



THE CHINA LAKER

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Newsletter of the China Lake Museum Foundation

Summer 2003

Why the United State Needs China Lake

By Thomas F. Pollock, CAPT., USN Retired

When Capt. Tom Pollock, 91, died on May 7 in Arcadia, Calif., a legendary part of our history was gone. As head of Aviation Ordnance Development Unit One, he was China Lake's very first test pilot — and a grand practitioner of the military-civilian teamwork that contributed so significantly to the productivity of the Naval Ordnance Test Station. Although Pollock's NOTS tour was just one assignment in a career filled with accomplishment, he kept a special place in his heart for China Lake. He wrote the following article in 1997.

Closing the Naval Air Warfare Center, Weapons Division, at China Lake and Point Mugu, California, would destroy one of the finest air weapons development installations in the world — one that is essential to a strong, scientifically advanced military force and one that can help ensure no more Pearl Harbors or Bataans.

China Lake was initially developed as the Naval Ordnance Test Station (NOTS) to provide advanced weapons systems to win World War II and to become a primary source of weapons for the Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force aircraft for future years. It has accomplished this mission in a most outstanding manner.

Before NOTS came along, the United States had never been adequately prepared for war. In October 1941, just prior to our entry in

World War II, Army General Breerton reported that the Air Combat Command had 312 pilots and 198 co-pilots. What he did not relate was

that our aircraft were obsolete and incapable of competing with the Japanese or the Germans. Our weapons were Browning machine guns and World War I bombs.

During the early part of the war, President Roosevelt formed the National Defense Research Council (NDRC), mobilizing the best scientists in the United States and giving them the mission of using all of their scientific expertise to assist the

military forces in winning the war.

On the West Coast the California Institute of Technology (CIT) was selected to join the NDRC in this effort, specializing in the development of rockets. The first type of rocket

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China Lake Museum Foundation

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President's Report — June 2003

By Paul Homer, President

I mentioned in the last China Laker that the Foundation has received a grant from the Kern Board of Trade to display a sign on a large billboard on the southbound-side of Route 395, not far north of the intersection with California Route 14. As you read this, the sign should be "up and running" and being viewed by the thousands of travelers that pass southbound on Routes 395 and 14 weekly. Hopefully, this sign will inform the public of the Museum's existence and attract some of them to China Lake and Ridgecrest for a visit.

As we enter the summer doldrums, with school vacations, family vacations, and other outings to the mountains and streams, the Museum and the Foundation Gift Shop may suffer from reduced numbers of visitors and shoppers.

Members of the Foundation are encouraged to visit the Museum and to check the Gift Shop for new items, and items on special sales. For example, most of the Sidewinder 50th Anniversary commemorative items left from the celebration last fall are discounted, and some items are in short supply.

The Foundation and our extraordinary volunteer force hosts many visitors to the Museum each week and frequently conducts tours of the Museum for official visitors to China Lake. I encourage Foundation members to consider arranging for similar tours of the Museum for groups that you may be hosting, such as family visitors or friends from out of town.

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Coffee Cup History

The Museum Foundation intends to create a display of coffee mugs that provides an insight into the history of Navy weapons and armament. This display will be of actual coffee cups on either shelving or in a shadow box type of setting. We will also include a brief write-up of



Also, Shirley Pladson has donated to this proposed display. The photos are of cups from both Dan and Shirley and show the type of cups desired by the Foundation.

Donations of coffee cups that represent a part of the Navy's effort in weaponry and armament are requested. Please send the cups to the Museum Foundation along with a short write-up on the significance of each cup, any interesting stories or history concerning the cup or the program that it represents, and any information about yourself that you would like to

pertinent facts concerning the cup and its donor. The desire is to provide enjoyment and fun in this display along with a glimpse at some of the programs, organizations and people that made the associated weapon systems.



Daniel Lukens submitted this concept and he has already donated over a dozen usable cups.

share. As a minimum we request your name and permission to state that you donated the cup. Our visitors enjoy remembering the people as well as the programs. The Foundation will not return the cups if they are not used, so please do not send any items you may want back. The cups will be cataloged and stored and depending on response will be displayed as soon as a proper setting can be created.



**Thank you,
China Lake Museum Foundation
Board of Directors.**

Support the U. S. Naval Museum of Armament and Technology

The U. S. Naval Museum of Armament and Technology depends on the generosity and support of individual and corporate donors. The China Lake Museum Foundation operates the Museum for the Navy, and is the civilian-managed, charitable 501(c)(3) organization that supports the Museum. We need your contribution! The rich heritage and memories of China Lake achievements are unique and irreplaceable. Join us to preserve the "grand experiment" for generations to come.

