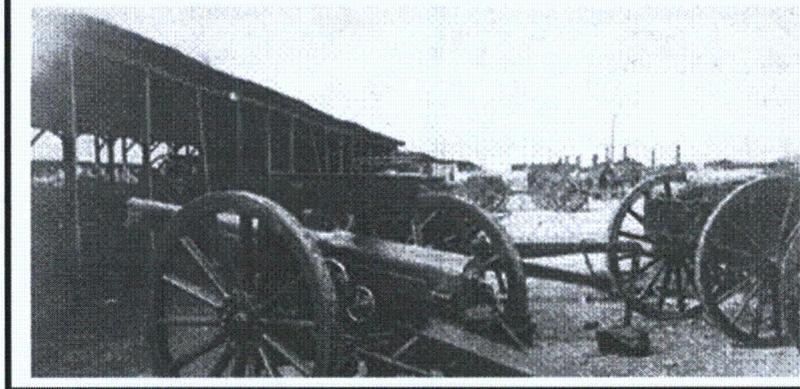


## Construction of JPG

“Near the end of October in 1940, the Chief of Ordnance directed me to proceed to Washington for consultation and upon arrival in Washington told me that there would be a proving ground located in the Midwest. I would build and operate it. It was not until November that the definite location, its present spot was located (North of Madison, Indiana). I was sent out to survey the spot and on the 20th of November, 1940 drove some two hundred miles through the present location of the proving ground. Existing war plans of the proving ground (based on Aberdeen Proving Ground) were taken and from them was adapted an acceptance test proving ground.”

------(Remarks by Lieutenant Colonel DeRosey Cabell, Jr. Commander, Jefferson Proving Ground 3/8/41 Remarks Tyson Temple Recreational Building in Versailles, Indiana.)

The US was not prepared for WWI, especially in equipment. As a result, the United States Army was equipped in France with mostly French and British-made Artillery pieces. The majority of American Divisions were armed with French 75mm Howitzers in the Direct Support Artillery Regiments that included the 15th Field Artillery (FA) Regiment. The French 75mm Howitzer was used to fire the first shot opening up Jefferson Proving Ground, May 10, 1941.



At first the only guns that were available to be used for testing of ammunition were the French 75's used during WWI.

The amount of land required to build a proving ground depended on what was tested. The mission of the new proving ground was to “Proof” Test all ammunition from 20 millimeter up to and including 155 millimeter guns. The largest gun would be six inches in diameter with a range of miles.

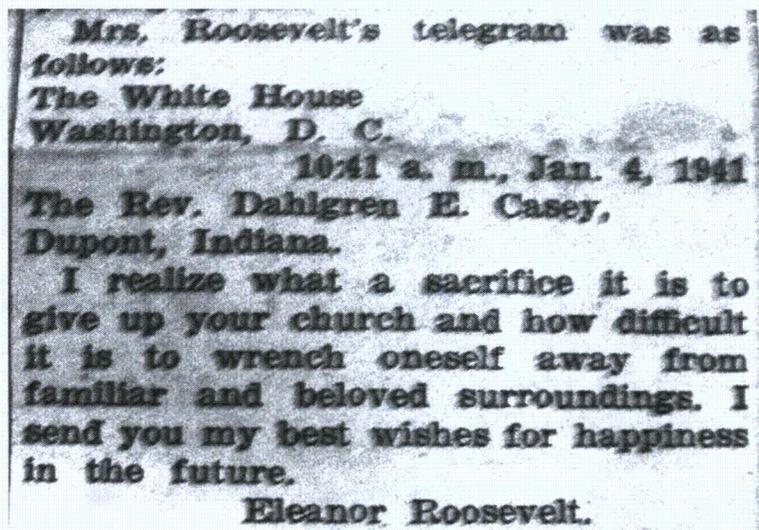
Lieutenant Colonel Cabell assumed command at Jefferson Proving Ground on December 30, 1940. He moved into the **Charles Jones Farm** and set up JPG headquarters in the dining rooms of the Madison Hotel. He immediately rented the former (Central) Madison High School at Central and Second Street on Dec 31, 1940. An annex was built in the playground of the old

Central School. By January 30, 1941 there was a wholesale exodus from the Madison Hotel dining rooms, where the Ordnance Officers, headquarters and Simmons and O'Connor construction companies had maintained offices since the project started, to the old Madison High School building. Russ and Harrison, the engineers and architects who previously moved into the La Fontaine building on Park Avenue also joined in the mass movement into the former high school building and annex at Central Avenue and Second Street.

Although influenza immediately impacted the start-up, and even LTC Cabell with a fever of 102 was affected and could hardly speak, a crew of 900 men started work on Monday Feb 1, 1941. During his bout with the flu, LTC Cabell communicated with Mr. D. C. Lord, Assistant Project Manager for Simmons and O'Connor, by written communiqués.

LTC Cabell said that his gunners would start firing in 2 months. The first item tested was 50 caliber ammunition and then later 155mm artillery shells that would land 10 miles up range would be fired. Although no silencers of any kind were to be used, JPG officers rationalized that there would be little or no annoyance to Madison residents by the noise from the explosives. The Army contended that Madison being under the hill and the fact that small guns were to be fired, only muffled sounds were expected to be heard.

At his meeting in Washington, LTC Cabell had been directed to work faster and harder. By January 14, 1941 the anticipated first firing had been moved up to the later part of April. Local newspaper accounts quoted LTC Cabell on his return from a trip to Washington DC as saying, "This meant that people had to clear out". Schools and roads had to be closed at a much earlier date than had been originally stated.



Mrs. Roosevelt's telegram to the members of Liberty Church.

During all of this extreme preparation, there were two hubs of activity. One was the administrative complex at the old high school in Madison. Most of the officers were in the Central School building, but a temporary office building was erected on the school playground. Salesmen and bidders on subcontracts streamed in and out of the building all day. Unless you were in the Army

Ordnance Department or employee of the contractor engineering companies, you had to do a lot of signing. Whoever went into the project offices had to display a badge containing his name, position and photograph.

The other hub of activity was the network of small construction offices at the main gate of the proving ground four miles to the north of North Madison. It definitely was not a place for sightseers. Trucks, tractors, caterpillars, and cars rumbled over the roadways at the lower end of the proving ground from morning until night. Huge cranes, derricks and steam shovels attested to the activity. Tracks four abreast were laid in the railway switching area.



THERE WAS A BIG COUNCIL OF WAR around the stove at the Big Creek Country Store among Joseph Stevenson, proprietor, in front of stove; daughter, Marylou Dewart, Stevenson; George Chambers, the storekeeper's cousin, and Mrs. Stevenson. Marylou says no matter where they go, "Teddy," her birthday present pup, is going too.

Joe Stevenson wonders where he will go when the Army takes over his store.

By the end of March, the project, employing 2310 people, was 10% ahead of schedule. By mid April 1941, over 3,000 people were working to transform the farm land into an explosive testing arena. Only 7 families were left on the farms and all the gaps in the 48-mile fence line were being sealed up.

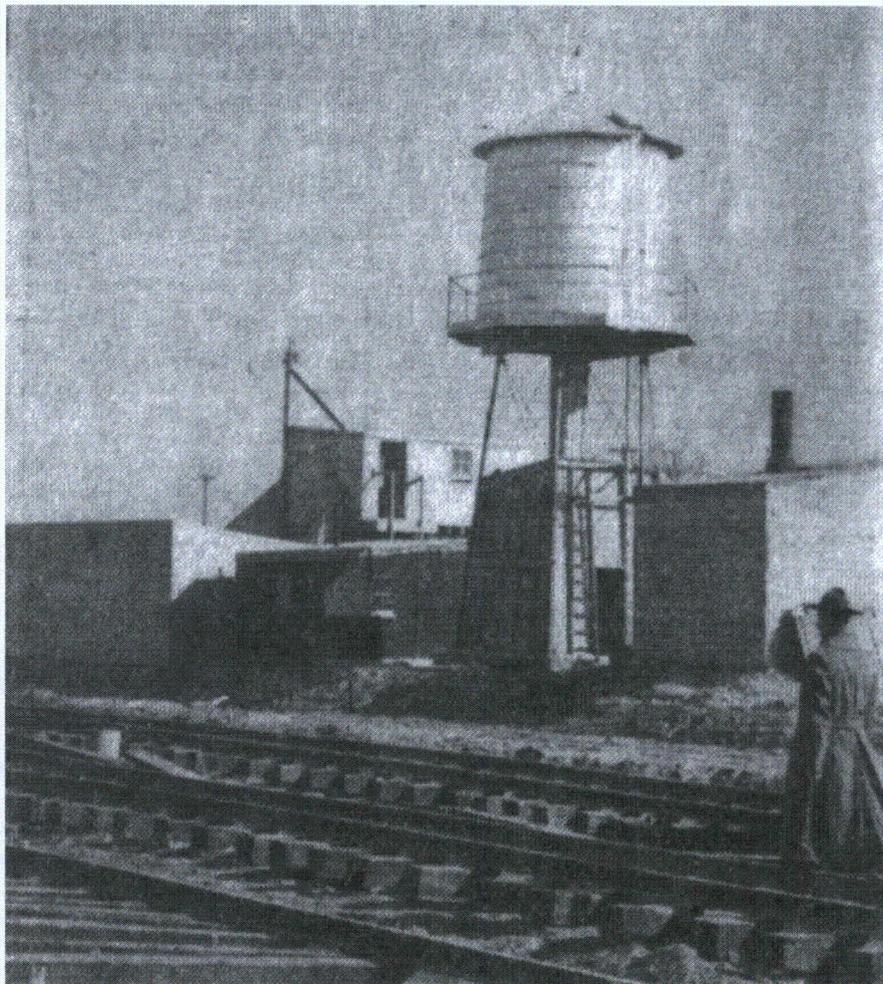
There were so many people streaming into Madison for jobs that by January 23, 1941, Mayor Frank Schnaitter received complaints from locals who were angered that too many outsiders were given jobs. The construction company said that the early stages must be done by skilled men, but there would be plenty of work later. This situation would take care of itself, and it did. Several of the local farmers who were removed from the proving ground, later returned a workers for the project.

By April 5th the water test well at the Chautauqua grounds was dug down to an aquifer below the Ohio River showed a good flow of water. A five mile trench was started up the hill. The six feet deep and three feet wide trench followed State Highway 56 near the Riviera Gardens to a point north of the Tuberculosis Colony on the State Hospital. Mechanized ditchers started at the top of the hill continued trenching to the Shun Pike and on to JPG. Water could then be piped from pumps constructed along the river to a 500,000 gallon water tower on the installation.

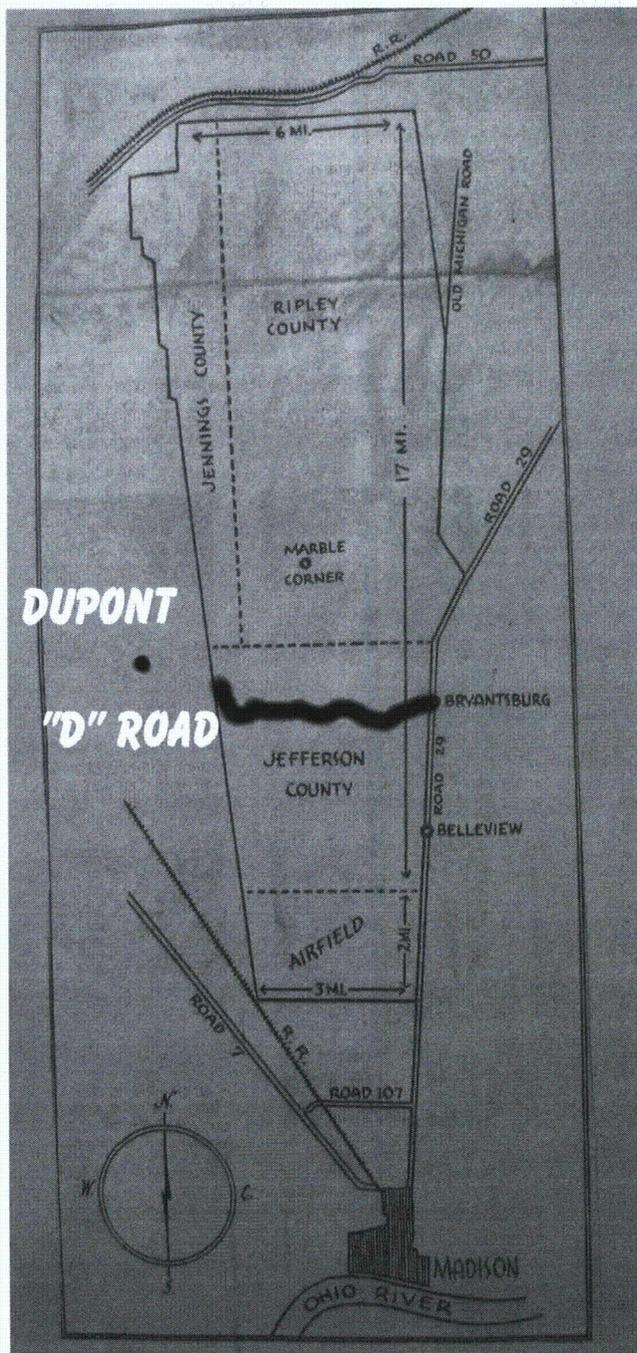
In April the first organizational chart of JPG was published. On May 26, 1941 the mail routes were changed from individual farms to the government offices being occupied. The first quarters were accepted on Aug 30, 1941 by Lt. G. H. Kast. The Administration building was accepted

*JPG Heritage Partnership*

Sep. 13, 1941. By October the bulk of facilities were completed and the contractor left on Dec. 12, 1941 five days after Pearl Harbor. At the close of December 1941 the construction costs amounted to \$13, 892,243 not including personnel costs.



Soldier walking his post by the JPG train water tower.



1940 map of land to be taken over by U. S. Army. "D" road was the site of Confederate General John Hunt Morgan's raid in 1863.

## **The First Shot: Saturday May 10, 1941**

The ceremonial first shot was fired under direction of LTC Cabell. Brigadier General L. H. Campbell from the Office of the Chief of Ordnance, Washington, is credited with pulling the lanyard which sent the first shell up range. Other officials from Washington who attended the ceremonies included LTC I. A. Luke, Major E. N. Clark and Lt. H. B. Sheets.

According to George H. Miller, who chronicled the first firing in Madison Courier articles dated November 6-8 1965, the General had help pulling the lanyard. In Paul Foxworthy's own words, "My crew consisted of a complete complement of J. E.s (Junior Engineers) Dunn, Simons, Ginsburg, Froelich, etc. Lt. Hirshorn was the Proof Director. A rope kept the crowd back. The General came up to me and asked for Mr. Fairweather. At his 3<sup>rd</sup> call, I got to my feet and said, "I'm Foxworthy." "Hell" he said, "That's the name I've been trying to think of," and he turned to me.

The General asked, "Is the gun ready to fire?" I answered, "Yes Sir." The General had trouble snapping the lanyard on the old French 75 and I stepped forward, gave it a yank and JPG's first round cut the air." "I recovered the round still warm and still have it. I carried the moniker H. R. Fairweather for 4 years, 8 months, 3 days and 8 hours". [The amount of time Mr. Foxworthy worked JPG after the first shot].



Brigadier General L. H. Campbell from the Office of the Chief of Ordnance, Washington pulled the lanyard for the ceremonial "First Test".



Old torn photo of the young Junior Engineers who solved difficult technical problems on the firing line. Note: Left over Mr. Vorrath's shoulder one can see the Boulange (Boo-lon-jay ) Time recording system. Shells were not magnetized. As the shell went through the screen, the breaking of the wires caused a motion of current in Building 115. The screens were measured in distance. The screens had to be rewired after each shot.

The young engineers were on the left of this picture and the gunners were on the right. (Left to right:) Mr. Vorrath, Mr. Jarcho, Mr. Merchant – Charge of assembly plants, Mr. Hensley, Mr. Danny Dunn, Mr. Simons, kneeling, Mr. Alfred Ehlers, Mr. Harry Noble, Mr. Paul Foxworthy, kneeling, Mr. Peterson, Mr. Bahle, Elmo Stevens kneeling, Mr. Johnny Podgarney, and Mr. Carver. (May 10, 1941)

## **First Acceptance Test: Monday, May 12, 1941**

The United States Army 75mm field gun shattered the peace and quiet of the surrounding southern Indiana hills to signal the opening of Jefferson Proving Ground. On this day a gun crew directed by Captain John Armitage, Chief Proof Officer, assisted by Lt. B. J. Leon Hirshorn, Proof Officer and several Junior Engineers, fired the first test rounds. These rounds were used to determine the quality of the Charlestown plant's powder by projectile velocity.

When the first shells filled with DuPont powder were ready, Captain H. E. Scofield, assistant inspector of Ordnance at Charlestown pulled the first shot. Captain Scofield was accompanied at the test range by Edgar Beugless, civilian in charge of the DuPont ballistics range at Charlestown. Each shell case was loaded carefully at the proving ground carefully to insure identical loads in the tests. Shell cases, expanded after firing, had to be resized before they were used again.

While the guns were firing during the summer of 1941, 6,000 bushels of wheat were harvested from the farms that were lying beneath the path traveled by the projectiles and bombs.

CU-1294 07153 FROM JMG RESOURCE MGMT

TO

0-7024010 P.02

JEFFERSON PROVING GROUND FIRINGS

1

Object of Firing:

To check operation of Ducloux's Chronographs

Date of Firing: May 10, 1941

Firing Record No. 1

Sheet 1 of 6

Ord. No.

O.O. File

J.P.G. File

W.O. No.

Related F.N. Nos.

	CALIBER	MODEL	MANUFACTURER	NO.	ROUNDS FIRED PRIOR TO TEST
Canon Carriage Recoil Mech.	75 M/M Gun	1887	A.R.A. COMPANY	12806	1
	75 M/M Gun	1897	French	601	
	75 M/M Gun	1897A	Sovjee	2837	

Asimuth of line of fire 352° 24'

Gun Position 17-1600 Yds. Deflection from AP Mile

Projectile

Mk. II Chemical Shell, Inert Loaded, with Square Nose Plug.  
Dwg. No. 75-2-171

Fuse

Powder

Du Pont VEH Smokeless, Picatinny Arsenal Lot X-3576-6-1935 for  
75 M/M Gun, M1897-1916-1917

Case

M18. Frankford Arsenal Lot 6894-45 of 1941

Primer

75 Grain, percussion, M22A1, Frankford Arsenal Lot 8296-18  
Dwg. 74-2-38.

APPROVED:

*W.C. Cabell*  
W.C. Cabell  
Lt. Col., Ord. Dept.  
Commanding

*John D. Arnitage*  
John D. Arnitage  
Capt., Ord. Dept.  
Chief Firing Officer

*B.J. Lewis Hamilton*  
B.J.L. Hamilton  
1st Lt., Ord. Dept.  
Firing Officer

The first of hundreds of thousands of JPG firing records.

## How is velocity figured?

Looking at the photograph showing General Campbell pulling the lanyard on the French 75 on Saturday May 10, one can see the first Boulenge screen in the system. The rope keeping the crowd back and the wires running from the gun to the temporary shack that housed the Chronograph Building are evident. The projectile of cast iron and sand would penetrate the first screen and an electrical circuit would be broken and then when the second screen was hit, the circuit was remade.

Knowing the distance formula **Distance = Velocity x Time**, operators would compute the velocity of the projectile.

By July 1941 the **Solenoid Coils** were installed which greatly sped up the testing. 250 rounds per day could then be recorded.

Note: Mr. Joseph Haas was in charge of the Chronograph Section and was constantly annoyed with the temporary lines strung from the temporary shack to the gun positions. These lines were on poles and on the ground. Wind constantly broke these lines and rain seeped in and soaked the insulation. By September 1941 the coils and wires were installed, ready for high volume firing.



Lt. D. D. Loos and Jack Pedgarney checking elevation of the gun, May 12, 1941.

## **George Miller hired by schoolmate Charles Cooper**

JPG's first personnel director, Charles Cooper had some unique criteria for hiring folks at the proving ground. George Miller (later a longtime Madison Courier columnist) was home for the Christmas holidays in 1941. He met Charles Cooper on the street in Madison, and Charles asked George what his draft number was. George responded that it was pretty high and, figuring he would be drafted by February 1942, had applied to the Navy. Cooper said that he had employment for George at the proving ground until he was either drafted or got his Navy Commission. So, about a week after Christmas, George reported to JPG as a clerk typist at the Bomb Assembly Building. This was located by the Army airport. Before the day was over he was asked to be a teletype operator in the administrative building, but before 5:00 o'clock, "I was asked to take a spot as proof director at the Bomb field out in the country west of New Marion". George was regarded, as someone noted, as a former "country boy" who wouldn't mind this lonesome assignment out in the flats. George said "I never before or after was promoted twice in a day and had three assignments between 8 a.m. and 5p.m.

By a stroke of luck on the first day at the bomb field, George and his crew met at Meisberger's at New Marion and discovered that they sold beer and sandwiches and they were friendly. Once the manufacturing reps found the place and knew that the bomb field crew liked it, a few perks developed, although George never knew of any rules being bent because of a few beers consumed at Meisberger's.

"Things got into action very fast at the bomb field and the three pilots, Majors Waugh, Sweeney and Van Dusen, were good guys. After a couple of weeks, I got a call from the commander and was advised that my duties were top stuff. I was then deferred from the draft and my Navy commission was placed on hold."

## Henry Moore

Henry Moore of 417 East Third Street recalls vividly what he was doing on the day he was called to go and talk to the construction Quartermaster, Captain Frank McGuire in the temporary Army headquarters located in the Madison Hotel (site of the former Kroger Parking lot now the Jay C's parking lot). Captain McGuire arrived in Madison on December 20, 1940, and his assistant First Lt. Samuel P. Davlos arrived December 22, 1940 to begin hiring personnel.

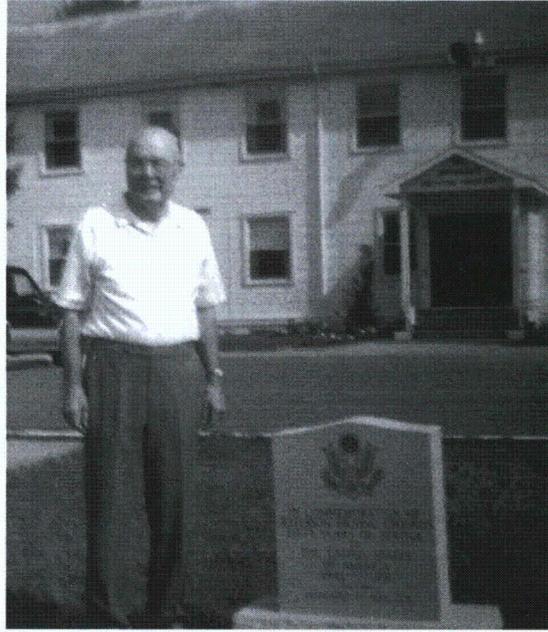
On the day the Army called, Henry a lifelong member of St. Michael's Catholic Church had taken Father August Riehl to see the doctor in Cincinnati. Upon Henry's return his family told him to see a Mr. Lord and Captain McGuire at the Madison Hotel. When Henry arrived for the interview, he found that the Army wanted a guide who was familiar with the area in Ripley County that was to be converted to a bombing and artillery impact range. Since Henry had attended some parties given by Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Thomson at Old Timbers Lodge, he was hired as a guide.

"I became friends with officers **Bill Brennen and Swede Carlson**. Business took us to the St. Magdalene and Old Timbers areas prior to the time of the Decommissioning Ceremony at St. Magdalene Church in February 1941".

The area was well known by these men at that time. Later Henry Moore became Chief of the Reproduction Office in Building 100 and was responsible for the firing records that described how each lot of ammunition performed.

It was not all hard work; however, Henry stated, "**Bill Brennen, Swede (Warren) Carlson**, and I would drive up highway 421 (Hwy 29 in 1941), turn on Old Michigan Road up through New Marion, through the guard checkpoint at the New Marion gate and on to Old Timbers where we would spend some time swimming in the lake created years before by the dam that Mr. Thomson had created."

Henry and Bill had an unexpected occurrence when they were hunting blackberries. They were traveling cross country in an Army Jeep near the St. Magdalene area when they went up over a hill and landed in a lake. They had to walk east until they reached the culvert. After crawling through the culvert to Old Michigan Road, they walked to a filling station where Bill called for a ride. When the two of them returned to the lake, the jeep was completely submerged. As far as Henry knows it is still out there.



Lt. Warren "Swede" Carlson, Henry Moore's friend, served at JPG during WWII. He visited the post on its fiftieth anniversary in May 1991.



Colonel I. A. Luke and Miss Maryland V. Roop examine the Army Navy "E" Pennant on Oct. 2 1942. The pennant meant that Washington was well pleased with the progress and quality of testing at JPG.

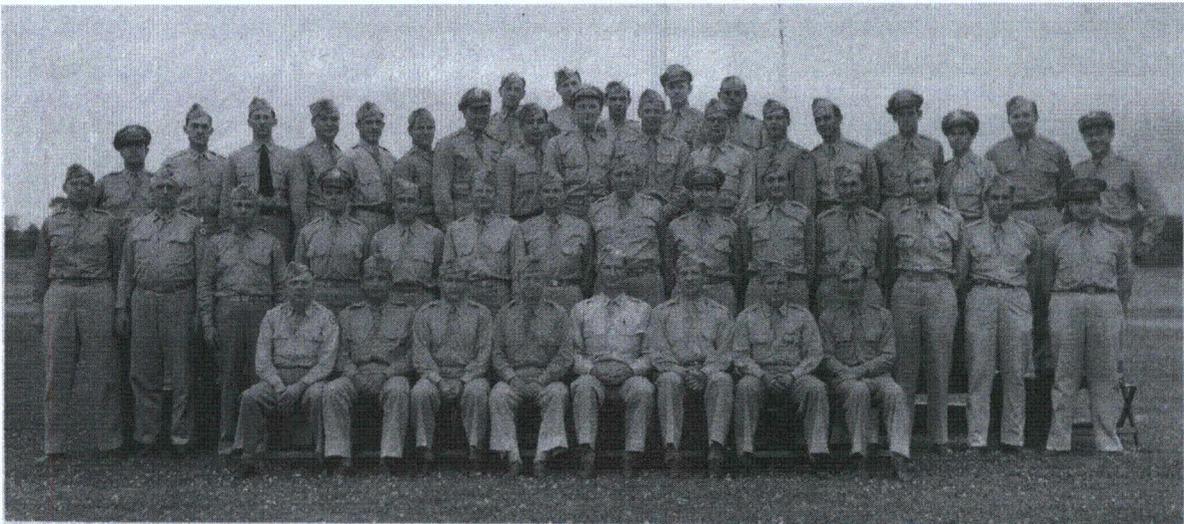
On September 8, 1942, a teletype was received by Colonel I. A. Luke, Commander of JPG, stating that because of the progress and efficiency of this post, it was awarded the Army – Navy "E" Pennant. The flag was presented at noon on October, 1942 in front of the Administration Building (100). The pennant was presented by Colonel D. C. Cabell, former Commander of JPG, who represented the Chief of Ordnance, Washington D. C.

A photograph of Colonel I. A. Luke and an attractive lady shown holding this Army – Navy "E" Pennant hung in **Henry Moore's** living room until he died. The photo is signed by Colonel I.A. Luke, but it is says To: Henry Moore From: Maryland Virginia Roop, no less than the lady holding one end of the pennant.

