

Lockheed names Vern Smith to top Empire Grade post

By JOHN McNICHOLAS

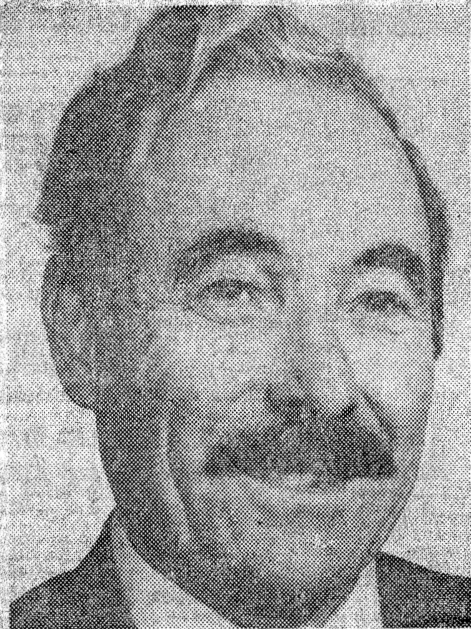
Sentinel Staff Writer

Vernon L. Smith, who will have worked 26 years for Lockheed this Jan. 1 and is a former mayor of Santa Cruz, was recently named base manager at Lockheed's Empire Grade facility.

Smith, a naturalized U.S. citizen born in Harrow, England, earned a Master's degree there in mechanical engineering. He went to work for Lockheed at a Marietta, Ga., facility as a flight-test engineer in 1957 when the Russian-launched Sputnik satellite fired the space race to a fever pitch.

In 1958, he moved to Santa Cruz, where he worked as a research engineer on the design, development and testing of the Agena series satellites.

The Agena are workhorse vehicles still in use, with payloads which have included communications, space exploration, tele-science, meteorology and communications



Vernon L. Smith

packages.

He has also done ordnance and propulsion work on the fleet ballistic missiles — Trident, Poseidon and Polaris.

Smith was made manager of engineering and testing in the late 60s, a title he held until the promotion to base manager last week. He has he has acted as base manager for some time, while the previous manager, Bud Zeller, was at Cape Canaveral working on the space shuttle program.

Smith was elected to the Santa Cruz City Council in 1970, and served as mayor from 1973 to 1974. He is a director of the Santa Cruz Area Chamber of Commerce, a member of the executive board of the Monterey Bay Area Tri-Counties Boy Scouts of America Council and chairman of the Santa Cruz Private Industry Council, which allocates funding for CETA training position in industry here. He lives in Santa Cruz with his wife. They have three children, one of whom still lives at home.