



# THE CHINA LAKER

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Special Edition 2000

*The China Lake Museum Foundation  
cordially invites you  
to the ribbon cutting for the  
Naval Museum of Armament and Technology  
1630, 28 July 2000  
Main entrance — former Weapons Exhibit Center  
R. S. V. P. by July 20  
(760) 939-3530, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., weekdays, except flex-Friday  
or [clmf@ridgenet.net](mailto:clmf@ridgenet.net)*

*Reception to follow — Lanai/Officers Bar*

## IT'S OFFICIAL: NAVY MUSEUM STATUS GRANTED TO WEAPONS EXHIBIT CENTER

Reprinted by permission from *The Weaponeer* • June 8, 2000

(China Lake Museum Foundation Board Members Burrell Hays, Paul Homer and Jack Russell provided input to NAWCWPNS/NAWS Command Historian Leroy Doig as he worked with the Weaponeer staff in preparing this first public announcement by the Navy of authorization as an official Navy Museum for the China Lake museum facility. )

"Museum? What Museum? You mean the Exhibit Center?"

Not any more.

Although the ultimate name may still be a matter for debate, the status of the U.S. Navy Museum at China Lake isn't. It's official. When the Secretary of the Navy signed out SECNAVNOTE 5755 on 12 May 2000, the U.S. Naval Museum of Armament and Technology was officially established at NAWCWPNS/NAWS China Lake. This is the culmination of a 10-year effort by NWC/NAWCWPNS employees, retirees, and supporters.

The establishment of what would become the Museum began in 1989 with an effort spearheaded by Milt Burford to create an expanded — and permanent — Command exhibit center.

## IT'S OFFICIAL: NAVY MUSEUM STATUS GRANTED

(cont. from p.1)

This was to be a showcase for past and current Center products and programs and an amenable environment for briefings and presentations to off-Center visitors. The old Weapons Exhibit Center (in Building 931, one of the oldest buildings at China Lake, which once also housed the Maturango Museum) had fallen into disrepair, along with many of its exhibits. In 1990 the establishment of a Command exhibit using the recently closed Commissioned Officers' Mess building was proposed.

Following the resolution of a variety of "house-keeping" issues, the use of the old 'O' Club was approved in March 1991, and rehabilitation and conversion was begun. Primary support for the effort was provided by the Technical Information and Public Works Departments.

Efforts also began in early 1991, again spearheaded by Burford, to develop the basis for a supporting foundation and to secure Federal and state recognition for a non-profit Educational Museum Foundation. By early 1993, the China Lake Museum Foundation had been established as a non-profit foundation. Its first board meeting was held 29 March 1993.

NAWS Commanding Officer Captain B.J. Craig "got the ball rolling" when he chartered the China Lake Museum Committee in July 1993 to provide Command liaison and oversight to the Foundation. The Committee, which included representatives from the technical departments and Command staff, drafted the letter (along with a large package of supporting material) requesting official

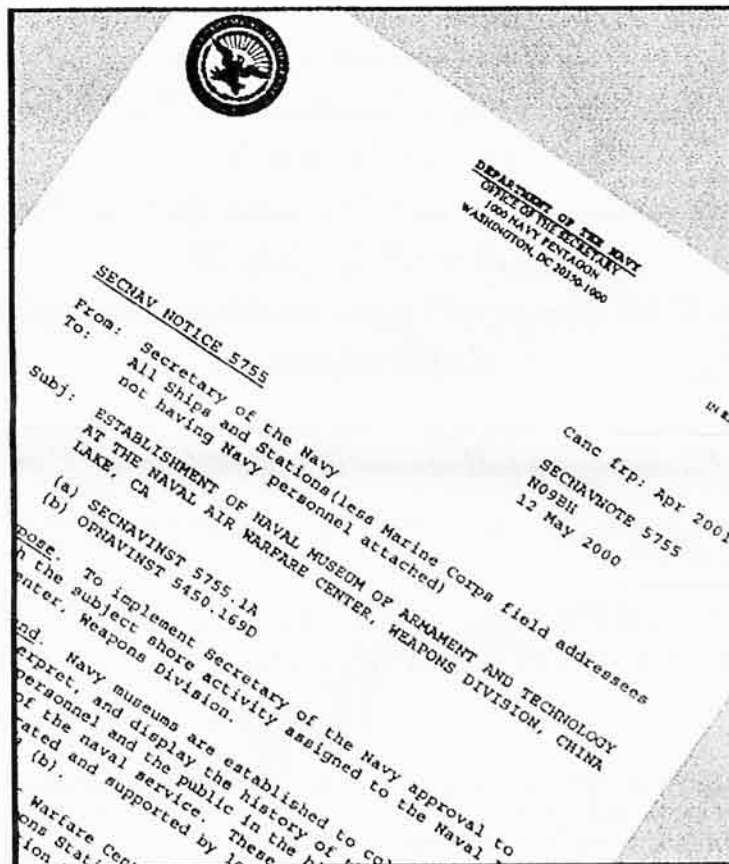
designation for a Navy museum at China Lake. "The Package" was submitted to local command in 1994, whereupon it began its twisting trek toward the office of the Secretary of the Navy.

