



# Snaproll II

## AREA 51 & SR-71 Event at MFAM-April 20, 2013



Area 51 at Groom Lake taken in the 1950's.

For years, the rumors of a secret test sight in the Nevada desert have floated around, especially since the U-2 and SR-71 spyplanes were tested, and later the F-117 Stealth Fighter. Well, now is your chance to learn all about Area 51 and the planes that were tested there at the "Area 51 & SR-71" event to be held at the Museum hangar on Saturday, April 20, 2013.

The event will run from 11am - 2pm, and will feature Peter Merlin, a well-known historian and author who has written books about the topic, and will speak to us about his experiences. Admission to the event is \$15 which includes a special box lunch. You may sign up by returning the reservation form on page 6 with a check (or you can call to leave credit card info).

(Continued on Pg 6)

### CALENDAR

#### April 2013

- 20 - Board Meeting  
Museum, 8:30am
- 20 - Area 51-SR-71 Day  
Museum Hangar  
11am - 2pm

#### May 2013

- 11-12 - Madness over  
Minter Air Show  
Minter Field Airport District

- 18 - Board Meeting  
Museum, 8:30am

#### June 2013

- 15 - Board Meeting  
Museum, 8:30am

#### July 2013

- 20 - Board Meeting  
Museum, 8:30am

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### INSIDE THIS

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Left Seat                   | 2 |
| Pix Page                    | 3 |
| U-2s Built in Bakersfield   | 4 |
| MP Bike Raffle              | 5 |
| Area 51 Cont-> Reservations | 6 |
| Membership                  | 7 |
| WE NEED YOU                 | 8 |

## Museum Acquires WW II Searchlight

There's a new item in the Museum's inventory of WW II artifacts. It's a 60 Inch Sperry Search light complete with generator that the Museum hopes to resurrect to operating condition in the coming months. Acquired from Terry Birtz of Campbell, CA, the light can produce 800 million candlepower. The light and generator weigh in at 6000 pounds. There is also a 2nd light for spare parts.



If and when the search light becomes operational, the Museum could rent it out for special events to cover the cost of operation and bring in some revenue. The carbon-arc lamps that create the light are automatically adjusted as they burn to create a beam 5 foot wide for up to 5.6 miles. It can be seen for 25-30 miles. Kudos to the Museum staff.

## The Left Seat by C.O.B. Ronald Pierce



I want to introduce myself. I am Ronald Pierce, and it looks like I will be in the Left Seat as the new Chairman of the board. But to make a smooth journey, I will need lots of help from co-pilots, navigators, radio operators, flight engineers, flight attendants, mechanics, passengers and ground crew to make the Minter Field Air Museum run smoothly.

I have lived in Shafter for some 76 years and graduated from Shafter High School in 1956.

I can remember coming out to Minter Field Army Air Base during WW II and swimming in their swimming pool, going in and out of the hangers, walking up and down the flight line and looking at the field from inside the control tower. After

WW II, my mom and dad, my sister and I flew our airplanes out of Minter Field; first a Globe Swift, and then a new 1948 Stinson.

My mom and dad had a Civil Air Patrol squadron on Minter Field in the 1950's.

I was a CAP cadet and attended four CAP summer encampments, three at March Air Force Base, and one at George Air Force Base. I received a ride in a T-33 at March.

I married my wife Rosalie in 1957, and she's still putting up with me.

My wife and I started a trucking company in 1966, R&R Transportation Company. I hauled Cryogenics (liquid nitrogen, liquid oxygen and liquid hydrogen) for the USA Space Program to test the Apollo rocket engines. In the early 1970's, I landed a contract, to haul dairy feed for Murphy Products, a subsidiary of Schlitz Brewery. Our trucking company hauled brew mash 24 hours-six days a week from the Schlitz Brewery in Los Angeles to Shafter and dairies all over California. We sold the trucking company in 1988, and opened Victory Lane Quick Oil Change in Bakersfield. We sold the lube shop in 2001. We were doing oil changes on some 400 cars a week at that time.

I first started coming to the Museum when my granddaughter, Krystal, was part of the first Air Explorer Scout Troup and the Museum in 2005, and before long they lassoed me by the neck and pulled me into the organization. I hope my passion for Minter Field and the Museum and my background in building businesses will be an asset for the Museum.

In news from the field, the Museum's new lease with the airport district is being negotiated – its moving slowly, but is moving.

I want to thank Don Westfahl for keeping the Museum open on Saturday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> for eight or nine hours, showing the big crowd of visitors who came through the Museum during a Fly-In event. Also thanks to Scott Hogstad in the Motor Pool, and Pat Marshall who had the Gift Shop open and sold some items. Also helping out was old...old...Board Chairman Dan Jones, who is back in town for a while, and Allen Anderson of Shafter. If I missed anyone, thanks to you too. I was having so much fun driving people in the Yellow Jeep from the tarmac to the Museum and back.

