



# THE CHINA LAKER

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## President's Message

by Bob Campbell

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26 years strong

130 E. Las Flores Ave.  
Ridgecrest, CA 93555  
[www.chinalakemuseum.org](http://www.chinalakemuseum.org)  
(760) 677-2866

As I take the helm as President, I want to thank Laura for her dedicated leadership of the CLMF as President. She and Art are transitioning to their new home in Gardnerville, NV, and thankfully, they have generously volunteered to continue as valued members of the Board.

I am optimistic that we are on the cusp of achieving the next step of our vision in the transition of our Museum into Ridgecrest. Briefly, our plans are to build an expanded 60' x 120' x 16' metal building (Phase 2a) using our current building budget which hopefully will be sufficient to accomplish the task. We may find that we will have to complete some "self-help" increments, but I hope not. The need to leverage our inventory of exhibits, which currently reside on the Base, drove this decision to build a simpler building, rather than waiting for a larger Phase 2b iconic hanger concept.

The COVID pandemic has definitely impacted us, along with everyone else. We hope you find the time to visit our gift shop which has a donated item section for sale in lieu of the annual dinner auction sales, while COVID restrictions are in force. We are continually sanitizing and following guidelines for safe distancing at this time.

We have continued to focus on expanding our outdoor exhibit suite which will be temporarily displayed away from the construction zone, on the drive next to the current Museum. The most recent addition is a set of Bowen Cameras that were key to recording early missile shots on the ranges. Tom Miller is working to make at least one of the cameras into presentable condition for display. We want to thank T & T Alignment, for generously donating and mounting tires to facilitate our ability to move the cameras.

That's it for now. I look forward to any input you may have.



### Happy Birthday

Wishing a very Happy 100th Birthday to Eleanor Campbell. She is a China Lake Museum Foundation Founder, Life Member, and a China Lake/NOTS Pioneer. We are glad you're here!

## ***Meet the new members of our Board of Directors!***

### **Meet Russ Bates**

After four years in the Air Force during the Viet Nam war, 37 years working for Naval Aviation while concurrently serving 25 years of Naval Reserve duty as an Aeronautical Engineering Duty Officer, I feel like it is time to give back to China Lake. My wife and I both had great careers at China Lake. My father worked at China Lake for many years, and my son now works at China Lake. We all love this place. China Lake is unique and I feel blessed to have had a career here. I pledge to do my best to promote the China Lake Museum and to make it a great representation of the organization that we all love.



### **Meet Tom Miller**

Tom Miller, NWC-NAWC range rat from 1978 to 2014. I graduated from Chico State with a degree in Mechanical Engineering in 1978 and China Lake was my first full time engineering job. I hired on in the Engineering Support Branch supporting AIM 9L production of wings and fins. But an opening arose on the ranges in the Optical Instrumentation Branch where I had toured. I loved the range instrumentation and testing world so I stayed there until I retired. I worked with engineers on the modification, design, development and operational implementation of several tracking instruments, including Askanias, M-45s, laser trackers and KTMs. These systems used cameras including the first stop action video to high speed digital cameras. My wife Betty also worked on the base in wellness and professional recruiting so we both have a strong connection to China Lake. I have always enjoyed history, museums and construction so the opportunity to join the China Lake museum board is an ideal retirement opportunity, or adventure, as I like to say.



*Welcome*

## ***How did China Lake get its name?***

In 1863 the Carson and Colorado narrow-gauge railroad was completed from Keeler in the Owens Valley to Carson City, Nevada. Ores from the White Mountains could now be shipped north on the train to Carson City smelters, and vegetables and farm products from the Owens Valley had a better means of transport to markets north and south. China Lake was named for the Chinese railroad workers who migrated south after building the railroad. They mined borax on the north shore of the playa (dry lake bed) for a short time. The operation was known locally as "The Little Chinese Borax Works." Chinese talents were also used to build the freight wagon roads. Remains of Chinese rockwork can be seen at the Slate Range Pass on the old wagon road, which went from Red Mountain to Ballarat in the Panamint Valley to the east of the Indian Wells Valley.

In 1920 the U.S. Geographical Board gave the name Indian Wells Valley to our area, consolidating what had been the Brown, Salt Wells, and Inyokern Valleys.



## Notes from the Annual Membership Meeting

The 2020 China Lake Museum Foundation Membership Meeting was held on December 3 via ZOOM. This was a first for us, and maybe for you as well!