## Kiwanis Club Briefing

By Aug 8, 1941 Lieutenant Sam P. Davalos explained to the Madison Kiwanis Club why the costs to build the proving ground had doubled from the estimated cost of 7 ½ million dollars.

“We feel that on the whole the project had been well handled,” he stated in a straight forward way. While JPG was looked over four or five years ago, unexpected difficulties were found when work was started. The ground last winter seemed to have no bottom. Where it had been expected that foundations would be sunk two feet, it was found they had to be dug seven or eight feet deep. Drainage in the “Buttermilk flats” was really a problem. Test wells for water produced only two or three gallons per minute and it became necessary to build a power plant to push the water uphill from the Ohio River. Airport facilities have been greatly expanded. Plans have gone so well at the proving ground, that the Hope, Arkansas grounds will be patterned after JPG.”



13648      26 July 45      JEFFERSON PROVING GROUND      Ordnance Dept.  
Officers on duty at the Jefferson Proving Ground. Seated, left to right: Major Harry L. Kahan, Major Oscar W. Schucany, Major Franklin O. Bennett, Col. Wm. B. Hardigg (Commanding Officer), Lt. Col. B. J. Leon Hirshorn, Major Tewes Kundel, Major John D. Ryder, Major Phill B. Baldwin. Second row, left to right: Lt. Edward A. Adams, Captain Richard C. Robinson, Captain Gilbert W. Williams, Captain Clyde G. Trammel, Captain William A. Brennan, Captain Jackson F. Palmer, Captain Joseph T. Seawell, Captain Paul W. Reed, Captain Hubert L. Brunner, Captain George F. Roberts, Captain Jack J. Boughner, Captain Roger S. Greene, Captain Robert C. Prince, Captain Moffett L. Pugh. Third row, left to right: CWO Jack P. Reilly, Lt. Lloyd R. Alexander, Lt. (j.g.) Mitchell W. Miller, Lt. Warren W. Carlson, Lt. Leslie O. Oates, Lt. Eugene R. Frye, Lt. Karl W. Ruthenbeck, Lt. James B. Price, Lt. Jean H. Lobb, Lt. Raymond C. Holmes, Lt. Donald A. Schmalzl, Lt. Charles E. Denton, Lt. Emmett S. Wilson, Lt. David J. Dunigan, Lt. Dwight R. Stoffer, WO (j.g.) Ernest J. Oresik, WO (j.g.) Charles Rondeau. Fourth row, left to right: Lt. James C. MacMillan, Lt. Robert B. Skriba, Lt. Robert H. Holland, Lt. Robert I. Scott, Lt. John D. Samuel.

JPG Ordnance Department Officers WWII (July 26, 1945)



JPG had many “Rosey the Riveters” to take the place of the men who left for war.

## Uncle Sam's Activities in Southern Indiana Bring many Heartaches

By Charles S. Hughes, assistant Editor  
(The Farmer's Guide – Jan. 14, 1941)

The New Year dawned stark and terrifying for 500 farm families living in Jefferson, Ripley, and Jennings counties. Less than one month before, these people had been jolted from their peaceful pursuits and forced to leave for good. Uncle Sam, they were told, was taking over their farms and homes for construction of a vast proving ground for artillery, tanks, and aerial bombs. The bad news spread like wildfire, leaving this 50,000 - acre section the saddest yet to be known in Indiana.

The affected tract, 17 miles long, 3 miles wide at the southern tip, near Madison, and 6 miles wide at the northern extremity, slices through some of the best land in Jefferson County. It fans out in its northward expanse to swallow the greater share of one Ripley County township and part of another and carves a sliver from the eastern edge of Jennings County. Towns will be split, business establishments paralyzed and at least one industry engulfed.



Re-internment associations were formed to move the graves from the cemeteries covering three counties. (Old photo from newspaper)

Approximately 8 million dollars are to be spent in transformation of this tranquil countryside into a make-believe battleground. The government reservation will be fenced off and roads closed. Initial work is expected to start soon on a six- square-mile segment north of Madison, preparing for an airfield, storage facilities and administrative headquarters. Already scores of job-seekers are thronging into Madison to sign up for employment.

The United States War Department, acting through the Paul L. McCord realty company, Indianapolis, is taking up options on these farms as rapidly as possible. By December 26, 139 options already had been sent to Washington for acceptance, although none as yet had been

returned with the necessary approval. The agents were expecting to start in Ripley County by the first week of January.

Under terms of the option, the McCord company receives 6 1/2 per cent of the gross sales price in payment for such services as procuring the sale, preparation of deeds, conveyance of land, elimination of title objections and arrangement commission is added to the option price offered the farmer so that, in effect the government pays the bill. According to terms of the option, the government has the right of occupancy within the 30 days (in some cases less) after approval. If an agreement cannot be reached with the farmer, condemnation proceedings are instituted, although none was reported at the time of this visit.

In addition to the purchase of land and buildings, the government is making allowances for moving expenses and the distribution factor. No payment is made for stored crops, live stock, implements and store merchandise.

Exact figures as to amounts allowed per acre were difficult to procure. One estimate was "everything from \$15 to \$150.11. Cases were cited where \$60, \$80, and up to \$90 were allowed in the appraisal. The government agents contend that they are more generous with the amounts recommended for payment. Prevailing opinion admits that certain farmers particularly those on run-down land or heavily encumbered property may be glad to "get out".

It remains that: (*paper is torn can not read*) ache known only to those that have spent their lives in one community, many on farms which have been handed down from generation to generation. While land optioning progresses, the people wait and wonder. Grim, silent men plod through their chores; bewildered, tearful women putter about their houses. At the time of the writer's visit not many he contacted knew where or exactly when they were going. But the realization came, only too poignantly, that things might never be the same again. The younger people seemed less perturbed but the older set viewed with dismay the task of adjustment to new surroundings.



C.-J. Photos by Darneal  
**Lieut. Ralph J. Kiely supervises posting of sign by Ellsworth J. Chambers of Madison.**

Folks kept coming back to their old home places, even though armed guards had orders to shoot trespassers.

A strange quiet enshrouds the doomed territory but beneath the placid surface runs an undercurrent of restlessness. Huddled groups discuss the matter both calmly and vociferously in homes, churches and stores. Strange faces and out-of-state licenses scurry hither and yon bent on diverse mission.

Real estate men with farms for sale are making their calls. Livestock buyers are thick as fleas, hoping to pick up a bargain. Other buyers will dicker for almost anything, standing timber, fencing or even manure in the stable. And everywhere, on fence posts, light poles or in store windows, are signs reading "Public Sale" or "Farms for Sale."

Many are asking why their territory was selected for the destructive activity of testing out war equipment. "Why," they query, "didn't the government pick out a piece of land in the West where only a few snakes or lizards might be disturbed?"

The writer had no opportunity of presenting this question to War Department officials but in explanation (if any were forthcoming) they probably would point out the proximity to munitions plants and army posts, the availability of good transportation facilities and the relative security from enemy bombers.

To those who suggest this part of the country “should have gone back to the Indians long ago” let me say that much of this territory is quite level and other sections moderately rolling, with rough strips here and there bordering on streams. While this land is not as productive by nature as some parts of the state, it nevertheless has provided countless families with a good living, sent children to college and supported attractive farmsteads.

Various governmental agencies are working to cushion the shock of this recent declaration and render aid in the ensuing task of relocation. The Farm Security Administration, county agent offices, land use planning committees, and Agricultural Adjustment Administration and others are cooperating in this tremendous undertaking. Meetings have been held to acquaint farmers with the terms and to advise them on methods of procedure.

Problems arising from this wholesale uprooting of humanity are manifold, and it is altogether probable that their solution will require months of thought and effort. One of the most immediate problems is the relocation of farmers.

The Farm Security Administration and county agent offices have lists of available farms offered for sale outside the area, many in Ripley, Jefferson, and Jennings but some as far north as Rush and Johnson counties. The purchase of new farms by these evacuees will displace other farmers, probably tenants, from their holdings, who in turn may displace still others. These are some of the problems with which the FSA must grapple.

While approximately 75% of the farms in this area are owner-operated, one consideration which cannot be overlooked with the remaining 25% is that of “tenant rights.” In the documents signed by the landlord, allowance must be made to compensate the tenant for disruption of his farm program. This matter is said to have been overlooked in certain other government purchase areas, necessitating subsequent adjustment. It also is pointed out that this case differs somewhat from some other purchase programs inasmuch as the option method supplants the blanket condemnation plan, giving the various governmental agencies a chance to work with the farmer and help him solve his problems.

Moving arrangements also enter into this complex puzzle. Hay must be baled, storage arrangements made and moving facilities procured. The appraisers are making allowance in their options to offset these expenses.

Several individual and community sales already have been held. It is said that most livestock commands a half-way satisfactory figure but that horse prices are weak. One where a team of sound Belgians, 9 and 10 years old, sold for the ridiculous sum of \$48.

Over the long pull the matter of tax rates must be settled. Shelby Township, in Ripley County, is a notable example. Removal from the tax list of 25,000 acres or 62% of the land area would be enough in itself, but, worse still the township consolidated school has an \$11,000 bonded indebtedness. The proving ground line misses the school by 1/4 mile.

Under the Indiana law this debt must be paid by the remainder of Shelby Township, which would be a staggering burden, unless some workable alternative can be evolved. The best solution seen

at present as re-establishment of the government purchase line to include the school building, relieving township taxpayers of this potential "white elephant."

Monroe Township, in Jefferson County, will disappear, according to best available information. Lancaster and Shelby Townships will take the few square miles not acquired by the government.

Jennings County is the least affected of the three counties. The proving area takes approximately 1/6 of Campbell Township which has a total assessed valuation of \$772,000 and 1/5 of Bigger Township with an assessed valuation of \$342,000. No schools are involved.

Teachers, preachers and school bus drivers also are affected. Teachers have one-year contracts and their pay must be continued whether school keeps or not. Inclusion of churches also makes the preachers wonder where they will go next. Many school bus drivers have fulfilled only part of their four-year contracts and have depended on this income to make payments for buses. They are not happy, either.

## *Prepare to Move In Interest of Defense*



When the War Department finishes its program of establishing a proving ground for army materiel on 60,000 acres of land north of Madison, it will mark the passing of the 100-year-old, one-room Liberty School. Mrs. Ross Demaree, teacher at the building, is shown with part of the 23 pupils enrolled, most of whom will be separated, never to see each other again.

Mrs. Ross (Elzia) Demaree wonders where she and her students will be next year when the army closes Liberty school.

Some farmers are wondering about their AAA bases and allotments. Reliable sources inform that probably this matter will be decided on an individual case basis depending on the amount of equipment the farmer transfers, previous farm program and other factors.

While the government, through the real estate agency, may be doing its best to arrange equitable settlements, complaints nevertheless are common. Some say that insufficient allowance is made for buildings. There are cases where the farmer has better than average improvements. Others contend that land in this region differs somewhat from that found elsewhere. They explain that the nature of their soil, assuming other things are equal, makes moderate rolling land more valuable than level ground.

Some have objected to alleged price scale-downs after preparation of the preliminary estimate. One of the most tragic aspects of the [process affects] entire neighborhoods, abandonment of churches, schools and homes, and removal of cemeteries. St. Magdalene's Church, in Ripley County, for 110 years has been a shrine for the German-Catholics, a substantial settlement of farmers whose disturbance will be a distinct loss to the county. Worship in the Otter Creek Baptist Church, Jennings County, founded in 1848, soon will be a thing of the past.

The Liberty Christian Church, Jefferson County, concludes a 123 year history and the Monroe Presbyterian Church, Jefferson County, which rounded the century mark in 1939, becomes government property and loses all but two or three families of its congregation. Members of this church plan to keep a directory so they may contact one another during this period of travail. Arrangements have been made for a reunion next August at Clifty Falls State Park, when further plans can be developed.

It is generally understood that graves in churches and family cemeteries will be moved to a new location by the War Department. The Otter Creek Baptist congregation is reported to have found a new site just 2 miles away. Other groups have reached no decision.

The sacrifices made by these people for a necessary defense measure assume heroic proportions. They are leaving the homes which sheltered their fathers and grandfathers, they say good-bye to the land of their ancestors. Small wonder, then, that eyes grow misty, that strong men choke with emotions.

## **JPG Bomb Field Activity:**

Dateline: United States Air Force Museum Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio April 19, 1995  
Interview with Major General Charles W. Sweeney  
(Pilot who flew over Hiroshima and Nagasaki)

On the 12th of December 1941, Charles W. Sweeney was commissioned a Second Lieutenant with the aeronautical rating of pilot and assigned to JPG. Both the proving ground and the pilot were to play pivotal roles in this nation's defense for over fifty years.

The first aircraft came to JPG shortly after Pearl Harbor was bombed on December 7, 1941. The bomber, a B-23 Dragon, was accompanied by a proving ground detachment of the Army Air Corps commanded by Major John Waugh. Accompanying Major Waugh were pilots, Lieutenant (Lt) Charles W. Sweeney and Lt. Robert Van Dusen. Later, Major Robert Van Dusen was killed in the Philippines just after the war ended. By early 1942, the B-23 had been replaced by two early production B-25's [Mitchell bombers], an A-20 [Havoc-light bomber], and an A-17 [attack bomber].



B-23 bomber assigned to the JPG bomb field.



B-25, Mitchell bomber dropping bombs in northern end of JPG in 1943 (Shelby Township, Ripley County.)

General Sweeney was born on the 27th of December 1919 in Lowell, Massachusetts. He attended North Quincy High School and graduated in 1937. He attended Boston University for one year. Charles W. Sweeney entered the military service on the 28th of April 1941 as an Army Air Corps Aviation Cadet. On December 12, 1941, he was commissioned a second Lieutenant and a pilot, and was assigned to Jefferson Proving Ground, Madison, Indiana where he was promoted to Captain, and in 1943 was transferred to Eglin Air Force Base, Florida. Later during 1943 he attended Purdue University acquiring a certificate in Advanced Mathematics.

Lt. Sweeney rapidly advanced at JPG. He was promoted to First Lieutenant. on 24 March 1942, and he was promoted to Captain on 22 February 1943. General Sweeney stated "that he loved JPG and that Madison was a lovely city, but he wanted to get into the war effort."

In the spring of 1943, Major Waugh was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel (LTC.) and transferred to Eglin Air Force Base, Florida where he was to be Director of Operations. Capt. Robert Van Dusen became the commander of the JPG Detachment. Capt. Sweeney at once spoke to LTC Waugh and asked to be transferred to Eglin. At this time the B-29 [Super Fortress] was a secret airplane. In July 1943 Capt. Sweeney was indeed transferred to Eglin as an operations officer and test pilot. In September of 1943, he met Colonel Paul Tibbets, who later dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. Capt. Sweeney joined Colonel Tibbets' unit in January or early February, 1944.

As stated before, the B-29 was a secret airplane that had been developed at Wright Field near Dayton, Ohio. Since the Program Office had not seen an operational B-29, Capt. Sweeney flew a Super Fortress from Eglin Air Force Base, Florida to Dayton spending two days at Patterson Field. At that time Wright and Patterson Fields were separate. On his return trip he made a short stop at JPG; thus, landing the first B-29 at the JPG airport where he had a short visit with his old friends.

General Sweeney stated that he loved JPG, but he wanted to get into combat. While he was there, he dropped bombs from B-25 bombers, and shot rockets from fighters at the north end of the proving ground. He became very familiar with North Vernon from the air. Some of the aircraft he flew at JPG were the P-47 Thunderbolt, B-25, and the A-20.

General Sweeney told these two stories on himself about his tour at JPG. One he liked to fly under the Madison Milton Bridge. He received written orders not to fly under the bridge, but he said he did it a couple of times when no one was watching. The other story was that when an aircraft that the then Lt Sweeney was flying made its final turn over the northwest corner of JPG near Nebraska, the bombardier opened the bomb bay doors, a normal practice up to that time, and eight 500 pound bombs fell out just before the aircraft crossed over onto JPG property. JPG personnel searched for the bombs, but never found them.

## George Miller



George Miller, one of the First JPG Test director's, Mike Moore, JPG's unofficial historian and Bob Congleton, the last JPG Test director, all friends standing in front of the gun that fired the last round at JPG.

George Miller in his column "It Reminds Me" in the Madison Courier has related the story that five bombs were dropped out over the fields north of the proving ground. Keith Stewart was an observer on the plane. Mr. Miller's column on 8 May 1965 describes the story this way. Luckily the bombs had not been armed, but when a 500 lb. bomb hits the earth, especially a plowed field, it makes a hole about 15 feet in diameter. The dirt kicked out of the hole then falls back into the hole covering up the bomb. Some 400 men were dispatched to the northwest corner of the proving ground, but were not told what fell out of the plane. Needless to say, no bombs were found and they remain to this day buried very close to the little town of Nebraska.

In June of 1944, then Capt. Sweeney was detailed for B-29 instructor duties that included General Curtis E. LeMay's B-29 transition training. Capt. Sweeney was promoted to Major in September of 1944. On the 4th of May 1945, at the age of 25, he became commander, 393d Bombardment Squadron. This was a B-29 unit that was assigned to Tinian in the Mariana Islands.

In the first seven months of 1944, the Central Pacific islands of Kwajalein, Eniwetok, Guam, Saipan, and Tinian were invaded by the Americans at a tremendous loss of life on both sides. On Tinian the Engineers constructed 8,000-foot-long landing strips in the coral, and at one point a valley was filled across to complete the length. 90 miles of hard-surface roads connected various parts of the Island.

On November 24, 1944, Brigadier General Emmett O'Donnell, led 111 B-29 Super Fortresses in an attack against the Musashino Engine Factory 1500 miles away in Tokyo. From that time on the islands of Japan were bombed with conventional bombs and later with fire-bombs made of jellied gasoline until August of 1945. Approximately one million people were killed during this phase of the War. Sweeney stated during this interview that "President Harry S. Truman warned the Japanese government that it would rain terror from the sky like no one had ever seen before and still the Japanese would not quit."

During all this time American scientists and engineers were feverishly working to complete the atomic bomb, and Colonel Paul Tibbets along with engineers from Wright Field was busy reconfiguring some 15 B-29 aircraft to accept the bombs. He also concentrated on training his men. Sweeney, who stated that he knew for 10 months that he and Tibbets would be dropping the bomb on Japan, continued to be totally involved.

The story of Hiroshima is told in books and movies. It is unnecessary to tell it again with the exception to note that the mission over Hiroshima was led by Colonel Paul Tibbets flying the famous Enola Gay armed with "Little Boy" on August 6, 1945. On the Hiroshima mission, Major Charles Sweeney flew his B-29 named the "Great Artiste" with instrumentation packages on board. These packages with parachutes attached, were released from Major Sweeney's plane. The packages floated above the mushroom cloud and telemetered data back to a scientist on board who recorded the readings. This mission went like clockwork.

Upon their return to Tinian, Colonel Tibbets gave Major Sweeney the command of the next atomic bomb drop. Since The "Great Artiste" was configured for scientific data collecting, Major Sweeney and Pilot Fred Bock traded planes. Fred Bock's aircraft was called "Bocks Car". So the second atomic bomb, "Fat Boy", was loaded in the "Bocks Car". This flight was fraught with danger for Major Sweeney and his crew, but there was never any thought to ditching the B-29 in the water. General Sweeney said during this interview "that he was determined to fly the plane right into a Japanese city if that was what it took to complete his mission."

At 3:00 in the morning, August 9, 1945, Major Sweeney and his crew took off from North Field on Tinian Island to begin a journey of delivering a 10,000 pound package to the enemy. He already knew that one of his fuel gages was malfunctioning; thus, he started out with 600 gallons less than normal.

The target was the steel-making city of Kokura, but clouds and smoke from previous fires obscured the target. Aware that they were short of fuel, Major Sweeney nevertheless headed the plane to the secondary target, Nagasaki. Nagasaki was obscured by about eight tenths cloud cover, so Major Sweeney was going to use radar to drop the bomb. But suddenly the bombardier yelled, "I've got it," and Major Sweeney said, "You own it," and the release was made.

Although he saw the Hiroshima blast; Major Sweeney did not see this explosion, because he was turning the "Bocks Car" to avoid the blast. The bomb was dropped at 30,000 feet. It was set to burst at 1500 -1800 feet above the ground for maximum blast; though scientists also determined that this would reduce concentration of the radiation. It took 52.4 seconds from release for the

bomb to explode. By that time Major Sweeney and his crew were 12 miles away. The concussion was more than they expected, but the plane was not damaged.

Knowing that they were low on fuel, Major Sweeney tried every trick to save fuel, and he did not “sightsee” along the way. An ocean ditch was a last consideration.

He feathered the props back to 1600 rpm, knowing that he was probably ruining the engines. He hoped to make a landing on Okinawa, and finally 12 hours after leaving Tinian, Major Sweeney landed the B-29 on Okinawa. He stated that “I was so tired that I didn’t even taxi the plane in. I said they could come and get it with a tug.”

In the USAF Museum’s spacious conference room on 19 April 1995, Jim Hannah, Associated Press Reporter, asked General Sweeney, “Why are you just now coming out and telling your story?” General Sweeney answered, “The Smithsonian Museum in Washington DC announced that it was going to have a 50th anniversary display depicting the dropping of the two atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Many veterans groups were upset at reports that looked like an attempt to portray the Japanese as victims by displaying the horrors of the destruction on the ground to the Japanese people. These veterans wrote their congressmen and congresswomen stating that the display was not fair to the thousands of American dead caused by Japan in WWII.” General Sweeney started getting calls from the news media, such as Nightline and others asking his opinion and he gave it freely. The response by Congress and veterans’ groups caused the Smithsonian to change its display. The person in charge of the exhibit even resigned over the flap. General Sweeney, in his speech the night of the 19th of April, stated that “The United States was not the aggressor in that war. We were savagely attacked at Pearl Harbor and thousands of Americans died wresting the Pacific Islands away from the Japanese. An Allied invasion of Japan was scheduled for November of 1945.”

President Truman was convinced that thousands if not a million people would die in the invasion and so ordered the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.” Five days later on August 14, 1945 Japan surrendered unconditionally.

General Sweeney wants to tell the story straight, as it was. He is in a unique position in that he was there.



Major Charles Sweeney, later General Sweeney, is standing in front of the Operations Office on Tinian Island, just prior to dropping the atomic bomb on Nagasaki, Japan.

### **Interview post log:**

After the war, newly promoted LTC Sweeney joined the Massachusetts Air National Guard where he attained the rank of Major General. General Sweeney became a partner in the firm Kelley and Sweeney Leather Company. He married and was the father of ten children. He was a member of St. Agatha's Parish, Milton Massachusetts.

On a personal note, I would like to thank Mr. Graham Taylor of the Madison Courier, Madison, Indiana for allowing me to represent the paper at General Sweeney's Press Conference. Many thanks to the General himself, who allowed me to interview him on the time he was stationed at Jefferson Proving Ground-Madison, Indiana. Mike Moore, Dayton, Ohio 19 April 1995.

NOTE: Major General Charles Sweeney died on July 16, 2004 at the age of 84.

### **More Bomb Field Activities:**

(Ducking Napalm Bombs and Gathering Silk: Madison Courier May 8, 1965 by George Miller)

Mr. Miller has been mentioned before. He was a Proof Director and Office manager at the JPG bomb field from the time it opened until he received a Navy commission in 1944. In those days planes flew out of Wright Field in Dayton, Ohio. (Keith Stewart would fly on those planes with Lt Sweeney to be discussed later). On this one occasion George and his crew on the ground were starting a program of testing photo flash bombs. The bombs were 100 lbs. in weight and designed to go off at 5,000 feet. If they fell to the ground, the bomb would make a crater about

10 feet across and 5 to 10 feet deep. The crew was set up and ready for the test, but no bombs were dropped and no planes were heard.

The ground crew argued that no bombs were dropped. The airplane crew said they did. This argument got heated and after about an hour or two the bomber went back to Wright Field and the ground crew went home. The next morning the commanding officer phoned the Bomb section and said a farmer south of New Marion thought something happened in his barnyard which might have some connection with JPG, and George was asked to take a look. The plane had missed the lights on the ground, mistook the farmhouse for the bomb field and dropped the photo flash bombs missing JPG completely. Of the ten bombs dropped 9 functioned properly at 5,000 feet, but one hit the ground and exploded. The bomb blew out all the window lights of the chicken house and de-feathered a number of chickens. George said that the chickens stopped laying, but he never found out what the government settled on to the farmer. These stories are but a few that former employees tell us about. They illustrate how dangerous the work was at the proving ground, but in 50 years of operation only two persons were killed and injuries were kept to a minimum by employees following stringent safety rules.

## PROVING GROUND WINS “E” PENNANT

THE INDIANAPOLIS STAR OCT. 1942

Jefferson Proving Ground, Madison, Indiana: Oct 1. (Special) - In recognition of high achievement in the production of the war equipment the Army-Navy “E” award was presented to the Jefferson Proving Ground at impressive ceremonies at noon today.

An imposing array of high-ranking army and navy officers and distinguished civilians occupied the banner-draped speakers’ platform erected in front of the administration building.

The presentation address was delivered by Col. DeRosey C. Cabell of Camp Sutton, North Carolina, who served as commanding officer during the construction of the proving ground. The pennant was accepted by Col. I. A. Luke, commanding officer, in behalf of the civilian and military personnel of the post. The first pins, one of which will be given to each permanent employee, were presented by Lieutenant Commander C. E. Briner, inspector of naval ordnance at Louisville, KY., and to **Miss Maryland V. Roop**, who responded briefly as spokesman for the personnel of the post.

The army band from Bowman Field, KY, played martial airs during the program while the air corps detachment, stationed at Jefferson Proving Ground, was drawn up in company front to add military background to the exercises.

The Rev. W. J. Stephenson of Madison gave the invocation and words of welcome by Boss Johnson of Cincinnati, OH, who acted as master of ceremonies. Permanent civilian and military employees of the post and their invited guest viewed the presentation ceremonial and were given a voice in the proceeding when they gave the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

A squad from the military police auxiliary of the post raised the pennant to position directly beneath the Stars and Stripes on the proving ground flag pole while the Bowman band played “Reveille.” Following the program, the distinguished visitors were guests at a luncheon at the post-exchange. (See photo in Henry Moore interview - page 102)

## **The End of 1941-Showing off a Hard Year's Work**

By September the end was in sight. By October it was predicted that folks could hear almost continuous firing. The Airport runways were completed in 44 days. Work began on July 10 and was completed on August 23, when the first plane landed on the new runways.

Open house, Madison Day was held November 1 and attracted 10,000 people in the first two hours. The designated route through the grounds took visitors along the firing line where guns ranging in size from 77mm to 155mm were on display. Some of the larger guns were firing, gun crews were hustling ammunition up in position, and many who visited the grounds had their first glimpse of Uncle Sam's big guns in action. Visitors also saw virtually all the 120 buildings on the grounds, big locomotives were moving from one building to another, the fire department had its big pumper out, an airplane was circling over the airport hangar while hundreds of cars drove the full length of one of the runways. Madison day guests were routed by the Officers' quarters where about 20 spick and span former farmhouses had been placed around a U shaped court.

Bill Ladd, Staff Courier Journal Correspondent put it this way. "It seems that powder manufactured at a powder mill differs occasionally in strength. At a proving ground they line up numerous guns and fire actual projectiles. First they fire with a shell with standard powder. Then they fire one with the latest lot from the powder mill. A bevy of unfortunate guys are posted at approximately the spot where the shell is expected to land. They are protected amply by bombproof shelters. As the second shell lands, these men telephone back to officials a comparison of the results of the standard powder and the new lot." That is a pretty good description from a civilian. Some 14,000 folks went to the proving ground that day.

