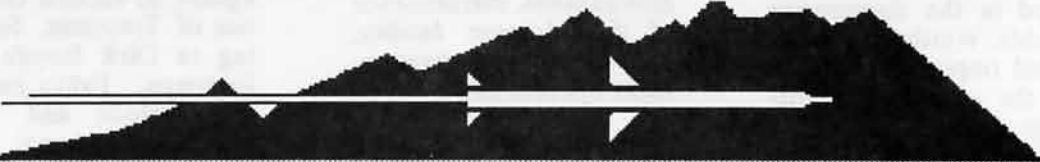
A cutting-edge air-to-ground missile conceived at the Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division is playing a major role in U.S. fighter aircraft's response in the Persian Gulf area to repeated provocation by Iraqi anti-aircraft units. The Feb. 4 issue of *The Weaponeer* (NAWCWD's successor to *The Rocketeer*) reported three successful, carrier-based missions using the Joint Stand-Off Weapon (JSOW) AGM-154 in late January.

In a congratulatory message to the on-station carrier air group, Capt. Bert Johnston, NAWCWD's new commander, said the achievement marked the beginning of a "revolution in strike warfare."

China Lakers' Personal Touch

At the time of the engagements two China Lakers were on board the USS Carl Vinson to help assure mission success. JSOW Project Officer LCdr. Mike Murphy had brought with him a crucial new mission-planning software unit. Clyde Swasey, NAWCWD's JSOW logistics manager, teamed with LCdr. Murphy to train aircrews on JSOW's operation.

In a manner typical of China Lake's history of rapid response to Fleet needs, the NAWCWD JSOW team worked with NAVAIR to provide the initial weapons in-theatre within the exceptionally short turn-around of three weeks.



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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

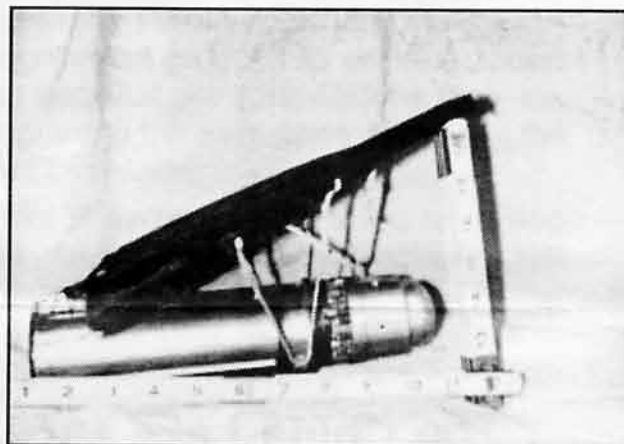
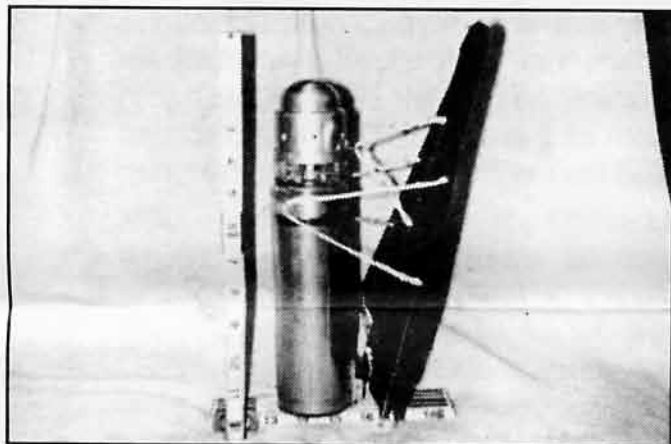
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760-939-3530		billb@ridgecrest.ca.us

CAN YOU IDENTIFY THIS HARDWARE?

NAWCWPNS Command Historian Leroy Doig has come into possession of another artifact whose origin and application are a mystery. The cylinder measures 10-1/4" long and 2-1/4" in diameter, and it's accompanied by a collapsible delta wing. A sub-munition component?

If you think you can help, please contact Leroy. His telephone number is 760-939-2027. His e-mail address is grendel@peewee.chinalake.navy.mil, and regular mail can be sent to: Commander, Code 700000D • Attn: Leroy Doig • NAWCWPNS • 1 Administration Circle • China Lake, CA 93555-6100.

Leroy says he appreciates the responses to the "mystery hardware" photos published in the preceding issue of THE CHINA LAKER. However, the provenance of that 1960s-era optical head hasn't yet been pinned down.



NEW BOARD MEMBER BRINGS VALUED EXPERIENCE

New Board of Directors member Patti Lawson completed a multifaceted, 32-year China Lake career when she retired in 1998. In those three-plus decades she advanced from her GS-3 starting level to management positions 12 levels higher.

Many of Patti's assignments centered on accounting and budgeting functions. For 4 years she held the position of Deputy Controller for NWC. She also served as Head of the Center's Internal Review

organization and later managed the Customer Services Division.

Her expertise earned her key Financial System Development assignments at several prime Navy installations throughout the U.S. During a 5-year stint in Japan, she directed an all-Japanese work force in the manual-to-computerized conversion of the financial system for a major Navy Public Works Center.

Among the many awards she received throughout her career, Patti especially cherishes 2 China Lake Commander's Awards and 2 Navy Team Awards.