

PRESERVING THE HERITAGE

Peterson Air and Space Museum Foundation Newsletter



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ERV SMALLEY, LIFE MEMBER & AWARD-WINNING VOLUNTEER

The Peterson Air & Space Museum Foundation lost a true friend at 1535 hrs Monday 14 November 2011. It is with deep regret that we report the passing of our Web Master, Senior Master Sergeant (Ret.) **Erv Smalley** after his battle with cancer. A Museum life member since October 2002, Erv created a web site that has been visited by 164,930 individuals over the years. His web site was the Museum's keystone for marketing, education, and general information to our world-wide public. He was honored as the Museum's Volunteer of the Year 2007. Erv contributed 3,445 volunteer service hours as he meticulously recorded our history with his pictures.

Our sincere condolences to his beloved **Sandy** and her family. Although not confirmed, rumor has it that last Monday night our F-106, USAF SN 59-0134, "Delta Dart", had a tear just below the cockpit and just aft of its radome. Sandy and family, you are in our prayers...



Erv **Smalley**, you will be missed. Erv's memorial service will be held at 1030 hours, 28 April 2012, at the Shrine of Remembrance in Colorado Springs.

FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT

Wes Clark

As we begin a New Year, I thought it would be useful to first review what happened with the Museum and the Foundation in 2011, and then to take a look at what lies ahead for us in 2012.

2011 was, in many ways, a good year for us. We showed an overall increase in our bank account of nearly \$10,000, thanks to a lot of donations and to a great year in gift shop sales. That enables us to hold some reserves for what we know will be needed with the upgrade of the Broadmoor Hangar. There was a

time when we thought we could have depended upon the military budget to support the Museum, but with hard financial times DoD wide, I don't think that will be the case for much of the future. So, we will take what limited support the 21st Wing can provide, and depend upon ourselves for all those other things that we will need for the major renovations that lie ahead.

Another positive event was that we were finally able to take full possession of the Broadmoor Hangar, after so

many years of having it used for filler space for the various organizations on Peterson. The Black Gang didn't waste any time in starting the renovations after the last tenant left, so there probably aren't many organizations that would now want to move in.

Speaking of the Black Gang, let me again offer my most sincere thanks to the volunteers who have given so much time and effort to support the Museum. I note that we had over 8000 hours of volunteer time this past year. That is over 200 forty hour work





“Let me again offer my most sincere thanks to the volunteers who have given so much time and effort to support the Museum.”

FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT

(Continued from page 1)

weeks – all unpaid! That is an impressive statistic.

One of the surprising negatives for 2011 was that our visitor count was down about 30% from last year. It is hard to attribute that to any single factor such as weather or exercises, but it does indicate that we have to make a major push this year to get our visitor count back up. We now have a solid inventory in the gift

shop, so with a greater visitor count, our gift shop sales should also increase. The key may just be to ask our friends and family to remember to visit the Museum when they have out of town guests, and to think about hosting more events at the Museum.

I would be remiss if I didn't end this message with a special thanks to **Ed Weaver** for all the great work he has done

as Secretary to both the Foundation and to the Board of Directors. When I think about the soul of the Foundation, it simply has to be with Ed and a most helpful **Karla**. I can't thank them enough.

I wish all of our Members, Volunteers, and the Staff at the Museum all of the best things for 2012. I know it can be a very good year.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Gail Whalen

Thank you to all of the staff and volunteers at the Peterson Air and Space Museum! This past year has been very busy and challenging, but I'm confident we'll look back in three years and realize it was the springboard for the renovation of the Broadmoor Hangar. Nearly 1 million dollars in renovations have been approved by the Air Force, now we're starting to whittle away at the actual projects. We've been working with graphic artist Diane Vulcan to complete the interior exhibit plans, and with our base civil engineering planning division to complete the structural changes. Our volunteers, of course, have been leading the charge and putting their sweat equity in right now. The Black Gang and its ad hoc engineer, John Brown, have cleared the museum store, theater, and exhibit space. They removed ceilings, wiring, conduits, walls and windows, built temporary walls, and been very gentlemanly to me when I've "changed my mind" or gotten a new idea. Very gentlemanly indeed.

