EXHIBIT CENTER WILL JOIN BALLOON FESTIVAL WELCOME

For the Veterans Day weekend just around the corner the NAWS Weapons Exhibit Center will join other major educational/cultural attractions of the Indian Wells Valley to welcome the crowds expected for the 2nd Annual Ridgecrest Balloon Festival.

The Exhibit Center displays and the China Lake Museum Foundation Gift Shop will be open all three days of the event, November 6-8. Regular "work-Friday" hours of 1000-1400 will be in effect on the 6th. On Saturday, November 7 doors will be open from 1000 to 1600, and on Sunday the 8th from noon to 1600.*

If you're hosting visitors for the weekend, be sure to bring them in to see us. If you don't have visitors yourself, consider volunteering a couple of hours at the Exhibit Center to greet the people and help them find their way around. Give a call to Volunteer Program Coordinator Dick Tolkmitt (375-4378) or Foundation Office Manager Jeannie Copeland (939-3530).** (See DICK TOLKMITT, p.6.)

Festival planners have announced a smorgasbord of activities for the weekend. These include balloon races featuring famous names in hot-air ballooning, and spectacular balloon glows both Friday and Saturday evenings. Saturday morning will offer Veterans Commemoration and Manzanar Remembrance ceremonies at the Festival site.

The Saturday schedule also encompasses a Balsam Street Faire with live music, food, arts and crafts vendors, classic cars, and a stage show. There will also be an evening dinner-dance with live country music following the balloon glow at the Festival site. Live big band music will be the order of the evening at Sunday night's USO Dance.

Other activities for this event-crowded holiday weekend—which also marks the 55th anniversary of the Navy's arrival on the Upper Mojave—include balloon rides, a scavenger hunt, a jazz festival, radio-controlled model blimp races, aero-batic demonstrations, kite flying, family games, and a volleyball tournament. Check the local news media for details.

*As of press time, it appears that on the Festival weekend guards at NAWS' main gate will issue a 1-time pass to vehicle drivers without obliging them to go inside the Visitors Center to get the pass.

**At press time, the need for additional volunteer staffing is greatest on Friday, Nov. 6 and Sunday, Nov. 8.
FOUNDATION CO-HOSTS BOOK PREVIEW/AUTOGRAPHING

A crowd of more than 90 people filled the NAWS Exhibit Center the evening of August 13 for a sneak preview of Target Hiroshima, a recently published account of the pivotal role played in our nation's breakthrough into the nuclear weapons era by an early NOTS backer, WWII Navy officer W. S. "Deak" Parsons.

Under the joint auspices of your China Lake Museum Foundation and the Historical Society of the Upper Mojave Desert, the book's author, military historian Al Christman, illustrated his presentation with slides highlighting Rear Admiral Parsons' childhood, education and distinguished military career. In addition, several slides illustrated the early days of the Naval Ordnance Test Station, whose moldering as an ongoing, major RDT&E center was significantly influenced by Parsons.

Christman, a retired Division Head of NOTS/NWC's Technical Information Department, focussed his talk on Parsons' involvement in the Manhattan Project. Assigned to the secret laboratories at Los Alamos, New Mexico, then-Captain Parsons was responsible for making sure the Little Boy version of the newly developed atomic bomb was a deliverable weapon. On July 18, 1945 he made a brief visit to friends and colleagues at NOTS. He was on route to the West Pacific, where he would fly aboard the Enola Gay to personally ensure proper release of the bomb that was to level Hiroshima and mercifully speed the end of the war.

China Lake Connection

Other emphases of Christman's presentation were air-drop testing of prototype A-bomb configurations at China Lake and the genesis of the Salt Wells Pilot Plant to fabricate non-nuclear explosive components for the weapon. Both occurred at Parsons' instigation.

Christman also described the salutary effect Parsons exercised on China Lake through his long-term friendship and professional association with Dr. L. T. E. Thompson, NOTS' first Technical Director. Before the war Thompson was Chief Scientist at the Naval Proving Ground, Dahlgren (Virginia) at the time Parsons was Experimental Officer there. In the course of numerous long, "kind of dreaming" conversations, the two men shaped a vision of the sort of military-scientific teamwork that would empower a truly effective RDT&E center for Naval air weaponry. Knowledgeable observers consistently confirm that this is precisely the type of leadership teamwork that has characterized the most productive periods of NOTS/NWC/NAWCWPNS' history.

