CHINA LAKE ARMED FORCES DAY 1963
THE UNEXPECTED SHOW

By
Anthony L. Tambini II
Commander, USN - Ret.
(Webmasters note: Aircraft involved was BuNo 149969)

Air Shows never fail to bring out the crowds. In the high desert of China Lake, 150 miles north of Los Angeles, people would come from every direction to see the airplanes. Armed Forces Day was a cause for celebration. Almost any reason could be a cause for celebration in this place where quarter movies and the bowling alley were the major attractions, although the bars at the clubs would most likely be first on the list of things to do for a good percentage of the population.

It was a typically beautiful day in May, a perfect day for families to get together and stroll among the static displays of all of the different kinds of airplanes that we flew from the naval air facility. There would be displays, demonstrations, and a flyover of every major type of airplane in our inventory. In addition to the Projects Department, where various newly designed and developing weapons and weapon systems were in various stages of testing, other important support functions of the naval air facility were to be featured.

Our "Redbirds" would be first in the order of appearance. These were F9F-6 Cougars that had been converted to "drones" or NOLO (No Live Operator) targets for the air-to-air missiles and surface-to-air missiles being developed or undergoing testing at the Naval Ordnance Test Station. Accompanied by their T-28 Trojan controller aircraft and a pair of FJ-3 Fury chase planes, this colorful group always pleased the crowds. After the drones, our collection of Projects birds was scheduled for individual flybys. Later, our skydiving club would make a series of jumps for the crowd.

Sitting on the flight line was a shiny, new A4D-5, the first of a new breed of Skyhawks with a more powerful J-52 engine mounted behind modified intakes high on the fuselage. This airplane would later be renamed the A-4E in conformance with the Secretary Of Defense's decree that the Air Force and Navy adapt the same nomenclature system—the Air Force's. Fresh from the factory, it would be the last of the Projects Department airplanes to participate in our Armed Forces Day show.
Less than a week old, we had put just four flights on the new bird before scheduling it for modification to carry instrumentation and experimental systems. The new J-52 engine was causing some concern with both the manufacturer and the Navy. Burner cans, the main combustion chambers in the engine, were burning through and causing engine fires. One effort to fix the problem was to modify the fuel control, which by now had already gone through twenty-nine changes.

The airplane itself handled like no other Skyhawk I'd flown. Peppy and responsive, it was fun to fly. There were other concerns about this airplane, but none we considered serious. The Attack Weapons Projects Officer and I had both found that the airplane flamed out (the engine quit) every time that we put the airplane into a spin. Restarting the engine proved to be easy and fast, but still, it was a concern. Spinning was not a maneuver purposely performed in the fleet, but it was a necessary part of structural flight-testing external stores (weapons) and aircraft performance/recovery under conditions involving new configurations. This airplane had been sent to the naval air facility in support of Shrike missile system development, and it would become another in the growing stable of aircraft assigned to Attack Systems.

Saturday, the day of the show, dawned bright and beautiful, as our days always did in the Mojave Desert. There was a bit of a kicker though: the wind was blowing at close to the limits set for safe flight operations. When the wind was above forty knots, the chance of a safe landing was minimal, as was the chance of a safe ejection, if that became necessary. A pilot would probably be dragged in his parachute and badly injured or killed on the rocks and rough terrain before he could release himself from his harness and get free of his parachute.

The combination of sun and wind made the air above the desert floor rough and bumpy; not the kind of ride that is comfortable at five hundred knots. If the wind got any stronger, we would have to cancel flight operations. We were even more concerned about our Skydiving Club. They were scheduled to finish the aerial part of the show with individual and team jumps over the facility. The first events in our program got airborne and confirmed the weather folk's assessment: we were right on the edge. The operations officer gave the go ahead so as not to disappoint the crowd, but he cautioned that, if conditions worsened, the show would have to be suspended. The FJs, Cougars, Crusaders, and a lone Phantom all found the air to be turbulent and jolting. And all slowed down dramatically; the bumpy ride was making it uncomfortable to go at the higher speeds planned.

While orbiting north of the field and waiting my turn, the air seemed to be smoothing out a bit. The Skyhawk was taking the rough air in stride, and conditions improved vastly as I began a slow descent toward the airfield. This was going to be fun after all. I saw the airspeed pass 550 knots with the airplane still accelerating. Dropping to eyeball level, I passed the end of the north south runway and saw, for the first time, the crowd lining the ramp and adjacent taxiway. They were a blur as I flashed past.