His job done, the recently promoted Col Cabell was reassigned to a secret place on April 25, 1942. Mrs. Cabell and her father, General George H. Morgan remained a few weeks.

## **June 27, 1942 Additional Land Acquired**

1800 more acres were acquired to improve the high volume of firing at the proving ground. This parcel of land bordered the south west side of the proving ground. This strip of land was about 1/2 mile wide and 5 miles long. Owners' had to be out by August 1, 1942. In the area needed were two cemeteries—Mt. Eden and Craig, and a Church ---the International Holiness church, along with 20 farms.

## **March 4, 1942 Chauffer Job Open**

Open competitive examinations for the position of Chauffer, at the Jefferson Proving ground at \$1200 a year, have been announced by the U. S. civil service commission.

## Interview with Dr. Ralph Pratt

By Mike Moore



Stacey Horine, EOD specialist discusses with Dr. Ralph Pratt on whether two shells in his garage were explosive or not.

I had two years of college at Indiana University, Pre-Med, but we parted ways and since Mr. Bear, later a Sheriff and my dad were friends, Mr. Bear hired me as a guard. I worked for the contractor that furnished guards while JPG was being built in 1941. I made \$20 per week. That was pretty good money during those times. I started in March. Some of the guards would be asleep when I drove up. I would slam on the brakes and make loud noise to wake them up. I wouldn't let them know that I knew they were asleep. We would talk awhile then go on to the next guard shack. I drove up into Ripley County and made a complete circle. Some places had water gaps. We had guards on water gaps and I checked on them, I would drive within a few miles of Highway 50, near Butlerville. The mileage on the pickup would read 75 to 100 miles. There was an all night restaurant up there that had good sandwiches. Sometimes I would have an extra guard with me. We always tried to have one extra in case someone was ill.

**Question: In the 80's we would have guards wreck out on the roads all by them selves. Did you ever have a guard run into a deer?**

No there were no deer here. I grew up out in Brooksborg and played on those hills, there was never any deer here in those days. Up in the proving ground near Old Timbers there were a few deer there. We were told that the people from Old Timbers had stocked the animals themselves. Some times, I would go close to Old Timbers in the night and I have driven into Old Timbers, but I had never seen a deer or wild turkey.

The Government had guards also. The government guards were oriented a little bit differently. They also cruised the area. We had seventy or so Simmons and O'Conner contractor guards. They were not armed or anything. There would be only one government guard on duty. He would

always find four or five of them asleep. Sometimes, I would wake them up and they would go back to sleep and when the Government guard found them, he turned their names in. So every morning we would have two to four new guards. The Government took over that duty around mid summer when most of the fence was complete and the roads were blocked and pretty much disbanded. Then I was transferred out to a parts depot.

Mechanics would come in and pick up parts, Caterpillar equipment, that kind of stuff. I worked in there it was just like a parts store. They would ask for some odd part. I was only 20 years old; I never had seen a Caterpillar, but there were several people that knew what was going on. The mechanics themselves would walk behind and get the part. I stayed there until probably around August.

I had a neighbor at Brooksbury. He had never done anything with his life. He managed to get by. He was a very fine person; he just did not work hard. He got a job as a guard. The very first night, I saw his name on the roster. To my knowledge that was the very first job he had. So that night, I got to his guard shanty. He was asleep. He woke up pretty soon and came out and got into the pickup with me. It was winter time and we had the windows rolled up and the heater going and he sat there and we talked awhile and then he got back out and went into his shanty. The next night I saw that he had been laid off. He had been caught sleeping. Here this man is a neighbor of mine, just lived real close to my folks. Of course he is dead now. Nobody would know this story. I thought that he will blame me for turning him in for sleeping. I went to his house as soon as I got home the next day. I told him that I saw that he got laid off and I said that I hope you do not think that I turned in. He laughed, and said, "No, I knew you did not do it. The government guard caught me after you came by and turned me in." But he said, "It doesn't matter." He did not want to go out there anyway. He said my wife made me go out there and get a job. (laughter)

Another of my duties was to get the telephone operators to the exchange. They had their own exchange. The operators were girls from out of town. There was a girl from Seymour that I remember, one from Indianapolis, and they did not have cars. Sometimes I would have to bring a little station wagon down to Madison to pick those girls up at night. The entrance at that time was from Paper Mill Road. That is where they had the time clocks. As you went in on the right side there was time clocks and I think our guard building was close in there. At that time there was just nothing over at Michigan Road.

I remember Gayle Rogers from Milton. I think he was in charge of the guard office in the daytime. I don't know anyone else except Dr. Stucker who was a time keeper. I left about the end of August. I left because I saw a piece in the newspapers that the government had a series of courses at Purdue, no tuition. I went there in August for three months. There were 15 of us in the Chemistry Department and we studied the chemistry of explosives. Then I went to the Elwood Ordnance Plant as a Group Inspector on the primers for the 105 millimeter howitzer line in Joliet, Illinois. We shipped a lot of stuff to JPG for testing. I had two deferments. I did not ask for the third deferment, so I was drafted on Jefferson County's quota, but I went through the Chicago Induction Center. They inducted 1500 people a day.

I waited 8 years and then went back to Indiana University in 1949 and finished up my Pre-Med.

## **Interview of Dr. William Irving Stucker March 3, 2006**

Location: Jefferson County Historical Society:

NAME: Dr. William E. Stucker -Captain, USNR -Ret.

**Rachel Getz, Interviewer**

Subject: Dr. Stucker worked as a JPG employee twice

**Rachel : Please describe your job a JPG.**

Dr. Stucker: Right after school was out in 1942, I was digging ditches along the firing line and JPG decided to have a fast pitch soft ball team. I went out for it and made the team and the next I was the timekeeper for the housing project. I worked there until I had to go back to school that fall.

In 1950, I came back after I had been in the Navy, from Newfoundland. I was married and had a child, so I needed the cash. The proving ground hired me that year to be assistant purchasing agent for the Pinker Construction Company. The purchasing agent was from Cincinnati, and he commuted every day. One day he had a detached retina of the eye and they made me purchasing agent. This was getting late in the summer time. The Pinker Company had several contracts to let and they wanted me to stay. I had been accepted to IU Dental School. The Boss called the Dean of the IU Dental School and asked if Dr. Stucker could finish the end of the year with Pinker. I was delighted that the Dean wouldn't allow it, because I had been out of school for nine years and I figured it would be tough. So that was the second time that I worked there.

**Rachel: Could you describe your workplace?**

Dr. Stucker: Of course the first time it was digging ditches along the firing line. Then I went to a supply storage house where I had a desk. My actual workplace took place in the housing area. They brought houses in, moved them in, refinished them, and got them ready for the people and I was the timekeeper there. The government timekeeper there was a Mr. Head as I recall.

**Rachel: What kind of activities did you go too? Dances, plays, etc?**

Dr. Stucker: No I did not because I was pretty busy at school, college and I did not have a whole lot of extra time. I did play on the soft ball team which kept me pretty busy too.

**Rachel: Could you describe the events under which you left JPG?**

Dr Stucker: Both times I went back to college. The first time, I went back to Hanover, the second time I went back to IU Dental School on the GI Bill.

**Rachel: Do you have any stories to tell that folks might think interesting?**

Dr. Stucker: I think the most interesting thing was going from a ditch digger which was a tough hard job. It shows what sports can do for you because once I made the softball team, I was timekeeper which was little or no job at all. (Chuckles). I had a little booklet and the names of the employees on there and in the morning I would put a dot down at the bottom of the square and in the afternoon I would put a dot in the top of the square. That was the job such as it was. Also, I always took advantage or the occasion to walk by my other employees that were still digging ditches and I would say, "Hello Boys." (Chuckles)

**Mike Moore: Did your softball team win?**

Dr. Stucker: Yes we had a good softball team. The JPG team played in the Madison League. They had an all-star team that I was fortunate to make and that team traveled. There were selected people from each team. I played third base. On September the 7th of 1942, I enlisted in the Navy. I did not come back to Madison until 1950, because that is when I got employed again at the Proving Ground.

Another thing happened to me that was kind of amusing that was almost fatal to me in a way, I guess. I was joining a fraternity out at Hanover, which meant my nights were not for sleeping that's for sure. I was very sleepy this particular day. One of the houses was literally finished along the housing group. Well, I thought that I would sneak in there and take a little nap. The government time keeper, a man by the name of Mickey Head, he was a tough guy, he did not put up with any nonsense at all. I went in this building and I went upstairs and laid down. I just was dozing off, and I heard the door open downstairs. I came rushing down stairs and sure enough, it was Mickey Head. I said there is nobody up there. (Chuckles) so I came close to losing a good job.

My Dad all his life was a great believer in getting into government employment to draw a retirement. So he was very thrilled to work there. He originally started with the construction part of it. He then ended up as the conductor on the railroad at JPG which he thought was a wonderful job.

His job was to tell the engineer where to take the train. He was sort of "boss" of the JPG railroad. His name was Albert Irving Stucker. He was born February 8, 1896. I was born February, one week later in 1923. He did not make it to retirement. Once things settled down they let everybody go you know. So he did not get to fulfill his life long dream to retire from the government.



Lewis Pugh, Engineer from Austin, Indiana and Conductor  
Albert Stucker of Madison operate Engine Number 7770  
to move ammunition and weapons around JPG.

He worked at construction a lot with the highway department and he worked at the tobacco warehouses in Madison. Of course we lived on a farm at that time and he farmed. He was a great man and I admired him a lot because he never liked the idea of pampering the poor. I have seen him many times; some fellow would want a quarter for a coffee and sandwich. Dad would never give him the quarter. He would say come to the restaurant and I will buy it for you, because they would end up buying wine, etc.

There is a picture of my dad and engineer on the locomotive. It was taken in 1956. He just worked at JPG during the Korean War. One interesting thing out there was St Magdalene's Church. It saddened me. I went to what we called the de-commissioning of St. Magdalene. The Bishop came out. The sad part was, they bought that church and they used it for bombing practice and it was a beautiful church.

By the way I was saddened a great deal. There was a one-room schoolhouse on old Highway 62, they called the Clay schoolhouse. It was a one-room schoolhouse that is where my dad went to school and it just recently got torn down. We tried to save it, but Charles Hensler bought the property and built some houses and just tore the building down.

My grandparents took in a lot of kids that did not have homes. They did not officially adopt them, because they did not do that in those days. They took in this girl from Cincinnati, Elsie and they of course, my dad and she walked to school, to the Clay school house. One day Elsie came home

and she was crying and Grandma said, "Elsie what is wrong." She said Irvin hit me. So Grandma called in my Dad and Elsie and she said, "You know what I think about little kids that don't tell the truth. Now Elsie, did Irving hit you?" "Yes he hit me." "Irving did you hit Elsie?" "No I didn't, I just tinselled her with walnuts." (Chuckles).

I have a box of Dad's old things and I will go back and see if there is anything you would be interested. Before he went to the Proving Ground, he was an inspector on the Madison Milton Bridge. That was a good job. I would remember him well. He would come home and my Mom would get on him about walking on the beams. He said, "It scares me to death," but I would not dare get down and crawl, because they would make fun of me. I have his little hammer where he would tap on the rivet and if it was bad, he would turn it over and mark it and then they had to replace it. When he left there, we went to Herman, Missouri where at that time was 100% German. Everybody spoke German. It was so interesting to us because when we would go to church in Hermann, the basic language was a dead language, so the Mass was exactly like it was in Madison, Indiana.

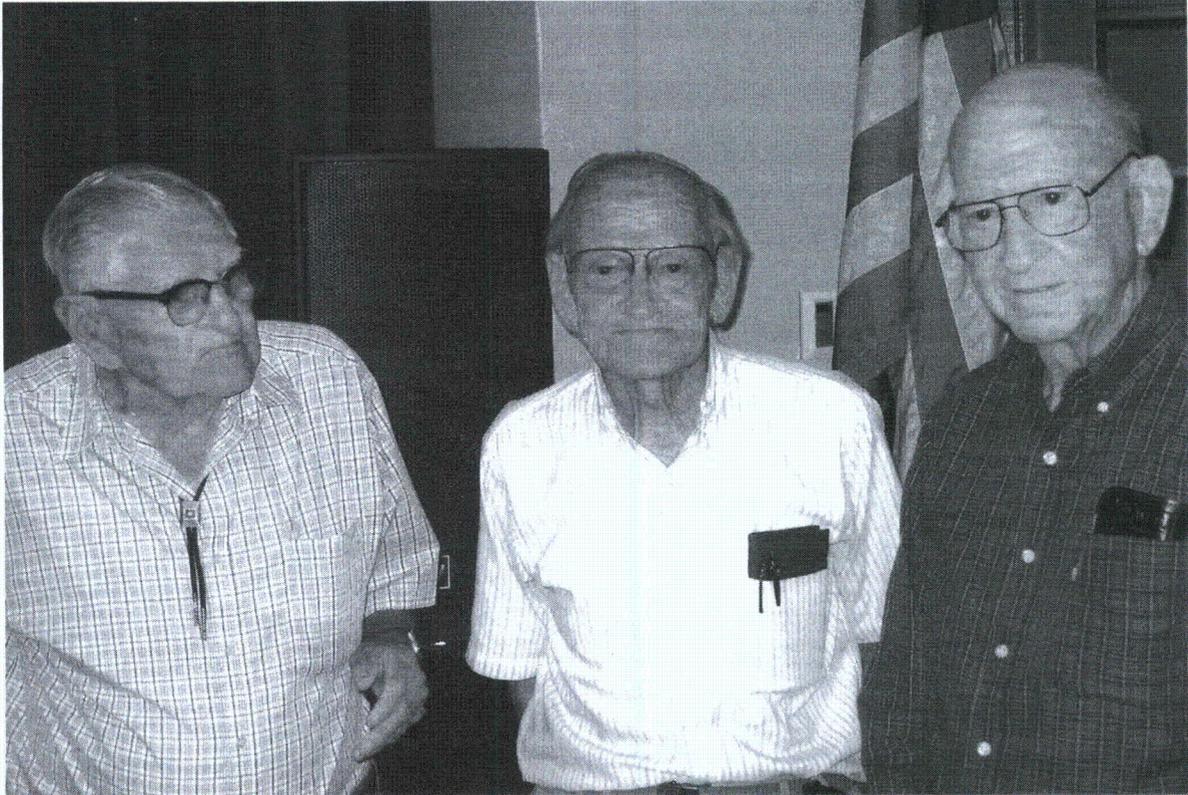


Rachel Getz, summer history intern, at the research library of the Jefferson County Historical Society, interviews Dr. William Stucker about WWII.

## Follow-up Interview of Louis Munier

by Mike Moore.

The date was February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2006. The location was Building 125, JPG.



L. to R. Leroy Harsin, Louis Munier, and George Bayless at Lydia Middleton Elementary School, Madison, Indiana 5/2007.

I was released from the Army on a medical discharge and then went to work at JPG in Artillery Repair (Building 227). I was drafted April 14<sup>th</sup> 1941 by Selective Service to go for a year's training. I was drafted into the antitank company 151<sup>st</sup> Infantry, 38<sup>th</sup> Division, Camp Shelby, Mississippi. We had 37MM anti-tank guns that we towed by a weapons carrier. Then later we had jeeps and changed to 57MM antitank guns that we pulled behind the jeep.

Then I drove a command car for a captain and then one of the lieutenants. Then Pearl Harbor hit Dec. 7<sup>th</sup> 1941. Then no one got out of the Army when their year's training was up. They sent the 151<sup>st</sup> Infantry to Fort Benning, Georgia to put on a demonstration with the anti-tank guns for the students that were going off to Officer's Candidate School. I then had surgery in the hospital there at the station hospital. They were going to transfer me to the 150<sup>th</sup> Infantry to go to Panama, but they found out that I had scars on my lungs so they did not take me. After the hospital they put me on limited service, so they sent me to Huntsville Texas where we had

German prisoners from North Africa. I was in a guard company and then I found out there was an opening at headquarters of the camp. I asked to be transferred to Headquarters. I did not know anything about running an office, but they gave me the job. I went to work for a sergeant. He was in charge of all the incoming and outgoing mail and the machine that would mimeograph the daily orders. He taught me all about that. We had to keep a file of every officer and what company they were in and every enlisted man and the company he was in.

I was a private then, so after about three months, I made T5 the same pay as a corporal, \$66 dollars a month. About 3 weeks later they were building camp up in Oklahoma and the Army sent this sergeant up there and threw all this work into my lap. About three weeks later, I made sergeant. I was in charge of all mail and had a fellow helping me. There was also a staff sergeant from Army Intelligence and I was working with him. Anything that came in the mail that looked suspicious, I was supposed to turn it over to the FBI. On April the 18<sup>th</sup>, I went home and got married to Mary Ellen Jones that I was engaged to before I went into the Army. So she came down there and we had a garage apartment for \$35 dollars a month, no \$25 dollars a month. Later we moved into a duplex for \$35 dollars a month. About August of that year, they were checking on our health and found the scars on my lungs again and sent me to a hospital in Temple, Texas. They thought that I had TB and put me in a TB ward and kept me there until May of 1944, and they gave me a medical discharge.

I came home and about a month later, I went out to the Jefferson Proving Ground to see about getting a job. They hired me right away for Artillery Repair. I worked on all the guns that they were testing on the firing line. I worked there until November of 1945 until they were laying off and then I got a job at the Scott Wholesale grocery company. I went down there and took a job. They closed up in 1952, so then I went to work for Thompson Glass Dairy. I worked there for thirty one and a half years, until January 30<sup>th</sup>, 1984.

**Who was your boss out at Artillery Repair?**

He was a civilian, Julius Solad from New York. Well, all in there were civilians. Ralph Sauers was the assistant foreman. Then a Truman Perry from Bedford Kentucky, he was shop foreman. After awhile there, they gave me the job of ordering the gun parts. They had a room on the side there where we could store some parts and we did not have to go to Property to get parts, if you needed some little spring or something. I kept them on file- the different parts. We had two Navy guns that, a 3 inch and a 5 inch and I had to order those parts off the blue prints, so I had to take some classes on blue prints to order those parts.

**Did you drive your car from Madison all the way to the building?**

There were some railroad tracks and our parking lot was right across those tracks. This was Bldg 227. I had about 5 passengers. I went down town to pick some up. It cut down on traffic.

**Did you have to wear a badge on your shirt to gain access to work?**

No, I had some kind of license on the bumper of my car. It had a number on it.

**How did they work on those big guns? Did they winch them up into a truck or what?**

There was a British Aircraft Gun at the East Stockade. We would take that barrel off after so many shots. The gauge and photo folks would come over and check out the barrel. We had a big old tractor that we would bring some of the guns in to the shop where we would work on them. We had two little Case tractors and a trailer where we could take that barrel off of the British gun and then some of the little guns we could bring the whole gun in. We did not check the inside of the barrel. The gauge and photo folks did that. Our section just repaired guns, not measure them. I worked there from June 1944 until November 1945. I attended one Christmas party in the building. I think we had a Christmas tree. There were 28 employees working in Artillery Repair. Three office girls were there to type different things. The rest were men.

Was it a pretty friendly place to work?

Oh yes, very friendly. Kinda like family almost there. Everybody knew each other. We had a Halloween party I think down at Crystal Beach. Everybody dressed up. There was a real crowd there.

I had not worked here too long and we got two tanks in with 75MM or might have been 105MM guns mounted on them. We had some visitors then.

I took my own lunch. My wife packed me a lunch. Most of the men in Artillery Repair brought their own lunch. We had employees from Trimble County, Versailles, some from Vevay, etc. There are only two of us left- Bill Hunt and I. Two out of 28 is not too bad after 60 years.

Some folks planted Victory Gardens out at JPG, but I don't think the ground was too good. Only folks that used to farm out here could grow things in this soil.

**Could you tell us what a "dead furrow" is?**

Much of the ground out there was flat. For about 50 feet they would throw the soil up to the middle. Then out by the edge there would be a dead furrow and the water from that dead furrow would flow over there in kind of another ditch they had plowed beside. So that is how they kind of drained that. Flat ground is a lot different to farm than other type of ground. My father had another farm. Where we lived was on Big Creek. The other farm was about a mile north. It was flat ground. On that land he had tried to change that dead furrow. It did not work. The water just stood there. My father had to plow it back like it was before with the dead furrow to get it to drain.

**Would you tell the tape recorder about the time that when you came back to see your old home place?**

The Fourth of July 1945, while I was working in Artillery Repair, a Captain May was in charge of the firing line. He took me out there. He wanted to go out and fish on Big Creek. He took me out there where I lived. Our house was still there bout like it was before the government took

over the farm. The back part of the house was stone. I went up there on the second floor and looked in the room where my sisters lived. There was a 75MM projectile laying there on the floor, knocked a hole on that back wall laying on the floor, so I got out of there fast. I don't think the Army used it for target practice, I think it just landed there.

My old farm place is in the hottest contamination on the proving ground. There is more stone left on our place than any other site out there. The wall is still standing. My Great Grandfather Louis Munier bought that farm in 1851 from Nathan Yost, and he was the son of Isaac Yost and he had a brother John Yost. His father and the two sons were stone masons and we think that Isaac Yost built our house. Then in 1842 Nathan Yost and his wife Elsie sold land for Big Creek Church for 4 dollars. John Yost and Nathan Yost built Big Creek Church and Nathan Yost was also the head stone mason of the old Presbyterian Church built in 1844. A newspaper article also states that John and Nathan Yost worked out there at that Eleutherian College [in Lancaster] and did some stone work out there. .

I was the 4<sup>th</sup> generation of my family that lived out there on the old farm.



Louis Munier and TSGT Joann Seibenthal visited at Old Timbers Christmas party in 2008.

## **JPG Wrecks Business- Madison Courier June 28, 1941**

### **Dupont Canner Finds tomato Acreage Gone –Asks Federal Relief**

Five hundred and thirty one tomato cans nicely sealed and addressed to each member of congress are leaving the Dupont post office Saturday to rattle down upon Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C., to tell of the distress wrought upon the Dupont Canning Factory by the Jefferson Proving Grounds. According to G.C. Cook, the manager of the plant, this normally thriving Lancaster Township industry, had secured acreage almost entirely from what is now the Proving Ground, the better quality and the largest quantity coming from Marble Corner and St. Magdalen neighborhoods.

The available acreage is not sufficient to operate the factory and therefore Mr. Cook must close the plant, which has been an important factor in the employment of labor about Dupont. Mr. Cook had invested his life's work and his savings, which would be lost.

"These letters will be hermetically sealed in a No. 2 tin can which will serve as the envelope for the letter. The can will then be addressed one to each of the various representatives with the notation: "Letter inside: use can opener". Mr. Cook wished to be reimbursed from the loss of his savings by the federal government. The War department had previously advised Mr. Cook that it had no money to reimburse him for the loss of the plant. -----

### **County seeks reimbursement for roads lost in JPG- Madison Courier May 22, 1941.**

Reasons for a \$152, 474 claim lodged against the government for reimbursement for 46.6 miles of Jefferson county roads within the proving ground were presented to government officials this morning at a special meeting with the county commissioners. The claim was presented by Mrs. Elizabeth Otter, county auditor to the Office of the Adjutant General, Washington DC. Rosco Lee volunteered that of the 60,000 acres in the proving ground area, 20,000 are situated in Jefferson County, and 90 per cent of this amount lies in Monroe Township. Mrs. Otter communicated with Senators Raymond Willis and Frederick Van Nuys and Congressman Earl Wilson for assistance on the county's behalf and all three cooperated.

## **Fate of Township up for Discussion ---Madison Courier May 6, 1941**

How to satisfactorily and legally dispose of Monroe Township, three/fourths of which has been absorbed into the Jefferson Proving Ground. It had been assumed that Monroe Township would be abolished with the remaining land distributed to neighboring Lancaster and Shelby Townships; however, it was discovered that the county commissioners had no power to even move the boundaries of Monroe Township. The township problem was taken up by a meeting of the county commissioners. The session was made up of the following interested persons: Lillard Custer, trustee of Monroe Township, and Cleve Yost, Harvey Lindsay, and Michael Heitz, township advisory board members; Glen Ralston, trustee of Shelby Township; John Kelly, Lancaster Township trustee; former Judge Curtis Marshall, Attorney for Monroe Township; and W. H. Clashman, county school superintendent.

Also present O. A. Stutsman, former county auditor. William R. Cook is president of the board of commissioners. Other members are Dawson Smith and Louis Van Buren. Mrs. Elizabeth Otter, county auditor is clerk and George R. Metford is county attorney.

Mr. Metford stated that the law was that 51 percent of the remaining land-holders had to petition asking that the changes be made to join the other townships. Since the proving ground area leaves a strip of Monroe's township on both the east and west side of the proving ground, the residents of each of these strips would be required to petition to join the other townships. Mr. Metford stated that Monroe Township would remain as an entity in existence since there is no law whereby the township may be dissolved. It was estimated that about 58 families reside in the east strip and about 15 families reside in the west strip of land not taken by the Proving ground. The meeting closed with a suggestion for the families left in the remaining Monroe strips to think about what they would like to do. Decisions about schools, taxes, roads, etc would have to be made.

## **Hermit Is Found On Army's Tract**

### **Says He Knew Nothing of Purchase for Proving Ground**

Army Officers at the Jefferson Proving Ground near Madison were confronted with a new problem when they found an 80-year-old hermit living on the 60,000-acre tract.

Already families in the area have been moved out, but the engineers found the hermit last Friday and he told them he knew nothing about the government having bought up the land. He said he had read no newspapers, had no radio and had no connections with the outside world except for the occasional visits with distant neighbors.

The man asked the engineers where a family in a distant farmhouse had gone. He said he had been getting kerosene for his lamps at the house, but had found no one at home. The house has been vacated to make room for the proving ground.

The hermit told the engineers he had no intention of moving because he had just completed planting his summer garden.

(From the Osgood Journal)

### **JPG Hermit Wanders Back to Old Haunts**

Leander Hans, who was referred to a few weeks ago in newspapers as a hermit found living in Shelby township in the Jefferson Proving Ground area, and was taken to the County Infirmary for residence, wandered back to his old haunts one day last week.

He was discovered by JPG guards and taken to Madison where he was held in jail until Sunday when local authorities were notified.

Hans is a man in his eighties and resents being taken from his old place of abode in the proving ground. It is said there is a little hut on the county farm and that an attempt is being made to get Hans to stay there for awhile in the hope that he will be more contented than he is in the men's dormitory.

(From the 1 May 1941 Osgood Journal)

## Mary Lou Hill Interview

May 2007

Jefferson County Historical Association

By Mike Moore

Subject: Baby Sitting at JPG



Mary Lou Hill and other high school girls baby sat for officers and wives at JPG during WWII.

Mike Moore: This is Mike Moore with Mary Lou Hill at the Jefferson County Historical Society on Wednesday the 9th of May 2007 at 1:00 pm. We are interviewing Mary Lou about her experience as a baby sitter for the employees of JPG during World War II.

Mary Lou: Now I have the year, it could have been 1944 or 1945 or 1946, those were probably the years. The people that were involved in baby sitting, were actually my neighbor, but they were about my age probably 15 or so. Maybe some of them were a little older. Their names were Mary Virginia Evans and her mother. I did not find out that until yesterday she sat for Colonel Hardigg. Mary Virginia sat with us in the summer during the day. Her mother probably sat at night. I was not allowed to stay later than 11:00 pm.