Book Stock Sell-Out

Before sitting down to autograph copies of his book, Christman opened the floor to questions; several of these stirred warm memories of bygone times at the base. He continued answering questions as he autographed the title page of Target Hiroshima, published by the Naval Institute Press. The evening's stock of 35 copies quickly sold out.1

The Historical Society of the Upper Mojave Desert, our co-host for this outstanding program, provided highly welcome refreshments. Our share of responsibilities included providing the venue and rearranging the usual conference-style seating into a theatre-style configuration.

Several CLMF Board members took care of crucial tasks that helped make the event a success. John DiPol handled liaison duties with HSUMD. He also borrowed several dozen chairs from the All Faith Chapel and effected the site set-up (and re-set-up) with the help of Frank St. George. Foundation Secretary Charlotte Bullard attended to the sale of the Target Hiroshima copies, and Paul Homer staffed the Foundation Gift Shop at the conclusion of Christman's talk.

1 A reserved-copy list is being maintained in the Gift Shop against the time when additional copies are available from the publisher. (See NEW ITEMS, opposite page.)
NEW ITEMS ON GIFT SHOP SHELVES

New Gift Shop offerings since our previous edition include an assortment of 8 postcards depicting outstanding examples of the China Lake contribution to America's arsenal of air weaponry. Six of the cards feature action color photographs of RDT&E activities such as launch of the antiradar missile Shrike from a high-flying A-4C and detonation of a Walleye linear-shaped charge in the base's warhead arena.

Two cards with black-and-white photos show an F4U Corsair firing CalTechNOTS rockets in the Navy's World War II assault on Okinawa, and the 1956 Fleet introduction version of Sidewinder, the most successful air-to-air missile in history.

These cards are priced at 75¢ each, or $5.00 for the set of 8. Also available are a variety of scenic postcards displaying landscapes and flora and fauna typical of our corner of the great American desert.

Foundation Board members Jack Russell and Dick Murphy took the lead in making the special China Lake postcards a reality. Board member Charlotte Bullard worked out arrangements for the scenic cards and display racks.

Another new addition is a collection of five metal souvenir lapel pins configured as Navy fighter aircraft that have soared over the China Lake ranges through the years: A4, A6, A7, F4 and F/A 18. Bright gold in color, the pins are approximately an inch long, and they sell at $2.95 each, or $12.95 for all 5. They, too, are the product of Dick Murphy and Jack Russell's creative minds. They make meaningful gifts, so keep them in mind when drawing up your holiday shopping list.

Unfortunately, copies of Target Hiroshima by former China Lake Airman Al Christman are not immediately available from the publisher. (See FOUNDATION CO-HOSTS, opposite page.) If you want us to reserve a copy for you when the order comes in, please call Office Manager Jeanie Copeland (939-3530) or drop in to the Gift Shop and let her know. The price is $19.95.

California sales tax applies to all prices cited in this article.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

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

Pladson, Shirley (Life)
Reuben G. Klammer (Contributing)
Muriel P. Dodge (Regular)
Hope Fielder (Regular)
John Hambuck (Regular)
Dorothy Jackson (Regular)
David C. Johannsen (Regular)
Clifton Ransom (Regular)
Francis Ransom (Regular)
Jacqueline H. Renne (Regular)
Louis Pracchia (Regular)
Thomas W. Sheehan (Regular)
Mary Lee Sizemore (Regular)
Warren & Kay Smith (Regular)
Capt. S. W. Vejitas (Regular)
Frederick & Helen Weals (Regular)

During the same period, Jeanie recorded 1 contributing and 15 regular renewal memberships.

To all: Welcome Aboard!

DILLARD BULLARD MEMORIAL

Donations toward a memorial in remembrance of Dillard Bullard, veteran China Lake manager and husband of CLMF Board Member Charlotte Bullard, are being received at the Foundation Office. Contributions may be sent to:

J. Copeland, Office Manager
China Lake Museum Foundation
P. O. Box 217
Ridgecrest, CA 93556-0217.
MUSEUM SUPPORTER
HEADS KEY NAWCPNS DEPARTMENT

Scott O'Neil, the NAWCPNS Museum Advisory Committee representative who is playing a major role in the pursuit of official Navy Museum status for the proposed China Lake Armament and Technology Museum, has recently been named to head NAWCPNS' Weapons/Targets Department.

Scott signed on with NWC in 1970 after receiving a Bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Seattle. In the intervening years he has completed advanced study programs that include U.S.C.'s M.S. curriculum and a Sloan Fellowship at M.I.T.