At midfield, I pulled up into a vertical climb and initiated a series of "Victory Rolls" for the crowd. On about the third rotation, the cockpit lit up like a pinball machine with the fire warning light flashing. "Tilt!" Smoke filled the cockpit, and when I looked in the rear view mirrors, I could see flames erupting through the side of the fuselage. Back around the horn came the throttle, and out went the ram-air turbine. I called the tower, dropped the landing gear and flaps, and executed a wingover maneuver to land on the same runway that I had just flown down. Speed and altitude bled off fast. I touched down on the end of the runway, and fire trucks chased behind as I rolled out and stopped the airplane. It's amazing how quickly the airplane decelerated with the engine stopped. It was frozen—not the slightest rotation—a very different sensation from the flameout approaches that we used to practice to simulate
I brought the airplane to a halt at midfield—right in front of the spectators who thought it was all part of the show. As I unstrapped and dove over the side, there in the front row, cheering and waving wildly, were my wife and sons.

Note: CDR Tony Tambini’s airshow article is taken from the A-4 SKYHAWK Association website. Tambini previously wrote an article in the Fall 2007 China Laker, on Project Rainhat.

About the author: CDR Tony Tambini entered the Navy through the NAVCAD program in 1956, then flew the F-9F Cougar and FJ-4 Fury prior to transitioning to A4D-2s in VA-56. He deployed in Skyhawks on Ticonderoga and later on Coral Sea, flew A-7s with VA-37, and completed Navy Command and Staff at Newport, R.I. His final assignments were in nuclear weapon safety and readiness in COMNAVAILANT and OPNAV.

Thomas S. Amlie
Former Naval Weapons Center Technical Director
And Sidewinder Pioneer

Published: January 27, 2012
The Washington Post

Thomas S. Amlie, 85, an electrical engineer who retired in 1991 from the Air Force Department’s office that monitors the cost-effectiveness of weapons programs, died Jan. 2 at his home in Bethesda. He had congestive heart failure, according to his son, Thomas T. Amlie.

From 1952 to 1970, Dr. Amlie worked on Navy Department missile programs, including the Sidewinder. He was a former director of what is now the Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division at China Lake, Calif. He settled in the Washington area in 1970 and spent a decade with the Federal Aviation Administration working on collision avoidance systems, radar and microwave landing systems.

Dr. Amlie later worked at the Air Force Department with A. Ernest Fitzgerald, the celebrated Pentagon whistleblower of the 1960s who exposed massive cost overruns.

Thomas Strong Amlie was a native of Elkhorn, Wis., and a 1946 mechanical engineering graduate of the University of Wisconsin at Madison, where he also received a doctorate in electrical engineering in 1952.

He served in the Navy V-12 officer training program during World War II.

In 1956, he married June Townsend. In 1991, she died in a commuter plane crash in Georgia that killed 23 people, including former senator John G. Tower (R-Tex.).

Dr. Amlie’s survivors include three children, Thomas T. Amlie of Mount Joy, Pa., Laura M. Amlie of Baltimore and Marcella J. Amlie of Takoma Park; two brothers; a sister; and a granddaughter.
President’s Report by Bob Campbell

Over the last three months we have ramped up the campaign to raise funds for the new building in Ridgecrest. We have held two information events, with Bruce Auld hosting the first two events. These events are focusing on bringing community leaders, life members and other interested parties up to speed on our campaign and plans. Jamie Gallagher, our Development Manager, along with Pat Connell orchestrated these events. We plan to host one event a month.

As part of our goal to establish a meaningful presence in the community as quickly as possible we are working on an exhibit to be placed on the southeast corner of Las Flores and China Lake Blvd, next to the courthouse. Bruce Bartels is leading this effort and we are coordinating with Jon McQuiston, the Kern County Staff and NAWCWD who all support the concept.

The building will take longer and is dependent on the success of the fund raising campaign. We are hoping for solid support from the community and are also seeking funding from outside resources.

I want to thank Ron Pruitt for providing a model he constructed of the Tiny Tim test set up with an Avenger airplane on a ramp. It is a very detailed model, and includes the figures of Dr Fowler and Captain Burroughs observing the set up, thusly capturing the essence of the China Lake military-civilian team model for merging requirements with technology to provide solutions to the fleet. You can see the model in the display case of Sidewinder shooter aircraft.

We have set up a special video display depicting the visit President John F. Kennedy made to China Lake, in June of 1963. The video is available for viewing in the bar area of the Museum.