Your membership dues go directly to support the Museum, and you receive the benefits of membership, including discounts in the Gift Shop.

If you are a regular member now, consider upgrading to sponsor, contributor, benefactor or life membership. Life membership dues are payable in one lump sum, or in two and four annual payments, and major credit cards are accepted methods of payment. If you already are a Foundation member, consider paying membership dues for your sons, daughters, and/or parents.

If you are a Foundation member now, we hope you will consider an additional gift. If you itemize your tax returns, you will find that your charitable gifts to the Foundation are deductible. Some employers will match your charitable gifts, making your gift worth even more to the Foundation. If your employer has such a program, just enclose their matching gift form along with your check.

If your business is a Business Sponsor or Contributor Member, consider upgrading to a Business Member. If you are not a Business member, consider joining the Foundation in this category. Your annual donation to the Foundation and Museum is vital to the Foundation and makes a statement that you care about the future of the Museum in the China Lake and Ridgecrest community.

Methods of payment for any and all donations and memberships can be made by cash at the Museum Gift Shop, by check payable to the China Lake Museum Foundation, or by credit card. If by credit card, please indicate VISA, Master Card, Discover, or American Express, your credit card number, and its expiration date. Internet users may log onto www.chinalakemuseum.org to make their investments in the future of the U. S. Naval Museum of Armament and Technology. The site includes a form that can be printed and mailed. Gift Shop items can also be purchased via the site, with payment by credit card. The website also includes a way for to automate a \$10.00 per-month contribution via your charge card. The collective impact of all gifts and donations, large and small is to sustain the excellence of the Museum and the Foundation. Your membership and gift counts!

NEW MEMBERSHIPS FOR April 8, 2003 - June 15, 2003

We would like to "Welcome and Thank" our new and renewing members!

Life Members (\$1000)

Cal and Linda Fallgatter, Ridgecrest, CA

Contributor Members (\$100 Annually)

Bob and Marge Vargus, Ridgecrest CA

Regular Members (\$25 Annually)

John and Virginia Johnson, Jr, Ridgecrest CA

Cordia Tankersley, Trona CA

Jay and Peggy Chun, Ridgecrest, CA

Elizabeth Babcock, Ridgecrest, CA

Henry and Janet Blazek, Ridgecrest, CA

Robert and Mary Phillips, Ridgecrest, CA

Robert and Darlene Boyack, Ridgecrest CA

Clifton and Francisca Ransom, Ridgecrest, CA

Woodie and Betsy Chartier, Bakersfield, CA

Marybelle F. Clark, Ridgecrest CA

Mel and Karen Creusere, Danville CA

Emory and Shirley Ellis, Santa Maria CA

Bob and Marie Riggis, Ridgecrest CA

Russ Bates, Ridgecrest CA

John and Charlotte Freeman, Ridgecrest CA

Dale W Cox, Palos Verdes Estates CA

William and Barbara Underwood, Ridgecrest CA

Gene and Jeri Gibson, Inyokern CA

Susan K Hoppus, Ridgecrest CA

Jenny K Miller, Ridgecrest CA

Ruth L Hoppus, Corona CA

Jim McCallester, Ridgecrest CA

Richard and Geri Clodt, Inyokern CA

AK(Sandy) and Fran Rogers, Ridgecrest CA

James Fallgatter, Long Beach CA

Dawn Chicky, Tucson AZ

Cheryl Chicky, Ridgecrest CA

Bruce and Ann Auld, Ridgecrest CA

Larry and Kim Lincicum, Ridgecrest CA

James and Lillian Gross, Ridgecrest CA

Bryan Blecha, Ridgecrest CA

Ken and Jane Grant, Eugene OR

The China Lake Museum Foundation recently qualified for both the United Way of the Indian Wells Valley and the Combined Federal Campaign for 2003.



For those of you interested in supporting the CLMF and the U.S. Naval Museum of Armament and Technology through payroll deductions, be sure to look for us at **Agency Code 5021** during the pledge drives later this year.

President's Report — June 2003

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Similarly, if you have a club, social group, or business staff interested in the rich heritage and memories of China Lake, consider scheduling a special tour of the Museum. We can accommodate individuals and large groups up to about 50 people. We have expert tour guides in most of the technical areas of interest to members and of course many of you are yourselves experts and perhaps could lead and conduct your own tours. Call the Museum for a scheduled tour, and a tour guide, if needed. Also note that the Museum office has a good library of videotapes, which can be shown to groups.