## 50th Anniversary Sparks Interest

The 50th anniversary of the China Lake laboratory in November 1993 provided the impetus for improvement and expansion of the then-designated Command Exhibit and Conference Center. In 1994, the Museum Foundation Gift Shop was opened in response to visitors' requests. The Gift Shop/Museum Foundation office was staffed by Jane Burford as a volunteer for its first two years, following which the Foundation provided a paid staff member. The Foundation provided volunteer docents to guide visitors and answer questions, and Public Affairs provided a staff member to coordinate conference facility functions. In 1998, the Foundation took over the day-to-day operation and staffing of the facility.

In anticipation of official Navy recognition of the Museum, the first of four planned outdoor exhibits went up last Summer (the Polaris missile, see The Weaponer, July 22, 1999), followed soon thereafter by the addition of the newly restored BOAR atomic rocket. Organized by Jack Russell and Frank St. George, volunteers from the Foundation — with the support of China Lake SEABEE, Public Works, and grounds-maintenance personnel — refurbished and placed missiles and

(See IT'S OFFICIAL, p. 3)



## IT'S OFFICIAL: NAVY MUSEUM STATUS GRANTED

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reconfigured the 'O' Club lawn area and promenade for the new exhibits. Volunteer teams were also tackling the cosmetic restoration of historically significant XF4D-1 and F11F aircraft and the complete restoration of an HH-1K helicopter gunship.

### Expanded Area Widens Scope

With the new enthusiasm for the development of the Museum, the former housing area to the Northwest of the Exhibit Center was designated for exhibit use. The new area will be home to a significant part of the Museum collection, including the NTA-4F, A-7E, HH-1K, F-111B, QF-86, DF-8L, RA-5C, AV-8A, A-6E, and F/A-18A ("Hornet 1") aircraft; several significant range instrumentation and target items; and a tribute to the Center's Search-and-Rescue (SAR) teams, including a UH-1 SAR helo.

The Museum would never have gotten to this point without the Herculean efforts of a core of volunteers — members of the Foundation, members of the Committee, and the largely unsung supporters behind the scenes (and behind the paperwork, paint brushes, and shovels!).

Likewise, "The Package" would never have completed its Homeric journey through labyrinthine bureaucracy without stalwart support by NAWS and NAWCWPNS Command and management — or without the very positive endorsement of Vice Admiral Lockard, NAVAIR Commander. The establishment of a new Navy museum here has also been championed by Dr. William Dudley, Director of Naval History (OPNAV-09BH), and by members of his staff, notably within the Curator Branch of the Naval Historical Center.

In summarizing its continuing role in the new Museum, China Lake Museum Foundation Board President Burrell Hays comments, "The foundation

is proud to support the Naval Air Warfare Center and the NAWS in the creation of a first-class naval museum. The Foundation's objective is to provide the long-term support of and participation with the Navy that will ensure that the unique history and legacy of the Navy at China Lake is maintained for future generations — as well as being able to display those artifacts that so clearly demonstrate China Lake's supremacy in weapons development and deployment. Foundation membership is open to the public, and we are eager to join with anyone who would like to share in the excitement of participating in the creation of this new Navy museum."