To date his China Lake career has encompassed engineering and management assignments in propulsion system technology, missile launch technology, missile production support, warhead/fuze system design, weapon system cost analysis, and information system management. The NWC Technical Director's Award, the NWC Michelson Laboratory Award, and the NAWCPNS L.T.E. Thompson Award are among the formal presentations recognizing his contributions.

Active Involvement

Over the past two years the China Lake Museum Foundation has benefited significantly from Scott's active involvement in the effort to secure official Navy Museum status. He has been instrumental in developing the basic request, in drafting numerous responses required by various levels of the approval chain of command, and in diligently following-up throughout the process in order to minimize delays.

Through his regular attendance at your Foundation's Board meetings he's kept members up-to-date on the status of the request. Scott's diligent support has earned him warm wishes for success in his new assignment.

The China Lake Museum Foundation
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Jeanie Copeland, Office Manager
760-939-3530
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760-375-5978
billb@ridgecrest.ca.us
Good news from the office of Dr. William Dudley, Head of the Naval Historical Center in Washington, D.C.: he has approved our request for official Navy museum status for the proposed China Lake Armament and Technology Museum, and has forwarded it to the Naval Operations Air Admiral, N-88. Once he signs off, the sole remaining signature requirement will be that of the Secretary of the Navy.

The third week in October representatives of the Naval Operations Command will visit China Lake to work out arrangements for operation of the Museum, once it has SECNAV approval. We look forward to having this direct interface with the representatives and pinning down the Foundation’s role in making the Museum a vital component of the Indian Wells Valley’s historical-cultural community.

We deeply appreciate the continued strong backing of the Museum proposal by the NAWC-WPNS and NAWS Commanding Officers, RAdm. Rand Fisher and Capt. John Langford.

And as we continue to benefit from his perseverance as head of the NAWC Museum Committee, we congratulate Scott O’Neil on his recent appointment to Department Head level. (See MUSEUM SUPPORTER, p. 4.)

The entire Foundation membership owes abundant thanks to the members who have contributed their time and effort to ensure that the Exhibit Center remained open following the departure of all Navy and Civil Service personnel from the building this past spring. Dick Tolkmitt’s growing pool of volunteer greeters and docents has definitely validated the Foundation’s ability to staff this valuable Navy/community/regional resource most competently. (See DICK TOLKMITT, p. 6.)

John DiPol and Frank St. George have also blazed some trails with regard to the Foundation’s participation in special events related to its mission. (See FOUNDATION CO-HOSTS, p. 2 and TV LOCATION CREW, p. 6.) Hats off to you, John and Frank, and to those who’ve joined in your truly serviceable efforts.

The long, hot summer we just came through did not discourage attendance at the Exhibit Center. Our visitor count continued to grow through the hot months, thanks in part to some very successful visits by special tour groups. Gift Shop revenues rose accordingly. (See NEW ITEMS, p. 3.)

It’s exciting to observe visitors to the Exhibit Center as they stroll among some of the outstanding products of the Navy’s cutting-edge activities here in the Upper Mojave Desert. I’m especially moved when I witness some of our younger visitors beginning to grasp the role played by many of these weapons in maintaining our country’s freedom. This sharpens my sense of the potential for a full-spectrum historical museum that clearly and comprehensively tells the story of the unique China Lake military/civilian team that has produced some of the most significant weaponry advances of the 20th century.

E-MAIL A GOOD IDEA?

Some of your Board members are considering the possibility of hooking the Foundation into the Internet for purposes such as rapid dissemination of information to readers with an e-mail address. If you have some thoughts on this or other possible uses of an electronic mail connection, please pass them in to CLMF Office Manager Jeanie Copeland (760-939-3530 or P.O. Box 217, China Lake, CA 93556-0217), or to Newsletter Editor Bill Blanc (billb@ridgecrest.ca.us).
DICK TOLKMITT ORGANIZES VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Thanks to the dedication of CLMF member Dick Tolkmitt, the past six months have been very fruitful for your Foundation. Beginning last May and responding to Foundation members' previous indications of interest, Dick began to assemble a pool of volunteers to staff the Weapons Exhibit Center.

Timing of his initial recruiting effort was crucial. Navy downsizing policies mandated the departure of all NAWC/NAWS personnel from the building that houses the Center. For a while it looked like closure of the building—including the Center—was inevitable. However, the reliable volunteer force Dick was able to muster enabled the Foundation to work out an arrangement with base Command, and the Center has remained open for the ongoing educational/cultural enrichment of IWV residents and visitors.

