



THE CHINA LAKER

Vol. 8, No. 4

Newsletter of the China Lake Museum Foundation

Fall 2002

Sidewinder 1952-2002 50 Years

The Sidewinder 50 year anniversary will be celebrated with events and exhibits throughout the base and at the museum during the weekend of October 31 thru November 3, 2002. Information regarding the event may be had by calling the Sidewinder 50th information number at 760-939-2002 or by checking the Sidewinder 50th Anniversary link on the museum's web page at www.chinalakemuseum.org.



China Lake Museum Foundation

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

Paul Homer, President

Sharon Goad, Secretary
John DiPol, Director Emeritus
Jack Russell, Director Emeritus

Wayne Doucette, Treasurer
Bill Porter, Director Emeritus

ADM Wesley McDonald, USN (ret.), Trustee

Vice Presidents

Alice Campbell, Membership
Vacant, Public Relations

Tex Hoppus, Fund Raising
Ray Miller, Facilities

Frank St. George, Operations

Directors

Ron Atkins
Steve Benson
Curt Bryan
Dale Gates
John Robbins

Elizabeth Babcock
Henry Blecha
Pat Doucette
Burrell Hays
Bertha Ryan

Iris Bachmann
VADM. Mike Bowman, USN (ret.)
Don Featherston
Harold Manning
Jim Simmons

Barry Lowry, *Museum Manager/Newsletter Editor*
760-939-4740/clmf1@ridgenet.net

Terry Bellino, *Business Officer/Volunteer Coordinator*
760-939-3530/clmf@ridgenet.net

Bob Campbell, NAVAIR-WD Museum Director

Leroy Doig III, NAVAIR-WD Museum Curator

President's Report—October 2002

By Paul Homer, President

As you read this note, the final planning for the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Sidewinder, the world's premier air intercept weapon system, will be behind us, and the big event will be just around the corner. I hope most of the China Lake Museum Foundation members and their families have tickets to the formal, scheduled events such as the reception on 1 November 2002, which is sponsored by the City of Ridgecrest and the Chamber of Commerce, and the Saturday night, 2 November 2002 banquet and program, with both of these events located at the Kerr-McGee Center. Perhaps another highlight event for many of our foundation members will be the Sunday, 3 November 2002 "Old-Timers" picnic and social gathering at the Solar Park area adjacent to the Wreck Center.

Of course, a major focus for the foundation during the past several months has been the support to the Sidewinder 50th Anniversary, and many of our foundation board members, docents, and volunteers have devoted many hours to planning and doing what is needed to prepare for the celebration. The celebra-

tion is an official function of the Navy, and many of the NAVAIR, NAWC, and NAWs personnel have worked tirelessly to ensure success of the events. The most significant change to the Museum is the conversion of the "back room" (the former kitchen and dish washing area in the old O'Club) to the display area solely devoted to Sidewinder and its derivatives. Everyone involved in the cleanup, remodeling, construction, design, and art have done an outstanding job, and I believe you will be impressed with the exposition of the history of Sidewinder.

Note that the U. S. Naval Museum of Armament and Technology and the Foundation Gift Shop will be open throughout the Sidewinder 50th Anniversary Celebration, and special event tickets are not required to visit the Museum. Also, Michelson Laboratory will be open to the public for tours, with demonstrations and displays,

(continued on page 6)

NEW MEMBERSHIPS JUNE 28, 2002 - SEPTEMBER 20, 2002

We would like to Welcome and Thank our new members!

Contributor Members (\$100 Annually)

American Association of University Women, Ridgecrest CA
Tom & Barbara Frisbee, Ridgecrest CA
Carlton & Virginia Hamel, Ridgecrest CA
Nick Schneider, Ridgecrest CA

Sponsor Members (\$33 Annually)

Don & Marilyn Featherston, Ridgecrest CA
Tom & Ulla Lipp, Independence CA
Hiroshi & Elizabeth Oishi, Redmond WA

Enlisted Military Members (\$8 Annually)