We just acquired a WW II Sperry Searchlight from a man who lives up by San Jose. On Saturday, March 30<sup>th</sup>, Museum members Dave Patterson, Scott Hogstad and myself and two grandsons made the trip with two trucks and two trailers. Allen Anderson came out when we got back and helped to unload. Thanks to Dean Craun for coordinating the operation. If we can get these running, we'll have a real "jewel in the sky" for events around the area.

Three more thank yous; To Morgan Clayton of Tel-Tec Security Systems for sponsoring the CAP Cadets to posted the colors at our February banquet. And also to Bill Murray, manager of the Double Tree Hotel, who "comped" us rooms for guests at the banquet. Also, many thanks to Aaron Leach of the Scotts Company on the field who helped with shipping supplies for items shipped from the Museum to Washington state.

We truly do appreciate the generosity of our many friends who support the Museum and our efforts to keep the memory alive !

**MFAM Pix Page**

**Historic Pictures of Groom Lake, (Watertown Strip, NV)**



**Groom Lake Aerial Photo**

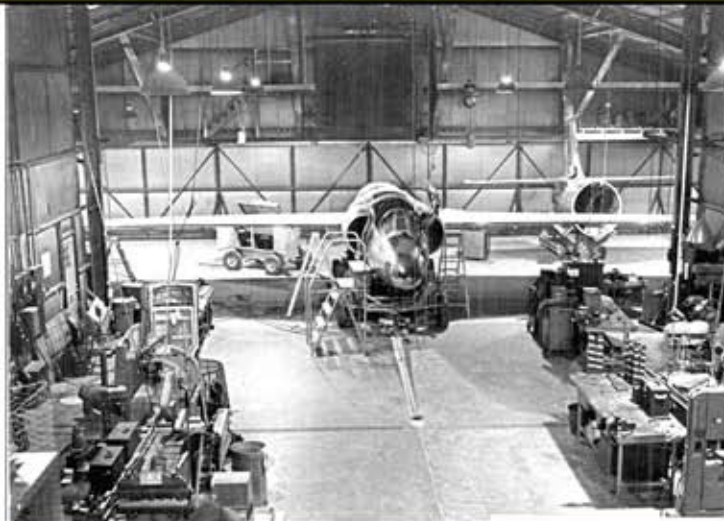
**Staff Living Quarters**



Pilot Transition From Groom Lake.

**U-2 Unloads from C-124**

**U-2 Pilot Climbs Aboard**



**Assembly Hangar**

**SR-71 Lineup at Groom Lake**

## First U-2s Built in Bakersfield



### Early U-2 Model - Built at plant in Bakersfield

It was a classified secret until just a few years ago that the first 55 or so U-2 spy planes were manufactured at a Lockheed Skunk Works factory on the southwest corner of Meadows field in Bakersfield, CA.

Long-time Museum member Steve Manning worked with the Air Force to de-classify the history of the plant where U-2s were manufactured and loaded into C-124s at Meadows Field for the flight to Edwards AFB or Groom Lake (Area 51) for test flying. Workers in the plant had signed a secrecy pledge, and to this day, many of them will not talk about the project.

The plant was dismantled several years ago, but the Museum was able to acquire some of the assembly line girders and some sheet metal from the exterior of the building.

This is one of many virtually unknown pieces of history that the Museum has been involved in uncovering. We're keeping the history alive !



Interior shots of fuselage - and wings being assembled

## Museum To Raffle MP Bicycle

# MINTER FIELD

AIR MUSEUM



# 3-Speed MP Bike RAFFLE

**Retail \$829**

Steel tank frame - Jerry Springer forks - 1 1/8" threaded headset - Adjustable aluminum quill stem  
Bar Dip h-bars - Aluminum 44T Chain Ring - 50mm aluminum Rims - Shimano Coaster Brake  
12g Stainless Spokes - 26 x 2.125 Quick Brink Tires - Rear Rack w\ Embossed side Bags—Front Headlite

(Full Page Printout on website)

Bicycle on Display at the Minter Field Air Museum, Shafter Airport, Shafter, CA  
And at other Museum Special Events



**\$10 per ticket**

**Drawing 12/14/2013**

**Need NOT be present to win**

The Museum is holding another fund-raising raffle for 2013. This year's item is a newly commissioned 3-Speed MP Bicycle manufactured by the Felt Company. This is a replica of MP bicycles that were used during WW II, and has authentic features including the Side Bags with signature logo.

The bike was obtained from the Finish Line, located on Stockdale Hiway across from Cal State Bakersfield. It has quality components, and is a limited edition model. It retails for \$829, but you can purchase raffle tickets for just \$10 each from Museum Board Members and Staff. You can also find order information on our website: at [www.MinterFieldAirMuseum.com](http://www.MinterFieldAirMuseum.com). We intend to display the bike at Museum events throughout the year.

The drawing of the winning raffle ticket will be held at our Holiday Open House at the Museum on December 14th, 2013. As with previous raffles, you do NOT have to be present to win, so make sure you leave a phone number or e-mail address on our stub.