On another note, I'd like to

bring some perspective about the total number of visitors we had at the museum in 2011. We counted 14,784 visitors who were not living on or assigned to Peterson AFB. These are visitors from our surrounding communities, or visitors driving/flying into Colorado Springs to see our Museum. While they were here, we simultaneously hosted 99 military events or ceremonies and 80 civilian special activities. That's out of 52 weeks in a year—we don't close down during the winter. And that does not include our virtual visitors, who visit our museum through the Foundation website. Nor does it count nearly 30,000 visitors who viewed our displays at the Colorado Springs Airport, or the nearly 1,000 NCOs who attend the regional NCO Academy here at Peterson AFB, or again more than 1,000 first-term airmen who visit the Museum as part of their assigned curriculum. On any given Sunday or evening, families from Peterson's base housing area walk through the Medal of Honor Park and the Airpark, sit on the benches,



Here is a sample of one of Diane Vulcan's initial renderings of the introduction to the new exhibit space in the Broadmoor Hangar.

run through the green spaces, walk their dogs, and enjoy the benefits of this incredible historic area. In December, I watched more than 100 people walk through the doors on 3 consecutive days—and our docents just couldn't keep track of everyone on a "people clicker." My perspective? There is a lot more people using this facility than we can accurately portray. I think our challenge this year is to really publicize our availability, and make the extra effort to get folks on base to see us. As our Board members keep reminding me, we have to take our

message out to the community.

Finally, I'd like to remind everyone that our Museum's assistant director, Jeff Nash, has passed a milestone in his career. Twenty years with the USAF on active duty, and 12 years as a federal civil servant, Jeff's more dedicated to the success of this Museum than anyone on this base. I firmly believe that. He proves to me every day how important this Air Force heritage is to him. I'm privileged to work with him.



Pictured above are members of the Museum's "Black Gang", (L to R) **Ed Mika, Ralph Spraker, Jim Henderson, Ron Gray, Ed Weaver** and **Scott Lee**. Their accomplishments are too numerous to record here, but include tearing out walls and windows

inside the Broadmoor Hangar, followed by installation of covering materials where windows once were, patching holes, sanding and painting, etc., and etc. The most amazing thing about them is that none of them had a career that included those experi-

ences. Nor did those careers include electrical work, which, from time to time, became necessary as walls came down. Those stories have not yet been told in their entirety. Other volunteers who have worked with this group over the years

include **Dave Austin, John Brown, John Cawood, Tom Dishion, Ed Kelly, Ron McClelland, Tony Roman,** and **Jim Swalley**.

A WORD ABOUT ERV SMALLEY

Gail Whalen

Instead of a photo of Erv, I selected this snapshot of his grandkids in the City Hangar. Erv had just convinced me we needed to explain the fire control system in the F-101 and F-106 when the Genie missile was their prime air to air missile. We (me and the Black Gang) had been vigorously discussing the best way to display the missile—I wanted it mounted on the wall, others wanted to make a nice movable display stand. A few others wanted to mount it outside on the underbelly of the F-106 static aircraft. All good points—except for mine—which probably would have ruined the missile and taken a good chunk of the wall down with it. Meanwhile, Erv was busy looking through his personal memorabilia and found a printed test tape that showed the electronic sequence of the Genie as it was "fired" from the Delta Dart. He also found live fire photos, photos showing the fire control system

inside the aircraft, and a pretty good display of all the individual system parts displayed on the ground around a particular F-106. I asked him where he got all the pictures. "Well, that's my baby", he said enigmatically. Soon after the display was set up, his son and daughter-in-law came for a visit with the grandkids. Since Erv was our webmaster, he (along with Ernie Newman) supplied almost all the photography of events out here. He decided he could knock out two things at once: take a photo of the new Genie display for the website, and bring the family out for a nice "look-see".

I was there that day still measuring the Genie in a vain attempt to convince the Black Gang we could actually mount it to the wall. Meanwhile, the grandkids came bounding around the Thunderbolt display and screeched to a halt at the Genie. They immediately circled it and then began to touch it. I heard one of the

boys ask "Is this real, daddy?" about the time the adults caught up. Erv told them it wasn't real but it looked just like the real thing, and then proceeded to tell them how it worked. A good lesson, I thought, because even if it was his family, Erv really knew how to talk to the adults and the kids and explain it so they each understood. And it gave Erv and his wife Sandy a chance to reminisce about a few of the bases they'd been stationed at, quizzing their son at the same time. I've seen that same scene played out many times, with parents showing their kids a plane, or a uniform, or a piece of equipment they used back when they were on active duty. It's one of the best reasons we have the museum. Eventually they moved on to look at some more displays, but the little kids came back to the missile one more time. The little guy in the black jacket told me "this is my Grandpa's rocket." The older one corrected him:



"It's a missile, not a rocket." He'd obviously been paying attention to the discussion. And then Grandpa Erv came over and snapped this photo.