We are also setting a goal of having at least one special speaker every quarter. This coming quarter we are featuring Dick DeMarco and he will be talking about his experience in the development of the Moray attach submarine while working at China Lake. Please plan to attend this event scheduled for April.
Membership Drive & Rate Increase

For the first time in its history, beginning 1 June 2012, the China Lake Museum Foundation is increasing individual membership rates will be increasing to $35 annually – up from the $25 rate set when we incorporated in 1993.

Membership is an important revenue source that allows the US Naval Museum of Armament and Technology to remain open so that individuals from our community and beyond can learn about and experience the historical and technical importance of China Lake. Inflation alone dictates our current rate inadequate to meet the increasing costs of operating the Museum as it exists today.

The Museum has increased staff over the past year to address its changing personnel needs and the realities of a shrinking volunteer corps. A Development Manager was hired to help us identify and acquire funding to move the Museum into a new facility Ridgecrest, where we will be responsible for all operating costs including exhibit loans, expanded educational outreach, building maintenance, utilities and more. We are also in the process of hiring an Administrative Assistant who will be tasked with development responsibilities and provide additional support to our Gift Shop (which is another important revenue source). The increase in membership fees will partially offset these necessary costs as well, although most of these costs will be covered by increased fundraising revenues.

If you would like additional information on our capital campaign or plans to move the Museum in Ridgecrest, please feel free to contact me at 760-378-2142 or pconnell@ Hughes.net, or Jamie Gallagher, Development Manager, at 760-939-2916 or development@ chinalamuseum.org.

Pat Connell
Director, China Lake Museum Foundation

Membership Application Form (New/Renewal)

JOIN US!
China Lake Museum Foundation
PO Box 217
Ridgecrest, CA 93556-0217
(760) 939-5758 - Fax (760) 939-5764
www.Chinalamuseum.org

The China Lake Museum Foundation invites you to participate in the advancement of our shared vision – one that will preserve and display accomplishments in Naval Aviation R&D, with a special focus on China Lake and its legacy/aerospace/industry. Dedication and skill have resulted in technological advancement and development of Air Weapon Systems which are unparalleled and discoveries that have been applied to everyday life.

The rich heritage and tradition of China Lake’s achievements — past, present and future — are unique and irreplaceable. Join us to preserve the history of the “good experiment” for generations to come. Your tax-deductible Foundation donation will help support our goal of developing a new museum outside the China Lake main gate.

The China Lake Museum Foundation is incorporated in the State of California as a non-profit foundation for educational purposes. The Foundation is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a charitable organization as described in Section 501(c)(3). Donors and members, therefore, may deduct contributions and gifts to the Foundation in the fullest sense of the law.

Enclosed is my donation for the membership I have chosen.

☐ Individual Membership - $35 annually
☐ Business Member - $500 annually
☐ Contributor Member - $100 annually
☐ Business Sponsor Member - $500 annually
☐ Benefactor Member - $500 annually
☐ Business Contributor Member - $100 annually
☐ Lifetime Member - $1,000 one-time, or
☐ $500 twice consecutively per annum
☐ $250 four times consecutively per annum

Volunteer Work (Area of Interest)

METOD OF PAYMENT

☐ Check or money order enclosed (Please, No Cash or COD)
☐ Payable to: China Lake Museum Foundation

Charge My: ☐ VISA ☐ Master Card
☐ Discover ☐ American Express

CRDIT CARD NUMBER: 

3 DIGIT CARD VERIFICATION CODE: 

Expiration Date: 

Issuing Bank: 

Signature:

Rev T (03/30/2010)
New Memberships received since Fall 2011 Newsletter:

**Business Corporate Members ($1,000.00 Annually)**
Alta One Federal Credit Union - Ridgecrest CA

**Lifetime Members ($1,000.00)**
Benton, Al & Brown, Mary Ann - Ridgecrest CA
Hewer, Gary & Carol - Ridgecrest CA
Highberg Berry, Kristin & Butler, Ray - Riverside CA
Johns, Jim & Kim - Ridgecrest CA
Little, Steven & Leah - Santa Barbara CA
Wilson, Dophine A. - Phoenix AZ

**Contributor Members ($100.00 Annually)**
Backman, Marvin E. & Jeanne L. - Ridgecrest CA
Faron, John F. & Martha - Oceanside CA
Kirchmeier, Bob - Ridgecrest CA
Nelson, Harvey & Audrey - Ridgecrest CA
Norris, William & Naomi - Ridgecrest CA
Vargus, Bob & Marge - Ridgecrest CA
Wolverton, Robert L. - Ridgecrest CA