**Mike Moore: Was it just in the summer time?**

Mary Lou: No. I was there in the winter also. Of course, I did not go during the day. I think it would be Saturday night if they had a party. Mary Virginia and her mother, Viola baby sat for Col. Hardigg. Bernice Rusk sat for a Lt. Fry. Carolyn Scott, Rosmund Scott, and Mary Margaret Scott and I believe Suzanne Peddie sat for Major Bennett. I sat for Major Schucany, He and his wife had two children. Martha Green was another person that sat. I don't remember her sitting, but she might have been a tad older than us. All these folks have passed away except Bernice and I.

**Mike Moore: Bernice, is she the person from Shelbyville?**

Mary Lou: The bus was based at Central Hotel. It would pick us up at 07:30 am in the morning and then bring us back at 4:00 pm unless we had other plans there. That was Monday through Friday. If we went during the weekend, then our baby sitters would pick us up.

**Mike Moore: Oh, they would drive into town and then pick you up and take you out to JPG?**

Mary Lou: They would. They would car pool, especially if it was a big party. They had quite a few parties out there, a lot of bridge playing. There was a need for us to be there.

The scenario for the day would be we would gather at the playground in the morning. The children would play and we might take them for a walk around the horse shoe. Then we would go in for lunch. Then after lunch and naps we would gather and walk to the PX and that is where we would have ice cream treats. Then we would make sure to be back by four and then we would get on the bus. The whistle would blow. Did they all blow when you were there?

**Mike Moore: Yes**

Mary Lou: The whistle would blow and then Taps. Not Taps, but "day is done". I did not hear it in the morning, but I heard it in the afternoon and I loved it. We were teenagers of course. We were aware that the proving ground was an ammunition testing place. From that information we had no idea where they were getting that ammunition, which of course was from Charlestown powder plant and other places.

But when you're that young you just don't put that together as such and later on when you talk about the proving ground, of course you worked there and Fred [her husband] worked there and a lot of people that we know worked there. It was such a wonderful place for us to be with our children, because they had a pool at one time, and Officers Club. We played ball and basketball and then when Chris [her son] played tennis there was tennis there. There were all these facilities there for us, so we kind of felt like that was our private playground.

We would have reunions there.

**Mike Moore: Did Chris play with organized tennis or just pickup games on that tennis court out there?**

Mary Lou: Actually at that time he was just starting. His dad played. Fred played as a young man. He was good. He would invite Dave Ferguson, and others. His brother Jefferey would play.

I was just going to say something about the farmland that was there. We knew that there were many, many farmers and their families and it was certainly upsetting to them that they would have to move. I think too now that when we talk about this, Fred's Aunt and Uncle were there and of course they would have to move to town. As far as selling it and getting what the land was worth. The money was not all that important. It was just the fact that it was their home and you don't really have to put a price on what is there for you.

I remember my parents talking about the sale of the fence that went around the proving ground. If I remember correctly, it was an astounding amount of money. To me it was the most. I think Lodge Hardware was the provider of that fence. Then my dad, he named what the price was quoted. It was quite a bit of money for our little town. That (JPG) was probably a lot of income to a lot of people who did not have jobs.

So that provided Madison with money. I am not sure if it was anything like a record, but my dad was here in business and it helped him.

**Mike Moore: What kind of business was he in?**

Mary Lou: He was in the car business. He worked for Yunker Motors for many, many years. They had Chryslers, Plymouths and then he had used cars of course and trucks. Then in 1947, he bought the place on Broadway that is now the Livery Stable. That is where he had his first garage. He had to start with Fraiser-Kaiser automobiles. If you know anything about Fraiser-Kaiser automobiles, you know they were the ugliest automobiles I have ever seen.

**Mike Moore: My family in 1947, I forget whether it was a Kaiser or a Fraiser. I think there were some differences. They were high quality cars.**

Mary Lou: They were and that was the deal. He would take that until he could get the Oldsmobile, Cadillac franchise. That summer in 1947 I graduated from high school and that is the year he bought this dealership.

**Mike Moore: Could you tell me your parent's names?**

Mary Lou: My mother's name was Stella Thevenow. She worked in Food Services at the Madison State Hospital for twenty five years.

My father was H. A. Bennett. He was in the car business most of his life. He always told the story that he worked on top, inside and under the cars. In 1947 he bought the business and took us on a trip. He had a Chrysler New Yorker. It just had every bell and whistle that you could

imagine. It had Mohair lined seats. We had on shorts, because it was in August. We were stuck, oh, it was just terrible. My step-sister and step-mother went. That was just such an experience, because Wallasee at that time was a cabin a mile apart maybe. It is in northern Indiana. It was named Wallasee Lake. Tippecanoe and Wallasee are together. We visited that. My sister lives in Fort Wayne. We went back about four years ago and they have permanent places now. There were places that some of the movie people own.

When we were there in 1947 we rented a cabin and we had access to the water. There was swimming. It was beautiful. We had a row of trees in our yard. It stormed one night. We were in the loft. It was really scary during the storm. That was some of my childhood.

**Mike Moore: To go back a little, do you know the names of Fred's aunt and uncle, that used to live out there?**

Mary Lou: Rose and George Adams.

You know of course that Fred's grandmother lived out there?

**Mike Moore: The Leinenwebber's?**

Mary Lou: Yes.

**Mike Moore: Have you ever been out to that house?**

Mary Lou: I have. It was a stone house. It had one of those what they called a spring house. His aunts, four of his aunts went at the same time. They had to clear the path for us. They are all gone now, but they recalled their childhood for us. That was something to record.

**Mike Moore: Was it empty? Was there anyone living there when you visited?**

Mary Lou: No. No. It was empty. When we went over the creek you know. They said when it rained they couldn't even get out of there. There were times when it rained hard they wouldn't be able to go to school, they wouldn't even be able to go to church. They told very interesting stories. To me it was like a pioneer type of house.

**Mike Moore: Fred took me up there one time. I just looked at the outer shell. It seems like it was a very long wall full of large windows. Of course there was no glass, it was all gone. It was covered by weeds and vines.**

**To get back to your baby sitting days, do you remember how much they paid you?**

Mary Lou: I was trying to think. He paid by the week. In the summer time of course that was Monday through Friday. I am going to have to say that she paid me \$10 dollars. They were very generous. When we went we could eat all of our meals there. I did extra. She always told me I did not have to do extra, but I did. I washed dishes.

If you want me to tell you a very lively and funny story about Bernice, I will.

**Mike Moore: By all means.**

Mary Lou: She sat for Lt. Fry. He and his wife entertained quite a bit. They would even go out of town. They would go to Cincinnati. They liked to go to the symphony. They would be gone and she would go in the next morning. Everything was like Mrs. Fry left it. They had not cleared the table. The dishes were there. The sink was full. She would of course have to wash the dishes and take care of the children. Bernice told me what they would pay her for I guess a day. We were laughing when she was telling me this, just when I called her. For all of that I was paid three dollars. We really laughed about that.

But then too she said, "I did not care for he was so good looking. I just wanted to look at him," and we really laughed at that. They just had the one child. I just couldn't believe that Mrs. Fry would not clean up their house before she left, but then we said maybe she had a little wine. They were young. I would never do that. I had very active children. I wanted the baby sitter to concentrate on the children, not to have to clean. Those were funny times.

**Mike Moore: I think it was interesting that you got to take the kids to the PX and get ice cream. That's neat.**

Mary Lou: Yes. That happened just about everyday, unless one or two of us decided to make treats at home. Treats at home would be too hard for that many children in the yard. There were maybe four of us or five. We would all go to the PX. Between us, lets see the Schucany's had two, the Bennetts had two, Hardigg's had two. We probably had about ten children all together. Of courses we took care of our own children. They were very good children. We really did not have too much problems. I thought it was a vacation to tell you the truth. And too meeting them because they were from Dallas, the Schucany's were very, very southern. Mrs. Schucany, Veda was her name, she was very southern. We spelled their name phonetically Schucany. It is probably wrong, but that is the best I can do. (Note: It was Major Schucany of Dept W. D.)

**Mike Moore: Did you hear the guns going off when you were out there?**

Mary Lou: Yes we did. I was thinking I was more bothered by that at home in Madison than when I was baby sitting. A lot of times our windows would shake, but not out there for some reason or another. I guess it depended on which way the wind was blowing or the atmosphere; it was sometimes very loud. But of course you get used to it. It never bothered the children when they were taking a nap. I know some people were bothered and they really complained, but I was never really bothered. There were some folks still calling and complaining when Fred was there.

**Mike Moore: I was just wondering if you could remember any of the children's names that you baby sat for?**

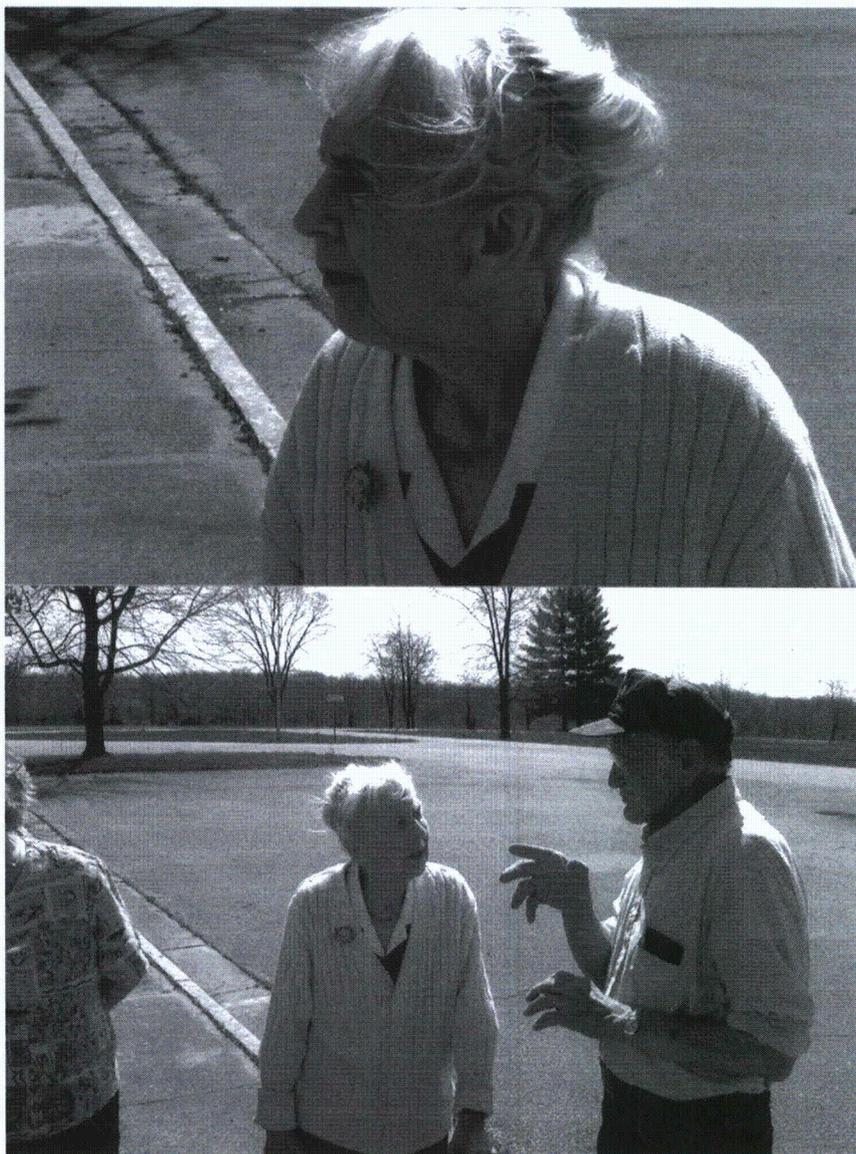
Mary Lou: I do. The Hardigg's had Bill Hardigg and they had another boy. And then the little boy that was left to us, his name was Dan Bennett. He was absolutely a doll. He was a little guy.

His mother was too. I sat for Bill Schucaney, four and Sue Schucaney who was six months when I went there. For quite awhile I heard from the Schucaney's and I don't know if Mary June, you see, the Hardigg's both stayed here for awhile, they had more children. The Hardigg's were here, oh gosh, but Mrs. Hardigg, I believe they had two more children., then the Dan Bennett and the little Fry girl, I do remember she had allergies. I remember Bernice had to put these little gloves on her and tie them so she would not scratch her face. She had terrible allergies. So she (Bernice) got the full treatment. She had only one child, but she had to clean up the house.

## Helen Miller

Article by Peggy Vlerbome, Madison Courier  
Saturday April 17, 2004

The Woman returns to visit JPG where she worked when the U. S. became involved in World War II.



Helen Miller returns to headquarters building, JPG where she worked in WWII.

Helen Miller recalls learning about the attack on Pearl Harbor as clearly as if it just happened. She didn't hear about it until she reported for work the next day at the Army's Jefferson Proving Ground, where she was the secretary to the chief proof officer. She had gone home to Cincinnati

for the weekend, as she did every Friday on the bus, and on Monday morning, Dec. 8, 1941, she returned to work in Building 100 at JPG at the end of the entry drive.

“Everyone was racing around here like crazy, Miller, who will be 88 on May 2, said Friday as she visited JPG for the first time since she worked there at the beginning of the United States’ involvement in World War II. My folks didn’t always turn the radio on. I came back and said, ‘What’s going on? She recalled a co-worker’s high-pitched, screechy voice asking her back, “What’s going on? Pearl Harbor was attacked.” “What’s Pearl Harbor? she remembers asking. “I never heard of Pearl Harbor in my life.”

The proving ground opened in December 1940, and by the next spring Helen Schepmann had transferred there from Erie Proving Ground in Port Clinton, Ohio. The transfer came about after a major’s wife’ who was teaching “us girls” how to knit asked if she was homesick and did she want a transfer to Jefferson Proving Ground closer to home. “I had started a sweater,” Miller said with a chuckle. “I turned it back to her unfinished.”

She certainly did want to be closer to Cincinnati. “I had never been away from home before,” she said of going to Port Clinton, which is on Lake Erie at the opposite end of Ohio from Cincinnati.

She had taken the civil service examination in Cincinnati and was given three job assignments to choose from. She had never heard of any of the locations or knew what they did. Her brother’s girlfriend said she knew someone in Port Clinton, so she chose that job. She worked in the payroll department. The job of secretary to the Army officer who was in charge of proof at Jefferson Proving Ground, the second-in-command at the base, had opened up. “All the other secretaries wanted to be his secretary,” Miller said. “I found this out later in the washroom. So they hired an outsider. “I guess it solved the problem,” she said.

The officer, whose last name was Armitage and whose first name and initial might have been John D., “was a wonderful guy,” Miller said. “He was the best soldier in the place.” She has long wondered what became of him.

In the office where she and Madge Hunt were the secretaries, Miller said she couldn’t hear the sounds of munitions being tested at the firing line. For her, it was an office job not unlike other office jobs where taking dictation and typing define the job. After she had been there a few months, Armitage took her to see the firing line.

She lived in a rooming house at 606 Walnut St. She had room but no board there, so she was directed to Barber’s Boarding House, also on Walnut Street, behind where the Salvation Army is now. She walked there for her meals. Louis Munier, who worked at JPG and had lived on the land there before the Army bought it, went on the tour with Miller and filled in some of the gaps such as the location of Barber’s. Mike Moore, another former JPG employee, is doing oral histories of people who worked there and took Miller on a tour before interviewing her.

Miller has no idea how she got from Walnut Street to the proving ground every day. She didn't drive. She wonders if there was a bus, and would love to hear from anyone who knows.

Transferring to JPG did more than place her closer to her parents. "The whole thing changed my life because I found THE man and got married," she said. On the face of it, she met a man named Hank by chance at Madison Country Club and ran into him there the next night. Later she learned his name wasn't Hank. The name everyone called him was Ham, an acronym for his name, Herbert Alvin Miller. And years later she learned that their meeting wasn't by chance at all.

One day at work, the washroom was full and someone suggested she use the one on the second floor. "I didn't even know we had an upstairs," she said. In that washroom, a woman, Prudy, talked to her for a while and asked if she would like to go to the golf club with her and her husband, Paul, the next Wednesday. She did. "After a while this man walked in and over to them," she said. "They knew each other." They introduced her to him. He asked her to dance to the jukebox music, and then they played Ping-Pong. At the end of the evening, her friends who brought her took her home.

The next day, the chief telephone operator at JPG, said she had heard that Helen had gone to the club and asked if she would like to go again at night. She did. Again, the same man showed up. "I didn't pay much attention to him," she said.

The telephone operator told her later, "I knew the minute you saw each other I was going to be going home alone," Helen Miller said. He brought me home. That was the beginning. "I learned years later that they had connived to get me to meet Ham," she said.

Ham Miller worked at Madison Bank in North Madison. He had graduated from Madison High school in 1930 and wrote the class poem, his daughter learned later learned from a yearbook. His mother had been a poet and writer.

Ham Miller was born in Trimble county, Ky., where his parents, Edward and Mary Young Miller, had a country store they lived behind. "In 1923 the town drunk came in and shot my grandfather," said Pam Newhouse, who along with her husband, Larry, brought Miller to Madison yesterday from their homes in Michigan. Pam Newhouse, a historian, also learned from her research that 1,000 people attended his funeral at Moffett Cemetery in Milton, Ky. Afterward, Ham Miller's mother moved with her children to Madison. Ham Miller quit his job at the bank because his number was coming up for military service. He wanted to be an Air Force pilot, but washed out because of his depth perception. He became an observer at JPG. He and Helen lived upstairs in the rear at 513 West St.

Helen Miller, who left her JPG job 1942, moved back home with her parents in Cincinnati after Ham was shipped overseas for three years. When he came back, he met his daughter, who had been born in his absence. They later also had a son.

The links to Madison faded, but then a couple of years ago the Newhouse's came to Madison for a Civil War Round Table conference where Pam was a speaker. She is involved in placing historic markers and trying to raise public awareness about the Sultana, a ship whose sinking on the Mississippi River in 1865 was the United States' greatest marine disaster but was obscured in news accounts of the time by the events of the Civil War.

The Newhouse's fell in love with Madison, so they bought a house at 416 E. Main St. where they can stay when they are in town, and they hooked up with Madison Presbyterian Church for when they visit. In a tidy completion of the connections to the area, from the second floor of their Madison home they can see the Moffett Cemetery across the Ohio River.

## Memories from Jefferson Proving Ground, Keith Stewart

November 10, 1941 to December 26, 1942 by Charles Keith Stewart

Mr. Stewart was a civilian aerial observer on B-25's and A-17's at the Jefferson Proving Ground in Madison, Indiana, prior to being drafted into the U. S. Army in 1943. Two pilots that he flew with were **Lts. Robert Van Dusen and Charles W. Sweeney**. Lt. Sweeney later went on to drop an atomic bomb on Nagasaki. Mr. Stewart went on to Italy to help supply ammunition to a squadron of heavy bombers. It is believed that Lt. Van Dusen was killed in the Pacific in 1946.

Mr. Stewart holds a unique place at the proving ground in that he lived on the land prior to its being condemned by the government. Mr. Stewart later retired from the proving ground as a Test Director.

What did I do in World War II? I helped supply bombs and ammunition to a squadron of heavy bombers in Italy. That's it. If the above is not detailed enough, what follows is not a diary nor a history but mostly a collection of excerpts from nearly one thousand letters written during the war and enlarged upon from memory. The morale of the home front was kept up (hopefully) by the facts that would pass censorship with the emphasis on the lighter happenings.

What follows will present an incomplete, distorted and murky picture with the accounts of the trivial and the serious being approximately in an inverse ratio to the way it actually was. If it truly depicted the boredom, frustration and unhappiness of army life in war time, no one would read past the first page. My hope is that the perceptive reader will acquire some inkling of the heat and cold; the toil and the misery; the danger and the fear we experienced. This is the way I saw it.

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Ex-Staff Sergeant, Ordnance Dept.  
U. S. Army  
The Ole Briar Patch  
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On November 10, 1941, I reported to Jefferson Proving Ground for a physical examination and probable hiring. After the examination and filling out of numerous forms, I was sworn in with a group and told: "Report to Mr. Lackey tomorrow morning. You may now go home. You will be paid for the full day. Wait—tomorrow is a holiday. You will be paid for it also. Report the next morning." Right then and there I decided I would like working as a "civil servant!" I was assigned to the Bomb Section at Building 322 at the airport.

The work consisted of preparing and testing bombs, aircraft signals, aircraft flares, ground signals and, later, antitank mines. At first we tested nothing as we had to acquire equipment and had no airplane or pilots.

On December 7, Wiletta and I were guests of Aunt Hilda Morris at Jeffersonville for Sunday dinner. After dinner the news came over the radio of the attack on Pearl Harbor. We all discussed the implications of the news—obviously we were in the war, but it had been apparent for some time that this country was preparing for war, so the only surprise was the time and manner in which we became involved. I told Wiletta then or on the way home that I would be called for military service.

At work there was great enthusiasm for the job at hand, and we said to each other, “Now we’ll get an airplane.” We soon got our airplane, a B-23, similar in appearance to a DC-3 (C-47). Along with the aircraft came a Proving Ground Detachment of the Army Air Corps commanded by **Major John Waugh, a pilot, and with Lieutenant Charles W. Sweeney and Lieutenant Robert Van Dusen** as the other pilots. **Lieutenant Al Rumberg** arrived in 1942. My work took me to the Bomb Field on the northern end of the Proving Ground—almost due west of New Marion. Our operational headquarters there was “M” Building—M a reinforced concrete building with thick walls and an observation cupola on the roof.

We rode to and from the Bomb Field in station wagons driven by a uniformed chauffeur (who was not required to do anything except drive) by way of what is now U. S. 421, old Michigan Road and Gate 9 at New Marion. The present perimeter roads inside the fence were not in existence at that time.

By early 1942, the B-23 had been replaced by 2 early-production B-25’s, an A-20A and an A-17. The A-17 was a two-seater by Northrup- low wing, fixed landing gear and not very fast. At that time, we were involved in research and development testing of various types of incendiary bombs, probably because of the existence of buildings--mainly houses--against which bombs could be dropped for evaluation of performance. Almost all houses and major buildings had been sold and moved so I suspect the remaining ones in that area were left by design.

During this testing, we had some experiences that I still remember very well (safety was only a word then). We were at the Shonk farm just north of Graham creek on the west side of the road which leads south from “M” Building. The two-and-a-half story Shonk house was still standing. The B-25 aircraft was flying from north to south at a low level (500 ft???) and the bombardier was dropping by hand, on command, three incendiaries (4 pound) at the house and hitting it if someone guessed right. There was no bombsight for that sort of thing. I was stationed with two other men in the driveway at the basement of a barn (torn down or moved) south and slightly west of the house. On either side of the driveway were stone walls that increased in height to the west. The tops of the walls were at outside ground contour while the driveway inside the walls was level. This gave us protection of various depths depending on where we stood. I was observing the flight of the bombs with the aid of binoculars and also timing the flight from the aircraft to impact by means of a stop watch.

On this particular run, when the three bombs dropped, one veered slightly down from the other two. Of course, I followed the flight of the two rather than the one which left my field of view. I was standing where the walls were waist high or slightly more—the men with me had crouched at the time of drop. The airplane speed was about 150 miles per hour so that the bombs at that

low altitude had more forward motion than drop. As the bombs got close, I saw that they would be slightly west and a little high of the house—and suddenly thought, “Where is the other one?” Instantly I dropped to the ground and a fraction of a second later the bomb struck the wall directly behind me. Had I remained standing, it would have struck me around the chest and torn me in two.

I didn't forget that lesson but soon had another. We had hit the house and were inside, upstairs, trying to find the hits. The weather was cold, the ground frozen, the sun was shining and it was mid-to-late morning. Hits were easier to locate if the entry hole was observed, so I stepped out a dormer window opening on the east side of the house. The roof was gray slate; it was dry and not too steep to walk on, as I was wearing two-buckle overshoes which gave good traction. As I walked north along the roof, my feet went out from under me and I started sliding toward the edge. I had walked into the shade of a large pine on the east side of the house and the snow or frost had melted off and refrozen into a thin layer of clear ice in the shade. My first thought was of what was going to happen to me when my body hit that frozen ground two-and-a-half stories down, and my second was of the brick chimney I was sliding by. I was on my left side and the chimney was at my back, but I reached back and out with my right arm and caught hold—and stopped with one or both feet over the edge. Would you believe that (as I reached for it) I was **SURE** the chimney was going to topple like children's blocks? With some careful squirming, I got on the upper side of the chimney and stood up. By pushing off the chimney I could just step onto clear roof to the south which I proceeded to do and then back into the house. I doubt I had been missed during the minute or so I had been out on the roof. Someone said, “Stewart, are you sick?” “No.” “Well, you look sick--you're white as a sheet.”

Of course, I had to tell the story. I was wearing mittens with a smooth leather surface and the right one that had caught the far corner of the chimney was considerably scuffed. The scuffed mitten was a constant reminder (as if I needed reminding) until it was accidentally dropped out of the back hatch of a B-25 at about 10,000 feet altitude.

Sometime in early 1942, we were put on a six-day work week. Saturday was a required work day for which we were paid time and a half (my pay at that time was \$1280 per annum).

Even with this, we worked a Sunday or so on the incendiary testing. One Sunday in late spring we were set up along “J” road near Bethel Church—nearly a mile south of the Shonk farm. The road runs a little south of west at that point, and several houses had been left on the north side. The B-25 was to make its runs down this road from the east. **Si Miller** (the George H. of “It Reminds Me” column in the Madison Courier), Pete Cutsinger, Jimmy Benham (a chauffeur), a photographer named Starkey, or some similar name, and myself were stationed in a field two or three hundred yards north of the road. It seemed that half the Proving Ground was on the road and well back from the target. Si and I were standing in the bed of a pickup truck, each with a stop watch and binoculars to observe and time the flight of the bombs.

The photographer, with his movie camera, was on a platform built on the flat bed of a 1 1/2 ton truck—about ten feet off the ground. Jimmy and Pete were standing on the ground. The plane was at about 1500 feet and was to drop a 500-pound cluster of 4-pound incendiary bombs--a

total of 125. There was some breeze from the south and the bombardier over-corrected on the first run and did not drop. The bombardier was Technical Sergeant Nace, and he had been out on the town on Saturday night. On the second run, the plane kept drifting right until we could see right into the open bomb bay which meant he was coming over us.

Si or I remarked that there would be no drop again this time when out they came. I swore and Si spit out his pet obscenity as we jumped over the side and crawled under the engine of the pickup.

During the eleven or twelve seconds that it took for the bombs to impact, I felt sure one of them would hit one of my exposed legs and take it off. After impact, we crawled out and soon found ourselves, in a fog as the smoke poured from 125 holes in the ground. It was as though we were in the center of a big shotgun pattern with the hits 20 or 30 feet apart. Neither truck was hit. Pete was a veteran of World War I and knew how to look out for himself—he stepped behind a tree and was safe. The photographer said he would have jumped had he realized what was going to happen. Jimmy couldn't understand how we got off the truck and under the engine before he had time to get there—and he was standing directly alongside! There was no room for him—we had beaten him to it. The sound(s) of this type of bomb falling is a swishing sound followed by a dull thud. Yes, I did get a good time on the watch. Shortly after this, Joe Gottwalles, one of two aerial observers, was drafted and I took his place.

Walter Pegee and myself were then sent to Aberdeen Proving Ground, Aberdeen, Maryland, to learn how to test M26 bombardment flares. We traveled to Aberdeen from North Vernon on the Baltimore and Ohio's crack train, "The National Limited." I had ridden on trains several times as a child and at least once as an adult, but I had never ridden in a Pullman, eaten in a dining car or slept in a berth. I was impressed by the food served in the diner—excellent! Walter and I were quartered at APG in officers' barracks—so new we swept sawdust and shavings out of our room.

