



Hands Across History



A joint newsletter for the White Sands Historical Foundation and the White Sands Pioneer Group.

Volume VI, Letter I

February 2010

WSHF Hosts Lunch / Briefing For Command

The White Sand Historical Foundation hosted a luncheon and briefing for the missile range command group on Feb. 10 at the range's Frontier Club. Present was Brig. Gen. John Regan, current WSMR Commander, as well as Robert Carter, the White Sands Executive Director.

Foundation President Sharon Reese briefed the group on our efforts to raise money for the next phase of building

at the museum and asked for the Commander's support in those efforts. Brig. Gen. Regan thanked the foundation for its efforts, saying WSMR's history was unique, interesting and definitely worthy of saving for future generations.



Board member and former WSMR deputy commander Dan Duggan tells Brig. Gen. John Regan about his experiences during his many assignments to WSMR.



Board member and former WSMR deputy commander Bob Lipinski chats with Brig. Gen. John Regan, WSMR Commander, before the luncheon / briefing.



Frank Chavez, Executive Director of the White Sands Test Center, discusses current programs with foundation board member Margaret Tyree.



Past foundation president Pam Vick and her husband, WSMR Hall of Fame member Austin Vick, attended.

Foundation President Looking Forward To The New Year

By Sharon Reese, President
WSMR Historical Foundation

Happy New Year!

Last year proved to be a very busy year for all of our volunteer board and members. We have finalized our DVD that is a short documentary of the history of White Sands. The DVD, Preserving Our Pioneering Past, is about 15 minutes and can be purchased at the Museum.

Our other big project was the completion of a "Donor Plaque" display, which is to be housed in the Museum. All donors with accumulated contributions and pledges to the Museum Building Fund are recognized in 3 levels, Platinum - \$50,000 and over; Gold - \$25,000-\$49,999; and Silver - \$5,000-\$24,999.

Our Annual General Membership Meeting was conducted in November. Part of the business included elections of Board Members. We welcome new Board of Director Members Mary Beth Reinhart and Margaret Tyree.

This year begins with an enthusiastic Board. One of our goals is to increase our membership with a renewed membership drive. More to follow in the next issue of Hands Across History. We are also planning to recognize all who have donated to the Museum Building Fund at a reception later this spring. This reception will include past and prospective donors. A goal is to raise enough donations within the next three years to complete Phase 1 of our three phase Museum and Learning Center construction plan.

Trinity Site Open House Still Free In April

Despite discussion of charging admission to enter Trinity Site during the biannual open houses, White Sands will again open the National Historic Landmark for free on April 3. Trinity Site remains one of the few internationally significant sites that are free to the public. Most unusual.

The open house will be pretty much the way they've been for the past 20 years. The Stallion Gate will be open for entry from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. and the Alamogordo caravan will leave the Tularosa High School football field at 8 a.m.

For info call Public Affairs at (575) 678-1134.



The new donor plaque display is completed and ready for placement in the museum. It is a three-sided stand made of oak and walnut and stands more than seven feet high. The empty spots for future donors are taken by walnut blanks. Obviously there is plenty of room for more donations, especially on the Platinum and Gold sides.

Statement of Purpose and Membership

The "Hands Across History" newsletter is published by the White Sands Missile Range Historical Foundation and the White Sands Pioneer Group (WSPG). Both nonprofit organizations aim to preserve the accomplishments of White Sands Missile Range.

The newsletter is intended to keep members of both groups informed about current events and share information of common interest. The edi-

tor is Jim Eckles. He can be contacted by email at nebraska1950@comcast.net or at either address below.

Membership to either organization is open to anyone who shares their goals. However, details of membership (dues, etc.) differ between the two groups. For more information, please contact the appropriate organization and we will send it via the Post Office or email.

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White Sands Historical Foundation
P.O. Box 171
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White Sands Pioneer Group Update

The White Sands Pioneer Group (WSPG) is a non-profit association of present and former personnel who have worked at White Sands Missile Range (WSMR). The WSPG purpose is to recognize and preserve the pioneering efforts and significant achievements that have occurred at WSMR.

