



White Sands Missile Range Historical Foundation NEWSLETTER



Volume I, Number 1

April, 2001

The State of the Foundation

By Ed Townley

In the past 18 months, your foundation has been actively involved in preserving the History of White Sands Missile Range. We partnered with the Installation in constructing the first phase of our permanent museum building, reorganized our structure, changed our bylaws, elected a new Board of Directors, created a web site, partnered with the White Sands Pioneer group in hosting a historical luncheon at WSMR, and are now pushing forward in our quest to complete the construction of the permanent museum building.

On the immediate horizon, your Board of Directors is pursuing publication of a book on the history of testing, and we are seeking grants and/or matching funds and other donations for our construction project.

A Dinner featuring Dr. Lowell Catlett as the speaker is scheduled for 6:30 PM on 21 April, at the White Sands Missile Range Frontier Club (\$25 per person). Please mark your calendar and plan on attending. Ride one of our Party Buses from the J.C. Penney Parking Lot at the Mesilla Valley Mall. Buses will depart at 6:00 PM. RSVP by 15 Apr 01 with the WSMR Protocol Office, 678-1949, or Mr. Jon Gibson, 505-382-8292. This will be a memorable evening, as you will be able to hear about our progress, plans and dreams, in addition to being entertained by one of the most renowned dinner speakers in the southwest. I promise you will not be disappointed.

Finally, I want to express our appreciation for the volunteers that have stepped up to the plate each time something was needed. Your Board of Directors, Board of Advisors, and many, many others continue to volunteer their valuable time and considerable expertise to catalog and study artifacts, research and archive documents, and similar other endeavors. If you would like to volunteer, I would encourage you to contact Terry Cornell at (505) 678-3358 or cornell@wsmr.army.mil; or Doyle Piland at (505) 523-7034 or dpiland@ziznet.com. Your input is also solicited on the future of



Foundation Board of Directors

Front row left-to-right, Karen Douds, Frances Williams, Doyle Piland, Robet Pick, and George Helfrich. Back row - Pam Ray, John Douds, Ron Burkett, Ed Townley, Joe Martin, Jon Gibson, and William Fugelso. Not shown, Leonard Sugerma, Robert Nichols, and Richard Overley.

this organization, our goals and plans. Please call or e-mail me at (505) 526-7807 or townley@zianet.com with your ideas or suggestions.

If you have not visited the museum, I encourage you to do so. I think the progress will impress you. We have a long ways to go, but as can be seen in the Museum Director's report, the future looks bright. If you are unable to visit in person, take a virtual tour at <http://www.WSMR-History.org>

Ron Burkett Museum Director

I'd like to welcome Terrie Cornell, our new Museum Registrar. She comes to us from the Air Defense Artillery Museum at Fort Bliss and so has a pretty good background in the missile business as well as extensive experience within the Army museum system. I also want to mention Doyle Piland, who continues to put huge amounts of time in managing the museum's archives project, the web page

and responding to ever increasing volumes of email.

We have several short term projects. A patio constructed in the 16 X 25 foot space in front of and in between the old exhibit hall and the new building was completed in March. The floor is concrete, dyed and stamped to look like old saltillo tile. It turned out pretty well. The design is posts, beams and latillas, and will conform to the territorial look we were able to achieve with the addition. There are benches, shade, and space for people to rest, contemplate the Missile Park and take refreshments.

We're constructing a half-mile interpretive nature walk on the two acres immediately east of the exhibit hall. The trail has been laid out and two sides fenced to define the space and to catch trash before it blows into the area. Basin plants will be collected, identified and planted along the path. Work on this project is ongoing.

See Director Page 2



New Patio under construction at Museum

Director From page 1

Itemized costs are being collected and analyzed to provide for repainting, stabilization and/or restoration of the missiles in the missile park. The degree of effort to be put into each rocket varies depending on its condition and importance. The WAC Corporal for example should be completely restored and brought inside. The V-2 needs a lot of attention. We'll be looking for support for this project and this will probably be addressed in other parts of this newsletter.

We've done a lot and there is a lot to do. Life is good.

Terrie Cornell Museum Registrar and Volunteer Coordinator

Our Museum volunteers are accomplishing important things! I know, because I'm the new volunteer coordinator for the WSMR Museum, the liaison between the post volunteer office and the museum. We have a dedicated group who has started the ball rolling in support of White Sands Missile Range history and its museum.

