

# AEROTECH NEWS



Journal of Aerospace, Defense Industry and Veteran News

*and Review*



**AV marks Memorial Day, remembers those who gave all for freedom**



# Some Gave All – Memorial Day Ceremony at Mojave Cemetery

by Cathy Hansen  
special to Aerotech News

Each year on Memorial Day, Mojave residents gather to honor the men and women who gave their all for our country.

This year, strong winds from the west greeted everyone, but the winds didn't diminish their strong attitudes of Patriotism and desire to take time to remember and thank those who died in service to our nation.

Victor Yaw, Chairman East Kern Cemetery District Board of Trustees, and U.S. Army Veteran of Vietnam said, "This is not just another three-day weekend, or another day to shop. This is Memorial Day and we remember that our troops are still fighting around the world and they don't get a three-day weekend to go shopping or have a barbecue."

Yaw thanked Porter Concrete Construction, Tami Kelley and the Mojave High School students who helped place American Flags on the graves of 511 veterans in the Mojave Cemetery. He also thanked James Stokes of Stoken's Donuts in Mojave and Starbucks Coffeehouse for refreshments.

Pastor Charles Wallis, of the Rosamond Assembly of God, gave the Invocation. He served as a U.S. Army captain in Desert Shield/Desert Storm and is presently serving as captain of the Rosamond High School Cadet Corps. The RHS Cadet Corps Color Guard presented The Colors and Tim Lomba, U.S. Air Force veteran sang The National Anthem.

Letters were read from Congressman Kevin McCarthy and Assemblyman Tom Lackey by East Kern Cemetery District Manager, Paul Holzer. McCarthy's letter stated, "This Memorial Day, and always, we must not just recognize and honor the fallen, but we must strive to live up to



Photographs by Cathy Hansen

Guest speaker, William Parkman, who served in the U.S. Navy from 1968 to 1991 during Vietnam and the Cold War, and Junior Miss Mojave, Addison Hutchinson at the 2022 Memorial Day ceremony in Mojave, Calif., May 30, 2022.

their resolve. We should use this as a moment to rededicate ourselves to the noble cause of service and patriotism."

"Our fallen heroes were our neighbors, family members, and friends, and though they each had distinctly unique personalities and ambitions, in common they shared a profound love of country and a deep devotion to freedom."

Keynote Speaker William Parkman served in the U.S. Navy from 1968 to 1991 during Vietnam and the Cold War as a communications yeoman and reached the rank of chief petty officer. Parkman was awarded the Navy Achievement and Commendation Medals for his service.

Parkman said, "Today is a day to express our thanks and appreciation for those who made the ultimate sacrifice. This includes the rows upon rows of sailors, marines, soldiers, airmen and merchant marines who made this sacrifice in defense of our freedom and way of life."

"In addition, we need to remember those whose Earthly body did not return — such as some of the men of the USS *Indianapolis* (CA-35) Heavy Cruiser. On 30 July 1945, the ship was torpedoed and sank in 12 minutes! Of the 1,195 crewmen aboard, approximately 300 went down with the ship. The remaining 890 faced exposure, dehydration, saltwater poisoning and shark attacks while stranded in the open ocean with few lifeboats and almost no food or water. Only 316 sailors survived. It was recognized as the greatest loss of life at sea from a single ship, in the history of the U.S. Navy.

Two torpedoes had hit the *Indianapolis*, one blew off the bow and one hit at midships, near the powder magazine. The resulting explosion literally split the ship to the keel, knocking out all power and causing her to sink by the bow rapidly.

Just a few days before the sinking, the ship had delivered internal parts for the atomic bombs at the Island of Tinian. The crew didn't know the

cargo they were carrying would finally end the war with Japan.

The USS *Indianapolis*, flagship of the 5th Fleet, had participated in many of the major U.S. Naval battles of World War II, including, Battle of Kwajalein Atoll, Battle of the Western Carolines and the Marianas, and also the Battle of Dutch Harbor in the Aleutians.