Membership is open to all civil service, contractor and military personnel who have worked at WSMR, Holloman Air Force Base, Navy, NASA and any others who share the objectives of the organization.

Activities include meetings to share the experiences of those who worked in various organizations and testing programs. We have conducted several "Then and Now" programs comparing the early testing and that which is planned or being conducted at the present time. The last "Then and Now" program featured the Navy at WSMR describing the Navy functions since being established at WSMR in 1947 and the latest actions of engaging a satellite decaying from orbit with a Navy air defense missile tested at WSMR. Another "Then and Now" program is planned for this year.

The WSPG Vice-president Dolores Archuleta serves as chair-person of the Review Committee to recommend candidates nominated for induction into the WSMR Hall of Fame.

The WSPG is soliciting potential candidates for the board of directors. The President position is vacant, Dolores C. Archuleta is Vice-president, Austin L. Vick is Treasurer, and the Secretary office is vacant.

The WSPG officers meet with the WSMR Historical Foundation Board of Directors and share common support for the WSMR Museum and Learning Center. WSPG shares cost of printing and mailing the quarterly "Hands Across History" newsletter.

We are updating the membership list and assure those who have paid their WSPG dues that they will continue to receive our quarterly newsletter and any special mailings for WSPG activities.

Your participation in our efforts would be greatly appreciated. You may contact Austin L. Vick at: avick@zianet.com

Foundation Golf Tournament / Fund-Raiser Set For April 30

Foundation board member Doug Messer is putting together a scramble golf tournament on April 30 to benefit the WSMR Museum and Learning Center. In addition to the four-person teams that will compete, companies and individuals have an opportunity to sponsor holes.

The tournament is limited to 14 four-person teams. The cost is \$55 per person and includes the green fee, cart and a box lunch at the White Sands Golf Course.

Check-in will be from 11:30 a.m to 12:15 p.m. with a shotgun start at 12:30.



Sponsors can make a \$250 donation for a business sign to be placed on the tee box of a hole. Also, Doug says he will take merchandise to be used as prizes for team placement, closest to the pin and longest drive.

Doug can be reached by telephone at (575) 430-1825 or email at: doug.messer@us.army.mil

If you play golf, get a team together or get yourself on a team to play. If you don't play, think about sponsorship. All money after expenses goes to support the WSMR Museum.

Clips From An Old General Electric Fact Sheet On The V-2

Editor's Note: The following quotes are from a General Electric fact sheet, probably written in the 1950s.

"America's first large missile was the German V-2. Composed mostly of components captured in the European Theatre of Operations, America's first V-2 was flight tested on schedule at the White Sands Proving Ground on April 16, 1946. By June 30, 1951, when the V-2 program was terminated, 67 rockets using V-2 components had been flight-tested.

"As measured by a most critical uncompromising yardstick, 68 percent of the V-2 flights were successful. Of course, many of the missiles classified as unsuccessful were extremely useful from an experimental viewpoint. For instance, one V-2 was classed as a failure because of improper operation of the steering system. However, the missile reached an altitude of 99 miles and the results of the experiments carried aboard were excellent.

"General Electric supervised the construction, test, and launching of the V-2 rockets for Army Ordnance. In addition, G.E. provided other necessary work in connection with actual firings such as: transporting, handling, unpacking, identifying, reconditioning, and testing of German components, assembling and testing subassemblies, modifying existing parts, manufacturing new parts, constructing temporary test equipment, and procuring and handling propellants.

"Several V-2 flights were particularly outstanding. A velocity and altitude record for single-stage rockets was recorded on December 17, 1946. This mark, 3600 miles per hour and 116 miles altitude, was surpassed only recently. On January 23, 1947, the G-E telemetry system operated successfully during a V-2 flight test proving that it was possible (for the first time) to transmit - from a rocket in flight, back to a ground recording station - all the performance data of the entire operating system."

