



# Civilian Military Support Group NEWSLETTER

January-February-March 2009



## VANDENBERG AFB VISIT A SUCCESS

Twelve members of the EAFB Civ-Mil Support Group and three guests departed the Antelope Valley in the early morning of February 12. After braving the cold Antelope Valley winds through Mojave and the rain, sleet, snow and fog in the Tehachapi's, the group arrived at Vandenberg AFB a little after noon.



Located on the western California coast between Santa Maria and Point Conception, Vandenberg AFB was formerly a US Army Base, Camp Cooke. It was renamed Vandenberg AFB in 1958 after General Vandenberg, the 2nd Chief of Staff of the USAF. Vandenberg AFB is home to the 30th USAF Space Wing, 14th Air Force.

After meeting up with our tour guide, Ms. Jennifer Green (that's Jennifer second from the left. John Coutley is furthest to the left) from the Public Affairs office, we were briefed by Colonel Carl J. Frushon, the Launch Group Commander, on the mission of Vandenberg AFB. Their main mission is to launch satellites southward into low polar orbit and test launch platforms, which are launched, to a benign, and hopefully uneventful, splash down in the Pacific, in a westerly direction. Vandenberg offers a complimentary capability to Cape Canaveral which, due to surrounding landmasses and other countries, can only launch Space Shuttles and satellites in an easterly direction. For the same reasons, Vandenberg can only launch to the south and the west.



John Coutly, Ms. Jennifer Green, John Fergione



We then attended a walking tour through the Western Range Operations Control Center (WROCC). This is a large facility, which houses all of the personnel necessary to insure an efficient and safe event on launch day. 2Lt Pierre Gregoire gave us an excellent and most informative tour of the facility.

We stayed on Vandenberg AFB that night and all of us were treated to a clean and spacious ground floor room at the Visitors Quarters.

On the second day we added a second tour guide to our group, Mr. John Coutley. John also works in the Public Affairs office and has worked at Vandenberg AFB for 56 years.

Vandenberg AFB contains many Space Launch Complexes (SLC's), each designed for the type of rocket being launched (the USA has many). These are the actual launch pads and they are all controlled by the one WROCC. They are scattered along the northern and southern extremes of the 100,000+ acre base.

*Thanks* to one of our members, Al Hoffman, who made a phone call to a Boeing facility there, we were treated to an unplanned tour of SLC-6 by Mr. James Boyle, the Site Manager of United Launch Alliance. SLC-6 was originally built as a second facility to launch the Space Shuttle. It was modified to launch the Delta IV rocket (a model of it is shown to the right) which sends the heaviest payloads into polar orbit. What a great addition to the planned tour.

We then proceeded to do a drive-by of the SLC's. John Coutley is a wealth of knowledge and briefed us all along the way on base facts and other "neat to know" trivia. We even had to stop once to let some deer cross the road in front of us.



With our tour complete, we made our way home. With highways 5, 58 and 138 closed due to snow, we took the southern route via Santa Barbara, Ventura and Santa Clarita. Though it took longer than planned, we got to see some beautiful views of our southern California beaches and the breathtaking Pacific Ocean. What a fabulous way to spend a couple of days.

John A. Fergione

Pictures by Mark Thompson

# Vandenberg AFB

## *A Touring Secret*

*By Mike Belzil*

After you read this update, the secret of the recent Civ-Mil tour to Vandenberg AFB will be out! Recently a small but adventurous group of Civ-Mil members embarked on a tour of Vandenberg AFB. Undoubtedly, there were several highlights over the course of our two-day journey. My personal highlights were the windshield tour and the visit to VAFB's Heritage Hall—their version of the Flight Test Center Museum. The windshield tour was led by a Public Affairs volunteer, John Coutley, who is a retired propulsion engineer. He amazed us with his extensive knowledge of the base. In the process we were able to enjoy the magnificent California coast as the base is located on prime real estate along the Pacific Ocean. We learned about the base's contribution to space and missile technology. There are numerous missile silos on the base and many of the launch silos are utilized to place satellites in orbit from the west coast.

The tour of Heritage Hall was a tremendous reminder of the role the base played in ICBM development and test-

ing. The small but impressive museum was developed and maintained through the dedicated efforts of volunteers. We could have easily spent many more hours absorbing the vast information the museum and our tour guides had to offer. Unfortunately, it was necessary to depart the museum and the base, as this was our final tour event prior to our journey home. We departed the base with a feeling of having learned quite a bit more about the mission of the base in the defense of our nation.

But the real secret of the Civ-Mil tour to Vandenberg was the opportunity for a group of members to become better acquainted. For 2 fun-filled days we were able to travel, relax, socialize and tour together. The adventure we shared brought us a little closer and allowed us the opportunity to come to know each other a little better. These forged friendships are the great secret of a Civ-Mil tour that makes these trips all the more worthwhile.



# News in the Brief

The Civ Mil Support Group donated \$2,900 + in dollars in cash plus the gifts for Holiday Gift Baskets for Edwards AFB families. This year a total of 60 families (240 individuals) benefited from donations.

*Thanks Terry for a job well done.*

## Holiday Toy Drive



Children at Edwards received many toys during the holidays. Over 130 toys collected by the LA Palmdale Sheriff's station and Bicycle John's in Acton were turned over to Aida O'Connor, founder of the Edwards Civ-Mil Group and Mary Oleksa, from the Angel Tree program at Edwards. "This is going a long way to healing and to help the children of Edwards have a wonderful Christmas," said Aida O'Connor at the time of receiving the gifts.



## BOARD DIRECTORS

Aida O'Connor : President

Mike Belzil: Vice President

Danny Bazzell : Secretary

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### Director Emeratus

Terry Scott, Alis Clausen

### Honorary Lifetime Directors

Clyde Bailey, Tom Craft

Roger Persons, Aida O'connor

## MISSION

**"The purpose and general nature of this organization is to establish a friendly, benevolent association of civic leaders and military personnel at Edwards Air Force Base (EAFB), to host groups incoming to Edwards, and to consider service projects to benefit EAFB."**

## THIS QUARTERS EVENTS

**Annual BBQ - Thursday July 23, 2009**

Andy Shillinglaw will spearhead the event.

**Tinker AFB Civic Leader Tour.**

Tinker AFB coming to Edwards

August 13th, 2009 - Contact John Fergione