A few days later he emailed the photo over and asked if I thought it would be OK to put it on the website. I'm so glad he chose that photo. It reminds me every time I look at it, while all the artifacts may belong to the US Air Force, that's always going to be grandpa's rocket, because to Erv Smalley, this was his museum.

ACKNOWLEDGING SOME UNBOXED VOLUNTEERS

Gail Whalen



I'd like to thank a few of our volunteers who've been working outside the box on some interesting projects. Bruce Long has figured out a way to revive the computerized video on the 11th Space Warning Squadron Alert System display. It is a continuous loop video, pieced from several different segments that showcase how the DSP satellite was used to warn troops of missile attacks. He also took our Global Shield tapes (24-hours in an ICBM launch control center) and edited them to give the Missile Procedures Trainer a more realistic feel.

When you go in the crew side, you can remotely activate the tape and hear HF radio traffic, the clunk of the low frequency communication system, and other realistic launch control center noise (I think there might even be a flushing toilet). Jim Henderson initiated a project with our base videographer, Cameron Hunt, to take down the real adventures of Colonel Reo Trail, retired USAF WWII, Korea, and Viet Nam War veteran. Col Trail's experiences are not only instructive to our young Airmen, but really do sound like they were made for a Holly-

wood movie. Without Jim's interest and without the time he's taken to work with all parties, Col Trail's story would not be available for our 21st Space Wing Airmen Leadership School, NCO Academy, and the Colorado Springs' community. Dick Burns has put his photographic talents to work shooting every inch of the Museum complex (except our renovation areas, thankfully) to make a very interesting music and photo montage. If ever there's a tool to use for recruiting, this is it. Dick's burgeoning movie talents will be put to good use, believe

me. Paul Brown has also been thinking of ways to market to the public and showcase our incredibly beautiful airpark. He developed a format for a Museum calendar that looks to be a great template for the future. And finally, Tonia Shaw has stepped into the role of newsletter publisher for the Foundation. You can see her product right now—this is her *first* newsletter. Jack McKinney and Ed Weaver do so many things for this organization it's hard to keep track, but I again want to call your attention to the fact that they also really ROCK this newsletter (as the kiddo's say).



AFA LANCE SIJAN CHAPTER DONATION

Ed Weaver

The Peterson Air & Space Museum Foundation acknowledges the generous donation of 1,000 dollars from the **Colorado Springs Air Force Association Lance C. Sijan Chapter**. This donation was made in support of the Museum's on going operations. The Foundation appreciates the AFA Sijan Chapter's long standing financial (4,500 dollars since January 2008) commitment to the Museum's activities.

2011 DONATIONS

Ed Weaver

Northrop Grumman-\$3,000, Air Force Association, Sijan Chapter, Colorado Springs-\$1,500, Jack McKinney-\$1,200, Chuck Zimkas-\$750, Don Kidd-\$600, Wes Clark-\$500, Jim Henderson-\$500, Ed Weaver-\$400, Dave & Jane Dennis-\$350, 64 FIS-In Memory of Col Ronald N Hoelizer, Gaile C. Kno-

blauch, and LtCol Elton L. Weston,-\$300, Colorado Springs Area Chief's Group-\$250, Henry Baird-\$250, Scott McLauthlin-\$250, Brian Binn-\$250, The Broadmoor Hotel-\$200, William Chick-\$200, Paul Brown-\$200, Bob Stein-\$200, Barbara Roberson-\$150, Paul Andrews-\$100,

Catherine Steele-\$100, Bob Stovall-\$100, and Gus Freyer, Don Fulkerson, Bill Linderman, Don Kitterman, Scott Lee, Tonia Shaw, Ron Solomon, Jim Swalley, and **all the folks** who dropped \$1,938.81 dollars in the donation box last year.....**THANK YOU ALL!**

*"And all the folks who dropped \$1939.81 in the donation box last year...
THANK YOU ALL!"*

MEDAL OF HONOR: CMSGT RICHARD L. ETCHBERGER

Ed Weaver

“Chief Master Sergeant Richard L. Etchberger, United States Air Force, distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism on March 11, 1968, in the country of Laos, while assigned as Ground Radar superintendent, Detachment 1, 1043d Radar Evaluation Squadron. On that date, Chief Etchberger and his team of technicians were manning a top secret defensive position at Lima Site 85 when the base was overrun by an enemy ground force. Receiving sustained and withering heavy artillery attacks directly upon his unit's position, Chief Etchberger's entire crew lay dead or severely wounded. Despite having received little or no combat training, Chief Etchberger single-handedly held off the enemy with an M-16, while simultaneously directing air strikes into the area and calling for air rescue. Because of his fierce defense and heroic and selfless actions, he was able to deny the enemy access to his position and save the lives of his remaining crew. With the arrival of the rescue aircraft, Chief Etchberger, without hesitation, repeatedly and deliberately risked his own life, exposing himself to heavy enemy fire in order to place three surviving wounded comrades into rescue slings hanging from the hovering helicopter waiting to airlift them to safety. With his remaining crew safely aboard, Chief Etchberger finally climbed into an evacuation sling himself, only to be fatally wounded by enemy ground fire as he was being raised into the aircraft. Chief Etchberger's bravery and determination in the face of persistent enemy fire and overwhelming odds