Here is the impressive list of projects undertaken by volunteers who have retired from WSMR. Read through the list – maybe there's a project you can help with.

1. Viewing videotapes from the collection we've inherited from PAO. We have hundreds of tapes that need to be looked at to identify the people and places in them.
2. Many videotapes are still in the old PAO building, Bldg. 122. We need to get them out of there before work begins on the building.
3. In the lab in Bldg. 1833, we have shelves full of electronic instruments that need to be identified. For the purposes of cataloging these artifacts, I need a paragraph describing the origin, use and significance of each piece of equipment. We need people from all areas of instrumentation to help with that.
4. Also in Bldg. 1833 are stacks of photographs to be identified. Who knows – maybe you'll find yourself in a picture!
5. Oral histories – we need subjects to be interviewed and people to conduct the interviews.

Museum docents are also needed to act as greeters and guides, answering visitors' questions and just generally making folks feel welcome here. After a short training session and a month's trial period, we require a commitment of several hours one

day a week.

My part in all this is keeping track of volunteers' names and hours, and acting as POC for the Volunteer Advisory Council. Come out and lend your expertise and experience to help the Museum's collections grow. Any talent is welcome – even if it's only a strong back to help move videotapes from Building 122 to Building 1833.

Museum phones:

Terrie Cornell 678-3358

cornellt@wsmr.army.mil

Ron Burkett 678-2250

burkett@wsmr.army.mil

Missile Firings

White Sands, through the Public Affairs Office, has started a program to make some missile and rocket firings available to groups and individuals. For instance, when a missile launch is scheduled which is safe to watch and appears fairly firm, Public Affairs personnel will notify groups to invite them to attend the firing. The groups vary from the local school districts, to chambers of commerce, to civic organizations.

The White Sands Historical Foundation is a group which is included in the Public Affairs notification system.

In most cases these events will not have long lead times - usually less than a week. This will preclude us from notifying members of the foundation by mail. If you would like to participate in one of these public viewing, please provide the foundation with an email address or local phone number and we will notify you.

Provide your personal information to Jon E. Gibson - JGibson709@aol.com, 505-383-8292.

Museum Archival Holdings

Doyle Piland

The work being done in the Museum's Archival Holdings by our cadre of volunteers is testament to their dedication to the preservation of the rich history of White Sands Proving Ground/Missile Range. Without them, the effort would go nowhere. Thanks to John Douds, Quinnie Flint, Jon Gibson, Bill

See **Archives** Page 3

Archives From page 2

Jones, Glenn Moore, Robert Nichols, Deborah Walters, and Frederick Walters for their volunteer efforts. Our volunteers logged 1,332 hours during the year 2000.

Work began several months ago to catalog and document the materials that are currently in the museum's archival holdings. In addition, as donations from individuals or organizations are in-processed, they are also being documented and cataloged. We have accomplished a lot, but still have a significant amount of work to do.

In addition, we have begun documen-

tation of materials of a historical nature that are held by organizations at White Sands and feel they still require these materials. The nature and location of such materials will be recorded in the Archival Holdings database where interested researchers can locate it.

The database will contain the type of material (photo, report, film, video tape, etc.), the source of the material (individual, family, organization), location of the material, and additional information about the item such as date, people involved, system, and other information, which will be helpful in determining if it is of interest to a

researcher on a particular subject.

We can always use more volunteers. Of course, in the documentation of the items, a volunteer needs some familiarity with White Sands and the various things that have gone on here over the years. However, we can also use individuals to do data entry of information into the computer database as well as other tasks, requiring no experience at White Sands. Anyone interested, contact the Museum's Registrar/Volunteer Coordinator, Terrie Cornell (see Terrie's article elsewhere in this newsletter) or Doyle Piland at (505) 523-7034 or email at dpiland@zianet.com.

Do you have photos or artifacts you would like to share with fellow Foundation members and the general public, in this newsletter and/or the Museum? Contact Terrie Cornell and work out the details. We will all appreciate it.



A Pershing I missile sits among the Yucca ready to fire 17 November 1964



Before pocket calculators and computers became common tool, students and scientists alike used slide rules for mathematical calculations. German scientists used this specially designed slide rule in calculating trajectories for the first rockets.

See the Slide Rule for Rockets and many other interesting artifacts and displays at our White Sands Missile Range Museum. Open weekdays from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm and 10:00 am to 3:00 pm Saturday and Sunday. Closed Holidays. Visit soon and often.