Make sure that time is allotted when you visit the Museum to check out the Gift Shop!

The Gift Shop will soon have for sale the promised items from the Sidewinder 50th Anniversary celebration. Included will be video records of the Technical Forum, the Shooter's Forum, the two evening events, and a CD containing several hundred photographs (many taken by Liz Babcock, CLMF publicist) of participants (you may be included). We are finalizing the order for stocks of these items, and you can help by calling the Gift Shop and indicating your interest in purchasing these items.



**U.S. NAVAL MUSEUM OF
ARMAMENT & TECHNOLOGY**

CHINA LAKE

760-939-3530

HWY 178 EAST - 10 MI TO CHINA LAKE MAIN GATE

**VISIT THE
SECRET CITY
FREE!**

USNMAT Billboard
Southbound US395
North of the Calif. 14 Junction

Why the United States Needs China Lake

(continued from page 1)

desperately needed was for defense against German submarines, which were sinking hundreds of our ships. The British sent over some solid-head aircraft rockets that could be fired through the water to penetrate the pressure hull of a submarine, and CIT then developed an improved model, which a small ordnance experimental unit at Naval Air Station, San Diego, then tested and found to be outstanding.

When the Chief of Naval Operations learned about the British report of the German submarines that had been sunk with rockets, he ordered that several thousand aircraft be armed with rockets. The one airplane and six people of the experimental unit had been using a small dry lake at Goldstone, California, for firing tests. Fortunately, forward-thinking people in the Navy and CIT recognized the need for adequate test and development away from population centers. The Navy and CIT then jointly found an expanse of desert at China Lake, just to the north of the small settlement of Ridgecrest, California. An airstrip with no buildings at nearby Inyokern was obtained and Quonset huts erected for use until permanent structures could be built at China Lake. The rocket program now had a suitable area with unlimited firing ranges and clear air-space for safe operations.

About 20 officers and 120 men augmented the experimental unit, which was designated Aviation Ordnance Development Unit One (AODU-1). This unit moved to Inyokern to become the air unit of NOTS and to help in the development of weapons systems, experiment in tactics, and train combat pilots and enlisted men in the use of the new rockets.

The unit thoroughly tested the 3.5-inch antisubmarine rocket and turned it over to naval units in the Atlantic to combat German submarines. A 5-inch explosive head installed on this rocket gave combat pilots in the Pacific Theater an effective weapon, but it had quite a bit of gravity drop. That problem was soon resolved with a rocket with a 5-inch driving motor. These weapons were in the Fleet in about four months—an extremely short time for any new weapon to be made available.

The 5-inch weapon became known as the "Holy Moses," a standard weapon for Navy and Army Air Corps squadrons. Air Corps squadrons firing Holy Moses rockets played an important part in stopping German tanks in the July 1944 St. Lo breakthrough in France. Navy and Marine Corps pilots made life miserable for the Japanese

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The China Lake Museum Foundation has gathered names and information for a memorial display to honor people who died in accidents on duty at China Lake. This information was obtained from past issues of the Rocketeer/Weaponer plus a few from the China Lake Safety Office. A similar list may be viewed at the following web location:

www.chinalakealumni.org/Shipmates.htm

Please send any suggestions you have for a Memorial to the museum staff.

Why the United States Needs China Lake

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aboard ships, aboard barges, and in foxholes in the Pacific.

These weapons, along with the heat-seeking "Sidewinder," which NOTS developed a bit later, became standard aerial weapons for the nation's air forces for about 45 years — and Sidewinder still has a prominent place in today's arsenal.

Another NOTS-developed weapon of World War II was "Tiny Tim," an 11.75-inch 1,200-pound rocket with a 500-pound warhead. This weapon did not play an important part in

the war, but the information gained in the development of Tiny Tim's propellant would prove important in building Polaris and other solid-propellant missiles during the years to follow. Numerous other weapons developments at China Lake, such as the so-called smart missiles, remain classified. The point is that without China Lake, the nation would have been ill-prepared to defend itself and its allies in the numerous military actions that have occurred between 1943 and today.

Capt. Pollock is survived by his wife Olive, son Thomas F. Pollock Jr., daughter Joann Latuf, son Robert Pollock, five grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

He was buried at the Live Oak Cemetery in Monrovia, with three separate services attesting to his service to his country. In addition to a graveside service, he was honored with a Commandery Knights Templar service and an American Legion gun salute and service.