are in keeping with the highest standards of performance and traditions of military service. Chief Etchberger's gallantry, self-sacrifice, and profound concern for his fellow men at risk of his life, above and beyond the call of duty, reflect the highest credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.” So reads the Citation of the Medal of Honor that **President Barack Obama** presented to Etchberger's sons on September 21, 2010.

Now for the rest of the story: A native of Hamburg, Pennsylvania, Etchberger graduated from Hamburg High School in 1951. He joined the Air Force on August 31 of that year, and was promoted to Chief Master Sergeant on April 1, 1967. During the Vietnam War, Etchberger was among a group of airmen hand-picked for a classified mission: manning secret radar facilities in Laos. According to the 1962 International Agreement on the Neutrality of Laos, the U.S. was to have no military facilities in that country. As such, the selectees would officially become civilians employed by Lockheed Aircraft. Etchberger was deployed to Lima Site 85, used to direct bombing missions against targets in Laos and North Vietnam. The code name for this top secret mission was “Heavy Green.” The site was staffed by “former” airmen, including Etchberger, two CIA agents, and one forward air controller. Local guerrilla fighters were hired to protect the base. Between November 1967 and March 1968, Lima Site 85 directed 27 percent of all air strike



missions in Laos and North Vietnam. When successful strikes were launched even through heavy cloud cover, the North Vietnamese realized that a radar facility must be nearby. Beginning in January 1968, North Vietnamese troops began closing in on Site 85. On January 13, the base was strafed by enemy aircraft killing several of the local guerrillas. Plans were made to abandon and destroy the base, but they were not implemented in time.

In the early morning hours of March 11, 1968, the site came under attack from North Vietnamese soldiers who had scaled the surrounding cliffs. By 3 a.m., Etchberger and six others were the only surviving Americans out of the original 19. Etchberger tended to the wounded and fought off the advancing North Vietnamese troops until a rescue helicopter arrived. Etchberger was recommended for the Medal of Honor shortly after his

death, but the nomination was rejected. Numerous accounts blame **President Lyndon B. Johnson**, but the decision was made by **Gen. John D. Ryan**, the Air Force vice chief of staff, who was the USAF approving authority for top awards. The Lima Site mission was still classified at the time, and the U.S. was not supposed to have soldiers in Laos. Etchberger was instead awarded the second highest decoration, the Air Force Cross. The cross was presented to his family during a secret ceremony at the Pentagon. It was only after the Lima Site mission had been declassified fourteen years after Etchberger's death that his sons learned their father's true fate; they had previously been told that he died in a helicopter accident. In the early 2000s, veterans of the Air Force's 1st Combat Evaluation Group began requesting that Etchberger's Air Force Cross be upgraded to the Medal of

MEDAL OF HONOR: CMSGT RICHARD L. ETCHBERGER

(Continued from page 5)

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“Chief Master Sergeant Richard L. Etchberger will receive his long overdue recognition.”

THE GROUND OBSERVER CORPS

Jack McKinney

In February 1950 the commander of the Continental Air Command recommended formation of a civilian volunteer ground observer corps to operate observation posts across the country to fill in spots where ground based radar sites could not pick up aircraft flying over the United States. By 1951 some 200,000 volunteers, manning more than 8,000 observation posts and 26 filter centers were tested in nationwide exercises. Filter centers were the collection point for spotter reports which in turn were passed to the appropriate radar sites and control centers.

The 1951 exercise results were a disappointment to the Air

Force and it was decided to enlarge the observation system and increase the number of filter centers. The revised plan was called “Operation Skywatch” which was begun on July 14, 1952. The result was an increase in all aspects of the Ground Observer Corps, eventually incorporating over 800,000 volunteers standing alternating shifts at 16,000 observation posts and 73 filter centers.

By the late 1950s development of the radar network, to include “gap filler” radars that automated the detection of low flying aircraft and blind spots, resulted in placing the Ground Observer system on “stand-by” status in 1958,



ultimately allowing the Air Force to disestablish the Ground Observer Corps on January 31, 1959.