Al DeMeerleer, Ridgecrest CA
PRC Louis "Bart" & Christie Dobbs, Ridgecrest CA
PR2 Justin Hodge, Ridgecrest CA
PR2 Seth & Katrina Karnes, Ridgecrest CA
HM2 Randall N. Oakes, Ridgecrest CA

Regular Members (\$25 Annually)

William J. & Ruth K. Berger, Inyokern CA
Elizabeth B. Bjorklund, Ridgecrest CA
Riley & Yoko Burgess, Ridgecrest CA
Robert D. & Ellen Burkhalter, Ridgecrest CA
Evelyn Callaway & Vincent Helm, Sun City AZ
Mary Ann Clodt, Inyokern CA
Fred & Ruth Ernsberger, Gainesville FL
Carroll L. Evans Jr., Ridgecrest CA
Robert A. Gould, Ridgecrest CA
Charles & Eleanor Hansen, Sunnyvale CA
La Rue Haycock, Twentynine Palms CA
John P. & Erin Hessler, Anaconda MT
Gerhard H. & Barbara Hillebrand, Ridgecrest CA
Frank & Joyce Markarian, Ridgecrest CA
Richard W. & Jo Ann Ruscioelli, Apple Valley CA
John B. & Elizabeth R. Seybold, Ridgecrest CA
Bo & Laureen Shaw, Ridgecrest CA
Thurl P. & LaNelle Thompson, Tehachapi CA
Robert B. & Patricia Wilson, Brandywine MD
William R. & Nancy Wright, Portland CA
Don & Louise Yockey, Ridgecrest CA

A Letter from Bob Campbell

NAVAIR-WD Museum Director

Dear Sidewinder Anniversary Participant;

We are looking forward to seeing you at the Sidewinder 50th Celebration.

I am writing this letter to let you know of two events that you will not want to miss. The events are the *Sidewinder Forum* and a *Shooters Forum*, both of which will be held Friday, 1 November. The goals of each of these forums are to share and capture some of the stories/events related to Sidewinder as well as some of the lessons learned.

The *Sidewinder Forum* will be held Friday morning from 0900-1130 at the Station Theater. Robert Hillyer, former Technical Director (1977-1982), will chair it. Participants on the panel will include a representative cross section (G&C, Fuze, Warhead, Propulsion) of technical leaders from the early days of Sidewinder.

The second Forum is the Sidewinder Shooter Forum, which will be convened 2:30-4:30 on Friday in the Station Theater. This forum will be moderated by RDML (select) D. J. Venlet,, who is currently the NAVAIR Air to Air Program Manager. We have lined up an interesting slate of Operators to discuss their personal experiences, including Maj. (ret.) Mike Chien of the Taiwanese Air Force (check spelling), who was involved in the very first combat use of Sidewinder over the Straits of Formosa in 1958.

I expect these forums will help spark some of the memories we are trying to capture during this event, and am hopeful that your presence and participation will help set the stage for a great weekend.

The badges which you will be issued for the Sidewinder 50th will get you into the gate on all three days of the event—Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. You will be able to pick up your badge during the week of the event, or at the Visitor Center at the front gate on Friday.

Do not hesitate to call (760-939-2002) if you have any questions. Also, if you have not already done so, I recommend that you get tickets to both the Friday night and Saturday night events, as we have several select speakers scheduled, who will be sharing their perspectives on the Sidewinder Team accomplishments—past and present.

Sincerely

Bob Campbell
Sidewinder 50th Chairperson

Sidewinder 50th Anniversary Celebration (as of 30 September 2002)

Thursday: (October 31)

5:30 PM--? Wuzwnder Party—Tommy T's (tickets required)

Friday: (November 1)

8:00AM- 5:00PM---U.S. Naval Museum of Armament and Technology (open to public) Sidewinder Exhibit—Comprehensive special exhibit of the evolution of Sidewinder with hardware and dynamic displays along with the people who made it happen. Static Aircraft and Selected Weapon Displays

8:00AM--Golf Tournament--China Lake Golf Course:
0630-0800—Registration, 0800—Play begins

9:00AM-1130AM--Sidewinder Technical Legacy Forum—NAWS Theater (event open to public)

The "Sidewinder Technical Legacy Forum" will be held Friday morning from 0900 to 11:30 at the Station Theater. Mr. Robert Hillyer, former Technical Director at China Lake (1977-1982) will be the chairman. Participants on the panel will include a representative cross section (G&C, Fuze, Warhead, Propulsion) of technical leaders from the early days of Sidewinder, as well as a representative from Germany. Members of this panel include Dr. Thomas Amlie, Dr. Walter LaBerge, both former Technical Directors who played key roles in Sidewinder earlier in their careers, Ray Miller (Propulsion), Rod McClung (test), Bud Sewell (warhead), and a representative from the early Fuze Development, as well as several others.