Parkman said, "Memorial Day also recognizes and includes the sacrifices made by the living. The children that lost a Dad or a Mom, the wife or husband who lost the love of their life, the siblings who lost a brother or sister and the veterans that lost members of their units. This day is a day to pass on an education to those that were never taught that the greatness of America comes from the citizen soldiers that serve in the shadows, while only seeking a better life for its people."

EKCD Manager Paul Holzer recognized and honored Mojave's Gold Star Mother, Hilaria Hannon with a bouquet of flowers. Hannon's son, Marine Pfc. Fernando Hannon, 19, was killed in an explosion in Al Anbar Province in Iraq in 2004 while serving as a rifleman with the 1st Marine Division. Fernando was the fifth generation of his family to serve in the U.S. military.

Holzer also introduced the Mojave Community Queens who attended the ceremony — Miss Mojave 2022 Vanessa Carter; Teen Miss Mojave 2022 Olivia McAndrew; Junior Miss Mojave 2022 Addison Hutchinson; Young Miss Mojave 2022 Caylee Cook; Little Miss Mojave 2022 Kyla Cambaliza and Tiny Miss Mojave 2022 Marielena Hernandez.

After the speaker's presentation, John Ferrandini, Tropic Middle School band leader played Taps and RHS Cadet raised the American Flag from Half Staff to Full Staff at 12 Noon.

Pastor Wallis gave a Closing Prayer and Tim Lomba led everyone in the singing of God Bless America.



The Mojave Community Queens were in attendance at the 2022 Mojave Memorial Day ceremony, May 30, 2022. Miss Mojave 2022 Vanessa Carter; Teen Miss Mojave 2022 Olivia McAndrew; Junior Miss Mojave 2022 Addison Hutchinson; Young Miss Mojave 2022 Caylee Cook; Little Miss Mojave 2022 Kyla Cambaliza and Tiny Miss Mojave 2022 Marielena Hernandez.

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Gold Star Mother Hilaria Hannon was honored at the 2022 Mojave Memorial Day ceremony, May 30, 2022. Hannon's son, Marine Pfc. Fernando Hannon was 19 when he was killed in an explosion in Al Anbar Province in Iraq in 2004 while serving as a rifleman with the 1st Marine Division. Fernando was the fifth generation of his family to serve in the U.S. military.

On the cover: Top; People gather for the annual Memorial Day ceremony at the Lancaster Cemetery. Bottom left; Visitors to the Healing & Honor Field flag display at Pelona Vista Park in Palmdale were able to view the flag display, and attend a Memorial Day Ceremony. Bottom right; a volunteer places U.S. flags on the graves of U.S. veterans the Mojave Cemetery.

# A Day to remember those who gave all

by Larry Grooms  
special to Aerotech News

**LANCASTER, Calif.**—At a time of national distrust, discord and division, there was no doubt or confusion as to why nearly 200 people came together at Lancaster District Cemetery Memorial Day morning. They gathered to remind other Americans of something too often forgotten.

From the Pledge to the Anthem, to the prayers, ceremonies and speeches, there could be no confusion as to why Memorial Day is time for remembrance, not a celebration with fireworks, barbecues and half-off sales. Memorial Day began informally to reunify the nation in the aftermath of the Civil War.

That history was remembered in the May 30, 2022, invocation delivered by Bishop and Lancaster Mayor Emeritus, the Rev. Henry Hearn. A U.S. Army veteran of the Korean War, Hearn said he remembers growing up at a time when being a Black American was a disadvantage. Yet Hearn said he thanks God for being born here and for the blessings of being an American.

Hearn said those who paid the ultimate price for America, “Have left their footprints on our sands of time.”

Chris Parke, in full traditional military regalia of a Highland Regiment

piper, brought home the message that Memorial Day transcends nationalities. He told of the thousand Scottish pipers killed in World War I, when armed only with bagpipes, they led troops over the top of trenches, playing their marches in the face of machine gun fire.