Reserve officers were pouring in--our barracks filled in a day or two and it was only one of several. We ate at a table with eight or ten officers and were astonished at the speed with which they wolfed down their food and left the table. Their time was so taken up that a minute was precious to them. I was (and am) a far too rapid eater and Walter was not far behind, but those officers left us the last two at the table every time! We finally decided not to be last and made an all-out effort to eat as rapidly as possible—still last! I suppose we were not motivated as highly or else ate more or both. We were supposed to stay ten days or two weeks (I don't recall) but a phone call came from Washington at the end of a week. The man taking the call turned to us and said, "Washington wants to know when you will be back at JPG—the work is piling up." Walter turned to me and said, "What do you say?" I said, "I'm ready to go now," and I believe we left that evening--neither of us liked the place.

On the return trip I had an upper berth instead of the lower I had outbound. Although not as roomy, it didn't seem much different until we got into the mountains of West Virginia. The train was constantly curving first one way and then the other and the car would tip back and forth so that sleep was only possible for me by drawing one leg up to prevent rolling and waking up.

The M26 flares were dropped from a B-25 at 10,000 feet flying at a speed of 200 or 250 miles per hour, later raised to 300, and it then became necessary to dive 2,000 feet or so to 10,000 feet in order to obtain the speed required.

Observation was made from the back of the plane to verify that the drag sleeve (similar in appearance to a "wind sock" at an airport) was open and its lines not twisted or broken. A glimpse was all you had. The other observer was in the A-17 at 4,000 feet where the time fuze functioned the flare, the parachute opened and the flare burned. A pass was made very near the flare to observe for torn chute or tangled lines. We reported by radio to the ground on each one and directed the ground observers to bad ones and even made low passes to mark the spot if it fell in a thicket or was hard to see on the ground. High explosive bombs were usually dropped from 8,000 feet with the bombing run from north (Holton) to the south. A 500-pounder that functioned on a delay fuze setting would make a hole ten to twelve feet deep and about thirty feet across while a 1,000-pounder would leave a hole about 40 feet across. The holes would have been somewhat deeper but for the presence of rock at ten to twenty feet and, also, much dirt fell back into the hole.

I well remember the first 2000-pounder we received for testing. When it arrived by truck, it was still warm from the explosive filler which had been poured at Ravenna, Ohio. It was dropped with the nose fuze set on "delay" and it made a crater about fifteen by sixty. Meisberger's bar at New Marion had a pyramid of beer bottles displayed behind the bar, and they all jumped off onto the floor.

That night I was over at Uncle John's (my mother's old home place on the creek beyond Canaan) and Aunt Bertha asked me, "What on earth did they do at the Proving Ground today? I had just walked in and latched the door when it felt like the whole house raised up and moved and the door I had just latched opened. John was in the barn and he thought the barn was going to fall in on him." There were more incidents.

At the conclusion of the dropping of one load of flares, I was closing the hatch in the rear floor of a B-25 when something was said on the radio or intercom—I, like everyone in the plane wore earphones. It was noisy in the extreme in that part of a B-25 behind the bomb bay and the only way to hear was to press both earpieces tightly to the ears. I quickly did this (without getting the hatch latched) but I was too late. I learned later that the pilot had said "Hang on!" The aircraft dived steeply about 4,000 feet, my feet left the floor, my headset was pulled loose, my head hit the top inside of the aircraft and stayed there for a short time, the hatch door came wide open and I speculated about whether I would come down in the plane or (feet first) through the open hatch. The pilots were combat oriented and wanted to find out all they could about the plane's performance under emergency conditions so they would now and then fly with first one engine shut off and then the other.

One day they pulled the nose up until the plane (B-25) stalled, and that was the day Master Sergeant McMullen (bombardier) headed for the Commander's office and announced that he didn't care if the pilots wanted to have fun and games until they killed themselves but that he wanted no part of it. That cooled things down temporarily. After some other complaints, Major

Waugh issued a written order that there would be no flying under 500 feet except as dictated by the mission. Within a few days of the posting of that order on the bulletin board in the hanger, I was in the back seat of the A-17, piloted by Major Waugh, headed north up the east side of the Proving Ground. The good Major followed the fire break just inside the fence until it dodged around a woods. We were so low the prop wash was waving the weeds behind us. I could see the tops of the trees as I looked over his head at which point he lifted the plane, barely clearing the woods, and dropped down again on the other side--a la cropduster. To show his happiness he swung the plane back and forth from side to side.

The regular pilots were Charlie Sweeney, an Irishman from around Boston and one of the nicest fellows you would ever want to know, Bob Van Dusen, from somewhere in upstate New York, and, later on, Al Rumberg. Sweeney was piloting "Bock's Car" (now in the Air Force Museum at Wright Field, Dayton, Ohio) when the second atomic bomb was dropped from it on Nagasaki, Japan. He (Sweeney) piloted his own plane, "The Great Artiste," when the first bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. Rather than moving all the instrumentation from "The Great Artiste," Sweeney and Fred Bock traded planes for the second atomic strike--Sweeney flew "Bock's Car" and Bock flew "The Great Artiste." After the war Sweeney eventually became Commander of the Massachusetts Air National Guard as a Brigadier General and retired as a Major General. Van Dusen was also likeable but was somewhat more reserved. According to rumor, he was killed in the Philippines, though I have never had it verified.

Sweeney was like a lightning rod; things seemed to happen when he was piloting and sometimes when he was not. He was acting as bombardier one day and opened the bomb bay doors near Nebraska (Indiana) and two or three 250 or 300 pound bombs dropped— outside the fence.

They did not explode because they had not yet been "armed." It was not Sweeney's fault— —perhaps. It was blamed on an electrical malfunction, and it may have been. We searched at low level in the A-17 until my head ached from looking at the fast-moving ground from such a low altitude—but no bomb holes.

Saw lots of groundhog holes though! It was blackberry time—whenever that is. A group of soldiers were brought up from Ft. Knox and they searched on foot for three days, but without success. Those bombs are still there, ten to fifteen feet down, less if rock was encountered. Sweeney was the pilot the day they flew a B-25 off the apron that extends from northwest of the hanger past Building 322 and on toward the Paper Mill Road. They wanted to see if they could do it.

Doolittle had just raided Japan and speculation was high as to his take-off point. Of course, they could have found out the shortest take-off distance by using a runway, but there would have been no adventure in that Sweeney was the pilot one day when we started to take off into the northwest. He "ran up" first one engine, then the other, asked for and received clearance to take off and opened both throttles. We accelerated rapidly had to hold on as I was sitting on my seat pack parachute on the floor where I could look out the waist window--my usual spot on take off and landing. We passed Building 322 and then the point where we should have lifted and continued to accelerate. We passed the hanger--why hadn't we lifted?--and then crossed runways

23 and 18. By that time we were far past the point of no return— where power could be cut and the brakes applied—too late now.

We crossed the large numbers painted near the end of the runway and I could visualize the pictures in the papers of the scraps of metal and debris mixed with the splintered trees. I was watching the right wheel when it lifted, and it was not more than a foot off the runway when we went over the end of the pavement. We soared up in a very steep climb until our speed dropped; then we leveled off and I heard “Bombardier to pilot on intercom.” I switched to intercom and heard the bombardier (Nace) say, “Lieutenant, what were you trying to do back there?” “Sergeant, maybe next time you will be on the flight deck on takeoff where you are supposed to be.” Nace was sitting on his little seat in the plexiglass enclosed nose where he had been reading a comic book as the flares were loaded and where he would have certainly been killed in any kind of crash on takeoff, and Sweeney had decided to teach him a lesson by letting him see the woods off the end of the runway come at him and thinking (as I certainly did) that we had, as the British say, “bought the farm..”

I mentioned to Sweeney afterwards that it would have not aged me so much had he let me in on it but he just laughed and said it was done on the spur of the moment. Again, with Sweeney piloting we took off to the east and had just made our turn north at the east fence when he continued to turn and started an approach to land into the southwest. This approach followed a line from east to west just south of the first row of buildings south of the firing line and then a turn onto the runway. You can still see the faint remnants of the double yellow lines on the south roof of the original buildings put there as a north limit for that approach. Clearance from the tower was required for takeoffs and landings but nothing was said on the radio. As we made our turn in past the hanger and settled toward the runway, what to my startled eyes appeared but the crash crew wearing their asbestos suits!!!!!! This was only done in anticipation of a possible crash. We landed, ran down the runway with the crash crew in hot pursuit, stopped (and I started breathing again), turned around, taxied back in front of the hanger and stopped with engines idling. The flight engineer got out, ran to the hanger and came back with his parachute which he had forgotten. Major Waugh’s office was in the southeast corner of the hanger and he happened to be looking at us when we made the turn and started back. He picked up his phone to the tower and asked if the pilot had called the tower.

“No.” “Alert the crash crew.”

Again, it would have been nice to have known. Sweeney, the pilot, coming in on 18 (due south)-construction was almost finished on the new east-west runway which we would cross well down on our roll. To prevent any mishaps, the contractor was to have a flagman at the intersection to stop anything or anyone from crossing in front of a plane. We came in high and landed well down the runway, and the brakes went on. I was sitting down looking out the waist window when suddenly the brakes went on full and the main wheels just stopped turning. We were doing possibly 75 miles per hour. I instantly knew what the problem was and braced as best I could--a waste of effort. We passed just to the rear of a tandem dual wheel flat bed truck loaded six or eight feet high with forms and moving east on the new runway—so close that the left wing went over the top and the left prop just missed the rear of the truck. Just then, the left tire blew, having

eroded all the rubber and part of the fabric off the bottom. We spun around in slow motion counter-clockwise as we continued on and stopped off the east side of the runway in the grass facing northwest. I hopped out the back hatch without putting down the little light-alloy ladder and my legs felt quite rubbery. It was probably a good thing that Sweeney was the pilot—he was the largest and strongest pilot—the others might not have been able to lock the brakes or, at least, not as quickly.

Van Dusen treated me to some aerobatics in the A-17 one day and Sweeney had me fly the A-17 two or three times while he read—we waited at altitude while the B-25 made repeated trips to the airport to reload.

Once he (Sweeney) landed the A-17 on the emergency landing strip located west and a little south of the bomb field. It was only dirt with the vegetation graded off and was oriented east and west. This was the only landing made on it before I left. Our takeoff was interesting we bounced three times before we stayed up. There was a certain amount of animosity between our boss and the Air Corps fliers mostly generated by Mr. Lackey and aped by some others..

We had two clusters of fragmentation bombs (6 bombs to a cluster) in the B-25 one day, and as we made our approach, one of the people at “M” Building said on the radio, “We would like to have these closer than the last time—about 300 feet instead of 3000 feet.” (Those are not necessarily the distances but convey the idea.) “Did you hear that, Sergeant?” “Yes, sir.” “Let’s get them in close.” “Yes, sir.” We were at 1500 feet or so and when the bombs left the aircraft I thought they would land on the roof of “M” Building where about five people tried to take cover on the west side of the cupola on the roof. The bombs from the first cluster struck in the road ditch directly across a narrow gravel road from “M” Building and chipped many pieces of concrete from the east wall. Later, someone circled each hit with black paint and it made quite a conversation piece when inquiry was made by visitors.

Walter Pegee and myself drove up to the bomb field one afternoon when we had nothing to test, unlocked the gate at the fence, called in to “M” Building for clearance to come in, was told to come on and were about three quarters of a mile east of “M” Building when we both heard something on the radio which sounded like “Coming on the range.” I looked out my window and saw a B-25 making a run with bomb bay doors open and we were just south of the target! Walter braked and we hit the ditches without bothering to shut doors behind us. A bomb was dropped and we soon saw the tail above the nose and felt better though it impacted only 300 yards or so from us. If the tail can be seen above the nose, it will be short. If the tail appears below the nose, it will be long. If you can’t see the tail of the bomb, pray!

In addition to testing flares and bombs, we also fired aircraft signals from the waist windows of the B-25’s which were observed and timed from the ground. We were scheduled to make a night test of aircraft signals one Thursday night in November, 1942, for the edification of some important (?) people from Washington who thought we might not be getting correct times on the signals in daytime (we were) so they must see a night test. We didn’t test on Thursday night because of foggy weather and had more of the same on Friday night. While waiting at the hanger, there was a phone call from the bomb field stating that it was clear there. Sweeney and the other pilot

(Rumberg) did not necessarily believe what they had been told so they took off in the A-17, flew to the bomb field and back and reported that it was clear at the bomb field.

We took off in a B-25 with two pilots, a flight engineer named J. C. Samsill, Raymond Loehrke (a proof director who went for the ride), Pegee and myself. The plane was not fully fueled as they had been filling the underground gas tanks from a tank car that day and no refueling was permitted while unloading a tank car. In addition, it was pay day and the man in the tower and the man in the weather station were not the regular, experienced people we needed; the regular people had put in their day and had left the post en masse. Samsill had been in trouble with the law in Madison and was confined to the post. The tower was to give us a report every half hour on ceiling and visibility. We arrived at the bomb field and fired signals for an hour or so while flying in tight circles. The smell of the signals filled the plane, a smell approximating burned horse hair and black powder—quite unpleasant.

After a time, Pegee nudged me and, smiling, pointed to Loehrke who was vomiting into a fuze can kept for such an event. The constant circling would have been enough and the smell of the fired signals was frosting on the cake. The mixed smell of signals and vomit permeated the plane from end to end and was quite foul. After finishing the test, Sweeney asked for artillery firing from the front be suspended so he could make a compass approach from the north. This was done and we headed south. The last report from the tower was ceiling 500 feet and visibility one mile. We could not find the field for the fog and went back to the bomb field asking them to fire a green signal (to make sure of our location) which they did and we saw it. Again we flew south and circled where the pilot thought the field should be. The ceiling was about 100 feet and visibility less than one mile. I saw the field once but it was gone in the fog before Sweeney could turn.

He flew lower and lower until we were under 100 feet by an altimeter that might or might not be right. There are many trees on the Proving Ground that are at least 80 feet tall and the water tank is about 85 feet, so Walter and I were most unhappy. Once we crossed what is now U.S. 421 so low I could see the road in the light of the exhausts. My sister thought we would take the chimney off Quarters 26 where she lived and one gun crew, at least, hit the dirt thinking we were going to land on top of them.

Willetta and I lived at Wirt and she could hear us and knew what the problem was; she spent a long evening praying. All the while, Sweeney was trying to get the flustered man in the tower to find out where the nearest open field was for we were very low on gasoline. Eventually, we were told that Wright Field, Dayton, Ohio, was open and Sweeney promptly went up to 1000 feet or so, headed for Dayton and instructed the tower to call Major Waugh, tell him of our destination and that we would return in the morning and to notify Wright Field.

Walter and I had started to relax slightly when Sweeney asked for the map of the Cincinnati area. There was a pilot's map case in our part of the plane containing section maps of the entire U.S.—except Cincinnati. We both searched it twice and Sweeney crawled over the bomb bay and searched it also—no Cincinnati map. Without it he could make no use front be suspended so he could make a compass approach from the north. This was done and we headed south. The last report from the tower was ceiling 500 feet and visibility one mile. We could not find the

field for the fog and went back to the bomb field asking them to fire a green signal (to make sure of our location) which they did and we saw it. Again we flew south and circled where the pilot thought the field should be. The ceiling was about 100 feet and visibility less than one mile. I saw the field once but it was gone in the fog before Sweeney could turn.

Immediately the tower got busy warning some four or five aircraft headed for Dayton that a B-25 was lost in the fog and to go away and stay away. By now I was resigned to parachuting and didn't like the bottom hatch from which we would have to leave, fearful that the wind would slam us against the back of the hatch opening. Walter and I tightened our parachute straps and I did the same for Loehrke and warned him we expected to have to bail out and for him not to tarry. He gave an attempt at a smile but I don't think he would have made it--he was too sick. I asked Walter, "You or me first?" "You first, but don't wait or we'll both be there at once." In a few minutes Sweeney called Wright tower and told them he had spotted a field (the fog was not so thick in Ohio) and was going to land. He "dragged" the field first (flew across it to survey it at low altitude), circled, put down flaps and landing gear and came in.

We had seen that it was a blacktop runway and felt cheered but Sweeney landed long and Walter said, "Give her the brakes, Charlie; give her the brakes, Charlie" very fervently.

We stopped at the very end of the runway and Sweeney had the four of us (all but the pilots) get out and hold a small plane just off the end of the runway which, though tied down, would have been pulled loose or turned over as he gunned one engine in order to turn around. Samsill did not take off his backpack parachute and walked around laughing and bent over several times to pat the blacktop--he was about one notch short of being hysterical. We found that we were at Vandalia, Ohio, and shortly took off for Wright—all but Loehrke—he had all the flying he wanted and then some, so he was going to take a bus to his home in Toledo. This was the only time that I ever knew Sweeney to be flustered--he started to land on the wrong runway at Wright, was told by the tower he was on the wrong approach, went around and landed on the proper runway.

I might mention here that when the plane was fueled it lacked 15 gallons of being empty— if the tanks held what they were supposed to hold--I believe it was 680 or 700 gallons. The "low fuel" warning light was blinking when we landed and must have been when we took off from Vandalia.

After calling Glen or Dody telling them that I was safe and asking that Glen drive to Wirt and tell Wileta, Samsill, Walter and I slept for the balance of the night (it was around 1:00 a.m.) in the Transient Enlisted Men's barracks. Next morning we assembled and found that the field at JPG was not open because of weather—low clouds, misty and foggy. By the time we got to the large cafeteria at Wright with a hope of getting some breakfast, it had just closed. Sweeney turned his Irish charm on the lady in charge, told her we had been flying all night from Seattle, Washington and asked that she feed his "crew." She doubtfully said she would "ask the girls." They opened up and fed five of us. There must have been a dozen women manning the food line. We, as civilians, could not go in the pilot's lounge and spent a miserable day standing and sitting in the chilly, wet air. When evening came, Samsill, Peggie and I took a bus to Dayton, ate at a cafeteria and got a hotel room for the night. Samsill was the only one with money so we borrowed from him.

We obtained a bottle of rye whiskey and drank it to settle our nerves but it didn't seem to help much as we were still wound up tight. After a very restless night during which both Walter and I heard Samsill say (talking in his sleep), "Take her up to 10,000 and I think we'll make it in." Next morning we returned to Wright and put in another miserable day of waiting until around 3:00 or 3:30 p.m., the pilots came hurrying, told Samsill to get the 'chutes, and we left before the weather report changed.

The pilots had been getting weather reports each half hour from JPG. As we prepared to take off, they told us that we could not return to Wright and if we missed JPG, the nearest open field was Atlanta, Georgia, BUT we had full gas tanks. We never flew higher than 800 feet, and as we crossed into Indiana, Pegee and I were invited to go into the bombardier's compartment and help navigate, as we knew the countryside better than the pilots. What did we find there? That's right, the missing map of the Cincinnati area! I suspect one of the bombardiers really got it for not returning it to its case. The first place we recognized was the road intersection at Pleasant--when we got to Canaan the pilots knew where we were; we landed at JPG and were taken home by the guards. Walter and I finally wound up with overtime for the whole affair (under the table), but we would not have willingly undergone such a harrowing experience for any amount of money.

We had worked overtime until dusk one day and the pilot had requested firing be suspended so we could land on 18 (north to south). After being told that firing was suspended and that we were clear to land, we were on our approach a mile or so from the front when someone fired a 4-round clip of 40mm shells at about our altitude and some 200-400 yards off our left wing. Those tracers are bright and they looked BIG as they streamed by. Everyone in the plane was most unhappy for it was entirely uncalled for.

I believe it was the day after Christmas, 1942, when I walked into the house at Wirt after work and Wiletta promptly burst into tears. I was taken aback more than a little thinking something had happened to Davey. She was unable to speak but handed me a card that was my notice to report for examination for military service. I was so relieved that nothing was wrong that I laughed out loud. I had been expecting the notice and suspect that Alice Francisco, postmaster at Wirt, had held it for a day or two so it wouldn't spoil Christmas for us.

There was a preliminary physical examination at the Armory on Jefferson Street in Madison for the purpose of detecting if any of us had three arms or one leg. Then on February 6, 1943, a group of us was taken by bus to the Louisville Armory and had a thorough physical examination. After completion of the exam, a fellow behind a desk looked over my papers and said, "Did you know that you are slightly color blind?" I replied that I had suspected it--Dody and I had disagreed on the color of a shirt of mine—I said it was green and she said it was blue and Dody was usually right. He said it was just enough to keep me out of the Navy or Marines to which I replied, "That's too damned bad!" You didn't want the Navy?" "No way." I was just a little uptight. I took the oath and went home as a member of Uncle Sam's army—inactive duty for one week to wind up personal affairs--then report to the Madison Armory on Saturday morning, February 13 for active duty.

I worked at JPG that week; the money was needed and sitting around home would have been trying. Arrangements were made for Wiletta and Davey to move into the front room of the Ringwald place on the Paper Mill Road with her family.



Keith Stewart and his wife Wiletta.

## **Interview With Lee Rogers, Jefferson County Historian.**

During the summer of 1945, Lee Rogers worked as a summer student at Building 488, [a bombproof] on the JPG bomb field as a Pyrotechnics Technician. "My main job was to help time the bombs and apparatus tested here. There were a series of buttons around the edge of the wall where we could see the bomb field on a shelf attached under the slanted windows. As the aircraft approached and dropped the illuminating round, I would push the button when the flare burst and then again when the flare stopped burning. That interval was the time of burning. It was quite often that the flare was still burning when it hit the ground. Sometimes there were instances where we could not even see the flare when the plane dropped it was off target. The windows were slanted so we could see the planes coming in. You could see the area completely around on all four walls. But the bomb field was mainly on the west side of Bldg 488. We had stools to sit on. This is probably the clock bank where the data was collected. There was a bank of clocks on three or four sides. Twelve clocks on each side. We could time different operations at a time.

We came in and met down on the main campus of JPG. We would congregate and bring up a bus on 421, through New Marion and come in the north gate. Our work depended on the Army Air Corp when they were dropping experimental bombs, or flares. They were small bombers. They were from JPG and Wright Field in Dayton. I think during this time we tested what we called the VT proximity fuze, they had just invented radar and these fuzes would detonate at a certain elevation. This fuze was I think tested here and later used on the Atomic Bomb.

Mostly I remember working here and we would go out in these cameras we would notice the elevation that the bomb would burst. We would detect these through our special camera. I think these cameras were east and west of the bomb field. I think there were probably two. When the plane came in, we would go out in the cameras and sit and wait for the bombs to come in. We had radio contact with the office and they would tell us when to be careful and watch for the bombs. Some dropped close by. We had an incident where we were expecting the bomb to come in. I looked and looked but could never see the flash. When they called me back in, I opened the door and there was a hole about ten feet from our camera. That hole was roughly 10 inches in diameter, I don't know how deep it was, I could not see the bottom, but it missed the camera about 10 feet. The camera was about ½ a mile to a mile south of Building 488. It was about ¼ mile off target."

-----Lee Rogers talking to Mike Moore, January 19, 2006



Lee and brother Lynn Rogers recorded the latitude and longitude of a Morgan's Raid Marker on JPG as part of a modern day volunteer effort.



Ken Knouf, Charles Gilles, Louis Munier and Lee Rogers  
touring the Shonk Farm area. They are shown standing in front  
of an 1800's truss bridge over Big Graham Creek.

## Test of Fuzes for Rifle Grenades

From: "Lynn Rogers"

The loud report of the M1 rifle shattered the quietness and the rifle grenade started its trajectory. Abruptly, the projectile was stopped by a pillow and fell gently to the ground two feet below, much as a baseball would hit a chain link backstop and drop. It was one of hundreds of grenades to be tested. In combat, a rifle grenade could be launched at some enemy target, but, rather than impacting the target, it might land in a patch of weeds so gently that the fuse was not activated and the grenade would not explode. Later, friendly troops might take that ground and step on the unexploded grenade. Then sometimes, the grenade would go off and cause serious casualties or otherwise demoralize our own troops. This was called a post mature fuze problem and a new fuze was developed.

Preparation for the test began with a bulldozer scraping the area down to bare dirt. A privy sized shed made out of two inch thick armor plate and mounted on skids was towed behind a tank. The rifleman rode inside the shed with the muzzle of the rifle protruding out of a small hole to the side. He reached out a larger hole in the back wall and around a corner and placed a live grenade over the muzzle. When everything was ready, he fired. The pillow was located about two feet from the muzzle. It was soft so that the grenade would not explode when it was stopped. The pillow was made from several layers of burlap protected by one or two layers of newly developed woven nylon ordinarily used for automobile seat covers. The tank would advance the shed by approximately one foot and the process repeated, row upon row of armed grenades lying exposed on the ground. Someone inside the tank would view the dropping grenades (me, Lynn Rogers, GS-3 Engineering Aide) and log each and every individual serial number and note the location and position of the grenade. Technical photographic documentation was also made. The ride inside the tank was uncomfortable as the tank lurched across rough spots and around turns. It lurched so much that your head was continually banging into equipment inside the tank. After a couple of days your head was sore all over and you were sure that you were earning your pay.

After a suitable wait, the rows were inspected for any missing grenades. There were none missing. The question of whether some ground hog had mistreated one never came up. The new fuze did not have post matures and was successful. Then of course, there was the task of disposing of several hundred live rifle grenades, but by then I had gone back to Purdue.

### THE EPISODE AT THE UNFAMILIAR TIME CLOCK

For the last three minutes of every work day, it was the perpetual solemn official duty of every federal employee at JPG to get in line at the time clock and wait intently for quitting time. Severe disciplinary action was wreaked upon anyone who actually clocked out even just one minute early, like losing an hour's pay. Individuals would then move rapidly past the clock punching their time card and even more rapidly out the door to running cars so that we could get to our real life. I had made arrangements to start and end my work shift in a different building to make car pool connections easier. In addition to the above mentioned solemn duty, as the very junior member it was my additional solemn duty to not keep the car pool waiting. Consequently I allotted an additional minute to be first in line on my first day. I searched diligently for my time card. Woe is me. I found it only after the line should have been moving for

30 seconds. Most in the rest of the line were waiting with contrived patience, but then a gorgeous redhead yelled, "What's holding up the line?" For the rest of the summer, my official duties brought me back often to the vicinity of the desk of the red headed secretary. The more senior members of the work force (ie, everyone else) quickly got the picture. The red head and I were married one and a half years later.

## MONSTER MAP TABLE FOR PLANNING FIRING SAFETY

The safety officer and the CO [commanding officer] wanted to improve the planning for safety areas around active firing position tests. A map existed for the entire JPG (about 20 x 5 miles) showing all possible firing positions. I designed a strong table that would accommodate the full flat map and a perimeter to conveniently store safety templates of firing positions. I laid out the keyhole shaped templates to scale. The circular area was for the possibility of the ammunition exploding in the breech and then the slot had a constant angle from the center for down range impact/explosions. I cut out the templates from thin Plexiglas sheet and scribed the centerline and the various ranges on the template. When the table came from the shop, it was a monster, castors and all. Some made fun of it because of its size (it must have been 6 x 12 feet), but safety planning was much easier and very visual. The proper template was selected to match the ammo being fired and the center was placed over firing position with the planned azimuth. After every planned test was on the table, areas safe and unsafe for personnel and equipment were immediately obvious, a major improvement in the previous method.

