

Sue Turner points out items on display at the Border Patrol Museum, which opened this week in Downtown El Paso.

Herald-Post photo by Al Gutierrez

At home in El Paso

Museum chronicles 61-year history of Border Patrol

By Thaddeus Herrick

El Paso Herald-Post

Praised by some, cursed by others, the Border Patrol has made El Paso its home since the first station opened in 1924.

So, said Sue Turner, the wife of a former Border Patrol agent, it was only proper that a museum honoring the law enforcement agency be opened in El Paso.

"We knew El Paso was the logical place," said Turner, the wife of William Turner, who died several years ago. "Most officers have served here at some point in their life."

The museum, which opened Tuesday in the basement of the Cortez building in Downtown El Paso, houses a variety of artifacts — from accounts of a 1961 border shootout to a uni-

form worn by an agent during the 1920s.

With 2,000 square feet of display and office space, the museum pays special tribute to Border Patrol agents of the nation's southern sector. Many of the artifacts were donated by El Paso sector agents, Turner said.

"The Border Patrol has played an integral role in our history," said Turner, vice president of the museum's board of directors. "The purpose of the museum is to educate people about its role."

The ceremony Tuesday, which featured a ribbon-cutting by Turner, Immigration and Naturalization Commissioner Alan Nelson and Robert Brown, president of Franklin Land and Resources, was the culmination of seven years of planning for the museum. The board of directors, with the urging of El Paso Electric Co. President Evern Wall, was instrumental in landing the project in El Paso.

Turner said.

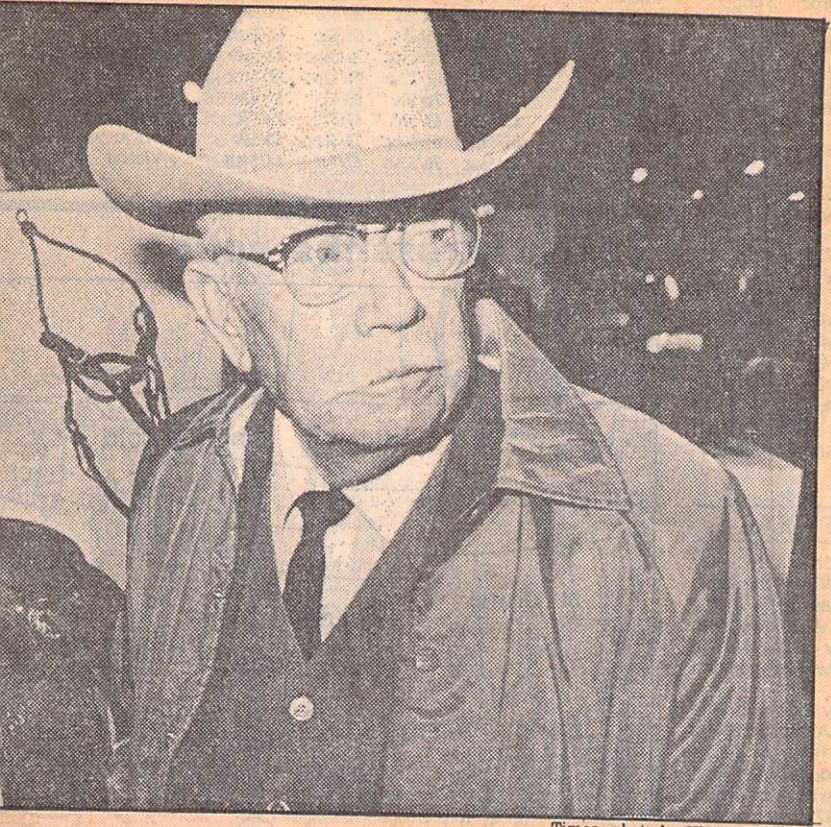
The space for the museum was made available by Franklin Land and Resources. Border Patrol agents — both retired and active — painted the room and helped build the museum's viewing cabinets.

The most unique display, Turner said, is the gear used by E.A. "Dogie" Wright, an agent who served from the 1920s to the 1950s. A resident of Sierra Blanca, Wright turned over his saddle, chaps and bridle — among other artifacts — to the museum.

Also featured at the museum are Border Patrol documents which will be available in a library for scholarly use, Turner said.

The museum, operated by the Fraternal Order of Retired Border Patrol Officers, is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Groups can arrange for other hours, Turner said. Admission is free.

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— Times photo by Victor Calzada

ends by an exhibit at the new Border Patrol Museum. The nt.

l's work along border

years to stay.

The proposed bill includes a provision for 350,000 temporary farm workers and currently is before the House.

The museum will be operated by the Fraternal Order of Retired Border Patrol Officers. Museum director Terrie Cornell said she expects the exhibits to change through the years as retired Border Patrol officers donate old items including uniforms, training manuals and weapons.

R.P. "Buck" Brandemuehl, U.S. Chief of Border Patrol, said a memorial for Border Patrol officers who have been

killed on duty will be established in the memorial in the future.

The museum contains worn saddles and boots, uniforms, photographs, scrapbooks, yellowed training manuals and other memorabilia.

