
National News

Astronaut Pete Conrad buried at Arlington

On July 19, one day before the 30th anniversary of the first manned landing on the Moon on July 20, 1969, Apollo astronaut Pete Conrad was laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery, with full military honors. Conrad, a former Navy captain, flew on two Gemini missions, and commanded Apollo 12 and the first long-duration mission on Skylab in 1973. Conrad died in a motorcycle accident on July 15.

The other astronauts buried in Arlington are Mike Smith and Dick Scobee, who died in the Challenger accident in 1986, and Gus Grissom, who perished in the Apollo 1 ground fire in 1967.

Celebrations for the 30th anniversary of the Moon landing took place over ten days in different parts of the country, including a banquet to honor Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin, the first two men to walk on the Moon, at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. Organizers for the event planned a moment of silence for four deceased Apollo astronauts, including Alan Shepard, the first American in space, who died last year.

Hugh Harris, the former Kennedy Space Center public affairs chief, who was the commentator for all of the Apollo launches, said on July 10: "We're 30 years from the time that we first landed on the Moon, so a high percentage of our population grew up knowing it is possible to get there. But it's important to point out what the meaning of it all was, how it changed the way we looked at ourselves and what we can accomplish."

Teller blasts Congress's spy hunt at labs

Veteran nuclear physicist Edward Teller, who worked on the Manhattan Project and helped establish Lawrence Livermore Laboratory in 1952, said that Congress is taking the wrong approach to finding any spies at the nation's weapons laboratories, if there are any. "Trying to find out about spies should be handled very, very quietly, and that is the exact opposite of what has hap-

pened," Teller told the *Sacramento Bee*, which published an interview on July 4. "I would hope the Congress in Washington would be one-tenth as careful about not spreading secrets as the labs," he stated.

Teller indicated that the story that is being presented on Capitol Hill is overly simplistic, reported interviewer Michael Doyle. "People outside the labs, and particularly politicians, have completely failed to understand that there is not 'one' secret. We are trying to preserve what is, in fact, gone; and gone not because of spies, but because of independent work" by other governments' scientists.

In Teller's view, people make discoveries independently, and sometimes simultaneously. Although countries may spy, he said, eventually the truth comes out anyway. "Secrets may keep for five years. They're less likely to keep for 50 years," Teller stated. "Politicians, and very especially Congress, have completely non-valid ideas about secrecy." He especially takes exception with the current efforts to impose a moratorium on visits to the labs by people from "sensitive" foreign countries. That is the "opposite direction" than where the labs should go, he stated. "Attempting to keep secret what is not secret interferes with our obtaining information in other countries," Teller warned, adding that "peace can be assured through cooperation."

Dellums calls for 'AIDS Marshall Plan for Africa'

The U.S. Senate Appropriations Subcommittee, chaired by Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.), conducted special hearings on the AIDS crisis on July 9, at San Francisco City Hall. Although the hearings were convened to discuss the AIDS epidemic in the United States, and particularly the devastating effect of the 10% reduction in funding mandated by the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, former Rep. Ron Dellums (D-Calif.) used his testimony to deliver an impassioned plea for emergency action to stop the spread of AIDS in Africa.

Dellums said: "Ninety percent of AIDS cases in the world are in the developing countries where there is no treatment. . . In

Sub-Saharan Africa alone 6,000 human beings are dying every day. . . . How can the world stand by and let 20 million people die, and do nothing?" He said that fighting AIDS is not just a moral issue, but also a matter of national security: "The virus travels. What makes us think we live in a cocoon? This is a great storm that can also engulf the United States."

Dellums called for an "AIDS Marshall Plan for Africa," saying it will take billions to fight the disease. As a first step, he asked for the U.S. government to spend \$500 million to \$1 billion over the next five years. He stated that less than 1% of AIDS drugs are sold in Africa, where 70% of new HIV infections occur.

DeBakey unleashes fury against 'heartless' HMOs

World-famous heart surgeon Dr. Michael DeBakey wrote a scathing attack against so-called managed health care, in the July 7 *Wall Street Journal*. In a guest editorial, he and co-author Lois DeBakey call the move toward unionization by physicians "a reasonable response to managed care's obsession with 'cost containment' that puts profits over patients." He added, "The insidious intrusion of unqualified, profiteering entities into decisions regarding patient care can have only a deleterious effect on the patient's welfare. Like scores of other medical professionals, we have personally witnessed such dangerous, even fatal, effects on patients who were denied lifesaving procedures by their managed-care insurers. The horror tales are many, and heartless."

"Today, patients are called 'consumers,' physicians are 'providers,' and health care is a 'product'—all terms of commerce, not a profession, and certainly not of a humanitarian profession," DeBakey wrote. "The new vocabulary, and its obvious intentions, are grossly inappropriate. Physicians do not provide inanimate commodities, as salespeople and service people do; they treat human beings. They deal with our most precious possession—our health and well-being—and to apply rules of commerce to such activities is unsound, indeed disastrous."