**Sponsor Members ($33.00 Annually)**
Canning, Douglas & Jamie - Ridgecrest CA
Crow, Eleanor - Boulder CO
Joyce Sr., Richard D. - Ridgecrest CA
Lawson, Cliff & Bernard, Ramona - Water Valley CA
Tracy, Marlene - Ridgecrest CA

**Enlisted Military Members ("Free" from Sponsor Memberships)**
Carlson, Greg & Julie - Ridgecrest CA
Kellogg, Daniel & Margaret - Ridgecrest CA
McNeely, Megan - Ridgecrest CA
Musser, Jason T. & Michelle - Ridgecrest CA
Parr, Jason & Louise - Ridgecrest CA
Pascarella, Michael & Ashley - Ridgecrest CA

**Regular Members ($25.00 Annually)**
Barker, Llewellyn & Sarah - Inyokern CA
Bartels, Bruce & Char - Ridgecrest CA
Baxter, Darryl - Ridgecrest CA
Clark, Bill & Jeanne - Bonita, CA
Cobb, Doug & Lois - Ridgecrest, CA
Cox, William F. & Thelma - Inyokern CA
Davis, Gary & Karen - Onyx CA
Dusol Jr., MD, Maurice & Leigh - Ridgecrest CA
De Rosa Jr., John & Frances - Ridgecrest CA
Ford, Brenda - Ridgecrest CA
Gallagher, Jamie - Ridgecrest CA
Felsen, Oscar & Jan - Ridgecrest, CA
Foote, David J. & Stephanie - Las Vegas NV
Gibbons USAF (Ret.), LTC James R. & Thirza - Tucson AZ
Glen, Bob & Rhodean - Ventura CA
Gonzales, Caitlin Chandler AZ
Gravelle, Noel & Ellene - Ridgecrest CA
Grosz, Richard - Tucson AZ
New Memberships received since Fall 2011 Newsletter (Continued)

Haas, Delores - Rogers AR
Jensen, Gwyn - Ridgecrest CA
Kapeles, Greg and Stephanie - Ridgecrest CA
Kerr, Tom - Ridgecrest CA
Jones, Patricia - Lakeport CA
Koharchick, Al & Dorothy - Ridgecrest CA
Hooper, John O. - Ridgecrest CA
Magorian, William & Carolyn - Ridgecrest CA
Malik, John & Ruth - Ridgecrest, CA
Moreno, Frank J. & Watts, Therese - Ridgecrest CA
Marcus, Maryelyn - Sebastopol CA
McCrary, Carter & Nancy - Ridgecrest CA
Moralez, Ernie & Gissell - Tracy CA
Phares, Glenn E. - Huntsville AL
Rohrbacker, Jeff & Shana - Ridgecrest CA
Shill, Gary & Carey - Ridgecrest CA
Smith, Dr. Edmund H. - Palm Springs CA
Smith, Toy Anne - Ridgecrest CA
Stange, Stephen & Aubrey - Ridgecrest CA
Stell, Katharine - Kensington MD
Stoner, Dale - Troy MI
Wetzel, Ray & Louise - Spokane WA
White, Major B.K. & Carol - Sonoma CA
Williams, Joe & Phyllis - Ridgecrest CA
Zarlingo, Fred & Peggy - Ridgecrest CA

Richard Joseph Mello
August 19, 1934-January 30, 2012
Richard "Dick" Joseph Mello, longtime resident of Ridgecrest, passed away January 30th at the age of 77. Dick was born and raised in Providence, Rhode Island where he enjoyed playing hockey with his brothers and attending baseball games at Fenway Park where he watched his beloved Red Sox’s. Dick graduated from Providence College with a degree in physics. During his college years, he met his future bride Louise Mailhot. After graduation, Dick and Lou were married and moved to California where Dick began working in the aerospace industry in Los Angeles. In 1960, Dick accepted a position at the Naval Ordnance Test Station, China Lake, CA. Dick worked in the area of naval missile research and development for over 40 years. Over the course of his career he worked on the Shrike program, the HARM program and was the program manager for the SideARM program. During his prestigious career he received many honors including the Michelson Lab Award and the Superior Civilian Service Award. Dick is survived by his wife Lou of 55 years; his brother, Bob; his four children, Rich, Mary-Lou, Shelly, Jim; his seven grandchildren, Richie, Breana, Zach, Ryan, Stephen, Kadin, and Harrison; and many nieces and nephews. In his retirement, Dick enjoyed hiking in the local mountains and working on home improvement projects. Dick will be remembered by his many friends and family for his quick wit, his dedication to his work, and his love for his family and friends.
The China Lake Museum Foundation