The first Border Patrol Academy was set up in El Paso in 1934. The school has been in Glencoe, Ga., since 1977.

The museum will be open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Groups can arrange for other hours. No admission is charged but donations are welcomed, Cornell said.

Oct. 2, 1985



E.A. "Dogie" Wright, a retired Border Patrol officer, s
exhibit features gear he used during his tenure as an a

Museum reflects patr

By Berta Rodriguez
Times staff writer

The Border Patrol Museum and Memorial Library was inaugurated Tuesday, 60 years after the first Border Patrol station opened in El Paso.

"El Paso has such a great history, it is only fitting to establish this museum and library not only for the Border Patrol, but for the city and the country," said Alan Nelson, commissioner of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service.

About 100 people, including Border Patrol and INS officers,

gathered at the museum home — the Cortez Building for the ceremony.

In interviews after the ribbon-cutting ceremony, Nelson campaigned for the proposed immigration bill that passed the Senate 69-30 Sept. 19.

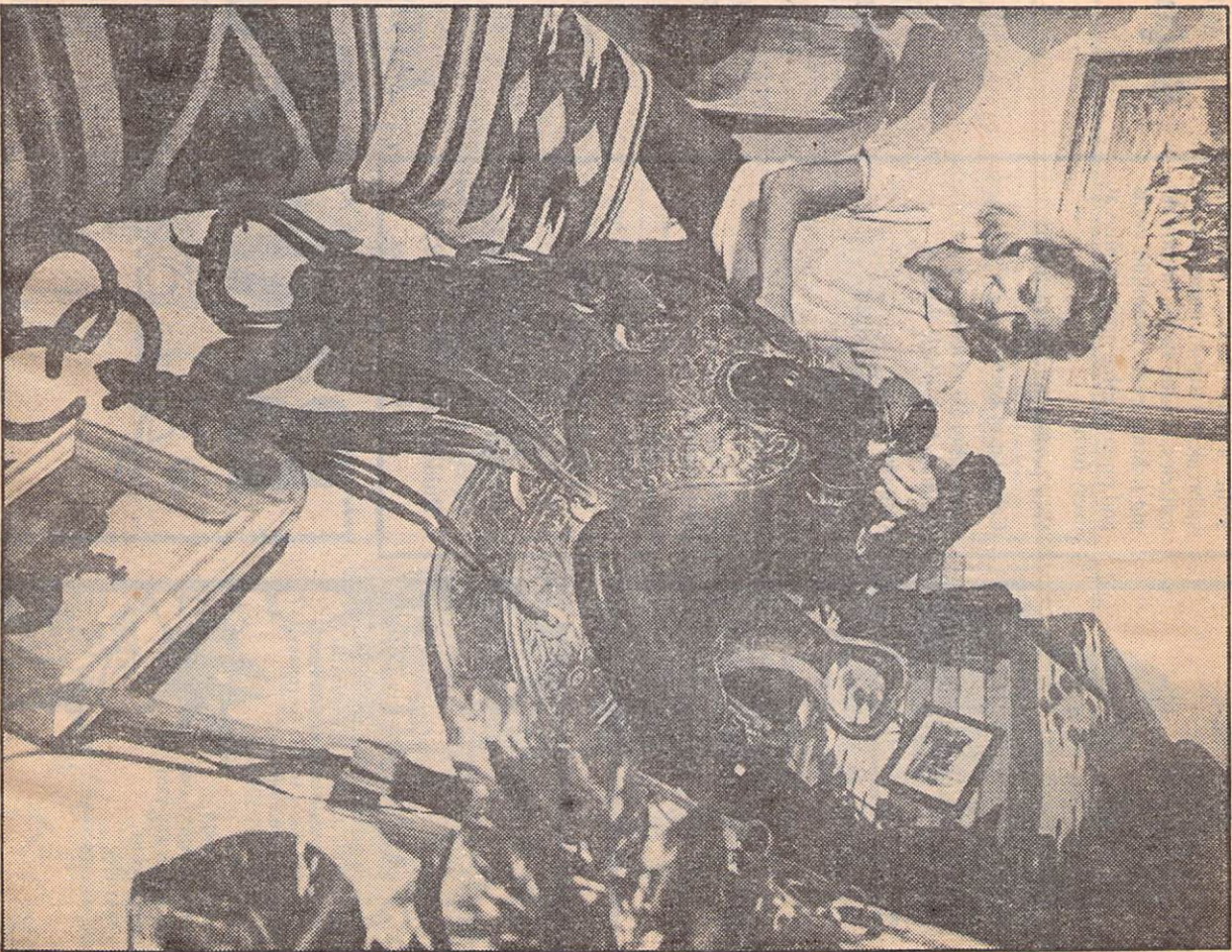
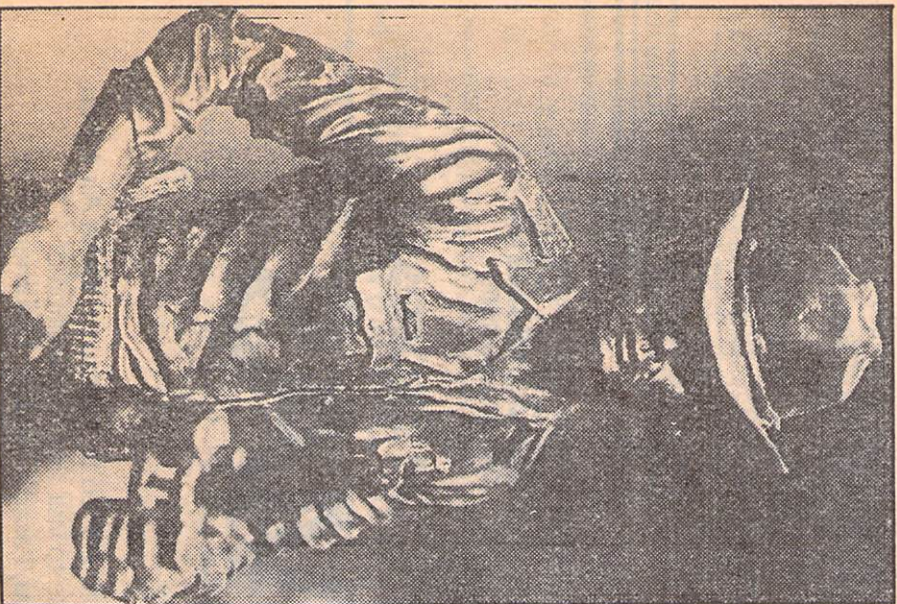
The bill "reflects the will of the people overall, not only Hispanics," he said.