1130AM-2:00PM—RDML Bachmann Sidewinder 50th Reception for Speakers, Artists, Authors and special visitors—U.S. Naval Museum of Armament and Technology (invitation event)

2:30PM-4:30PM—Sidewinder Shooters' Forum—NAWS Theater (event open to public)

The "Sidewinder Shooters' Forum", will run from 1430 to 1630 on Friday in the Station Theater. This forum will be moderated by RDML (select) D. J. Venlet, currently the NAVAIR Air to Air Program Manager, and RADM (retired) Fred Lewis. We have lined up an interesting slate of operators to discuss their personal experiences, including Maj (retired) Mike Chien of the Taiwanese Air Force who was involved in the very first combat use of Sidewinder over the Straits of Formosa in 1958. Also on the panel will be Capt (retired) Ron McKeown who has two MIG kills with Sidewinder in Vietnam and was the first Commanding Officer of Top Gun. Walter Schirra and Glenn Tierney some of the first test pilots for Sidewinder here at China Lake will also participate on the panel. An Air Force Shooter will also sit on the panel.

1800-2200--City Reception @ Kerr McGee--Dr. Higgins co-host with Chamber/City Representatives. (open to public, advance tickets required) The evening will feature Sidewinder History talks, dancing, entertainment and a tasting buffet with an international flair. Dress will be cocktail party appropriate and Blues for Military. A special auction of the first three numbered prints (#1, #2, #3) of Larry Zabel's "Sidewinder over Wild Horse Mesa" painting commissioned by the China Lake Museum Foundation. Receipts of the auction will be given to the China Lake Museum Foundation (tax exempt).

Speakers: Dr. Higgins—Sidewinder Missile History, RDML (select) Venlet—Combat experience (US 2, Libya 0)
Chuck Anderson (Raytheon)—Sidewinder now and future, VADM Mike Bowman (retired) (DRS Inc)—Sidewinder/Spike

Saturday (November 2)

Blandy Avenue Restricted to shuttle and event traffic.

0900--1600—Michelsen Lab Open House (open to public)

Front part of Mich Lab through IBAR and Prototype Shop
Current WD Weapons and Product Displays
Guided Tours through Machine Shop (Sidewinder Built here)
Outside Static Displays--Weapons and Aircraft (Current)
Historical videos showing in 1000D, Including Special Sidewinder Video made for the event.

0900-1600--Theater open for Historical Videos (open to public) - Secret City, Sidewinder video.

0800-1700--Museum Open All Day with Static displays (open to public)

1000-1500--Solar Park Food Booths/Wreck Center (open to public)

Navy Band (Combo) playing two sets, Air Demo/Fly-by (TBD), Industry Exhibits—UAVs, other products.

1730-2300—Salute to Sidewinder Dinner @ Kerr McGee Center (open to public, advance tickets required)—The evening will feature a full dinner, special memorabilia gifts including a signed copy of Liz Babcock's Book on Sidewinder, and distinguished speakers. RDML Bachmann and Dr. Higgins co-host. Dress—semi formal, Military—Blues. Speakers: VADM Dyer—Sidewinder impact on National Security; and the following will talk about "What Sidewinder Means to me"

Tom Amlie, Glenn Tierney, Walter LaBerge, Walter Schirra, Mike Hall, Burrell Hays

Sunday (November 3)

1000—1600---Museum open with static displays (open to public)

1200—China Lake Retiree Picnic @ Solar Park (open to public-tickets required to eat)

President's Report—October 2002

(continued from page 2)

and we will temporarily move some of the weapons exhibits from the Museum to areas in Mike Lab, so as to facilitate the flow of larger numbers of people at the Museum. You are encouraged to come and view these events, and participate in the 50th Anniversary of the Sidewinder missile. Details as to security and access requirements may be found elsewhere in this News Letter.