Way Back When

The Museum Archives Are A Great Tool

By Doyle Piland

In previous articles I have mainly concentrated on places at White Sands Missile Range that have an interesting history and were significant in the history of the Range. Most of the information used for those articles was from documents housed in our archives and supplemented by personal knowledge of myself and others.

This time, I'm going to depart from that theme and "blow our own horn" for a change.

As some of you know, the White Sands Missile Range Museum Archives is mostly a volunteer operation. The archives are also generously supported by the White Sands Missile Range Historical Foundation. The foundation has over the years provided for use at the archives four computers, two video cassette recorders, two DVD recorders, and most recently a high speed copier-scanner-printer.

The archive operation has been in existence for almost 11 years now. In that time, we have had hundreds of requests from individuals, companies, and government agencies. We have provided thousands of photos and documents in the form of paper copies and scanned images. We normally charge a small fee to the non-government entities, which goes to the Foundation to compensate for use of the equipment used to satisfy the requests.

A few months ago, Lawrence (Larry) Peterkin, a member of the Historical Foundation who lives in Dallas, contacted me about coming to do some research for about a week at the Archives. After some discussion, a time period was agreed to for him to come and do his research.

On Aug. 3, when Larry showed up, I realized that he was serious about his research. He and his wife Nell arrived with three laptop computers, three scanners and other assorted items, along with a long list of photos and documents he had gathered from our on-line databases. What made it work were the smiles and friendly personalities.

Larry, and Nell (part time), worked on scanning while I pulled items from the files and re-filed them after scanning. We worked about eight hours a day for the whole week of Aug. 3 thru 7.

After returning to Dallas, Larry began sorting through the material he had acquired at the Archives. When he got to the point he could provide an assessment of what he had acquired, Larry wrote a "news release" for inclusion in the *Hands Across History Newsletter*. Below is the release as it was sent to us.

Guided Missile Researcher Peterkin Visits WSMR Museum Archives

Lawrence Peterkin of Dallas, Texas visited the Museum Archives during the week of 3-7 August to conduct in-depth research regarding several post World War II guided missile programs. Museum Archivist Doyle Piland support-

ed the week long endeavor and sustained a long daily work schedule to ensure that the aggressive research goals were accomplished.

Peterkin is conducting research to obtain source material for several book projects, including the Navy's Operation Sandy and the Army's Hermes program.

The Hermes program spanned the decade from 1944 to



Doyle Piland (left), WSMR Museum Archivist, and researcher Lawrence Peterkin finalize research plans.

1954 and encompassed various missile projects that also included the launching of 74 modified German V-2 rockets (including 6 Bumper and 4 Hermes II) at WSPG between 1946 and 1952. (Note that some of the 75 launches were conducted outside the Hermes contract.)

Operation Sandy revolved around the launching of a V-2 rocket from the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Midway in 1947 that depended on personnel from the Naval Unit and the Army 1st Guided Missile Battalion personnel located at White Sands.

Since 1987 Peterkin has conducted research at the National Archives, the Army Center for Military History, the Naval Historical Center, and the National Air & Space Mu-

see Archive Researcher page 5



Nell Peterkin at work scanning documents at WSMR.

Archive Researchers — CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

seum, all located in Washington, D. C. He has also visited the U. S. Space and Rocket Center and the Army's Redstone Arsenal Scientific Information Center, both located in Huntsville, Alabama, as well as the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California.



Peterkin scanning photos at the Museum Archive.

Near the end of the week, "research assistant" Nell Peterkin supported the work and manned a third scanner in addition to the two being operated by Peterkin to ensure that all research objectives were satisfied. Assistant Nell has since commented that she personally scanned at least 50 different photographs of the first WSPG base commander, Colonel Harold Turner.

During their 10-day New Mexico stay at the Valley Vista Bed & Breakfast the Peterkins visited the WSMR Museum and Rocket Park and were provided a tour of the Army blockhouse and V-2 gantry at Launch Complex 33 by museum director Darren Court. They also visited Old Mesilla near Las Cruces, the White Sands National Monument and the New Mexico Museum of Space History in Alamogordo.