This writer was assigned to the Grand Rapids, MI, filter center in an advisor and training role in 1957. In mid February 1959, at a ceremony and dinner for volunteers and Air Force personnel to commemorate the demise of the Corps, in Grand Rapids, the U. S. Congressman for that district was invited to attend and speak. I was designated to be

the driver and escort for the Congressman and a two-star USAF general who came with him. Following the dinner, etc., when my guests and I started to drive back to their hotel, the Congressman suggested we stop somewhere and have a drink. He relied on me to pick the facility for that purpose.

And that was my first and only meeting with the man who became our 38th President - Gerald R. Ford.



PASM FOUNDATION BOARD

Ed Weaver

As a result of the Peterson Air & Space Museum Foundation Board of Directors election 14 November 2011 through 9 December 2011, the following individuals have been approved for an additional three year term (1 January 2012-31 December 2014): **John Brown**, **Tom Cavalli**, **Don Kidd**, and **Catherine Steele**. Additionally, Board Director **Bob Stein** submitted his resignation effective 19 December 2011 citing conflicts that prevented him from attending Museum Foundation meetings. The complete listings of Board Members and Officers are:

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Donald Kidd, Colonel, USAF (Ret) CyberSpace Operations Consulting

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

Elizabeth Z. Anderson, Colonel, USAFR (Ret), CEO, Peak Opportunities

Henry D. Baird, Colonel, USAF (Ret), Director, Strategy & Business Development, Colorado Springs Field Office, ATK Aerospace Systems

Brian A. Binn, Colonel USAF (Ret), President, Military Affairs Division, Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce

John Brown, Lt Colonel USAF (Ret), CEO, Rocks & Glass, Inc.

Tom Cavalli, Lt Colonel USAF (Ret), AFA Colorado State President, Corporate Business Development Lead, Westech International, Inc

Mark Earle, Director of Aviation, Colorado Springs Airport

James C. Hutto, Colonel USAF (Ret), MDA Modeling & Simulation, Northrop Grumman Corporation

Scott B. McLauthlin, J.D., Colonel, USAF (Ret), Attorney, USAF Academy

Catherine J. Steele, VP, Aerospace Corporation, Strategic Space Operations

Robert Stovall, President, Gain-Stovall Inc.

Terry Sullivan, President & CEO, Experience Colorado Springs at Pikes Peak (Ret)

William C. Taylor, Lt. Colonel, USAF (Ret), DAF Civilian GS-14, Chief, Special Projects, Space Innovation & Development Center (SIDC)

HONORARY MEMBERS

Forey Hamilton, Chairman, Military Affairs Council, The Greater Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce

Stephen Bartolin, President & CEO, The Broadmoor Hotel

George M. Douglas, Major General, USAFR (Ret),

Special Assistant to the Chairman of the Board, Peterson Air & Space Museum Foundation

Harry Hoth, Colonel USMC (Ret)

Steve Bach, Mayor, City of Colorado Springs

Doug P. Price, President & CEO, Experience Colorado Springs at Pikes Peak

PRESERVING THE
HERITAGE

We are the keepers of their stories!



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WE'RE ON THE WEB!

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G. Wesley Clark, Maj Gen (USAF, Retired), President

Jack L. McKinney, CMSgt (USAF, Retired), Editor

Tonia Shaw, Art and Format

Somehow the computer gremlin managed to omit the last three paragraphs of the newsletter piece about CMSGT Etchberger; so, here they are. Our apologies.

Jack

Now fast forward to the Peterson Air & Space Museum and the year 2011. Air Force monies are not available to upgrade the Museum's Medal of Honor bronze plaques that contain the history of the Medal of Honor and the names of the Air Force recipients. The Museum's non-profit Foundation's Board of Directors assumes the responsibility to raise and fund the required monies to update the bronze plaque with Chief Etchberger's name.

As a result, this spring (tentatively scheduled for 23 March 2012) a ceremony will dedicate and honor the placement of a new Viet Nam Era plaque in the Museum Medal of Honor Amphitheater. Chief Master Sergeant Richard L. Etchberger will receive his long overdue recognition.

(Contributors that made this possible: Air Force Association's Lance P. Sijan Chapter; CMSgt (Ret) Paul Andrews, Colorado Springs Area Chief's Group, CMSgt (Ret) Don Fulkerson, CMSgt (Ret) Jack McKinney, Matthews Bronze, Peterson Air & Space Foundation, CMSgt(Ret) Ed Weaver and special thanks to CMSgt (Ret) Chuck Zimkas)