The basic facts of this story are true. Portions might be apocryphal and/or embellished. The B-25 was being used for both dropping flares and observing and documenting their performance. The flares were dropped and the aircraft maneuvered in a simultaneous roller coaster maneuver and banking both left and right to remain on course and bring the burning flare into the field of view. (The parachutes were the source of many silk wedding gowns in Jefferson and surrounding counties, and also for the strong nylon cord, useful for a large variety of purposes, if you knew how to tie knots, because they were prone to slippage.) The parachutes could and did land anywhere and everywhere, including on power lines, shorting them out. After one mission, the 2nd Lieutenant, who, as the lowest rank in the universe, was designated to ride in the tail gunner's spot and was assigned the responsibility for the observing. After one particularly rough flight, the lieutenant respectfully requested to the pilot, that he could observe just as satisfactorily if the roller coasting and banking were not so vigorous. You could experience air sickness, even if you were not susceptible. The lieutenant knew the pilot had heard and assimilated his message because on the next mission the roller coasting and banking was significantly more vigorous, much, much more than necessary. There was a tool box in the tail gunner's area, and a race between it and the lieutenant on every roller coaster and bank cycle on which one made it to the top first, then one side, then the bottom, then the other side. So much so that the lieutenant found the observing impossible. After all of the flares were dropped, the pilot said on the intercom, "We are going to fly under the Madison Bridge and show the world that it can be done." Parenthetically, a black crew had recently attempted to fly under a bridge at Cincinnati and wiped out by hitting one of the abutments. The pilot leveled out just above the surface of the river, headed for the bridge. The lieutenant said, "From my tail gunner's spot, I could tell that we were low enough because I could see the prop marks in the water." The airplane flew under the Madison bridge and landed at JPG. The lieutenant commandeered the nearest jeep and reported the absurd behavior to the CO. Immediately the pilot was transferred out- which may have been his strategy

all along. He was transferred to training in a Florida squadron of B-29s, the newest, biggest, and best of airplanes. After several training missions, the now B-29 pilot got lost on a cross country training mission. When he broke out of the clouds and could tell where he was, he was over JPG. He did a pylon turn around the JPG water tower and headed back to Florida. Randall [Lynn and Lee's brother] was on top of the water tower installing a radio antenna. Randall looked down at the pilot in the cockpit and they waved to each other. The pilot's name was Sweeney; he dropped the second atomic bomb. JPG contributed to winning the war in uncountable ways. In about 1980, Lynn and the lieutenant sat side by side on a flight and discussed the episode.

## **Betty Cull, Civic Leader, Journalist, Pilot**

One of JPG's first aerial observers and the first female aerial observer:



First Aerial Observer at JPG. Betty rode with Lt. Charles Sweeney and other pilots to plot explosions on the ground. Photo is March 30, 1943.



Betty was a pilot and active in women's flying.

Her family moved to Jennings County in 1924. She graduated from North Vernon High School and received her college degree from IU in 1941. During World War II, she had the distinction of being the only woman civilian working for the U. S. Army as an aerial observer during testing of bombs at Jefferson Proving Ground.

She told George Miller, columnist for the Madison Courier that Major John Waugh, the first CO of the air unit at JPG would go into a dive over a pond near the JPG test boundary and pull out with a zoom scarring h----- out of the ducks on the pond.

Another story she told was of two dummies the Army Air Corps used to test their parachutes. This was not proving ground work, but routine requirements by the Air Corps. One day Betty's sister was parked over at Wirt waiting for her to come home and she saw a drop test of this type. She was positive that Betty had been forced to bail out. She was in kind of a shock until she found out that Betty was safe.

## **JPG's Ultimate Product**

Nothing fancy and yet this plain bureaucratic report saved thousands of American and Allied lives. For 53 years, JPG's primary mission was production acceptance testing of munitions (ammunition, explosive shells, bombs, mines, rockets, flares, etc)-in essence the last quality control step to make sure that soldiers, sailors, and airmen receive munitions they could rely on.

The test report was the final outcome of testing. Either the munitions performed according to specifications and they were accepted or they didn't and were not. There are stories of pallets of ammunition being pushed overboard from transport ships headed towards Europe during WWII, Korea, and Vietnam because the randomly selected lot of munitions sent to JPG did not pass the test. Imagine the possible consequences had our servicemen used bad ammunition.

AMCS CODE NO: 4110.16.2194.6  
USATECOM PROJECT NO: 8-MU-001-374-099  
TEST REPORT NO: 74-1523  
TEST SPONSOR: Picatinny Arsenal  
TEST SPONSOR PROJECT NO: AD-E-A-1717



PRODUCT IMPROVEMENT TEST  
OF  
CARTRIDGE, 81MM, HE, M374A2  
FINAL REPORT  
BY  
WILLIAM D. HAWORTH  
JUNE 1974

Distribution limited to U.S. Government Agencies only; Test and Evaluation; June 1974. Other requests for this document must be referred to Commander, Picatinny Arsenal, ATTN: SARPA-AD-E-A4, Dover, New Jersey 07801.

**U. S. ARMY JEFFERSON PROVING GROUND  
MADISON, INDIANA 47250**

Bill Haworth was Test Director on Mike Moore's first product improvement test on 81mm mortars.

In WWII and later in the Korean War, all this paid off with great interest in savings of money and lives. For example, nearly 35 percent of all German shells fired during the Battle of the Bulge were duds as compared to only 4 % fired by the Americans. The difference, experts say, came because of our careful testing of ammunition.

## Silk Bags

The office of personnel management banned using silk in non-military items. At the time of WWII some 1200 sewing machines were humming at Charleston, IN sewing up silk bags to hold propelling charges of powder. Silk was also used in parachutes that helped illuminating rounds in the air to light up the battlefield. Many employees would find the silk parachutes hanging in trees and take them home to their wives and mothers to make silk dresses. Although it was illegal to take the silk out of the proving ground, at least one wedding gown was created using a silk parachute.

The sewing machines were vital to the war effort. The first bag in a charge held black powder that was the primer. It made the other bags explode. The bags were variously colored and linked together with cords. The bags were all made of silk, as were the cords. Silk burned almost instantly and left practically no lint in the gun. Experiments had been made with cotton, rayon, and other textiles--but thus far silk did the job best.



Wedding dresses were occasionally sewn from silk parachutes that fell outside the proving ground.

## WWII Articles

Extra Guards assigned at Madison Bridge.

Three guards have been assigned. The guards will make hourly inspection of the structure and will be ever on the alert for Loiterers.

Dec 13, 1941

By December 5, 1941 all construction work on JPG has been completed. By 1 January 1942 the high school building will be cleared of all personnel that is connected to the proving ground.

The first round fired down range on May 10th the ceremonial opening day was a propellant test. By March 30, 1943, testing of supersensitive fuzes against metal plates showed the effects of modern warfare in raining destruction down on machinegun nests, military personnel, and planes. Fragments of shrapnel bursting over a wide area, ripped through targets to demonstrate the manner in which armies are mowed down.

At another station, anti-tank firing was in progress. Armor plate, such as is used in the construction of tanks and ships was penetrated by sharp nosed projectiles. Also 1,000 pound bombs were being loaded into B-25 Bombers. In the far north is located the bomb field where aerial bombs, parachute flares and other missiles are dropped by bombers. In the middle are many farm houses, a few of which have been splintered and shattered from explosives, shrapnel, and projectiles of various sizes. By 1943 the proving ground personnel was 90% civilian, most of whom are skilled technicians. Twenty percent of the employees are women-all directed by a staff of commissioned officers.

Gradually women were taking over positions formally held by men. The proving ground has the distinction of having the first woman proof director in the U. S. Ordnance department. She was Miss Sarah Cook of Madison who is in charge of the metal component section.



First Woman Proof director at JPG, Sarah Cook (1943)

## Interview with Edward Franklin Inskeep

### **Frank, How old are you now and when did you come to Indiana?**

77 years. I have been here all my life. I started in 1942-43- six months started at 46 and retired in 86.

### **How long did you work?**

I have forgotten. I started out in the instrumentation building. I started out as a laborer, went to the instrumentation building, and at the last, I was president of the union. I had a tenure of four terms as president of the union.

### **What kind of equipment did you use?**

You know what you use as a laborer don't you, a shovel and pick. I was a warehouse man for a while, I worked in the instrumentation department, there was a lot of things that I did.

### **Do you remember when the first computer came to JPG?**

I remember the first computer, the early 60's.

### **How much did you make on your first job?**

I cannot remember except that probably 6 or 7 dollars an hour.

### **What was the atmosphere there when you went to work?**

Well, I don't really like to talk about that. It really upsets me to talk about things like that. There was a lot of prejudicial people that worked out there. It was not a very good atmosphere, I don't like to talk about it. When I was president things started to change. Things started changing.

### **What role did the women play?**

As time went by, they looked at the ladies like me. All of a sudden they started getting jobs that men thought were traditional ladies jobs. The ladies. As time went by they started getting jobs like the men thought were men jobs, the men did not really like that.

### **What is your best memory?**

As president of the union, I had a couple of good friends. We had a base closure. They were going to close JPG. I had a good friend known as Vernon (Beano) Gudkese, graduate of Notre Dame. He was in management. We went to Washington DC. We fought and we won. We saved the jobs for oh maybe 6 or 7 years. I was very happy about that.

The Congress couldn't get the job done. So a commission was setup to name bases for base closure. The President had to sign the Commission's recommendation or reject closing them all. I was not there at the time the Employees tried to save the place (BRAC 88).

One time I applied for position as a supervisor. I was highly qualified. Eventually they hired this individual. In the mean time, I talked to my fellow employees and they told me what had happened. The man that was selecting the person, he asked the employees, "Why would they like to work for a black man?" I really did not appreciate the comments he made. You were not supposed to discriminate against anybody. They tried to keep the ladies out of the so-called men's jobs.

**Did any Commander make an impression on you?**

(Laughter.) I probably made an impression on them. I was president of the Union. There were problems.

**Have you ever been in the Army?**

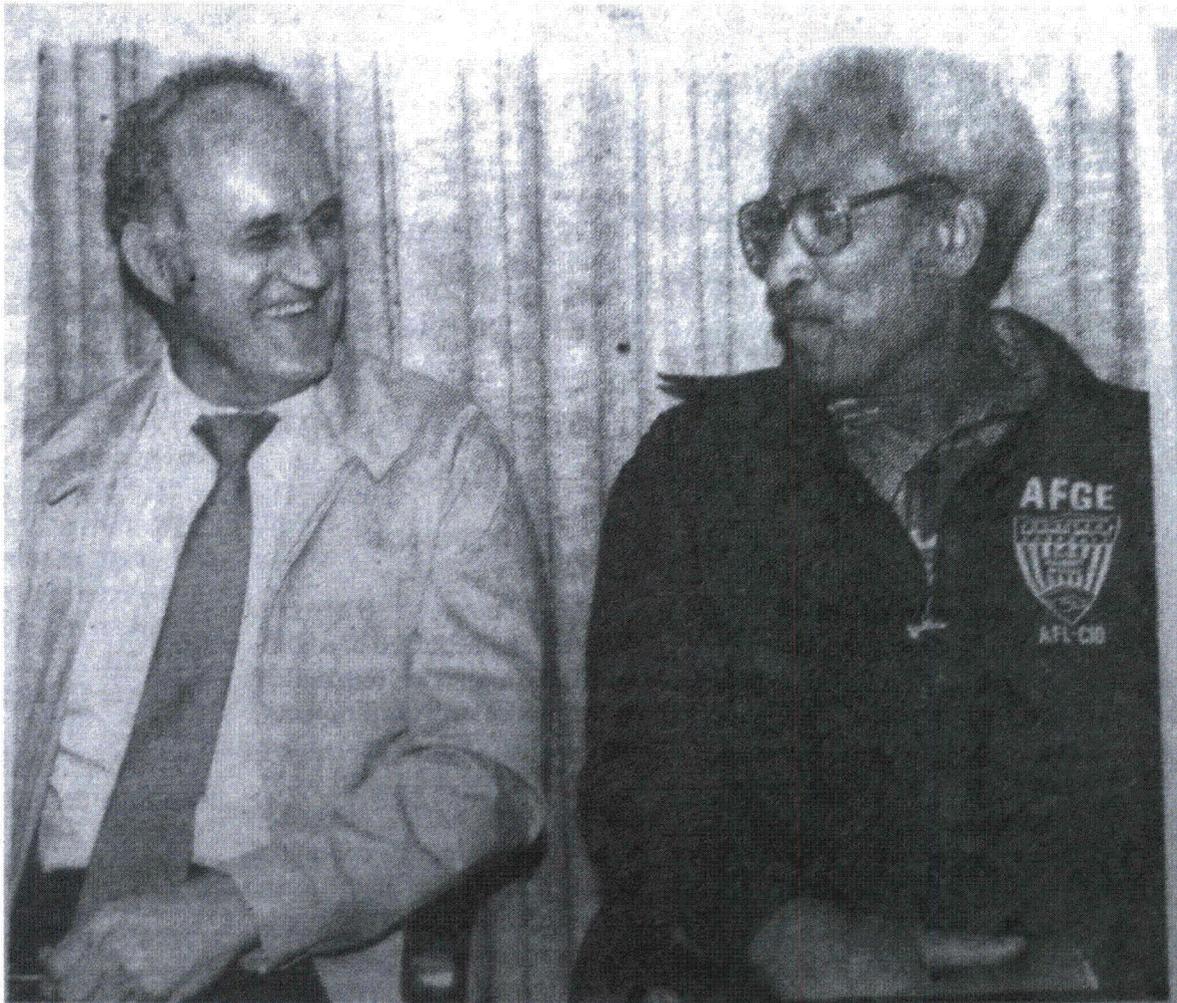
No my father was in the Army. I was in Army bases for 16 years of my life. He was in the Medical Corps. That was different than the regular army. These commanders, I don't know

I worked there for 22 years, I retired from there. I don't know what they will do with the land it is so contaminated.

**What memories would you like to share?**

My trip to Washington. How we met with a lot of the dignitaries, Dept of the Army, DOD, especially [Congressman] Lee Hamilton. They wondered what we were doing up there. They did not know what we did at JPG. They were supposed to be working for JPG and they did not even know what we did. We would get a canned letter. I told them that I did not want to get a canned letter from them. You would write a letter to one office they would copy that letter and send it on to another office. They were rather frightened when we walked in. They did not know what we did or what we were there for, I was disappointed in them. My tax money and they were wasting it and did not know what we did.

But let me tell you this. There was another incident at Blue Grass and those people had not done their homework. Mr. Gudkese, the most important thing was that we knew what we were talking about. I was real proud of him



**TWO TIRED BUT HAPPY MEN.** Vernon Gudkese and Frank Inskeep discussed their long battle to keep the work at Jefferson Proving Ground from being contracted out. The two men along with the American Federation of Government Employees made numerous presentations to government and Army officials in Washington during the fight, which they won yesterday. (Staff photo by Steve White.)

Beano Gudkese and Frank Inskeep celebrate victory in saving JPG in 1980.

## Edward Inskeep Obituary

### Obituary

Edward Franklin Inskeep, 83, of Madison died Tuesday, Oct. 31, 2006, at Hickory Creek at Madison. He was born Dec. 23, 1922, in Madison, the son of Roy and Mabel Perry Inskeep.

He was an Army veteran and retired in 1986 from Jefferson Proving Ground as a supply specialist. He was a former house painter and had worked for Conn Organ for several years. He was a member of Ebenezer United Methodist Church where he was active and served as a lay speaker. He was a 48-year member of Eureka Lodge 30 of the F.&A.M. and was a past master; a patron of Jen-Era-Jeff Chapter 44 of the Eastern Star; American Legion, Jefferson Post 9; Jefferson County Democratic Party; president of his AFL-CIO union; former board member and chairman of Ohio Valley Opportunities; former board member of the Lide White Boys and Girls Club; was a charter member and former president of the local NAACP; and served on the first Mayor's Human Relations Commission. He loved bowling, playing in Madison's fast pitch softball league, and was an avid golfer.

He is survived by one daughter, Beverly Inskeep Bradford of Louisville, Ky.; two sons, Neal Franklin Inskeep of Carrollton, Ky., and Dwight Steven Inskeep of Madison; eight grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his parents; his first wife, Claudia Burton Inskeep; his second wife, Mary Jackson Inskeep; one daughter, Kim Louise Inskeep; two sisters, Virginia Cosby and Harriet Wells; and one brother, Herbert Inskeep.

## Korean War 1950 - 1953

### JPG Active 1950-1958

At Approximately 4:00 a.m. (Korean Standard Time) June 25, 1950 on a rainy Sunday morning, the North Korean Democratic People's Army artillery and mortars opened fire on Republic of South Korea Army positions south of the 38th parallel, the line serving as the border between the two countries. At 11:00 a.m. North Korea announced a formal declaration of war initiating what is now known as the "Korean War". U. S. President Harry S. Truman was notified of the invasion and returned from his home in Independence, Missouri to Washington, D.C.



Shells embedded in trees like this one located at "A" road, JPG.

After World War II, JPG had not stayed on standby for long. As early as February 1949, inquiries were made to determine the feasibility of reactivation. The next month, 12 employees were hired for proof testing ammunition. These employees reactivated files for Proof Records, reconditioned and installed instrumentation equipment, obtained and placed in service weapons necessary

for limited proof testing of ammunition. There was a general increase in personnel until the invasion of Korea when Jefferson Proving Ground's workload increased and a larger expansion was necessary.

The first round of ammunition at the reactivated proving ground was fired on 8 April 1949 for the purpose of checking weapon recoil and testing velocity measuring instruments. The first proof testing to be accomplished was a 105mm Powder Test fired on 6 June 1949.

### **Summary of Reactivation:**

Early in August 1950 an announcement was made telling of a sharp increase in proving ground activities and plans to increase the staff of employees by about 100. On October 1, 1950, Jefferson Proving Ground changed from a standby sub-post of Indiana Arsenal at Charlestown to an active industrial Class II installation. The Madison Courier was notified October the 5<sup>th</sup> that 500 people were to be added. On November 15<sup>th</sup>, JPG was reactivated. At the end of 1950 there were 338 civilian employees, 6 officers and 1 enlisted man on the post.

Major Chase R. Teabolt assumed command of JPG. He was promoted LTC on 8 December 1950. The new JPG commander spent the first few weeks of 1951 conducting a staff study to determine the feasibility of rehabilitating JPG for testing ammunition. Even though a crew was placed on standby for maintenance purposes during 1946 – 1949, the exhaustive study concluded that JPG needed to be massively rehabilitated to be expanded above the WWII capacity.

Due to more stringent safety requirements, JPG's testing and ammunition storage was restricted by Quantity – Distance requirements. The basic idea was to limit the amount of explosive in any one place and to provide sufficient safety distance between any two places to minimize damage or injury to adjacent facilities or people in case of explosions.

A separate personnel study indicated that 1500 employees would be needed to test at the increased levels. On 2 March 1951 Congress authorized \$2,646,300 to build barricades, concrete walls, ammunition storage igloos, 8 bomb proofs for relocated fields and 4 more at the old bomb fields and to finish assembly buildings started at the end of WWII.

Other changes included increasing the two-lane entrance gate to four lanes, constructing a gate house, repairing joints in the airport runways, and laying new rails to a new rocket range south of Front Road, west of Gate number 1. By the time the Rehab was over the Government had spent over \$8 million dollars on construction.

At the end of 1950, JPG had received \$12, 192.46 to conduct night photo missions for Wright Patterson Field, Dayton, Ohio. Surveillance testing responsibilities were assigned to JPG on 26 November 1951. Special production engineering tests as well as research and development tests were undertaken on a growing scale during the years 1951 – 1955.

Heavy snows in January and February of 1951 and overall winter weather slowed construction and rehabilitation and placed a great burden on repair and maintenance of roads; however, the

Korean War precipitated a second wave of building at the installation. Between 1951 and 1953, some 107 new structures were constructed. The firing line was extended, but for the most part these buildings consisted of additional test firing and storage facilities, and improvements to the infrastructure.

There were a lot of arrivals and departures of officers, but the early JPG management team consisted of Captain W. A. Brennan, Jr. as EXO who served as Administrative Officer as an extra duty. Captain Brennan had served previously at JPG during WWII. Finally on 7 March 1951, James B. Mong was assigned as administrator. Captain Raoul P. Valenzuela became the Proof Division Chief. Mr. Harold C. Foerstner was the Civilian Proof Chief. The Chief of Proof Control was Mr. Emra W. Nay.

Extra personnel and equipment began flowing to the proving ground early in 1951 to include:  
Solenoid Cameras with 10 people to read film (January 1951)  
Second shift of 3 people to read film (1 April 1951)  
Radar to provide Air Safety (July 1950) moved to the roof Bldg 241  
20 sedans and 35 Pickups received in early 1951.

In 1951 and 1952 new construction included barricades for the East, West, and Rocket assembly plants; an assembly plant group for major caliber positions. Started in WWII, Building 534, the new Complete Rounds Assembly Plant, was finished in 1951.

In January 1952 JPG employed 813 people. By June the figure had climbed to 1170, reaching a peak of 1375 employees by the end of 1952. In 1952 the number of rounds fired reached 120,000. Employment levels made a big jump in 1953, rising to a level of 1774 in August of that year, just before the end of the Korean Conflict.



The Firing Line was extended during the Korean War.

This time most of the workers – all those in the field – were men. This was in contrast to the '40's when at the height of WWII, women were doing all types of work, even loading the guns and firing them and observing the shell bursts in the field. Not all the workers were engaged in firing the guns or checking the results. With the final product being the test report, there was just as much work away from the firing line than in the field.

The proving ground had a large mechanic force which maintained the guns, even rebuilding them if needed. It had a large electronics shop that cared for the delicate instruments used in photographing and recording the projectile flights. One entire building was used for salvaging and straightening out dents in cartridges and cleaning them so they could be used again. The proving ground maintained a constant radar vigil of the air above the reservation during the hours when firing was being done. A large police force patrolled the area and a small army of people was employed in handling the records kept on every bit of ammunition.

During the period 1 July through 31 December 1953, the workload of the proof division attained its highest monthly peak and began a leveling period. On 21 July the grenade range, "Y" position was turned over to contractors for construction of new facilities and this necessitated the moving of the rifle grenade tests from "Y" to the newly constructed "O" position. In September 1953, new programs arrived including, the 240 mm howitzer; the cartridge T25 for 120mm T123 Gun and new special tests were coordinated on the 75mm Sky Sweeper to measure barrel strain. On 9 September 1953, the 120mm T123 Gun was proof fired mounted on a 240mm howitzer carriage at "B" position.

Even though the increase in research and development projects assigned to JPG resulted in a greater workload of more complicated tests, personnel numbers still had to be reduced. On 17 Feb 1954, notices of separation were given because of decrease in workload of normal acceptance testing. By 30 June 1954 all items of new construction were completed.

### **July 27 1953: Armistice Day**

The United States, North Korea, and China signed an armistice, which ended combat but failed to bring about a permanent peace. To date an actual peace treaty has never been signed. A total of 33,686 service members (all services) died in battle, or from battle related injuries during the Korean War.

In 1955 the mission of JPG was redefined. In addition to ammunition testing, JPG accepted ammunition surveillance and engineering functions such as automotive maintenance shops, calibrated ammunition components, and mobilization planning. By conducting research and with new development tests like the parachute drop test described above, JPG would have a better chance to stay open during peace-time.

It was during this time that the story of the latest "JPG Hermit" became known. David Gilkey, 30 year-old Cincinnati man was discovered and removed. His explanation was,

“I just wanted to get away from people”. JPG had found clothing, money and religious periodicals in an unused shack on JPG property near Gate 9 in Ripley County. The paper reported the following: “Man lives for weeks in midst of shell fire.” He was fined \$25 and court costs in Federal court. He survived on a diet of pears and apples.

In another oddity, on 13 Feb 1956, a deer was discovered to have been killed by small arms fire at J position. Mr. Orrill, the Game Warden was called to dispose of the animal in accordance with regulations. Mr. Gilbert Reardon, State Game warden, delivered the animal to the JPG infirmary. Throughout much of early and mid-1900's, deer were virtually non-existent in the state. Over-hunting and loss of habitat devastated the once large population, but given the immense acreage that encompassed JPG, the restricted public access, and improved habitat conditions, the deer population flourished to the extent that deer hunting was allowed to start in 1953. JPG was one of the first locations to offer opportunities for deer hunting, and at one time over 5% of the entire state harvest total came off of the installation.

## JPG Celebrates its 15th Anniversary

Madison Courier Saturday, May 12, 1956:



JPG Commander, Colonel H. G. Hamilton cutting the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Cake.

A 15 gun salute that started at 1:55 p.m. began a formal ceremony in the hanger building. Distinguished Madison visitors included Mayor Charley Vaughn, President David Clapp of the Madison Chamber of Commerce, and Chamber Secretary Arthur E. Wooden. The highlight was given by Maurice ("Boss") Johnson, WLW radio, Cincinnati, who presented the history of JPG.



Madison Courier, Sept 7, 1956 Outstanding Employee Ratings: Recognized for Efficiency: Left to right: Thomas Furnish, General Supply Branch; Miss Mildred Bersch, Assembly Branch; Mrs. Mildred Spotts, Operations Branch; Col Heller, and Mrs. June Raisor, Librarian all of Madison, and Raymond T. Wilson, Signal Branch, Bedford, Kentucky.



Versailles Republican, Thursday April 11, 1957. Left to Right: Wilbur Weare and Jack Webb complete training and were issued Ordnance Management Engineering Program Certificates. Mr. Webb is assistant Chief, Operations Branch and Mr. Weare is in charge of the Analytical Section, Ballistics and Records Branch.

On 31 March 1958, Jefferson Proving Ground was relieved of its proof testing function. This function was transferred to Aberdeen Proving Ground. Jefferson Proving Ground airport facilities were considered excess to the needs of the installation and plans for leasing these facilities to the City of Madison were initiated in June 1959

By 16 February 1959, lease agreements were executed with the Standard Glass Products Company and Massoud Company, Inc, and on 16 July 1959, a lease agreement was executed with the Randall Company. A total of 7 buildings were leased to these companies. Approximately 350 people were employed by these companies during this period of downtime.

Also during this time, the folks at the proving ground were getting about 12 calls per moth about unexploded ordnance being found outside the proving ground. According to the 19 Feb 1959 Madison Courier, shells were washed from JPG by heavy rains. A quote from the article read, "Impact areas next to streams contain thousands of projectiles and were inundated when the swift water overflowed their banks. Capt Douglas H. McClinton, CO, JPG asked that extreme caution be taken by anyone finding a projectile."

Also quoting from the 10 March 1959 Madison Courier, "A live hand grenade was recovered from the bank of a small stream on State Highway 256 near the Borcharding Road. Terry Ricketts, 14, son of Mr. and Mrs. William Rickets found the grenade."