### Positive Economic Impact

Hays also points out that, "Captain Jim Seaman took a personal interest in getting the Museum package through the system; he deserves a lot of credit for expediting the process. Rear Admiral Johnston also provided real high-level support for the project that helped keep things moving. Congressman Bill Thomas has also been — and will continue to be — a supporter of the Museum effort (and of China Lake as a whole); he is a life member of the Foundation and deserves our thanks for his role in our ultimate success. The Museum will have a significant positive economic impact on the Indian Wells Valley, and this effort by the Navy to support the community at large is greatly appreciated."

Now that the Museum is "official," the real work can begin. The Foundation and the Committee are formulating plans for new exhibits, indoors and out; for expanding the collections that will support new exhibits; for expanding the exhibit areas within the Museum facility; for increasing the volunteer core for operations and restorations; and for raising the funds necessary to support a full-scale, world-class Navy Museum.

### ON THE WEB

U.S. Naval Museum of Armament and Technology & China Lake Museum Foundation

<http://www.ridgecrest.ca.us/~clmf/clmf/clmf.html>

China Lake Museum Foundation Gift Shop • <http://www.ridgenet.net/~clmf>

**VOLUNTEERS****Duane Jack Russell**

Volunteers are the foundation of the Foundation. They are fundamental not only to the day-to-day management and operations of the Museum but to the many projects and programs for modernizing and expanding the displays.

Without a reliable cadre of docents we could not open the doors for visitors. These people greet the visitors, answer questions, keep a watchful eye on things and help with many tasks such as cataloging the displays. Since 1998 the following people have given much of their time manning the front desk of the Weapons Exhibit Center:

Elizabeth Babcock	Don Winter	John Faron
Mickie Benton	Steve Benson	Clyde Hazen
Henry Blecha	Jacqueline Renne	Beth Holtermans
Curtis Bryan	Leon Peachie	Adrian Milbrath
Don Cooper	Roland Baker	Ken Delger
Bill Davis	Henry Blazek	Joe Seibold
Nick Kleinschmidt	Bill Burns	Ed Donohue
Lee Lakin	George Cercone	Cathy Doyel
Charles May	Cecil Daley	Don Featherston
Bob McKenzie	Les Dalton	Norm Nelson
Harold Platzek	Dick De Marco	George Silberberg
Dick Tolkmitt	Joe Di Pasquale	Fred Zarlino
Frederick Weals	Emanuel Dunn	

In the past year the Foundation has undertaken a number of projects aimed at enhancing the exterior of the Exhibit Center. To date these entail the restoration and placement of Polaris and BOAR missile shapes and two historical aircraft. The volunteers responsible for the missile work and grounds preparation are:

Jerry Morrison	Frank St. George	Ron Porter
Joe Seibold	Jack Russell	Ryan Doig
Ed Donohue	Eddie Brooks	Leroy Doig
Ed Brooks	Chris Peterson	

In particular these projects are indebted to Lt. Manny Hernandez and BU2 Dan Rose of the SEABEE/Self-Help office for heavy equipment operation and cement work.

The volunteers who have done restoration on the two aircraft are:

Dick Bauers	Jason Brennan	Paul Popolizio
Willie Goodman	Ashley Brennan	Chris Popolizio
Donald Boyle	John Licari	Steve Schiavone
Zack Boyle	Jason Licari	Ryan Poindexter
Josh Boyle	Alyssa Licari	
James Brennan	Robert Licari	

In addition, Ed Brooks, Jack Brown, Bill Giuliani, Ron Porter, Leroy Doig and Frank St. George prepared a mobile display for the Balloon Festival last fall.

(See VOLUNTEERS. p. 5)



## VOLUNTEERS

(cont. from p. 4)

The Foundation is also indebted to Erik Van Bronkhorst for updating its websites.

The Command Historian, Leroy Doig III, is the primary person responsible for collecting and restoring the weapons and artifacts for display at the Museum. A number of people have donated their time in helping him in this endeavor. Those people include Eric Bengtson, Mark Pahuta, Sam Brown, Jerry Morrison, Maurice Hamm, Ron Porter, Jim Spencer and Steve McWilliams. (Spencer and McWilliams were on temporary assignment here from their home company and worked with Doig in their off-hours.) Charlie Cass and the HAL 5 Association are restoring a helicopter for display.