The week-long effort resulted in scanning over 550 documents and photographs, consisting of over 3,800 pages. Peterkin is currently in the final stages of cleaning up the documents and putting them in archival format. Once completed, the documents will be provided to Piland at the archives so that they will be available to other researchers upon request.

At the conclusion of the research Peterkin commented, "this has been one of the most interesting and gratifying of all research endeavors I have ever conducted."

END OF RELEASE

The ability to provide the kind of research assistance Larry mentioned above is the result of many hours of unpaid time by our volunteers and the thoughtful donation of photos and

documents by both current and retired WSMR employees and contractors.

Most of our current volunteers have been with us for almost 11 years. They include John Douds, Robert Watkins, Glenn Moore, Bill Jones, with Joe Marlin and George Helfrich coming onboard a few years ago.

Due to the nature of our retiree volunteers, sadly we have lost two who made significant contributions to the effort. First we lost Roger Roenfeldt and more recently Fred Walters. We miss them.

There are those who for one reason or another are no longer willing or able to devote time to the archives, yet share in the credit for our success. They are Robert Nichols, Donald Champ, Terry Chappell, Dick Dysart, and Debbie Walters. Debbie was responsible for sorting out various stacks, shelves, and drawers of material already stored at the archives prior to the official start and did a great job. Debbie and Fred drove all the way to White Sands from Cloudcroft to work with us at the Archives.

All donations of collections pertaining to White Sands Proving Ground/Missile Range add to the combined knowledge of our history that will be available for individuals, be they curious individuals or serious researchers like Larry Peterkin. So, if any retirees or former workers from White Sands have any items that would contribute to the overall knowledge of our history, please consider donating them to the Museum Archive.

As I tell people, your heirs most likely will not hold your "old junk" in as high regard as you do, and it will end up in the landfill somewhere. If you donate these treasures to the Archives, we will store them in acid-free envelopes all together in filing cabinets. If you need to refer to them any time or just get lonely for them, contact us and you can come out -- we will pull your collection and you can look through it and/or "bond" with it all you want.



Archivist Doyle Piland going through the files.

White Sands Loses Pioneers & Supporters

White Sands Missile Range has lost two of Pioneers, **Hector Samaniego** and **Barbara Yalkut**

Hector worked as a Personnel Specialist in the Civilian Personnel Office for many years offering guidance and counseling in personnel matters to both employees and managers. He was a quiet, gentle soul who also gave his life to his church serving as deacon for many years until his death.

After retirement from WSMR, he went to law school and practiced family law and mediation. He will be remembered by all who knew and worked with him as a dedicated employee, a wonderful friend and father.

Barbara Yalkut came to WSMR in 1953 and worked in Logistics, Civilian Personnel and in Comptroller as a Budget Analyst. She worked her way through the ranks, took time off to have two sons, Kent and Wade Yalkut, and then came back to work. She was a dedicated employee, a skillful gin player and was devoted to the game of mah jong. She will be sorely missed by her friends and family.

A donation to the White Sands Museum Foundation has been made in their names by Frances F. Williams.

We also lost a wonderful friend and supporter to the museum, when **“Hotch” Manning** recently passed away.

Hotch was a local business man and banker who provided some of the seed money to start the museum at WSMR, and was always on hand for the various ceremonies and events at WSMR. He was one of the many connections between WSMR and the community of Las Cruces which made their relationship so special and cemented the relationship that WSMR had with the Las Cruces community.

A donation has been made in his name to the WSMR Museum Foundation by Frances F. Williams. May all their memories be for a blessing.

Finally, the Broomstick Scientists lost their touchstone with the death of **Arnie Crouch** in January. Arnie was stationed at White Sands in the early 1950s as one of the irreverent broomstickers. These scientists, engineers and technicians worked on the latest missile technologies being tested at White Sands, all the while making life for their military bosses interesting at the very least.