Over the summer and early fall Dick has continued to enroll more people, contacting them via a mailing by the Retire Affairs Office and by individual phone calls. "I truly appreciate the responsiveness of the members I've talked to," Dick said. "It's encouraging to be involved with people who care enough about their community and China Lake's role here to give so willingly of their time and effort."

Count Nears 3 Dozen

The rolls now number nearly 2 dozen regular volunteers, plus 9 alternates. The regulars contribute 2 to 4 hours of their time on scheduled days of the week. They provide services like greeting visitors, helping them find their way to specific exhibits, and playing informative videotapes for them on the large-screen TV in the conference room.

In addition, several regulars have taken on longer-term tasks. One example is Ed Donahue's development of a plan for displaying aircraft on the grounds adjacent to the Center; this enhances the Foundation's ability to retain appropriate aircraft for eventual display, rather than see them otherwise disposed of. Ray Miller has undertaken to amplify and upgrade the explanatory cards/plaques that accompany several crucial exhibits. As these and other projects move along, they'll be reported in this newsletter.

In the immediate future, Dick is looking for extra help on Friday and Sunday (November 6 and 8) of the Balloon Festival weekend. (See EXHIBIT CENTER, p. 1.) To get in on this act, just give him a ring at 375-4378.

Normal Exhibit Center hours on Monday through Thursday and "work Fridays"—i.e., non-Flex Fridays—are 1000-1400. Saturday and Sunday hours on the Festival weekend will be 1000-1600 and 1200-1600, respectively. That weekend, volunteer assistance will probably be helpful in the Gift Shop, too, so let Dick know if you're willing to lend a hand in this important area.

Dick hopes to build up the pool of alternates to cover absences that will likely occur during the fall-winter holiday season. Also, he says there's a requirement for a few more regulars to cover NAWC/NAWS "work Fridays."

TV LOCATION CREW TAPES IN EXHIBIT CENTER

In late August the Exhibit Center served as a videotaping location for an upcoming presentation on the History Channel. Veteran China Lakers Dick De Marco and Jack Pakulak were interviewed by a crew from Actuality Productions on the subject of energetic materials for propulsion and warheads. Command Historian Leroy Doig, NAWCWPNS contact for this project, arranged for the interviews to take place with the Exhibit Center's Tomahawk missile display as the backdrop.

Leroy was told the sessions were recorded for the History Channel's Modern Marvels series, with a probable air date of November 16. At press time, this series is airing on Mediaco Channel 54 Monday-Thursday at 7:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m.
NEW BROCHURE HELPS SPREAD THE WORD

Enclosed with this issue is a copy of the publicity brochure created this past summer by Volunteer Program Coordinator Dick Tolkmitt, Office Manager Jeanie Copeland and a former part-time assistant to Jeanie, Rebecca Shakelly.

The brochure is getting a good reception from community service groups, such as the Ridgecrest Area Convention and Visitors Bureau. C&W Director Ray Arthur sees the potential for distributing some 3,000 copies a year in hand-outs and mailings to tourists, tourism-oriented organizations, and the motion picture/television crews active in our area.

The Ridgecrest Chamber of Commerce has the piece on its Area Attractions rack. So do local hostleries, such as Heritage Inn, Carriage Inn, and several restaurants. Other distribution locales include the NAWC/NAWS quarterdeck and MWR service counters. The Balloon Festival planners who focus on visitors traveling in RVs are bundling a copy into a special RV packet of publicity materials.

Dick carries a supply with him for dropping off at pertinent points in his travels, e.g., the Kernville Chamber of Commerce office and assorted RV Rally sites. If you’re inclined to do something similar, get in touch with Jeanie at 939-3930 for extra copies.

DO YOU RECOGNIZE THIS HARDWARE?

Ever since the archival hardware below came into the possession of NAWCWPN’s Command Historian Leroy Doig, he’s been looking for someone to pin down its program association and application.

The unit appears to have been aircraft mounted for information gathering purposes. It’s about 4 feet long by a foot high and a foot across; the fore-mounted optical head (left) is 9 inches in diameter. It turned up on Charlie Range. Manufacturer’s labeling indicates it was designed and fabricated by Eastman Kodak Crosley Division-Avco Corp. in the early 1960s.

Leroy can be reached by telephone at 760-939-2027. His e-mail address is grendel@peewee.chinalake.navy.mil, and regular mail can be sent to: Commander, Code 70000D • Attn: Leroy Doig • NAWCWPN • 1 Administration Circle • China Lake, CA 93555-6001.