Contributions in his memory may be made to the American Stroke Association, a division of the American Heart Association, (888) 478-7653, or to any charity that means a lot to the donor.

New Merchandise Museum Store Sales Special Events Hot Topics

The China Lake
Museum Foundation
is assembling an e-mail list to notify
members of events of interest.

If you are interested in
being on such a mailing list please
drop a line to clmf@ridgenet.net
to let us know, and be sure to
include your current
e-mail address.

ZABEL LITHOGRAPH SALE



During the month of August the Zabel Lithograph (unframed), *Sidewinder Over Wild Horse Mesa*, is on sale for 25% off the original price of \$75.00. Don't miss this opportunity to own your own Zabel Lithograph.

Museum Happenings

by Barry Lowry, Museum Manager

Well, summer is here and the desert is certainly warming up... although not as fast as usual.

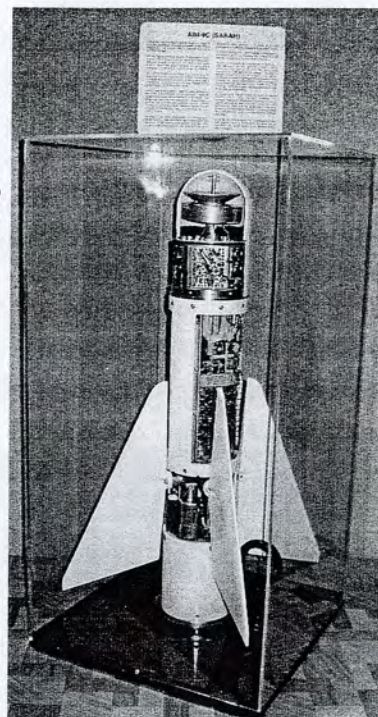
The museum continues to be a busy place. Visitor statistics remain at or slightly ahead of last year's numbers. The staff is busy with sundry projects and activities. USNMAT continues to be a desirable place for media interviews and as a backdrop for video. The History Channel recently conducted interviews here with a few retired China Lakers for a piece the channel is preparing for *the Deep Sea Detectives* program about a B-29 that took off from China Lake in 1948 and subsequently crashed into Lake Mead in Nevada. This should air in the November timeframe. In May a German Government representative presented a book and videotape to the museum detailing the cooperation between the U.S. and Germany during the Cold War.

The museum continues to be a popular place for the China Lake Distinguished Visitors' office and the Public Affairs Office to showcase China Lake's accomplishments to visiting dignitaries. Several large groups from various parts of the Navy and the Federal Government at large have toured here recently. We've also toured Boy Scouts from Pt. Mugu, 3rd graders from Pierce School and a few private tour groups in the recent past.

In my last report I told of our applications to be a United Way Agency and to participate in the Combined Federal Campaign. I am happy to report that both applications were granted, and we will appear in the fall 2003 campaigns here in the Indian Wells Valley as Agency 5021. Do remem-

ber us when it comes time to mark your pledge cards for payroll deductions!

Pat Brokke continues to be busy in the museum store identifying new suppliers and finding interesting things to offer. The Museum Store Committee, which oversees product selections, has been discussing the idea of occasionally e-mailing information to members about new products, sales and such. If you are interested in receiving e-mailings from us, make sure to let the museum staff know what your current e-mail address is.



AIM-9C SARAH Guidance Section on Display in the Museum's Sidewinder Room

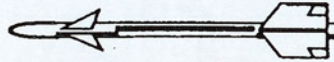
In response to several inquiries, we have undertaken a project to make our newsletter, *The China Laker*, available on our web site. Our volunteer web master Erik van Bronkhorst is busily scanning old copies of the newsletter to prepare an archive of past issues. We will also be mounting the latest edition on the site coincident with publication of the printed version. We are also planning a "Support Us" page where people will have different options for volunteering, supporting us with direct financial contributions and various other types of support. We are still working to create an on-line shopping environment for the museum store but that is coming to be a project bigger than we currently have time for. Not to fear, we will get it done eventually.

I encourage one and all to visit our web page and try the Discussion Forum-Bulletin Board feature. Originally installed around the first of the year it has been slow to catch on but we still hope that people find and use it on a more regular basis.

You can find us at:

www.chinalakemuseum.org

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Did you know that the CLMF is

Code 5021

in the 2003



**IWV United Way
and**

Combined Federal Campaigns ?