



COUNCIL ON AMERICA'S MILITARY PAST - U.S.A.

PRESERVING, INTERPRETING AND SHARING OUR MILITARY HERITAGE

presents

The Persistent Pandemic Preservationist September, 2020

Editor's Note:

Welcome! This is Volume 1, Number 2 of a monthly newsletter featuring historic sites across the country responding to the challenges of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The intent is to stay in touch with old and new members, and to share information that is interesting and useful, in the hope that we will create a community of practice among those preserving the nation's military past. Each issue will focus on one or more sites. The original Persistent Preservationist was an excellent newsletter produced by CAMP member Col. Hal Youmans, USA (Ret).

This issue features the National Museum of Nuclear Science and Industry in Albuquerque, New Mexico, courtesy of CAMP member and former CIA Museum Director Toni Hiley, along with the International Spy Museum in Washington, DC, our newest institutional member, thanks to the Museum's Vice President of Marketing and Communications, Amanda Abrell. Both museums were initially closed at the start of the pandemic, and found creative ways to continue serving their customers.

Last but not least, we are including an author's query from longtime CAMP member Mary Ellen Cortellini in San Diego, where she has been assiduously researching and preserving a beautiful site above the bay along with her friend Karen Scanlon. They welcomed and oriented us to Ft. Rosecrans during CAMP's visit to San Diego in 2005, a year that now seems to belong to another era. — Nick Reynolds, Editor.

Marking a 75th Anniversary

by Toni L. Hiley

The National Museum of Nuclear Science & History in Albuquerque, NM, America's only congressionally chartered resource for nuclear history and science, closed in March when the pandemic struck but, the very next day, started to plan how to reopen.

The Museum had to reimagine the commemorative events and exhibits planned to mark the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II and the beginning of the Nuclear Age. For the most part that meant a lot of hard work by the executive director, Jim Walther, and the staff to transition to the web.

- The day of the president's national emergency declaration, the Museum opened an exhibit entitled "Dark Cube: Heisenberg's Race for the Bomb." This exhibition focuses on a dense, two-inch charcoal-black cube made of pure uranium metal that Nazi scientists suspended with 663 other similar cubes during WWII in an effort to create the world's first atomic bomb. With travel restrictions already in effect, the cube's lender, Dr. Timothy Koethe Assistant Professor in the Department of Materials Science and Engineering at the University of Maryland, gave his talk "virtually" via web presentation on the story of Heisenberg's efforts and eventual failure to create an atomic weapons during a critical time in world conflict.

- The museum marked "Trinity Day" on 16 July – the 75th anniversary the Trinity A-bomb test that ushered in the nuclear age – with a live on-line presentation by Trustee Emeritus, Judith Meade.

- In September the museum's programs will include a virtual exhibit opening entitled "FDR: His Vision, Our Freedoms Still Alive" a special exhibit that tells the story of Franklin Roosevelt's enduring achievements as he led the United States through the Great Depression and World War II; and on 19 September the Museum will present a virtual

symposium “They Changed our World; The 75th Anniversary of WWII and the use of Atomic Weapons. The panels of distinguished guests will create a public dialog in considering current and future concerns.

- - The Museum’s education department has been particularly inventive in creating online STEM educational materials for age-appropriate scientific experiments and activities. The Museum has mined its fascinating collection of artifacts and digital archives to create podcasts and virtual tours with in-house experts. On 8 September the Museum will offer K-7 students an Extended Care Program of online-distance learning incorporating school-integrated STEM-specific curriculum, museum activities and fun physical events.

- - In October, the Museum’s flagship educational event – Nuclear Science Week, an international, broadly observed week-long celebration to focus local, regional, national and international interest on all aspects of nuclear science – will be offered exclusively on-line.

To offer some in-person activities, the Museum was able in early June to open its outdoor Heritage Park, the largest publicly accessible collection of historic aircraft in the state. Additionally, in August, the governor of New Mexico gave museums with static displays permission to open at 25% capacity. As retail stores opened, the Museum opened its gift store and offered gift store products at a new online site, generating much-needed revenue.

With access limited to staff only, Operation Preservation – restoration of the Museum’s iconic aircraft – which relies on volunteerism – went into hiatus and just recently resumed restoration of the museum’s Soviet MiG-21 fighter . However, fundraising for the Museum Artifact Center to house the largest unclassified collection of historic nuclear weapons casings as well as fundraising for other museum priorities continues.

CAMP members can attend the September 19 event by following this link: <https://www.nuclear-museum.org/visit/events/75anniversary>.



A quiet day at the National Museum of Nuclear Science and History.

Spy Museum Reopens to Visitor Acclaim by Amanda Abrell

In 2019, the International Spy Museum, housing the world's largest collection of artifacts related to espionage, moved from an historic location in Chinatown to a new state-of-the-art building near L'Enfant Plaza in downtown Washington, DC. It was open less than a year before it had to close on account of the pandemic.

Upon reopening on June 22, 2020 rules and recommendations were put in place to ensure the safety of guests, staff, and volunteers including: health monitoring, limiting capacity to ensure proper social distancing, and mask requirements. The Museum increased cleaning of public spaces with CDC approved cleansers and placed hand sanitizing stations throughout the exhibit space. Interactive stations were fine-tuned for guest safety; free stylus pens are available to safely engage with the interactives and a few high-touch areas in the exhibits have been closed to address safety concerns.

The response from visitors happy to escape confinement has been very positive. One visitor, Elizabeth B., was typically enthusiastic:

As someone who very much enjoyed the old Spy Museum in Chinatown, I was curious to see what the new updates were going to be and how the experience could be enhanced with the updated museum at L'Enfant Plaza. Let me tell you, the new museum takes things to an entirely different level. From the moment your tour begins you are fully engaged in the immersive experience. It is not only creative and fun, but also extremely educational. They have done a superb job of re-opening during COVID in a manner that makes for a safe trip. The smaller spaced out group sizes allow for almost a private-like tour. They have clear social distance markings, plenty of hand sanitizer and the unique touch of everyone receiving their own stylus so you still can interact with the touch screens. Overall, a wonderful experience ...

Upcoming Spy Museum events are at: <http://www.spymuseum.org>.

Author's Query by Mary Ellen Cortellini

Longtime CAMP member Mary Ellen Cortellini and friend Karen Scanlon are asking for interior photos of brick Post Exchanges and Gymnasiums built at the turn of the twentieth century, around 1906-1910. The bowling alleys installed in some of these structures are of most interest, and photos of them are hard to come by.

Building 158, the Post Exchange building at the former Fort Rosecrans is currently under renovation and scheduled to open in early October. It is situated on Naval Base Point Loma in San Diego and will house the Naval Base Security Department when completed.

Mary Ellen and Karen are doing an article and small exhibit for the reopening, and hoping to display some pictures of the interior of the building in its early days. At a time when NARA, museums, and historical societies are closed during the pandemic, they hope that a CAMP member or two might be able to contribute relevant photographs for the cause. Please send any ideas/contributions to: maryellen.cortellini@gmail.com.