## Interview With Jim Vogt

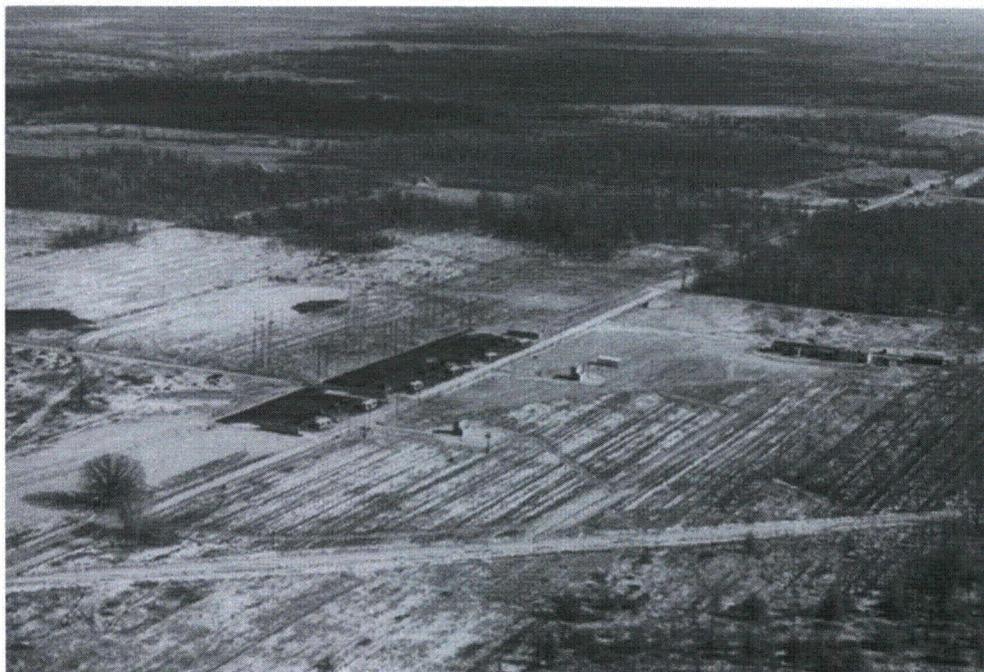
By Ron Harsin

Korean Conflict Employee

Mr. Vogt was Looking at Photos of Firing Positions that He Designed for the Reactivation of JPG in 1953:

This was on the south end. The hand grenade range was south of [present day] Krueger Lake. You turn right on the first road on the way out of JPG. You then turn right again and that leads you to the hand grenade range. They did not know what the structure was. It was shaped like this in the center you would set the hand grenade on a little plate. You run a line through it, and hook it to a lanyard connected to a solenoid. When you hit the solenoid, it pulled the lanyard, the plate would come out and the grenade would fall down into a pit, we had a sound pickup [microphone] to pick up the sound. The sound would start a camera. When we were searching for stuff; there was a tremendous amount of metal, a lot of fragments. To my knowledge while I was there, anytime a grenade did not go off, we would go down and blow it. We put a little Comp "B" by it very carefully and ignite it. But I am not saying that in the years past there were not some left down there.

"Major Caliber" [firing position], that was way down there over to the west over there next to the Woodfill Road. I would have to give that some thought. We put some new magazines over there. We did the 155's at night at Major Caliber. We also worked on a flash reducer test. This picture was shooting white phosphorous and that would be at West Stockade.



Aerial view of Major Caliber Area from the southwest showing new designs created by Jim Vogt for reactivation of JPG.

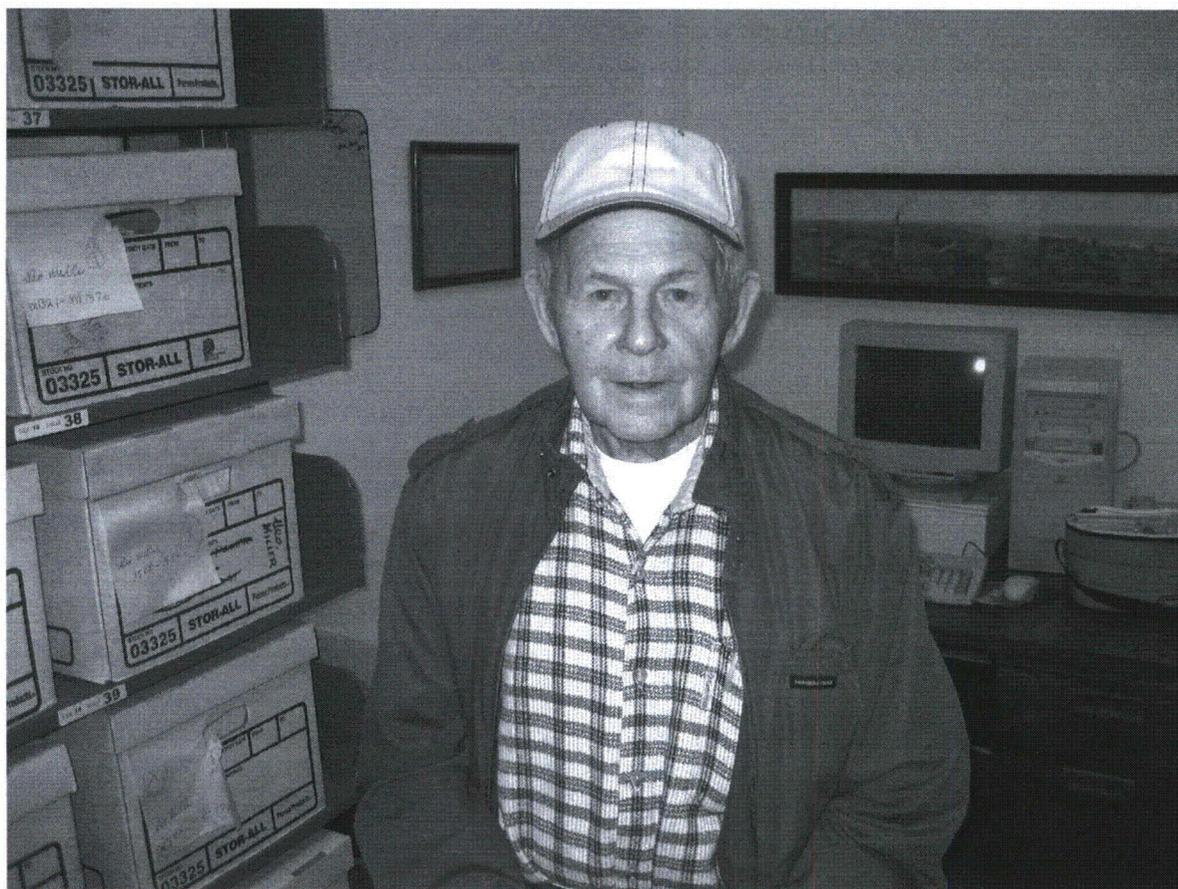
This was a gadget that I designed. They would shoot a grenade with an M-1 Garand [standard issue WWII rifle] through velocity coils to get the velocity of the grenade. You did not want anybody around ammo when you were testing, because I have heard that of a grenade blowing at 4 hundredths of a second, now how far can you go in that length of time, so everything was done remotely

This was a mortar base, a 4.2 mortar base test. It was a big problem if you drop a mortar round down the mortar tube and it doesn't come out. You can't see it. One thing you would [do is to] hit it remotely with a hammer, but then you had to provide a means of remotely tilting the mortar over. A mortar is one of the worst misfire's you can have.

One of the ordnance engineering jobs was to design stands to hold the weapons, say like to hold a 4.2 mortar.

## Interview with Morris Richards at JPG

From the Demolition Branch



Maurice Richards in 2008 telling his story at the JCHS Research Library

I enlisted in 1942 at the age of 18. When the war was over, we came back to the states and I left the army. I was staffed at the Paris Directory, you know jobs were hard to come by, you couldn't get a job back then and I was happy to have one. But if you did, you weren't paid anything. I made more money at Charleston on the outside. And I almost re-enlisted but I didn't. But you had to sign up for six months plus the duration of the war so I was there a long time.

I got out in '45, and jobs were hard to get. I tried for three years and couldn't find anything but the service, but I didn't give up. I got a job at Charleston Powder Plant in 1948, from there, I went to Naval Ordnance Gun in Louisville, and then from there I went to the Proving Ground. I worked in Charleston eleven and a half years and ended up working 32 years in three places.

I started working at JPG in [19]62 after the job in Louisville, but I couldn't quit the job I had to wait for an opening. When I first went in, I had to take a test you know, to get into the gate, and then I worked at transportation for three months. I drove a dump-truck for three months; you know I drove everything. I was hauling cinders up from the power plant and impact beams. I did

that for three months. And I could have went out, but they let me start in demolition. That's how I started in demolition. We had training that taught us how to handle the bombs. You also had to have four years experience, before you could become a leader. I didn't think we had enough people to have a leader.

George Hutton was my first boss. He was out there a real long time, he did pretty much everything and he was a good boss.

For demolition, we fired classified ammunition before it was sent out to the different branches of service. This ammunition was highly classified and all us guys had to go up to guard headquarters every morning to look at the classified ammunition and get a special badge. We had orders not to let anyone see that ammo, and we were always worried about that, because people would always come up to the fence, and go over it to go hunting and all that. This was back in '48. We did that for about three-and-a-half years, and we had a special badge to do that. We even found people sleeping in the bomb holes, poachers and stuff, you know they could've gotten hurt.

People back then thought that this classified ammunition were these big things, but in fact, they were like these small 55's and they had about 60 of these small things. Nobody would believe how powerful these things were. I had to search for that search for that stuff out on the field, you know we had a 61 acre field, there was mud and stuff, we were lucky that someone didn't step on it or something. We were just lucky see, cause of how many years we did it. You couldn't really see them and we would have to blow a lot of duds, we would have to move a lot of duds. We had these tanks where we had to test the tank mines and all of that. We had a minefield set up north and we had a special fence set up around it. We would drive the tanks over them and test it out.

We had several close calls you see because these mines were set up in a row and if one went off you would have been blamed if someone got injured or killed, you know it would have been your fault. You were supposed to wait five minutes after one of those mines went off to open the hatch. You see, sometimes another mine would go off before you could open that hatch and shrapnel would hit the hatch. They would have called that "Sympathetic Detonation" if you would have gotten hurt. One day, we were in those M-48 tanks, and this one tank wasn't running good, it was acting up so, there was three of us there, and we left it running you know. We would bend down over this mine, getting it ready you know. We heard this "Clang, clang"; that old tank had started on its own; it had shifted gears. This other guy was closer to it, and he run and got it stopped, five feet away. I would not be here today if he hadn't; it would've run right over those mines. But a lot of things like that happened. We were lucky. I got extra pay, hazard pay.

I retired in 1975, I think we had 23 guys at one time, or 34 guys here at one time. When we first went into demolition in '62, there were only 12 guys there. There's a lot of these guys gone now (looking at a picture of him and his team), and I don't know about all of them because, some of them work away from here. I got most of them named, (looking at picture to one guy he hadn't named on photo) his name is Webster, I think it's Raymond or Patrick. And so many of these guys had nicknames too, Charlie, never did know their first name. There was one guy who was killed (car accident) and I didn't recognize his name because I knew him by his nickname.

We were all really more than lucky. We never really realized that it was that dangerous see. I'll tell you something that happened, right after I went there in '62. Demolition, my section, had most of the mines that the counters were setting off. You know those personnel mines. It was just a few months after I went there, these two employees, one was bent down over this mine, getting it ready, and he fell over on it, and it killed him and injured the other guy. Well, what they did was take this mine and give it to us, so we had all of them in there. So other than that, we were more than lucky. That happened in the gunner section, and then we got it after the guy was killed.

Murrell Jackson was just like me, in demolition, operator you know like that. He lived at Bedford.

**Question: If a new round came on base, and you all were going to fire it and needed to learn more about it, did you ever go to Aberdeen to watch them blow something up?**

I was up there one time, we always had representatives come in from all of these places to see their ammo fired and tested and all that stuff.

**Question: You were talking about hauling cinders up to these impact fields, did these little bomblets sit on these cinders?**

Yeah

**Question: That's how you found them**

Yeah

**Question: They didn't bury themselves in to the cinders?**

Sometimes they did, sometimes they didn't. You could see a little impact hole.

**Question: What did you do when you saw the little hole?**

I just uh, we wasn't supposed to, but we'd take our fingers and lead out around it. And then if it was a dud we would blow it.

**Question: Everybody seemed to be very safe. I mean when you think about it, not too many people got killed.**

Yeah I know, it's hard to believe. They were all working with explosives everyday.

**Question: Did you ever do anything with that "beehive round?" [dangerous anti-personnel round that contained sub-munition bomblets]**

Yeah, you know lucky is the word for it, we've been out on the field before. You know, Louis Hallman. Well, old Louis was out there once. He was an observer, worked in Range Control.

We'd be out on the field, and they had fired rounds from the front, see, naturally, and sometimes a stray would go where they weren't supposed to go, and we'd have to start walking out there on the field and we'd have to take off running back to the bomb proof. That's why I said we were lucky, see, we could've gotten like that a lot of times.

**Question: You were out there on the bomb field while they were shooting off other rounds?**

Yeah, we were out in the field see. They would go the wrong way.

**Question: So you would hear it screaming and coming in, and you'd know to run?**

Yeah, yeah and then you could see it kicking up dirt and dust on the field you know.

**Question: Did you all go out in the morning and wait till they fired off all the rounds and then go out in the field? You were in the bomb proofs with the observer?**

What they do is they fire a round and they put out all these units on the field, and after they fire this one round, they'd hold up and we'd have to go out on the field and locate all these units. We'd have to locate the units and we'd have to carry these little flags, and we'd have to flag the duds. After so many duds, we'd have to blow them and then it'd go back to firing again, you know.

**Question: What did you use to destroy the duds with?**

Okay, a lot of people have never heard of C4, they think dynamite and TNT is it. Now we had dynamite and TNT, but it didn't amount to anything like this plastic explosive the army had- C4 they called it. It came in two-and-a-half pound sticks. It was much more highly explosive than dynamite or TNT. And it was plastic, you could break pieces of it off, and it was harmless; you could light it with a match. The only thing was, if you put a fuze in it, blasting cap on, it would explode. But we'd use this to destroy duds, because they were highly classified, and representatives wouldn't want there to be any pieces of it left. So we would use C4 most of the time. We'd have to put it right over top of it.

**Question: So you put the plastic on the dud, and then you stick a fuse into it?**

We all had the outer blasting cap on it. We'd set in down in there and then we'd put a timer on it, what time we wanted.

**Question: So you'd use that to set the time you wanted on it and then you'd leave, and then would you go in the bomb proof?**

See, there would be about six or eight of us out there on the field. A lot of the time, there would be sixty or seventy or more duds dug in there, and we'd get them all fixed up. You couldn't just set a few off at a time, you'd never get anything done. And then we'd get them all ready, and six or eight of us would go around pulling these. We'd have a set amount of time and then we'd

have to head back to the bomb proof and then we'd count them as they went off, to make sure they all went off.

**Question: What if two went off at the same time, would you count that as two or one?**

No you had to count it. Yeah that happened some times.

**Question: Did you do it by sound or seeing them blow up?**

Sound, but of course you could see most of them from inside the bomb proof.

**Question: It would be bad if you even missed one. So then after you went out and blew everything up, would they fire more rounds?**

Yeah, they go ahead and fire it up. It just kept up like that all day. But if you had so many duds, we'd go out, clean the field up, and they'd fire again.

**Question: So they would fire about ten rounds a day then?**

Well, that depended on how much time it took for everything. Sometimes they could fire more than other times.

**Question: Did you have any funny things happen to you out there that weren't suppose to happen?**

Oh, yeah. One time, I'll never forget this, there was supposed to be at least two of us in a personal carrier we drove them tanks to. We were in radio contact all the time. This one day I was by myself, there was supposed to be two of us in a PC. And I pulled out, and I was over in the weeds, I was going to get out and check. Well, it's a good thing I decided to check. I couldn't feel the ground because there was so many weeds. There wasn't anything solid, see, it's a good thing I didn't let loose. We had a lot of old wells and cisterns. You see, there would be hunters out there and we'd find holes, some would be dry and some would have water in them. But I got to feeling with my foot and I couldn't feel anything. So I checked and it was either a well or a cistern. But I'd have been out of luck if I had fell in because I was by myself, see. Boy I tell you, that scared me more than ammo.

**Question: When they cleaned and removed all the foundation and stuff from the homes and barns, it looks like they would have found the wells**

We got to blowing. No one would believe how many cisterns and wells we found you see. We got to blowing them in though. Because hunters have fell in them, no kidding. And you couldn't see 'em.

**Question: Oh, I've head stories that some of that excess ammunition that they wanted to get rid of, they'd go out and dump them in the wells.**

Yeah, that's what they did. They've done that before.

**Question: There's still a lot of them up there in the ground?**

Yeah, them environmentalists aren't supposed to know that

Regardless of what you hear today, you can ask any other guy in demolition and they would tell you what I'm telling you; that that place will never be safe up north. Because of what they put up there it will never be safe. There's too much stuff up there that we blew on Saturday and Sunday on overtime, destroying old rounds and stuff like that. But there's been so much fired up there. Here's another thing. We'd be out dragging the field down, and we'd have dogs and legs and stuff with drags on our tanks dragging our feet on there you know. This happened many times, where we would be dragging the field and you could hear this big drag that they were made of, this was heavy metal and stuff. We'd stop, and we'd check the dragger to see what it went over, and turn it over around. Back in WWII days, it would go around <almost illegible>. The thing is that the ground freezes and thaws, and you could see across that ground, and when you dragged it would scrape the ground, and anytime you found a rusted old round, you want to consider it because 9 times out of 10 it is. And we'd blow them. Now a lot of people wouldn't believe this, we'd blow that round and it'd leave an impact hole big enough to put that tank in.

**Question: They were firing these rounds way back in WWII basically, that long, and they're still live?**

Yeah, because freezing and thawing like you said, they'd light up. When I was a fireman, we'd used to plow fields, and you'd think, "Well where'd that round come from?"

Yeah, that's the way it is around here.

**Question: So did you do anything different in the winter than you did in the summer?**

We'd used to test bombs up there above K Road, there were two different tests zones you know. And when you'd find the ground frozen you're supposed to dig a little hole to put these mines in. The ground would be frozen, and we'd take a little bit of C-4 and blow the ground and open it up so we could remove the rounds.

**Question: So you didn't have to use a pick ax or something, huh? Now, did you have any restrictions like in the summer time when a storm was coming, because of the lightning?**

Oh, yeah. We were supposed to, of course we didn't always do it, but we were supposed to give it up.

**Question: Now, did you work with the same crew all the time?**

Yeah.

**Question:** The three of you? Were there three to a crew?

Oh, no, some of these crews that would work up north would have six or eight guys.

## JPG Service during the Vietnam War and into the 1980's

The year 1961 opened quietly with 66 employees and with the Madison Police notifying the Protective Services Division that a conservation officer had notified them by radio that the lock had been shot off of Gate 13, allowing the gate to swing open. While Mr. Burkhardt was replacing this lock the following day, someone shot the lock from Gate 14A. Both locks were damaged beyond repair. People from the outside have always been curious as to what was inside the proving ground.



Local Vietnam War protestors march outside JPG's gate. 1961

During JPG's second deactivation, several buildings were leased to private industry. On 14 January 1961, the District Corps of Engineer's office was preparing to lease Building 227, Weapons Maintenance, to the local Army Reserve Unit commanded by Captain Lester Lee. The unit used Building 227 for only a short time as by October the Weapons Maintenance Branch was reactivated and the Reserve Unit moved out.

Due to the construction of the Berlin Wall and the heightened Cold War, on 8 September 1961 JPG received official word that its status had once again been changed to active and that proof

testing would resume by December. It was announced by the Office, Chief of Ordnance that Jefferson Proving Ground would be partially reopened with a maximum work force of 320 which would be reached by 1 April 1962. Applications for work flooded JPG

“It would be less expensive to build a new airport than to maintain the facility at the proving ground”. “We hesitate to do much in the way of making improvements when we can be moved off within 30 days, said John Pritchard, Madison Aviation Board Member. “The proving ground undoubtedly will need the airport some day if the present activation approaches that of WWII or the Korean War”.

Using weapons that had been mothballed worked well; although, some equilibrators did have to be replaced. Aberdeen supplied weapons and proof mounts. Very little delay was experienced.

Captain McClinton, Commander of JPG, said “All reactivation plans are proceeding according to schedule”. He stated “The specific reason for the proving ground reopening is that Armed Forces will call for increased requirements of conventional ammunition that must be tested. JPG is one of two testing grounds; Aberdeen Proving Ground is the other.”

On Friday 13, Oct 1961 Lt. Col Herbert Riedemann, new CO, replaced Capt Douglas McClinton. As of 31 December 1961 Jefferson Proving Ground was authorized funding of \$2,858,000, considered adequate to cover the cost of increased testing. The table below will provide some idea of the initial workload.

Official Historical Summary	Period	1 July -	31 Dec 1961	Volume 1	Book 11
Item	Lots Received	Lots Tested	Accepted	Rejected	Referred
Cart 105mm	12	7		3	4
Cart 40mm XM386 E1	9	9	9		
Cart 40mm XM406	4	4	2	1	1
Fuze PD	13	13	6	5	1
Fuze M217	1	1			1
Flare, M9A1	1	1			1
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>

Of 40 lots received 9 were rejected and 8 were referred (something was wrong with the ammo, but maybe not serious enough to reject it.

On 22 April 1962, JPG requisitioned an M-60 combat tank with a 105-mm gun to be utilized in proof acceptance of ammunition.

A primary concern in the facility reactivation was that bees found ideal “hiving” places in various firing positions. This gave JPG Fireman whose job it was to control fires, the odd duty of starting blazes to chase the bees out of gun emplacements.

The reactivation began when the first new employee was hired 12 September 1961. Applications were received by Personnel at the rate of one hundred per day after that. The table below shows the dramatic increase in testing workload versus the previous table:

Official Historical Summary	Period	1 Jan -	31 July 1962	Volume II	Book 11
Item	Lots Received	Lots Tested	Accepted	Rejected	Referred
105mm Cartridge	307	299	63	89	147
Cartridge 40mm, IN XM387	4	4	1	0	3
Cartridge 40mm, HE XM406	43	43	29	5	3
Cartridge 40mm, HE XM386	45	45	35	5	5
Fuze PD T359E1	2	2	0	2	0
Cartridge HEAT-T 90mm	51	51	24	20	7
Total	452	444	152	121	165
*Smaller tests were fired, but these were the significant tests					

*JPG Heritage Partnership*

By January 1964 there were 388 employees, in 1966 there were 700 employees and by 1968, the peak of US involvement in Vietnam, there were 956 personnel.

During the Vietnam War, JPG was used by Wright Patterson Air Force Base using infrared photography techniques to see through trees. For awhile some of JPG looked a little like a Viet Cong village.

According to the Greensburg Daily News, Feb 16, 1967, the tests of flares were linked to UFO sightings. Greensburg was 20 miles from the Proving Ground as the crow flies, so on some nights the flare that ignited at 2000 feet above ground level could be seen for 50 miles. Mrs. Wayne Wehr, R. R. 1 Greensburg, reported that a group of women who attended the Grace Lutheran Church Monday night at the home of Mrs. Wilbur Roberts observed a round object with a brown top hovering in the sky with lights that sometimes blinked. It changed colors and moved to the left and then to the right for about 20 minutes.

During the 1970's the workload decreased, but remained relatively stable well into the 80's. Personnel levels hovered around 400.

## Interview with Bob Hudson on March 6, 2006

Interview done by Mike Moore at the Historical Society



Bob Hudson, former technical director of JPG,  
examines text for JPG History in 2005.

On July 9 1962 I came to work at the JPG at the data reduction branch as a math technician GS-5. Even though I had a degree in mathematics there was not a vacancy as a mathematician. Then after about a year of working in data reduction as a math Tech, I was promoted to a GS-7 mathematician; I went from 2.39 an hour to 3.20 an hour in one jump, and I thought I was walking on air. I stayed there from 1963 to about the 2nd day of January of 1967. Due to the build up for Vietnam, I went to night shift. We were shooting up all the fuze tests at night. JPG had a data reduction section on fuzes, and my boss put me overseeing a bunch of mathematicians. We had about 2 or 3 or 4 who would come in from Hanover College, students, on data reduction. I stayed on nights until August 1969. I was moved to the day shift as Chief of the Ballistics Division. I did that through 1970, 1971 or so and I was also made Chief of Engineering Test Branch. So I was my own boss; I was a branch chief of the division, and I was on board the division and in the Chief's job. In the summer of 1977, we hired Ike Peterson, because Mr. Everhart was going

to retire. He came on board JPG in the summer of 1977. Mr. Everhart retired around January of 1978.

My division was reorganized by 1978. It was called Methodology and Data Reduction Division (MAD). This division included the test directors, ballistics and computers' branches. Mr. Peterson became Chief or Director of MTD [Material Testing Directorate] and brought me down and sat me next to him his assistant; yet, even though; I still had that MAD division down the hallway. Around 1982, Mr. Peterson was taken out of the position of Director of Testing and they brought in a Colonel from logistics and put him in charge of being the director. That was sort of the time frame of the position called Technical Director. Mr. Peterson never really served as Technical Director, he transferred to White Sands Missile Range, then they opened up this Technical Director position. I believe I was selected around 1983 as Technical Director.

I left day-to-day contact based on testing at JPG. I did more assisting the commander, orienting new commanders, trying to get them up to speed and helping with day-to-day decisions about the total operations at JPG. Not just the testing at JPG. I told the Commanders along the way when they were brought in .They could do community and PR work, go to dinners, banquets and teas and socials. I would stay at the proving ground and I would just run the proving ground on a day-to-day basis and all they would do is to be a figure in it. And for the most part that's how it worked. They would get involved in things, on the surface of things. They would get oriented and about two years we'd lose them and we'd start all over again.

Now somewhere after 1983, and I don't know exactly the time frame, when Colonel Conrad was the JPG Commander. He had all these people working for him, the directors and office chiefs and he had to supervise them and do evaluations on them and all that such. And he said "This is your job now" and from that point till the last day of the Proving Ground, I guess I rated about everybody except for me, even the commander and his secretary except they just wouldn't recognize it.

What I am going to do is tell you little stories along the way of my career path. When I was hired in 1962, we did not have any work for me to do. So a guy named Stein and I had the same problem. The office workers would not share with us. The incumbents were kind of selfish about the work. Most of it was classified, but we had clearances. Charley and I started doing things to make the flow of things better and give assistance to what we were doing. We put in a card index system to track all the ammunition by item by the manufacturer or assembly plant, load plant that put it together. We could track the item from the time it entered the proving ground until the test report or decision was made. We made up a whole bundle of Mathematical sheets where we computed constants where we could. We would make all these calculations for this constants and give the sheets to the data reduction people so that they could jump up into the process to a fixed point and they did not have to do all these repetitive calculations.

There was really not a system to track costs of doing work so old Stein and I worked on a cost accounting tracking system. They gave us permission because we didn't have anything to do anyway and as long as we were doing something constructive, I guess we were okay. We put

together a method of assigning work order numbers to everything that came into test. That work order number stayed with the test until it left the proving ground as a report.

We got all the time keepers in the proving ground together and we trained them how to fill out the forms for an 80 hour two week pay period. That would track what projects they worked on. The minimum amount of time that we would let them charge to a project would be increments of one hour. Charley and I went to payroll and got the pay of every single direct person that had anything to do with testing. At the end of the two week period on Monday morning the time keepers would finalize that report from their cost center codes. They would bring them up to our office on Monday morning, so in theory we had a track of what an individual did for the 80 hours during that two week period.

We compiled all those costs against a given work order for the whole proving ground. At the end of a two week period we knew the direct labor hours it took to do the project, and also how much it cost.

Stein and I did this for a year or so. We would get the data in on Monday for the two week period and by noon we would have the report done and expended only 8 hours for the two of us. (Four man hours for Charley and four for me.) We would turn that report in to finance and accounting.

Russell Smart was in charge of finance and accounting and it dawned on him one time that Stein and I were doing cost accounting work. We were doing his work. He then requested that we turn all the work over to him and then he asked for five people to do it with. (Laughter) Here Charley and I were doing it in 8 man hours every two weeks and he wanted five full time people to do it. He didn't get five, but he got three. So Charley and I did those kind of things and finally they began giving us some work gradually and they began sharing with us.