Arnie organized the Broomstick reunion held in Las Cruces and at WSMR but was unable to attend because of health reasons. Also, for years he collected stories from his comrades and published a newsletter dedicated to those few years at WSMR.

Missile Range Currently Taking Hall Of Fame Nominations

White Sands Missile Range is now accepting nominations from all sources until the end of March for its hall of fame.

The hall of fame was established in 1980 to honor former missile range personnel who made lasting contributions of an outstanding nature. Past honorees include such individuals as Wernher von Braun, the famous German rocket scientist, and Dr. Clyde Tombaugh, the astronomer who discovered Pluto.

For information on nominating an individual contact Terry Garcia at the missile range’s Incentive Awards Office at (575) 678-3221 or email her at terry.garcia@us.army.mil and request the White Sands Hall of Fame Pamphlet. In addition to the nominating forms, the pamphlet outlines the guidelines and procedures for the hall of fame. The pamphlet also is available by contacting the White Sands Missile Range Public Affairs Office at WSMRPAO@conus.army.mil

To get into the hall of fame a nominee must have been responsible for significant and lasting deeds or achievements in support of the missile range mission. The contributions may be in various areas such as research, cost savings, technological advances, safety, public relations, equal opportunity or heroic deeds.

Last year Mary Beth Reinhart (Las Cruces) and Dale Green (Socorro) were inducted. There are now 46 individuals in the White Sands Hall of Fame.

All former military, civilian and contractor personnel who once served at White Sands are eligible for nomination. No one currently working at the range is eligible.

The White Sands Hall of Fame is located inside the main museum building just inside the Las Cruces gate at the missile range.

Bataan Memorial March On March 21

Despite rumors that the annual Bataan march might be canceled because of money shortages, the events will be held at White Sands as usual on March 21.

Two routes are offered again this year. The “green” route is the original 26.2 course while the “blue” route is 15.2 miles.

Registration by mail will close on March 6 while internet registration will run until March 17. However, any web registration between March 14 and 17 will cost double.

There is NO registration at the site and all marchers MUST pick up their bib numbers, chips and other materials at WSMR on the Friday or Saturday before the event.

For complete information and access to the registration forms visit the official Bataan website at: <http://www.bataanmarch.com>



The White Sands Missile Range Historical Foundation

Thanks Its Many Benefactors For Their Generous Support Of

The Capital Fund (CY2000 Thru CY2009)

For The White Sands Missile Range Museum And Learning Center



\$25,000 or More

El Paso Electric Company (In Memory of) Mary Bochmann Lockheed-Martin

\$15,000 to \$24,999

Raytheon COL (R) Leonard Sugerman

\$10,000 to \$14,999

NewTec Doyle Piland MG (R) Niles J. Fulwyler Jon & Elvia Gibson

\$5,000 to \$9,999

Citizens Bank of Las Cruces COL (R) Robert & Marion Mills Linda Lovelady Epstein Austin & Pam Vick

\$1,000 to \$4,999

Frances F. Williams Loretta E. Higgins SPIE Mr. & Mrs. Alex Paczynski Douglas & Vickie Messer COL (R) Charles R. Cranford BG (R) Robert & Shari Reese Tomas & Adela Chavez CSC Applied Technologies	James S. Bethel BG (R) William & Linda Engel Wal-Mart Foundation NCI John & Karen Douds COL (R) & Mrs. Robert H. Lipinski Marie Southworth Patricia Tombaugh James and Janie Hollingsworth	Mrs. Alan A. Nord Northrop Grumman John A. Bayer David Soules COL (R) & Mrs. Dan E. Duggan Dr. R. W. Engel Robert E. Lechtenberg uniTEC Pyramid Services	COL (R) Greg & Pamela Hoscheit LTG (R) Ronald V. Hite Quinnie M. Flint Rear Admiral (R) Paul Arthur TRAX International Corporation James Scott Moutainview Medical Center George A. Helfrich
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\$250 to \$999

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Hands Across History
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Every year Bataan marchers cruise by the WSMR Museum and Missile Park as they head north out into the desert.