Parke first played “America the Beautiful” honoring America’s war dead, followed by “Amazing Grace,” a tribute to all those allies who never returned.

Bringing Memorial Day history and traditions into the fresh and painful realm of contemporary life, Five Blue Star/Military Mothers, Jessica Mellick, Colleen Goodman, Kathleen Staats and Ida Ketchum, placed red, white and blue wreaths in a ceremony conducted with a uniformed formation of young members of Marine Corps League, AV Detachment 930.

Navy veteran Phil Roberts and Dayle DeBry, Cemetery District Manager conducted a traditional Bell Ceremony, remembering the 19 local veterans who died or were interred after Memorial Day 2021.

Keynote Speaker Augie Anderson, Air Force veteran and AV Wall Gold Star Ambassador, presented a moving and emotionally charged first-person reflection on loss, grief, redemption from grief and recovery.



Photograph by Dave Owens

About 200 people were in attendance at the 2022 Lancaster Cemetery Memorial Day ceremony, May 30, 2022.



Bringing Memorial Day history and traditions into the fresh and painful realm of contemporary life, Five Blue Star/Military Mothers, Jessica Mellick, Colleen Goodman, Kathleen Staats and Ida Ketchum, placed red, white and blue wreaths.

As a 12-year-old in 1967, he was playing touch football in the street near his home when a military staff car came to the house. A bit later, Augie’s father told Augie that he wouldn’t be seeing his elder brother again. Anderson said he didn’t immediately understand, since his brother, Richard, a Marine Corps sergeant, was finishing his tour of duty in Vietnam and was expected home within a few days. The brother he never saw again was killed in action in South Vietnam, Nov. 19, 1967.

Consumed by grief and anger at the loss, Anderson said he enlisted in the Air Force and made South Vietnam his top choice for first duty station. And then he hit a life-changing wall. He said the training instructor denied Anderson’s assignment wish, explaining, “Your mom’s been dragged through hell once already.” The T.I. was not going to let that happen again.

Anderson told the gathering that Edwards Air Force Base was his final duty station, but a few years later he returned to work there in a civilian



Members of the Antelope Valley Young Marines post the colors during the 2022 Memorial Day ceremony at the Lancaster Cemetery, May 30, 2022.

capacity. It was in 1997, he said, that on a chance visit to an AV Mall store he saw a framed print of the Vietnam

Memorial Wall painting, “Reflections.” Anderson said that for the first time he saw in that artwork his brother’s name etched there, along with the more than 58,000 others who never came home to live out their lives.

Armstrong pointed out that the Gold Star is “an honor no one wants to have,” and the title is worn by many. Mothers, fathers, siblings and grandparents.

Summing it up before the trumpet sounded “TAPS,” Cemetery Board Chairman Dave Owens read the poem he composed when a war veteran was to be laid to rest with no friends or family to be present. That would not happen at Lancaster District Cemetery, where more than 1,066 military veterans are at rest. Between Owens, 95-year-old World War II Marine Corps veteran Pat Murray and a high school Junior ROTC cadet, the funeral was conducted with honors that now assure no veteran’s last rites go unwitnessed or unremembered.

And the poem concludes:

*“An American veteran is at rest today  
And we may struggle for some words to say.*

*How does one express with feeble speech  
The lessons a veteran’s life should teach.”*



Courtesy photographs

The keynote speaker for the 2022 Memorial Day ceremony at the Lancaster Cemetery was Augie Anderson, an Air Force veteran and AV Wall Gold Star Ambassador. Anderson presented a moving and emotionally charged first-person reflection on loss, grief, redemption from grief and recovery, as he recalled being 12 years old in 1967, playing touch football in the street near his home when a military staff car came to the house. Anderson’s older brother, Richard, was killed in Vietnam on Nov. 19, 1967.



Navy veteran Phil Roberts and Dayle DeBry, Cemetery District Manager conduct the traditional Bell Ceremony, remembering the 19 local veterans who died or were interred after Memorial Day 2021.