The China Lake Museum Foundation is governed by an elected Board of Directors who donate their time. The Board is responsible for assuring that the purpose and objectives of the Museum are met, including day-to-day operation, long term planning and fund raising. Currently the Board is comprised of the Directors listed in the China Laker masthead on Page 7, serving under President Burrell Hays:

Ex officio Directors are Bill Davis and Bill Blanc. Past members are Steve Sanders, Milt Burford, Dick Boyd, Eleanor Johnsen, Ken Dickerson, Hugh Drake, Patty Lawson, Dave Rugg and Director Emeritus, John Di Pol.

**The China Lake Museum Foundation gives a huge Thank You to all of the volunteers who have helped us reach the establishment of the Museum. Our sincere apologies to anyone whose name we have inadvertently omitted.**

There is a continuing need for additional volunteers, so please contact the Museum office if you would like to participate at (760) 939-3530.

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## A NEW NAVAL MUSEUM? SO WHAT?

Ray Miller

What does it mean for our China Lake Exhibit Center to become an official Naval Museum?

Actually, it is an **extremely high honor**. Until the commissioning of **our U.S. Naval Museum of Armament and Technology on 12 May 2000**, the most recent Naval Museum held its "ground breaking ceremony" in 1985.

The U.S. Navy operates only **twelve** museums throughout the United States (plus the historic ship USS Constitution).

Thus, **we join a very elite group** which includes The Navy Museum (Wash, DC), U.S. Naval Academy Museum (Annapolis, MD), National Museum of Naval Aviation (Pensacola, FL), Naval Undersea Museum (Keyport, WA) and the Patuxent River Naval Air Museum (Patuxent River, MD).

**The Naval Museum at China Lake focuses on telling the story of the development of arms and weapons for Navy and Marine users, with subsequent extension to many other services and foreign countries.**

## THE CHINA LAKE MUSEUM FOUNDATION WANTS YOU!

Paul Homer

Now that the Naval Museum of Armament and Technology is official, **increased membership** in the Foundation and **increased volunteer support** become even more important. The achievements of the people who worked at China Lake include the accomplishments of sailors and officers, engineers, machinists, scientists construction workers, documentation specialists, technicians, administrators, munitions workers, pilots, and many others. All of these people combined innovation and expertise in their respective fields, to research, develop, and test the most cost effective weapon systems for the U.S. military forces. Many of these weapons and systems are still in use today while newer systems evolve towards the Fleet.

Membership dues and other contributions are being used to operate the Foundation's office, update office equipment, maintain mailing and membership data, publish and mail the Foundation's newsletter, obtain exhibit and display materials, and generally enhance the transition from the Exhibit Center to the Naval Museum of Armament and Technology. In the future, dues and other contributions will be of great importance in financing the administrative operations of the Foundation, the funding of expanded and new museum facilities, the development of museum-quality displays, and the creation of historical displays.

The Foundation organizes volunteer efforts for two purposes. The first is for a cadre of docents to greet visitors to the Museum, show them around the exhibits, and answer questions. Some docents spend a half-day per week, others a day or so per month at the Museum. The second effort is to supplement the SEA BEE and self-help office in mounting several outdoor displays in front of the Museum as well as restoring and preparing indoor exhibits. For instance, during 1999 we completed the restoration of a Polaris missile shape and erected it in the sidewalk area leading to the front entrance, and it is effective in attracting more visitors. **We encourage you to participate in any of these volunteer activities.**

The Foundation is extremely grateful for your past support. Without such support the establishment of the Museum would not have been possible. For Life and Regular Members, we encourage your continued support and involvement, and encourage Regular Members to consider upgrading to Life Membership status. Please pass the Application for Membership on Page 7 to a friend, colleague or relative, and urge them to join the Foundation. Remember that your dues are tax-deductible. For China Lakers and friends of China Lake who are not members: **Send in your application today!**

### The China Lake Museum Foundation

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[Http://www.ridgecrest.ca.us/~clmf/clmf/clmf.html](http://www.ridgecrest.ca.us/~clmf/clmf/clmf.html)

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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