"It prevents illegal aliens from coming in and taking jobs from American citizens."

Nelson said the bill provides balance by allowing the hiring of farm workers and permitting immigrants who have been in the United States more than

"The majority (of Border Patrol agents) are hard-working, dedicated and compassionate people trying to enforce the law, often under impossible situations."

— Sue Turner
museum coordinator



A bronze statue of an old-time Border Patrol officer is part of the exhibit.

Border Patrol museum interior designer Nita McNabney readies an exhibit of riding equipment donated by a retired officer.

Lonely desert job

New museum traces Border Patrol, immigration history

By Guadalupe Silva
Times staff writer

March 11, 1872, Congress passed House Resolution 1925 to promote immigration to the United States.

March 17, 1924, the U.S. Border Patrol was organized to control the influx of immigrants invited to the United States by the 1872 law.

Between those years, the country opened its arms to 25 million immigrants.

What happened in immigration law enforcement after 1924 is well documented in The Border Patrol Museum and Memorial Library, which will be inaugurated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 1:30 p.m. Tuesday in the lower level of the Cortez Building, 310 N. Mesa. Alan Nelson, commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and Robert Brown, president of Franklin Land and Resources, will be the main speakers.

The museum was proposed by the Fraternal Order of Retired Border Patrol Officers to "keep up the esprit de corps," said Sue Turner, coordinator of the museum and widow of Border Patrol Agent Bill Turner. The federation will pay for the museum through fund-raising events, she said.

"Most people have a mistaken image of

the Border Patrol because of the nature of their work and because they usually keep a low profile," Turner said. "But the majority are hard-working, dedicated and compassionate people trying to enforce the law, often under impossible situations."

Turner said people forget that aside from protecting the country's borders from illegal entry, the Border Patrol also helps control the flow of drugs and helps track down children and adults lost in the wilderness.

But the Border Patrol's primary responsibility continues to be enforcing immigration laws and catching aliens in the country illegally. This is why H.R. 1925, the oldest document in the museum, also is one of the most important, Turner said.

Shortly after the Border Patrol's creation, agents patrolled, on horseback, most of the 2,000-mile border with Mexico and the nearly 3,000-mile Canadian border, as well as the Pacific and Atlantic coasts, she said. Automobiles were not used until 1928, and then only in areas where there were roads. Horses were used until the advent of the helicopter after the Korean War.

Agents often would be out in the field from three to five days at a time, maybe longer, depending on weather or how long it took to track an alien or fugitive, Turner

said. Patrol duty in the Southwest normally meant days out in the desert alone.

The museum reproduces that environment with saddles, Indian blankets and bridles amid displays of cactus, sagebrush and golden sand. An old-time olive-green uniform — featuring jodhpurs, boots, long coat and the well-known wide-brimmed hat — round out the display.

Pictures, scrapbooks, journals, letters and other documents, a fingerprint kit, and other memorabilia tell the agency's story. Nita McNabney, a free-lance decorator, designed the museum.

Being a Border Patrol agent was dangerous during the early years, said John Sanchez, president of the Border Patrol Foundation and a retired agent. Those were the Prohibition years, when rum-runners, not too pleased at being caught with full loads, would start shooting.

"Now it's the coyotes, professional illegal alien smugglers, and the drug runners who make it difficult and hazardous," Sanchez said. The coyotes — professional alien-smugglers — are the worst because they extort the illegal alien out of what little money he might have, and they do not hesitate to use violence against the Border Patrol when caught, Sanchez said.

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