# New name, same great supersonic mission

by Jim Banke and Kristen Hatfield  
NASA

Introducing Quesst!

Evoking the experimental nature of flight testing and the spirit of aeronautical exploration, Quesst is what NASA is calling its mission to enable supersonic air travel over land.

This new moniker — complete with an extra “s” to represent “supersonic” — draws its inspiration from NASA’s long legacy of supersonic flight research.

The mission’s centerpiece is the sleek research plane known as the X-59, which Lockheed Martin Skunk Works is currently building in Palmdale, Calif.

Quesst replaces the mission’s original name: the Low-Boom Flight Demonstration.

“With Quesst, we’ve found a name that more effectively conveys the purpose, relevance, and — most importantly — excitement of what this mission is all about,” said Peter Coen, NASA’s mission integration manager for Quesst.

Through Quesst, NASA plans to demonstrate that the X-59 can fly faster than sound without generating the loud sonic booms supersonic aircraft typically produce. This thunderous sound is the reason the U.S. and other governments banned most supersonic flight over land.

Working with select communities, NASA will fly the X-59 to learn how people react to the diminished sonic “thump” it produces — if they hear anything at all. The agency will share survey data with regulators, with the hope they will consider writing new rules that lift the ban.

## Quesst’s new look

With the introduction of Quesst comes a new

mission identity — a blue and green signature mark that represents the elements of Quesst.

The new mission graphic displays stylized supersonic shockwaves encircling the research aircraft, above a community of homes. The imagery highlights the ground-breaking research that will be conducted across several U.S. cities during this mission.

Inspiration for the design comes from images captured during NASA’s 2019 Air-to-Air Background Oriented Schlieren (AirBOS) flight series, which recorded images of intersecting shockwaves from supersonic jets.

Here’s a breakdown of the design and its color palette:

- The supersonic shockwaves, represented here in green, do not merge. This is what enables the X-59 to produce a quieter sonic thump.
- The aircraft shape represents the X-59. While previously known as the X-59 Quiet SuperSonic Technology, the aircraft will now just be referred to as the X-59.
- The three houses represent the communities that will provide the data that could allow for future commercial supersonic flight over land.
- The crescent represents land, highlighting the crucial and unique aspect of our mission — commercial supersonic flight over land.
- Overall, the blue and green symbolize the Earth, and where the value of NASA’s aeronautics research is experienced by humankind every day.

## The Quesst plan

• To achieve its mission goals, NASA has laid out Quesst in three phases. The first and current phase focuses on the assembly of the X-59, followed by initial flights planned for later this



year to prove the safety and performance of the aircraft.

• The second phase, expected to take place during 2023, will focus on acoustic validation. During this phase, the mission will prove the X-59 is ready for regular operations in the National Airspace System. The aircraft will fly over NASA’s Armstrong Flight Research Center in Edwards, California to demonstrate that the supersonic technologies work as designed. The flights will also show that the tools used to predict and measure the sound level of the sonic thump are ready for use in phase three.

• Likely the most anticipated point in the mission, phase three will feature the X-59 flying over several communities across the U.S., gathering data from the public to learn what people think of the X-59’s sound. This phase is expected

to take place in 2024 through 2026. NASA has yet to select the communities.

• The mission is set to wrap up in 2027 by taking the information collected during phase three and sharing it with U.S. and international regulators. With the information gathered during the Quesst mission, the hope is to enable regulators to consider rules based on how loud an aircraft is, not based on an arbitrary speed.

• “The Quesst mission has the potential to transform air travel as we currently know it,” Coen said. “Success of this mission will open the door to fast air travel for everyone across the globe.”

• Learn more about the advances in this transformational mission.

• Quesst — the mission where speed never sounded so quiet.



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# Plane Crazy Saturday to feature Shaun Milke



Plane Crazy Saturday at the Mojave Air and Space Port will feature Sean Milke on June 18. The event runs 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Milke will tell us about his 1978 MELANSON CASSUTT III M Formula One Race Plane (“Cassie”) race #74 that he raced in the 2021 Reno Air Races!