We appreciate everyone that was able to log on or call in. For those that were not able to join us, we wanted to share a quick recap:



1. The meeting began at 5:15 pm, and Laura Hickle, the then-President of the China Lake Museum Foundation led the meeting.
2. There was a brief discussion of the various types of membership and associated benefits.
3. Alice Campbell and Megan Rawson teamed up to make a great video of our China Lake Museum campus in Ridgecrest that was shared.
4. Laura conducted a Holiday Trivia contest. Jenny McLaughlin was the winner, with Dave Cobbel a close second.
5. Laura read short bios of the newest Board Members, Tom Miller and Russ Bates.
6. There were questions from the audience regarding the current number of CLMF members.
7. There were several other questions from attendees.
8. Dr. Bob Smith provided an overview of the CLMF interactions with NAWCWD Command Artifacts.
9. Finally, it was announced that Laura would be stepping down as President of the CLMF, and Bob Campbell would become the CLMF President for Fiscal Year 21. Bob spoke briefly prior to the end of the meeting.

## News From the Gift Shop



Happy New Year!!! We hope that everyone has been happy and healthy throughout the Christmas Season! Here in the Gift Shop things are going strong!! The Gift Shop remains OPEN. We would like to thank everyone that has come into the Gift Shop, placed an on-line order, or made a donation over the last few months. Your generosity is greatly appreciated!!

As we move into the new year, there are new things coming into the Gift Shop. We have a new F-35 patch, new ornaments that make amazing sun catchers, shirts, puzzles, and so much more. If you are in the area, you should come stop by and see what we have. We are practicing all social distance regulations and have plenty of hand sanitizer available. Masks are required for entry.

If you are more comfortable shopping on-line, new items on our website are tagged "New Items" for fast reference. Our website is [www.chinalakemuseum.org](http://www.chinalakemuseum.org) and then scroll down to "Gift Shop". You will be able to see everything we have available from there. Email Jenn @ [chinalakemuseumstoremanager@gmail.com](mailto:chinalakemuseumstoremanager@gmail.com) if you have any questions about the Gift Shop goodies.





## Things Are Happening!

### The VLA has been Mounted!

On the bright and chilly morning of December 18, with the generous assistance of Ken Blades Trucking operating the heavy machinery, the Vertical Launch ASROC was placed on her mount. The VLA is located in the Southwest corner of the Museum complex near the West gate. Come by to admire her beauty!



A HUGE Thank You to the following people for making this happen:

Russ Bates  
Ken Blades  
Bob Campbell  
Art Hickle  
Tom Miller



## Memorial Funds Making a Difference

New signs have been placed in the Cargo Container Structure to commemorate those whose memorial funds made the concrete floor possible.



THE CONCRETE FLOOR IN THIS STRUCTURE WAS  
MADE POSSIBLE BY MEMORIAL DONATIONS MADE  
IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE

Frank St. George

Edna Fujiwara

Virginia Boyd

Robert A. Wilson

Lee Lakin

Ed Brooks

La V McLean

David N. Livingston

Ivar Highberg

Allyn "Owl" Berryman

## Things Are Happening!

### Bowen Cameras

The CZR-1, Bowen, camera is an example of the ballistic or acceleration camera used on the China Lake Ranges to capture high speed images of rockets in flight. The camera's invention is credited to Dr. Ira Bowen from CalTech who was the first head of the photographic section for China Lake rocket testing (see article by Jack Latimer in The China Laker of 28 Feb. 2015). This camera is a second generation camera to the RC-2 and was built by the Navy in Philadelphia, PA. It was in use from the early days of China Lake through the 1990s.

The Bowen Cameras are currently being repaired in the Cargo Container Structure area.

*A special thank you to T & T Alignment for donating tires and mounting them on the cameras!*



"In one of the most critical phases of air weapons development at the Naval Weapons Center, test firing and data acquisition on the instrument-studded G-Ranges, two women make a significant contribution to the Center's mission. The two women are Estaline Cottingham and Mrs. Marie McArtor, the two most experienced and capable missile trackers on the Center's ranges, according to their supervisors in Code 30's Optical Instrumentation Branch, Instrument Operations Division."

-Rocketeer, Vol. XXII, No. 31  
August 4, 1967

Pictured is Marie McArtor, 93, who paid us a visit at the Museum to check out our Bowen Cameras and tell us stories of her time working with them. Thank you, Marie!



## Thank You to our Supporters!

The following individuals have made donations since the November 2020 Newsletter:

George & Jean Anderson  
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### Welcome to our new China Lake Museum Foundation Members

David and Robin Bare  
Teri Cleveland  
Gene and Jeri Gibson  
Ken Koch

Rick and Peg McCormack  
Rebecca McCourt  
Carolyn Pande  
Aimee Zeller

# Thank You

Thank you to the following people for helping us prepare for our Members and Volunteers Discount Shopping Day:

Alice Campbell  
Mary Ann Clodt  
Jenn Cobbel  
Heather Davis  
Pat Doucette  
Cathy Foraker

## December 2020 Winner's Choice Art Raffle

Congratulations to Bob Campbell, winner of the December 2020 Winner's Choice Art Raffle.

Our next Winner's Choice Art Raffle will be held on Friday, February 26 at noon.

Come in to the gift shop to purchase your raffle tickets, or call us at (760) 677-2866 to buy them over the phone. You do not have to be present to win!



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