



The Cata

A Newsletter for the White Sands Missile Range Historical Foundation

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New Museum Exhibit Draws Dedication Crowd

On Oct. 30, the White Sands Museum, with the help of the Foundation, hosted a dedication ceremony for an IGOR camera newly mounted in Missile Park.

The IGOR or Intercept Ground Optical Recorder was used to film missile tests and aircraft intercepts during the 1950s. Camera No. 2 is the one now on display.

NewTec donated the restoration of the camera which had been in storage for decades. They also prepared the pad and placed the instrument in Missile Park.

In telling the audience about life as an IGOR operator, Joe

Marlin recounted how his crew captured exciting footage of a Nike Ajax intercepting and destroying a B-17 bomber on April 24, 1952. In 1955, a still photograph from the footage was given the Ernie Pyle Award for Outstanding Contribution to National Security by Still Photograph. As part of the ceremony, Marlin donated the Ernie Pyle statue to the museum.

In addition to Marlin, one of the other camera operators from 1952, Hal Shoppach, was on hand for the ceremony.

Terrie Cornell, the Museum registrar, thanked NewTec officials

Dr. Gib Kelly, Vernon Diaz and Jim Scott for starting and standing behind the project.

Jeff Knight was the work leader and was assisted in the restoration by Danny Fisher, Todd Reynolds, Rene Roman, Jason Curry and Leroy Ramirez.

Cornell Named New Museum Curator

Just at press time, Terrie Cornell was named the new Curator of the White Sands Museum, replacing Ron Burkett who retired at the end of the year.

Most readers are familiar with Cornell because she has been the museum's registrar since 2000.

Cornell is a geologist by education but fell in love with history and museums early on. Before coming to White Sands, the Connecticut native served as a technical assistant with the El Paso Centennial Museum, director of the Border Patrol Museum and Library and museum registrar for the Fort Bliss Air Defense Artillery Museum. She is currently a member of the N.M. Association of Museums and is on the registrar's committee of the American Association of Museums.

Cornell lives in El Paso with her husband Bill. They have two children, both teachers.



Joe Marlin, an old IGOR station chief, explains how the IGOR worked and where they were used uprange to collect data.

WSMR Museum Accomplished Much In 2003

This past year will go down in history as a busy one for the blossoming WSMR museum. The accomplishments ranged from recarpeting the exhibit hall to funding and shipping the V-2 rocket for restoration.

Work on the V-2 is finished in Kansas and is awaiting the completion of the V-2 House. Construction of the building began in 03 and officials are looking at an April ribbon cutting for it with the restored V-2 inside. The V-2 House will have many educational displays about rocketry to go along with the most complete V-2 in America. Also, it will provide very practical toilets for visitors to Missile Park.

The Loon in Missile Park has been restored and once again is resting behind its informational sign. In fact, several other items in Missile Park were repainted in their original colors during 03 and are on display.

Hall Of Famer Dies

Pat Higgins, 78, a White Sands pioneer and member of the range's Hall of Fame died at his home in Gainesville, Tex. on Jan. 13. Higgins was inducted into the hall of fame in 1988. When he retired in 1981, Higgins was Chief of Data Sciences for the National Range. He served at White Sands from 1950 to 1981.

His wife Loretta has asked friends to make a donation to the Historical Foundation in Pat's name instead of sending flowers.

For information on donating to the Foundation, contact treasurer Jon Gibson at (505) 382-8292.

Along those same lines, the largest missile in the park, the Redstone, was removed at the end of the year. It went to the Kansas Cosmosphere for restoration.

A real-time weather monitoring station was installed inside the museum so visitors can easily see what conditions are like outside. No more exaggerating how hard the wind was blowing or how hot it was.

The nature trail east of the museum parking lot is pretty much complete. The business of transplanting new desert samples along the path continues.

The pre-history exhibit and the Hembrillo Battlefield exhibit were refurbished. Eventually, the Hembrillo exhibit will be used as an educational tool for young NCOs and officers in training.

Thanks to the volunteers, under Terrie Cornell's direction, the development of the museum archive made great strides. In fact, emails and other queries come in quite regularly asking for assistance in finding photos and data.

In addition to new carpet, the museum building windows were sealed, the exhibit hall was repainted and central air conditioning was installed. These steps take the museum much closer to certification in the Army system. Two hurdles to cross yet in this quest are acquiring a fire suppression system and controlling the humidity in the display areas.

Finally, the museum is developing into a center for entertaining and informing visitors. During 2003, several VIP groups held socials in the museum.

Thank You Las Cruces Wal-Mart



Frances Williams, Foundation board member, accepts a \$1,000 check from Sergio Ceres, a co-manager at the new Wal-mart store in Las Cruces on Valley Dr. Way to go Frances.

Museum Brick Orders Possible Next Month

The White Sands Historical Foundation has almost all the details in place to begin taking brick orders to raise money in support of the museum.

For a donation of \$65 anyone can have names or a message carved into a brick to be placed in missile park. You can use one, two or all three lines but will be limited

to 14 characters per line. In the photo to the left, Gen. Fulwyler's name takes all of the available spaces on the top line.

Slightly larger bricks are available at an additional cost. These are four by eight inches.

The brick program has been developed by Foundation board members John Douds and Jon Gibson. They are building a pamphlet and order form that should be available in Feb.

For more information, contact Douds at 524-7916 or Gibson at 382-8292.

Donations Can Be A Way To Pay Tribute

Earlier this month Frances Williams demonstrated that donations to the historical foundation can be made for any number of reasons and take many forms. In her case, Williams wrote a check to pay tribute to many individuals who have made a difference.

She said her donations were:

▶▶ **in honor of Ron Burkett's retirement as director of the White Sands Museum in Dec.,**

▶▶ **in honor of Len Sugerman and his participation in community affairs and his generosity,**

▶▶ **in memory of Fred Ingram, who once was chief of logistics at WSMR,**

▶▶ **in memory of Lt. Col. Fred Frank who was deputy director of logistics at WSMR and contributed so much in Las Cruces to honor veterans.**



A Little Of This And A Little Of That

Foundation President Karen Douds and Vice President Tomas Chavez have switched jobs. At the January 13 board meeting, Douds resigned as president allowing Chavez to be elected president by acclamation. Then Douds was nominated as vice president and elected by the board.

So, the new line up is:
 President - Tomas Chavez; Vice President - Karen Douds;
 Treasurer - Jon Gibson; and Secretary - Pam Vick.

The Honest John in Missile Park is the next scheduled item to be restored at the New Mexico Space Museum in Alamogordo.

Planned giving is well on its way to reality for the White Sands Historical Foundation. The board has been working to develop a program where people can safely leave some of their assets to the Foundation in support of the museum.

Such a program obviously helps the museum by providing sources of income for future improvements and developments. Also, the program will benefit donors because they will be assured their gift is to be carefully managed and credited in the future.

It will be a way to be remembered for doing something very positive for future generations.

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Museum Director Ron Burkett is flanked by his wife Marlys and Brig. Gen. Robert Reese, range commander, at his retirement ceremony on Dec. 16. Hasta la vista baby.