Designed by ex-TWA captain Tom Cassutt, it is a mid-wing cantilever monoplane with fixed tail wheel undercarriage. Milke is an aerospace engineer and lives in Anchorage, Alaska. He earned his BS & MS in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Alaska Fairbanks. He is presently an Independent Contractor here at Mojave Air & Spaceport. He previously worked as an Aerospace Engineer, FAA, Northwest Flight Test Section/Anchorage Aircraft Certification Office.

The presentation will begin at 11 a.m. in the MASP Board Room. Seating is limited, so please R.S.V.P. to [info@mojavemuseum.org](mailto:info@mojavemuseum.org) or call 661-342-0604. While the presentation is free, a dona-

tion to the museum is requested.

Additionally, there will also be historic aircraft on display, and the Voyager Restaurant opens at 8 a.m.

Historic aircraft forms will be signed during the event. Attendees are reminded that the only animals allowed on the flight line are service animals, and the flight line is a no-smoking area.

The Museum would like to thank the sponsors of this event: the Mojave Air and Space Port, Aerotech News and Review, The Loop Community Newspaper, Scaled Composites, Comfort Inn & Suites, Golden Queen Mining Company, The Rosamond News, Mission Bank, Karl’s Hardware—Mojave, Rosamond and Boron, Thom Lapworth—CivMil support, and Voyager Restaurant.

For more information, visit [www.mojavemuseum.org](http://www.mojavemuseum.org).

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# Palmdale holds Memorial Day ceremony to close out the Healing and Honor Field

by **Adrienne King**  
Aerotech News

To commemorate Memorial Day, hundreds of people gathered at the closing ceremony of the City of Palmdale's Healing and Honor Field.

Palmdale Mayor Pro Tem Richard Loa, who served as master of ceremonies, and council members Laura Bettencourt, Austin Bishop and Juan Carrillo were also in attendance.

Assemblyman Tom Lackey spoke on bringing honor to those who served and gave the ultimate sacrifice.

Members of the Quartz Hill Young Marines presented the colors and the William J. "Pete" Knight High School Air Force Junior ROTC cadets participated in the POW/MIA Table of Honor Ceremony. The ceremony was closed out by representatives from Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3552 performing the 21-gun rifle salute.

The field of flags that were on display at Pelona Vista Park were dedicated to family members or friends who served in the military, first responders, law enforcement, fire services, medical.

Proceeds from the flag sales benefit local veterans' charities including American Legion Post 348, Antelope Valley Veterans Community Action Coalition, Coffee 4 Vets Point Man AV, VFW post 3000 and VFW Post 3552.



Photographs by Adrienne King

Members of the Quartz Hill Young Marines present the colors during the closing ceremony of the City of Palmdale's Healing and Honor Field on Memorial Day, May 30, 2022.



The Memorial Day ceremony at the City of Palmdale's Healing and Honor Field was closed out by members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3552 performing the rifle salute. The 21-gun rifle salute is in honor of the American military personnel who were killed while in service to our country.



William J. "Pete" Knight High School Air Force Junior ROTC cadets render a salute during the rifle salute during the closing ceremony of the City of Palmdale's Healing and Honor Field on Memorial Day



Palmdale Mayor Pro Tem Richard Loa, master of ceremonies, giving closing remarks. Also in attendance were Palmdale City Council members Austin Bishop, Laura Bettencourt, and Juan Carrillo, Assemblyman Tom Lackey, and Air Force Master Sgt. Anthony Perez.



Members of the public visit the Palmdale Healing & Honor Field on Memorial Day, May 30, 2022. The field of flags were dedicated to family members or friends who served in the military, first responders, law enforcement, fire and medical services.



Cadets with the William J. "Pete" Knight High School Air Force Junior ROTC set the POW/MIA Table of Honor while Cadet Lt. Col. Tyler Clayton narrated the meaning of the table.