Originally chosen for the CIA's Project Aquatone for the development of the Lockheed U-2 spy plane, the sight was not a favorite of designer Kelly Johnson since it was just outside the Atomic Energy Commission's (AEC) nuclear proving ground at Yucca Flat. But he later agreed due to the restrictions to the public of the sight. In July of 1955, personnel from the CIA, the Air Force, and Lockheed began arriving at what was at the time called the Watertown strip.

Peter Merlin will be available to sign copies of his books, which will be available at the event. A special guest is also being contacted to attend the event.

For more information about the history of Area 51, you may go online at:

[http://roadrunnersinternationale.com/merlin/no\\_secret.html](http://roadrunnersinternationale.com/merlin/no_secret.html)

### Reservation for "Area 51-SR-71 Event"

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **How Many:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **St** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip** \_\_\_\_\_

**Ph:** \_\_\_\_\_ **E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this information along with a check for \$15 per person to:  
 Dean Craun, Minter Field Air Museum, 9217 Hoxie Ct, Bakersfield, CA 93311  
 Tickets will be held at will-call. Deadline is April 17th.  
 Or call (661) 654-9159 to leave credit card information

## **MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL A MUST THIS YEAR**

Please check the mailing label on this Snap Roll issue. Behind your name is a code that tells what year your last membership was for. If it doesn't say A2013 or the word Life, you are not a current member of the Museum.

We urge you to become a member of the Museum to assist us in our efforts to keep the history of Minter Field and Kern County aviation alive.

Our board and staff work totally without compensation to maintain the Museum as a historical record of what went on at the base during WW II, and also to commemorate aviation history and events in Kern County. We also maintain examples of WW I and WW II military artifacts such as a Fokker DR-1 Tri-plane, and several WW II vehicles including a Willys Follow-Me Jeep and a 1941 Plymouth Staff Car.

Recently we have acquired a WW II Sperry Searchlight, and are working to move a rare Army bridge erector truck for renovation and display. We are working to establish a memorial display featuring a AH-1 Cobra helicopter.

These and other projects require funding, and besides events we hold during the year, memberships are our main way of keeping the Museum open and, of



# MINTER FIELD AIR MUSEUM



## 2013 Membership Program

The support of our members allows the Museum to preserve the rich history of the San Joaquin Valley and educate the community on the important role played by Minter Field during WW II.

**\*Veterans receive 20% Discount on Pilot Level Annual Renewable Memberships**


| <u>Member Recognition Level</u>  |  |  | Newsletter & MFAM Pin | Warbird Cup | Warbird T-Shirt<br>S M L XL XXL | MFAM Golf Shirt<br>S M L XL XXL | Life Member – One-Time Fee | **Warbird Flt. in WWII Trainer | Sponsor Plaque | Leather Flight Jacket | *** VIP Status |
|--|--|--|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| <b>Pilot</b> (Basic Individual - \$40*<br>Membership) Family - \$50*<br>(Annual) Student (6-18) \$20 |  |  | +                     |             | ^                               | ^                               |                            |                                |                |                       |                |
| <b>Senior Pilot</b> (Annual) \$100*  |  |  | +                     | +           | +                               |                                 |                            |                                |                |                       |                |
| <b>Command Pilot</b> (Annual) \$250*   |  |  | +                     | +           | +                               |                                 |                            |                                |                |                       |                |
| <b>Squadron Commander</b> (Life) \$500   |  |  | +                     | +           |                                 | +                               | +                          |                                |                |                       |                |
| <b>Wing Commander</b> (Life) \$1,000   |  |  | +                     | +           |                                 | +                               | +                          |                                |                |                       |                |
| <b>Division Commander</b> (Life) \$2,000   |  |  | +                     | +           |                                 | +                               | +                          | +                              |                |                       |                |
| <b>Air Force Commander</b> (Life) \$5,000  |  |  | +                     | +           |                                 | +                               | +                          | +                              | +              |                       |                |
| <b>Supreme Commander</b> (Life) \$10,000   |  |  | +                     | +           |                                 | +                               | +                          | +                              | +              | +                     | +              |

**Your Museum membership will become active 14 days after payment**

Your contribution is tax deductible – US Tax ID #953646320

*\*\*Warbird Flight in a WW II trainer)*

*\*\*\*VIP Status receives 6 tickets to the annual Fly-in and Founder's Day Banquet*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ 

Company: (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ St \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Level: \_\_\_\_\_ #Members: \_\_\_\_\_

Payment: Check Enclosed  Total: \_\_\_\_\_ **OR** Charge to my Credit Card ->  
 Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_ 3Digit Code on Back \_\_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*Please Charge \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to my   card for \_\_\_\_\_ month(s\*\*)**

Authorized Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Make Checks Payable to: Minter Field Air Museum  
PO Box 445, Shafter, CA 93263**

E-mail: [mfam@minterfieldairmuseum.com](mailto:mfam@minterfieldairmuseum.com) - Website: [www.minterfieldairmuseum.com](http://www.minterfieldairmuseum.com)

# MINTER·FIELD

AIR MUSEUM

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We're on the Web

[www.MinterFieldAirMuseum.com](http://www.MinterFieldAirMuseum.com)

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