Presents the 12th Annual

Museum Fundraiser
Dinner and Auction

Saturday, June 2nd, 2012

Catered Dinner at the Kerr McGee Center
~ $30 per person ~

Premium Cash Bar Available
Silent Auction
Live Auction
Raffles

Event Sponsorship Available*

~ Cocktails/Silent Auction 5 P.M. ~ Dinner 6:30 P.M. ~ Live Auction 7:30 P.M. ~

Tickets for event may be purchased through the Museum gift shop, located on Naval Air Weapons Station; at the CSC Office located at 100 E Ward Ave (Desert Valley Credit Union bldg); by sending a check or money order to the China Lake Museum Foundation, P.O. Box 217, Ridgecrest, CA 93556.

For information contact the Museum Office at: (760) 939-3530, by email development@chalakemuseum.org or visit our website:
http://www.chinalakemuseum.org/index.htm
Dinner & Auction Information Sheet

All proceeds from the auction are placed in the China Lake Museum Foundation Fund for supporting costs associated with achieving the overall Museum Vision and Mission. Membership, fundraising, and community support are instrumental in maintaining the museum and achieving the museum’s future goals. Currently the museum is located on China Lake Naval Weapons Center with the Foundation’s primary focus of moving the museum into the Kern County Park adjacent to the Maturango Museum. The move will greatly improve the accessibility by the public and provide a significant tourist draw directly supporting the local community.

Ways you can help:

Event Sponsorships:

$1500 Corporate Table or $1000 Small Business/Family Table:
Includes: Reserved table, dinner for eight, 2 bottles of wine, complimentary 1 yr CLMF membership for non-member table guests, and sponsor name(s) displayed in the program. Sponsors’ names will be included in the local media. Corporate donors can provide their company banner for display at event.

$250 Sponsor:
Includes: Reserved seating, dinner for two, and name(s) in program.

Recognition Opportunities in Dinner Auction Program:

$500 ~ full-page  $250 ~ half-page  $125 ~ quarter-page  $50 ~ business-card-size

Donated Auction Items: Items may be dropped off at the Museum Gift Shop, or to arrange for pick-up please call (760) 939-3530. The China Lake Museum Foundation is a 501 (c) (3) corporation. Donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

New Members: Individuals or families interested in joining are encouraged to call the Museum office at (760) 939-3530 to discuss the benefits of membership. The success of the museum and its vision is dependent on active members.

Volunteers: Volunteers are the backbone of the foundation. If interested in helping in the auction, or other museum related events, contact Paul Homer at (760) 382-8020 or at phomer@ridgenet.net

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

Museum Vision: Create a self sustaining, historical, educational and entertaining Museum that; Shares history of China Lake and the development of Naval Armament and Technology; Nurture’s curiosity in science and engineering to youth through the rocket scientist program; Is a tourism draw for the Indian Wells Valley; Is a community resource for social and networking events. The challenge faced by the Foundation is to expand and modernize the Museum thus allowing expanded exhibits, and developing a focus on the history of science, engineering and technology for educational purposes. The Museum is located on the Navy base requiring special permission for public visitation; improved access is another part of the plan.

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 2 June 2012

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. June 2 IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER, SO DON’T DELAY IN GETTING THOSE GOOD DONATIONS UNDER WAY. THEY CAN RANGE FROM: FINE ART YOU HAVE GROWN WEARY OF (AND FOR WHICH YOU CAN USE A TAX DEDUCTION) TO -----GREAT BUT NOT NEEDED CHRISTMAS GIFTS (AND YOU CAN USE A TAX DEDUCTION) TO -----ITEMS YOU LOVE TO PURCHASE FOR THE THRILL OF THE SHOPPING TO -----GOOD STUFF IN THE HOUSE OR GARAGE THAT YOU HAVE OUTGROWN TO -----GREAT HOBBY, CRAFT, COLLECTION, ANTIQUES, NOTABLE BOOKS AND HISTORICAL ITEMS, ETC. ITEMS YOU HAVE. IN OTHER WORDS “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:

Paul Homer at 760-382-8020 or phomer@ridgenet.net
Or
Call Chris McKinley at the Museum
760-939-3530
clmfl1@ridgenet.net
!!!!!! WE NEED YOU !!!!!!

The China Lake Museum Foundation is seeking volunteers to help plan the upcoming Annual Dinner Auction Fundraiser on June 2.

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

Contact: Paul Homer

760-382-8020 or phomer@ridgenet.net