# On This Date...



**June 12, 1979:** The Rutan Long-EZ made its first flight. The Rutan Model 61 Long-EZ is a tandem two-seater homebuilt aircraft designed by Burt Rutan's Rutan Aircraft Factory. The Long-EZ was a plans-only kitplane, and several variants of the basic design have surfaced over the years. In this photograph, a Rutan Long-EZ, built by Bill Allen in 1984, takes off in Gloucestershire, England.

**June 12, 1979:** The human-powered airplane, Gossamer Albatross, built by AeroVironment, Inc., of Simi Valley, Calif., flew across the English Channel. Powered by long-distance cyclist Bryan Lewis, the flight established two Fédération Aéronautique Internationale world records.



**June 15, 1916:** The Boeing Model 1, also known as the B&W Seaplane, made its first flight. It was a U.S. single-engine biplane seaplane aircraft, and was the first Boeing product. It carried the initials of its designers, William Boeing and Conrad Westervelt. Two B & Ws were offered to the United States Navy. When the Navy did not buy them, they were sold to the New Zealand Flying School and became the company's first international sale.



**June 15, 1946:** The U.S. Navy's Flight Demonstration Team made its first public appearance at Craig Field, Jacksonville, Fla.,. A flight of three lightened Grumman F6F-5 Hellcat fighters flew a 15-minute aerobatic performance. Five weeks later, 21 July, the team would first call themselves The Blue Angels.



**June 15, 1939:** Eleanor Roosevelt presented the Harmon Aviatrix Trophy to Jacqueline Cochran for the second year in a row as "the world's outstanding woman flyer."



**June 16, 1954:** The Lockheed XFV made its first official flight at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif. The XFV, sometimes referred to as the "Salmon," was an American experimental tailsitter prototype aircraft built by Lockheed in the early 1950s to demonstrate the operation of a vertical takeoff and landing fighter for protecting convoys.



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on the Restoration Advisory Board. The RAB facilitates two-way communication between the public and those responsible for environmental cleanup at Edwards AFB.

Volunteer representatives are not expected to be environmental experts.

#### **Responsibilities**

A RAB public representative acts as a conduit for environmental cleanup information. Responsibilities include distributing a bimonthly newsletter and meeting flyers, in addition to attending semiannual meetings. Applicants should be accessible within their respective area and willing to publicize contact information. Community concerns or questions can be addressed by the representative or referred to the Air Force Civil Engineer Center's Installation Support Section at Edwards AFB.

#### **Requirements**

Individuals interested in serving on the RAB must be at least 18 years of age and work or live in the area they seek to represent. Terms of service are two years in length. Military members, civil service and contract employees are welcome to apply.

#### **Applications**

Applications are available by contacting Gary Hatch, 412th Test Wing Public Affairs, at (661) 277-8707 or by e-mailing [412tw.rab@us.af.mil](mailto:412tw.rab@us.af.mil).

#### **Applications will be accepted until the positions are filled.**

For additional information, contact Gary Hatch or Alexis McCadney (BB&E) by e-mailing [412tw.rab@us.af.mil](mailto:412tw.rab@us.af.mil).

*Air Force Civil Engineer Center, Installation Support Section, Edwards Air Force Base, California*



Paid Public Announcement

# The Antelope Valley defines this hobby, attracts visitors from all over



Courtesy photographs

BJs Corner at the intersection of Sierra Highway and Avenue N in Palmdale, Calif., is a popular gathering spot for aviation enthusiasts looking to see aircraft take off and land at Air Force Plant 42.

by Bob Alvis  
special to Aerotech News

It was about 100 years ago, or a little more, that a phenomenon started that would continue to grow to epic proportions here in the Antelope Valley.

While pursuing my other hobby of chasing trains and photographing them, I fell in with a group of railroad workers who gave us the nick name “foamers,” whatever the heck that means. I think it was their way of calling us “those crazy guys with cameras and who appear to have no jobs or a life.” LOL!