I went on the night shift in 1967. The bosses played a joke on me. JPG started a night shift in about 1966. Mr. Everhart, the boss, Jim Selig they were all in on it. I came in to work one day and there was a [standard form] 52 Personnel Action on my desk directing me to night shift the next pay period. All the proper signatures were on the 52. Doyle Shafer had signed off on it, Personnel had signed off on it, I don't know if the commander had signed it, but anyway, I didn't say anything. I just put it into my desk drawer and kept quiet about it. Finally they decided they ought to ask me about it. It turned out the whole thing was a joke.

At the beginning of 1967, I came in and found a real one on my desk directing me to the night shift. I went on night shift in 1967. They gave us Hanover students, three or four of them. That is how we ended up with Steve McGuiness. We had three or four students at a time working 20 hours a week and we had two or three permanent employees. They would rotate from day to night shift. But, I stayed on night shift. That is how Steve McGuiness became a permanent employee.

I had people call me in connection to somebody working for me, you know checking on references and stuff particularly at the end. I had people calling me about references to positions at Yuma,

Arizona. Well I had occasion to tell them the truth about the person. It would have been very easy to build a person all up but that is just not how I am. I am going to tell you how it is up front. I never put anybody down. I would just tell them about their work habits. The folks at Yuma thanked me. They said no one had ever told them the truth about a prospective employee before. I said, "You know if I was hiring and you did that for me I would appreciate it."

One time on nights, JPG had a test conducted at "N" Position. The guards in their patrols found a round of ammunition on the bench. It had not been fired. The program had been shot during the day time. I don't know what that crew did when they walked off and left that round. The guards notified Shafer and called McClung in (security) about 8:00 at night in the conference room. They called me down there because I was on night shift with data reduction stuff. Shafer came up there. This item was classified secret. So he found out who the test director was and called his boss in. We did not call the Proof Director in. So Shafer comes in and says Bob this can't be a classified round. I said we deal with it all the time. It was a 40 millimeter. Shafer said we don't have any 40 millimeter here. I said, "We do. It is secret." It was in that category of COFRAM. We had that vault on night shift that we kept locked, unless I had to get in it. Shaffer said, "Prove it to me." I opened up the vault we had the specifications in there, and copies of the same item. I got them out and showed them to him. He just did not know at his level all the particulars of the round. We took the rough report out that the test director had used. All the rounds on the report were accounted for. The report had data on every one of them. Yet here was one of them lying down on the bench at the firing position.

In August '69, I came to day shift. I took over Data Reduction, because in '69 when Shafer left, Mr. Chambers moved up to be in charge of testing, Mr. Chambers selected Mr. Everhart to come down and be his deputy. This left the Chief of Ballistics and Data Reduction Branch open. I was offered the job as chief. I had to check it out with Jim Selig to see if it was okay with him, because he had more time than I did. It was okay with Jim, so I took over. I had trouble with this move because I did not want to make Jim mad. He assured me that everything was okay, so I took over Data Reduction. After that we must have had a re-organization. I am not sure how it came about, but I ended up as Chief of Test Engineering Division where all the test directors worked.

Betty Graves, bless her heart, she was secretary of Ballistics and Records. When I was transferred to days, I did not even know how to do a DF (Disposition Form) or a time card, Betty ran the office. She taught me all the stuff how to do. I mean she took me by the hand and led me down the path and taught me the minutia of doing business. Later, I moved over into the Test Directors Division in 1971. The first thing they told me that I had a problem with a person that was drinking. I said, "That was against the rules." I was naïve about it. I felt that we had to go by the rules. Well, no, this guy does not go by the rules.

They said, "You cannot make him go by the rules." "Yes I can too," I said, "You watch and see." The employee was a super nice guy; he just had a drinking problem. It took me a year and in that year, I thought I was being fired. They would chew me out, The NAACP was on my case, one brother-in-law was on my case, but one brother-in-law was on my side. Col Bishop would chew me out because I reprimanded this person. I put him on leave without pay. Finally we fired him.

He came to my house that night and cried. He said he was an alcoholic and needed help. I said, "I have been waiting all this time for you to say that. I have waited a year. You come back in the morning and we will get it all lined up and straightened up. We will send you to "AA". He went to it for two years and I don't think he missed a meeting. As far as I know, he did not drink anymore. So it was worth the effort, but all the time I was in it, I thought that I was going to be fired. You have to give a guy a chance to straighten up, but the onus falls on you as supervisor. You have to provide training when they need it. You have to provide counseling. You have to give them a chance to straighten up whatever they have done.

You don't know what accurate is. We had a guy named Myron Phillips as a test director. Have you ever heard of him? It was kind of a standing joke. You remember how Data Reduction used to take a proof director's records every entry, every letter and compare it, see that he had all the right data. This guy was such a perfectionist he spent so much time producing this hand written rough copy that there could not be mistakes in it. Well it would really upset him. Let's say he entered a number wrong or he misspelled something, just any little thing. Well I don't know if you remember, but we had those red pencils, they were ever-sharp. They had red on one end and black on the other.

**Mike Moore: Oh Yes, I do remember, I had forgotten about them.**

Bob Hudson: We took great pride in trying to find something wrong with his record, (Chuckle) and we would put a big red circle around the mistake. Oh boy, Jeez he would almost have a heart attack and he beat himself up. He wasn't mad at us, but he would get mad at himself. He would have a fit. If we put one red mark on that piece of paper, (Chuckle), you know if you fill out several pages of this stuff, it is easy to make a small mistake, but he was a real perfectionist.

**Mike Moore: I never heard of him, some of the proof directors were pretty sloppy and some were pretty neat. I remember Woody Bell had perfect print.**

Bob Hudson: Yeah old Myron would have a fit. You know you talked about doing thousands of those firing records. It got so that I could look at the typed copy and tell you what girl typed it.

**Mike Moore: They were punching cards by the time I got there.**

Bob Hudson: One of the best typists we had during that time as I saw it in the typing pool was Betty Lucas. If you looked at her she had sort of stubby fingers and you would not believe that she could type at all. But I am telling you she was a whiz on the typewriter. You could tell when she had done something. Another person that I could recognize the typing was Dolly Harsin. I don't know how they did it but their typing was the most distinct.

I am going to tell you something about Herb Inskeep. Oh, when what was that Colonel's name, some Colonel, I will remember in a minute. Herb was a proof director for me, but he was also had those EEO [Equal Employment Opportunity] duties assigned to him. It was a combination of duties, but the EEO HQ's-side of the house did not like that, because they did not think he could put enough time in. This Colonel called me down to the office one day and he said Bob,

“We’re doing away with the EEO.” I said, “There is no way in the world we can do away with the EEO.”

I said, “I will give you a week before the order is reversed. Once TECOM (Test and Evaluation Command, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland) finds out and Herb calls up there and tells them that he is no longer the EEO Officer, that general is going to stand you at attention (Chuckle) and tell you what you are going to do.” It did not take a week. The Colonel called me the next day and said, “Bob not only did they tell me that I had to put him back in ( Herb as EEO Officer) but I had to put him in full time.” (Chuckle) We lost him. I lost him as a Test director (proof director). They put him in full time as the EEO Officer. Herb was a nice guy. I really liked working with him.

As I told you earlier, in those early years they really did not give me much to do, so in accordance with that, I was in that line of getting cross trained. I don’t know if I told you this or not, but we had to go to the Secretary of the Army once a year for a briefing on our budget. There was nobody in the finance and accounting office that would go. Why I did not know anything about budget work, but they picked me to go. Well, I did not know at the time, but it turned out to be a benefit. I had to learn the system well enough to brief the system. We had to brief it at TECOM, then DARCOM, then go on down and brief the Secretary of the Army. I ended up having to do that. Well it did not hurt me to do that. It got me outside of testing and into something else. In the later years there was not much that they could tell me about that finance and accounting. I went up there and those are the kind of things that paid off when I became a Technical Director.

This reminds me of a story on Woody Bell. It was a fuze test and it was a Safety Phase. One test that Woody supervised was to shoot into a target close and that round should not function. The timing mechanism would not have had time enough to get it armed. These rounds theoretically end up being all duds, because they weren’t supposed to fire in that length of time. A criteria in the Mil Spec stated that it function within so many feet, perhaps 25 feet behind the target. We set up cameras behind the target. It would count as a valid round if it did not function on target.

Well one of these rounds functioned and Woody without seeing the camera data or anything on the spot said it was okay. There was a lot of fuzes sitting on a ship to go to Vietnam. The Representative called his boss up and said the lot was accepted. The camera data showed that that round had functioned in close to the target, so it was a malfunction. So we (JPG) put out a report that the lot was rejected. Whew Wee (Whistle--Boy did that cause trouble).

This guy from the company went to Picatinny Arsenal; then he went to TECOM Headquarters, complained to them trying to make us change that Lot to the status “accepted”. He had gone out on a limb, but the ship had left the port. It was steaming overseas with the rejected lot and it was rejected in a critical phase. A thing like that when you are running the “tube test” you just cannot have a “critical defect”. We wouldn’t change the results of the test. This guy made a trip to JPG. He talked to Woody, and I was there. Woody was as stubborn as a mule. The guy wanted us to say that the round was lost. No! Sireee! The rep begged and pleaded with us to somehow or another to mark the round “lost” so the status of the lot would be changed.

The Rep said, "Do anything we wanted to with it, but get it out of this rejected status." Boy you talk about Woody. He got red in the face. I thought he was going to hit this guy. Ole Woody stood his ground. I was standing behind Woody. It was our decision and we were sticking with it. The Rep said you know that is going to cost me my job. I said here is what happened, here are the results, go away with it. I don't know whatever happened to that guy, but boy Woody was like a tiger, you could not get him to change something that he did not believe. That's the right way to be too.

**Mike Moore: Tell me about that Tornado in 1974:**

Bob Hudson: I was on the first floor [of the HQ's Building 100] when we got the call that it was so many minutes away. Col. Bishop told me, "Bob it is your job to get everyone here in that tunnel." Why, I did not know where the tunnel was. I started telling everyone to get down in the tunnel. They were moaning and groaning. There were not any lights down there. Water was standing in that tunnel and people didn't want to go in there because it was too scary. I was trying to herd them in there. Couldn't get them all in there, some wouldn't go in at all. They were all crowded at the bottom of the steps stumbling in the dark. I stood at the top of the steps at the tunnel door. The tornado went by. Later as a result of the tornado, generators and lights were put in there.

The tunnel had lights in there, but the electricity was out. Then later we used the tunnel for disaster drill. We put food down there. We had water to drink. We started having a lot of practices down there. We would have our practice on the same day that the county practiced. It was a tough day that day of the tornado.

Now a funny part of that story was. It occurred just a few minutes before 4:00 pm., when we were getting out anyway. When we gave them an all clear, people just ran like rabbits. They jumped in their vehicles and rightfully so, because they didn't know what had happened to their home. I did not know what my house was like.

Well one of the ladies that was in typing had grabbed her report she was working on, a secret one and slammed it in my hands when she started down into the tunnel. Well, she sure did not come back and get it. Now here I am, no electricity, everybody runs away and I have this secret report in my hand. I got Jim Selig to go with me back upstairs. I found a pack of matches and I was lighting a match and Jim could not get the vault open by the time the match would burn out. Well you know when you in the dark and you have a little bit of light, it takes a little bit of time to get your eyes accustomed to the dark. Well we had a light and lose it, we had a light and we would lose it. We couldn't get the door open.

I said Jim lets just stop this. "We will wait until we just get totally accustomed to the conditions and then maybe we can see too get it open." All the proving ground personnel were gone you see. Here were Jim and I trying to get this vault door open. We finally got it open. We then went home after that.

We saw that the tornado just ruined the hilltop. Hanover and all that was wiped out. Colonel Bishop set up a Command Center down at the top of the hill. That night we took a bunch of our generators to the hospital and places that needed them. He stayed down there I think all night in that Command Center. The next morning everybody came back to work. He dismissed the whole proving ground. The whole work force was allowed to go home, change clothes, take government vehicles down there and start helping people, primarily JPG people, we worked with them first.

We worked down there in Madison, I don't know if it was one day or two days. We helped get JPG people moved to places and rescued. The proving ground people got some kind of award from the Army for doing that. We did a lot of service for the community that time. The proving ground only lost electricity. That was all. At my house there were big chunks of hail. Now the hail stones weren't round like they normally are. They were all irregular shapes. The edges were jagged all over my yard.

I climbed up on the roof. My roof was about seven years old. I reported it to the insurance company, but I said take care of people worse off than me. I got up there and measured it. It was 30 squares of roofing. I was at the proving ground one day, and I got a call from my insurance company adjuster. To put on a roof at that time was 40 dollars a square. I was bracing for a big let down, because it was 7 years old. He said there are 40 squares, 30 dollars a square. It would be \$1200 dollars to replace your roof. You have 50 dollar deductible. Would it be alright if I left a check for \$1150 dollars here at your house? I said it would be fine. (chuckling) So I had to put a new roof on.

There was a woman that worked down in Supply in Bldg 108. She lived on Cragmont Street. Her house was torn up and she had two girls. Well, what she did, she took her barbecue grill and made them some hamburgers. Well, it was raining and it was cold, so they cooked hamburgers for supper, she and these two girls. They brought this grill inside, put it in the middle of the floor and they laid down beside it to get the warmth because they did not have any heat. She woke up, the girls were already unconscious. She could barely go herself. She dragged herself out of that house to get out into the fresh air. A neighbor was in his house since a person had to stand guard over his house to ward off looters. She got him awake and they went over to the house and dragged those two girls out. They came within an inch of their life of dying of carbon monoxide poisoning. She had a son named Gerald. Talk about strange, after Vietnam, JPG started Reductions in Force [government layoffs] and he bumped his own mother out of a job.

I usually worked the deer hunt. I worked on a Saturday. I always worked the north hunt [out of Old Timbers Lodge]. In order to get things in place in time I had to leave the front at 4:00am. The procedure was as follows. Two people would go and lay out all the forms and what have you. When it was all laid out then you could start checking the hunters in and assign them to their hunting areas. A person would stay at Gate 9. We would let people in from the east side [near New Marion] and they wouldn't have to come in from the front.

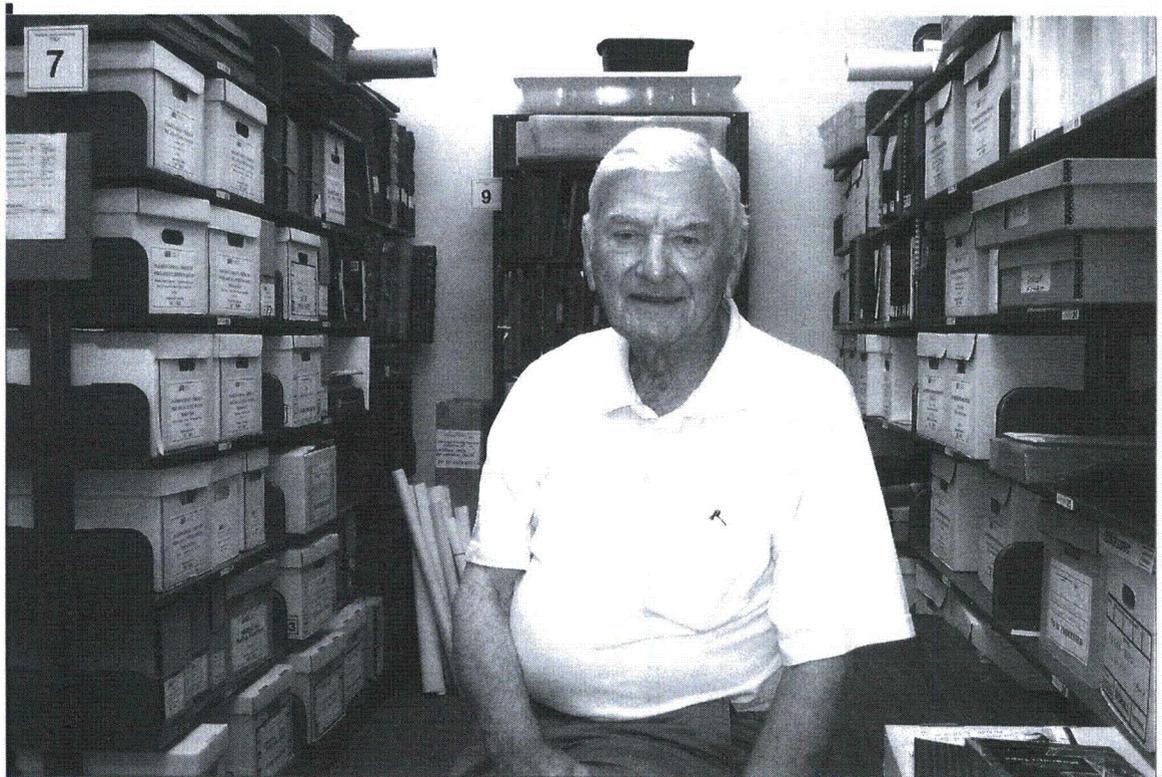
We had to leave at 4:00 am to get all this work done. This woman that I am talking about was supposed to be up there. She did not show up and I finally had to go on without her. The guy

was at Gate 9 to do that for me, so I went on to Old Timbers [Lodge] by myself. I called over there at Gate 9 and I told the man there that I am by myself. Here is what I want you to do. Whoever is standing at Gate 9, send them in two or three of them and they are going to work for me or they are not going to hunt. So he did. I had these tables set up and we had to get slips signed for liability. We had an area for the maps. I had them lined up at the table to help me. Then we let all the hunters through and we got them registered. We gave them a briefing film. I had to wrap up my papers and give them to the person that took my place. I turned my stuff into security and went home.

Sunday afternoon the phone rang, there was this lady. She asked, "Bob what am I going to do?" The way the rule was if you worked on the deer hunt you were supposed to take off one of the work days in the week before and you would get compensated for working the weekend there. She had already had her day off. She said, "Sunday I had company. Saturday, I had all this work to be done. I had housework. I had to go to the grocery store. I spent all day working on it. I got up this morning and the people came, they had their meal and they were gone and I sat down in my chair to relax."

It was like a bomb went off in her head. She realized that she was supposed to be out there Saturday at 4 o'clock in the morning at the proving ground. She said, "I am so sorry." I said, "It worked out fine. There was no problem." She said, "Yeah, but what am I going to do? I have already taken a day off." I said, "Just you and I know that don't we." She said "Yeah." I said "end of the story." Well she retired. The very first morning after she retired she was going to sleep in. I got up at 4 o'clock, I called her. I said where are you? I am standing out here waiting for you to go up north to do that deer hunt and I am waiting on you because you haven't showed up. She said Bob, "I am going to kill you---- but, I deserve it". "Wake me up on my very first morning to get me to come out there." She finally went to Florida and eventually died there. She would come back to Madison from time to time and we would rehash this story.

## Charles Fredrick Hill –Hanover History Project 1994.



Fred Hill Visiting the JPG Collection at the Research Library, Jefferson County Historical Society.

I was born and raised in this little burg. I started to work at JPG in 1966. In 1990 I retired. Initially, I was a proof director-a person in charge of a test. From there I went to management analysis. I was a management analyst far longer than I was a proof director. I was given I think it was six weeks training. Each week we were given a review and we worked with a crew in preparation hauling and storing powder. Most of what we did was to observe. Weights and scales, screwing in a dummy fuze, loading and unloading.

### **When did the computer come in?**

I was there when they left the abacus. My best guess is that we got the computer in the early 70's.

### **When you started how much did you make?**

I think somewhere in the neighborhood of 8 or 9 dollars per hour.

### **What was the work atmosphere like?**

This was during the Vietnam War. I was hired under a program that had to do especially with “Nam,” a program called “COFRAM” [short for] **The Controlled Fragmentation of Munitions**. I was hired for the express purpose of testing COFRAM. The Army was allowed to hire a lot of people for this project. It was secret. They already had the folks doing the main testing, but we were hired just to do COFRAM testing. I lucked out and got into the special stuff.

After Nam there was a cutback. This is production stuff- when the Army bought it. I worked down at Charlestown before I came here. We made the powder at Charlestown and bagged it and anyway they sent random samples of anything the Army was purchasing to JPG where the Army would test it. Projectiles, fuzes, all sorts of powder, anything that made a complete round on the cartridge cases.

Right off the assembly line, the factory would immediately send samples to JPG to be tested. We had 72 hours to wire back to the manufacturer and the government whether the ammo was acceptable according to a set of standards. They had book after book of what the performance should be. Then the government would cut the manufacturer a check and they would continue manufacturing more rounds.

After Nam, they cut back on the purchase of ammunition. The rumors abounded of cutbacks. The only change I remember was the fear of layoff before reaching minimum retirement.

### **What was the role of women?**

I don't know how many women were out there before I got there. We had an increase in the employment of women for example in preparing the ammo. They began to put women on some jobs previously held by men. There was one or two on the guard force, which was unknown before. There were women proof directors while I was there. Women's utility increased greatly while I was there.

### **What were your best memories at JPG?**

My best memory was probably the Gulf effort (Gulf War I). A lot of patriotism existed. Just as it was when I went to World War II. When I went off to WWII, there were parents of my age group working at JPG and they worried about their sons and daughters. Just as when the Gulf War happened then again we had parents that were worried. Here it was now that I was a parent. Fortunately I had no children in Nam or the Gulf War. The parents that worked at JPG now had children in the Gulf War.

### **What were your worst memories?**

I really don't have truthfully any worst memories. We had several commanders that were good that were interested and were excellent leaders. I personally did not experience any fatal accidents. I think there were one or two occurrences while I was there, but they were very minor.

### **What were your thoughts on Base Closure?**

I was in a very unique position. I had earned the right to retire. They offered a good retirement package. I took advantage of the situation to retire. I regretted the closure for the other employees.

I was glad to see the Air National Guard come in and stay after closure. I was a pilot for 8 years and I was glad to see the Air National Guard flying at JPG. If the Army was not going to buy as much Ammunition, there was no reason to keep a multimillion dollar operation going.

Fred asking: Do you know what we were doing out there.

**Interviewer: They told us of the testing, but I have been out only once.**

Fred: If you ever want to go out there, just call me and I will take you out there.

End of Part 1.

### **Follow on Interview with Fred Hill**

1:30 pm, March 9th 2007

A further explanation of COFRAM was controlled fragmentation ammunition. These inserts in the 155mm were like a slice of pie only much thicker. Inside of the round was located a golf ball sized sphere (lead azide inside). I recall that from a timed fuze they were kicked out of the carrier at 1500 feet they would disperse. They had spring loaded wings to stabilize the fall and when they fell they were on the bottom side of the wedge, so that when they hit the bottom of the wedge it would cause that lead azide not to function but to go up about 5 or 6 feet and then explode. It was anti-personnel and I asked once why not 6 feet, because you would get better coverage up there and the answer was that the rounds were designed for Asians whose average height was about 5 feet. This was Nam you see. After the COFRAM units were dispersed, functioned or didn't function, that field was closed off when the test ended we would go out with demolition people and mark each unit if it functioned or did not function and tell why to the best of our ability. Then when all were checked out, the demolition people would place a charge next to them and blow them all up and then they had to collect every little piece that had anything to do with that test. Demolition would place the pieces in a bag and periodically they would melt them down.

We carried 38 revolvers. Everybody on the test did, well the gunners did not. But the people in the field did. I remember we would pick up the bullets over at Security. I would stick them in my pocket, put the revolver in my holster and that's where it stayed. I never did put a bullet in that revolver. I think I practiced at a firing range, but if you aimed north and fired the gun that was good enough for qualification (laughs). I never had a problem with weapons.

Finally there were no more rounds that were classified secret (See note at the bottom). The answer was that some marines were being attacked were overwhelmed by the North Vietnamese and they had those in supply there. They said now is the time to use them and they cut loose with the rounds and they were exposed, but it stopped the enemy, the charge was over. Along with that in the way of testing we had targets.

They were 5 feet tall and I am guessing they were 12 inches wide. They resembled bodies and they were made of corrugated insulation board. Each target was wrapped in brown paper and given a number. There would be 150 targets in the woods. We would fire the gun and as best we could to get it to function over there at 1500 feet in the air. These munitions would fall amongst the targets. That was one round.

We would go out with a colored marker and circle the holes. Then when all was ready, we would fire another round into the cluster. We would go out and mark the holes with a different colored marker. Everybody in the field took part in marking the targets. So that was one test. Then they fired a 155 HE [high explosive] with a proximity fuze on it to see how that compared with a 155mm COFRAM round. I only heard that in the field that when the Marines were being swarmed that they were very effective, other than that I don't know how they did.

**Mike Moore: I have not heard of that round since Vietnam. Now we are fighting in the desert in Iraq.**

Fred: Now we are worried about camel spiders. (Laughs)

On this COFRAM, I recall Sammie Roberts was at the gun. Oh no I beg your pardon, I was at the gun. Sam was at the field. It was an 8 inch COFRAM round. It was dovetailed in the back end and at 1500 feet it would explode and all the units would fall out the backend. There were about a 100 of them. One day Sam called for a certain elevation and azimuth. We put one round down, and Sam wanted about a 30 mil correction, a very slight mil correction. In the meantime there was a gun crew and a gunner up on the 8 inch gun messing around and the gunner asked, "What was that reading again? I said "30 mils." I was in there setting the fuze and they were getting the gun ready. So okay we fired one and Sam called back and said "Good grief, what happened?" I said, "I don't know what happened?" Sam asked, "Was that fired at [the correct] azimuth and elevation?" I said, "Gosh, I hope so." Sam said, "You know what Hill, instead of going out in front of us, it went behind us." I went out and checked the gun with the gun leader and found out what the goof was. I said, "Don't touch it. Don't you dare touch it!" I looked in the gun sight and instead of 30 mil left, the gun sight said it was 60 mils left, which put it on the other side of the bomb proof. Things like that happened. We were very fortunate. You know the culprits never did get blamed! A poor guy on the night shift had fired a set of pressure gauges through the gun tube and the authorities said these gauges cut out some of the lands inside the tube and caused the round to go awry. I provided enough proof to the investigating committee that it had to be the gun sight was off. My contention was why did it not happen on all preceding rounds? Anyway Lawrence Raisor got a day off without pay, and he was on the night crew. There was some disagreement between what I said and what the gun crew leader said.

Notes on COFRAM From the Internet

1st Battalion Operational Report

Top Secret Round Fired:

On 7 February 1967, the Lang Vei Special Forces Camp close to the Khe Sanh Combat Base was over run by NVA Tanks. This was the first reported use of tanks by the enemy in the war. Reports show 9 NVA tanks were used.

Early in the morning of 7 February 1967 the Marine artillery, B/1/13 105mm towed, fired, what was a Top Secret projectile back then, COFRAM projectiles or "Firecracker Rounds". This was the first official reported use of these Top Secret COFRAM artillery rounds in the war.

According to reports, this authority was requested by General Westmoreland and then approved by President Johnson.

According to a memo from General Wheeler to President Johnson, 28 COFRAM rounds were fired in the first usage. COFRAM rounds, followed by HE, and then air support.

The 13th Marine Artillery at Khe Sanh consisted of three 105mm howitzer batteries (towed) a provisional 155mm howitzer (towed) battery, and a 4.2-inch mortar battery. This totaled 24 artillery pieces.

Marine artillery would support for an estimated four hours.

Marine artillery was also under heavy counter fire and would suffer casualties during this exchange. It was used with some consistency from then on. While not the primary round it would be used in certain situations.