During the last quarter, the CLMF has added to

Museum Happenings

By Barry Lowry, Museum Manager

As you can probably tell from the content of this newsletter, the Sidewinder 50th Anniversary event is almost upon us and has been the focus of an enormous amount of energy recently. For the better part of a year now, what used to be the Officer's Club kitchen, has slowly been cleaned out, renovated and prepared to become a 2,600 sq. foot exhibit area dedicated to 50 years of Sidewinder missile history. More recently the Command Historian, Technical Information Division (TID) personnel and contractor personnel from Jacobs Sverdrup have been installing display cabinets and equipment and gathering hardware and artifacts to be displayed. The displays include a plethora of Sidewinder missile hardware representing all aspects and phases of the missile systems 50 year evolution. Storyboards will provide the viewer with a basic knowledge of the how and why aspects of guided missilery. A Warfighter display will illuminate the battle history of the Sidewinder from its first combat use by the Nationalist Chinese in 1958 through Vietnam, various Arab-Israeli conflicts, the Gulf War, Bosnia and beyond. In addition, there will be a diorama of an early Michaelson Laboratory workshop similar to that which created the Sidewinder, various video displays, and displays of personal memorabilia loaned to the event by the family of Dr. William McLean, inventor of the sidewinder.

Of course, events such as the Sidewinder 50th Anniversary (and all museum events in general) wouldn't occur without the help of a dedicated group of volunteers. One of the most diligent and probably the stealthiest of our recent volunteers has been Ron

the Board of Directors two people: Mr. Les Hill of Ridgecrest and Mike Bowman of Arlington, VA. Welcome aboard, Les and Mike! Ed Brooks and Russ Bates have resigned from the board. The board needs new members, and/or volunteers to support all of our areas of responsibility, and in particular the functions of fund raising and public relations. Foundation members interested in serving are encouraged to call me

Porter. Ron has worked steadily at various carpenter jobs producing everything from custom-built walls to display cabinets. In the accompanying photos Ron is creating the floor panels for the workshop diorama complete with 1950's vintage government issue floor tile.

(continued on page 7)



Museum Happenings

(continued from page 6)

In addition to all of the new display work for SW 50th, we have moved out a number of exhibits and rearranged those remaining to provide easier access throughout the display areas. Prior to the SW 50th weekend, most of the exhibits in the museum should also receive new, more detailed and more consistent signage to explain the nature of each exhibit.

The gift shop has laid in a significant stock of Sidewinder 50th merchandise including t-shirts, polo shirts, caps, etched glassware, mouse pads, decals, patches, and much more. High quality Giclee prints, lithographs and tiles of the *Sidewinder over Wild Horse Mesa* commemorative painting will also be available in the gift shop.

On a more general note, visitor numbers at the museum have been down this summer as compared to the same period in 2001. Although the reason for this slip is not readily apparent, the Maturango Museum in

Ridgecrest, as well as the Death Valley National Monument, and the Sequoia and Yosemite National Parks have all shown a decrease in visitors this summer. As summer wanes, visitor numbers and scheduled events are both on the increase.

A security reminder for the Sidewinder 50th event. Special event badges, picture I.D. and tickets will be required for the events at the Kerr-McGee Center in Ridgecrest. For those with access privileges to China Lake nothing extra will be required for base access throughout the weekend. For those without normal base access, the Sidewinder special event badges will allow you access to the base for the weekend. Further information may be had by calling the SW50th information line at 760-939-2002, or Cheryl Roquemore at 760-939-7718, or by following the SW50th link on the museum web page at www.chinalakemuseum.org.



Tex Hoppus, CLMF VP for Fundraising, and Alice Campbell, CLMF VP for Membership, seem to be having fun while manning the CLMF booth at the 8th Annual Verizon Community Dinner held Saturday September 28th.