When it comes to aviation, especially here in

the Antelope Valley, we have had generations of shielded eyes looking to the skies to see what hot rod with wings was punching a hole in our skies.

After World War II when “Plane spotting” went from being a war time assignment and became a pastime, the people of the AV started to realize that out at that old dry lakebed some pretty cool stuff was taking wing and that a glimpse of some ‘Buck Rogers’ technology was always worth the effort to see. As many of our families were a part of all that technology, it also added the fun aspect of saying “Hey that’s the plane my mom/dad is working on!” and it was much like a prized baseball card to a kid pointing in the sky at a sleek design that had a

family connection.

So here we are today and things have not changed much, and on a daily basis somebody can be seen craning their necks or running outside to see what all the racket is flying over. And for the diehards, cameras are clicking and comments are being shared as the carbon copy of flights day after day is never short of these plane spotters looking for a once in a life time catch of something unusual.

Over the years we have had a wide variety of exotic aircraft, thanks to the dozens of contractors taking advantage of the valley’s exceptional flying weather and unique geography, that aided research and development. But it was a challenge to keep up with all the new designs that were showing up during the year. As a plane spotter myself, I believe the 1960s was the best, even though when the black wings took to the skies it was always a must see show that had hundreds fixated on the roar and afterburners crossing Sierra Highway.

Today our skies are a mishmash of commercial traffic way up there and a constant racetrack of military birds in the middle turning heads and

civilian aircraft and operations making up the rest of the daily smorgasbord of flight operations in our skies. With all the technology around, we now even have hobbyists tracking air movements and specific aircraft and making daily logs of air traffic.

Here in the AV, we even have groups dedicated to watching the skies that identify themselves from a location or a title that is connected to some aspect of chasing planes and sharing that passion with others. Many times, people from around the world will read up on said groups and travel here, like a young man did last week who came all the way from Warsaw, Poland, to sit at a famous corner at Avenue N and Sierra Highway! In many ways what we have going on daily has no comparison in many parts of the world and people are fascinated with our “daily air shows.”

Now all this talk has brought me to a question in need of an answer when it comes to all of us who need a better nick name than “plane spotters” as that title is more appropriate to those around major airports and standard military bases. That works just great for them, but here in the “Aero-space Valley” I believe we are in need of a better nick name that better reflects our unique region and its dedicated band of wing nuts that just can’t let a sighting or a sonic boom go without sharing it with the rest of the valley! Pretty sure there is a cartoon character or a fitting mascot that would fill the bill that some of you could come up with and I would look forward to whatever colorful name you folks could come up with that would morph into a title to poke a bit of fun at we bent necks of the Antelope Valley!

I have my own ideas and would like to share but as an old guy my suggestions are already dated out of the gate. My ideas probably won’t fit what the younger generations would feel was a more hip nickname. So it’s up to others to find that name, so we can form an identity that will let the world know we are all part of a special fraternity of plane spotters that call the Antelope Valley home.

Funny, watching *Wayne’s World* some time back I was taken in by the scene when Wayne and Garth were on the hood of their car as 747 flies over them on a landing. Nothing new to us here in the Antelope Valley because many of us do the same thing every evening as Sofia from NASA leaves Plant 42 on its way north! Of course, I don’t know if we scream and yell as it passes over, but it appears people still get pretty excited LOL!

So there we have it. The masses of those who chase planes are pretty much chase planes themselves, and like the pilots of “chase planes” we are also performing in the capacity of sharing information with others about what we are seeing and hearing and letting it be known that it’s a hobby we fully embrace and always will, as long as a sleek aircraft and one of a kinds take to the skies over the Antelope Valley.

Until next time, chaser Bob is out ...

NASA’s SOFIA takes off from Air Force Plant 42 in Palmdale, Calif. The Antelope Valley offers ‘plane spotters’ an experience unlike any where else in the world.



Photograph by Bob Alvis



Air Force photograph by Staff Sgt. Clayton Lenhardt

People watch for aircraft during an air show.



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