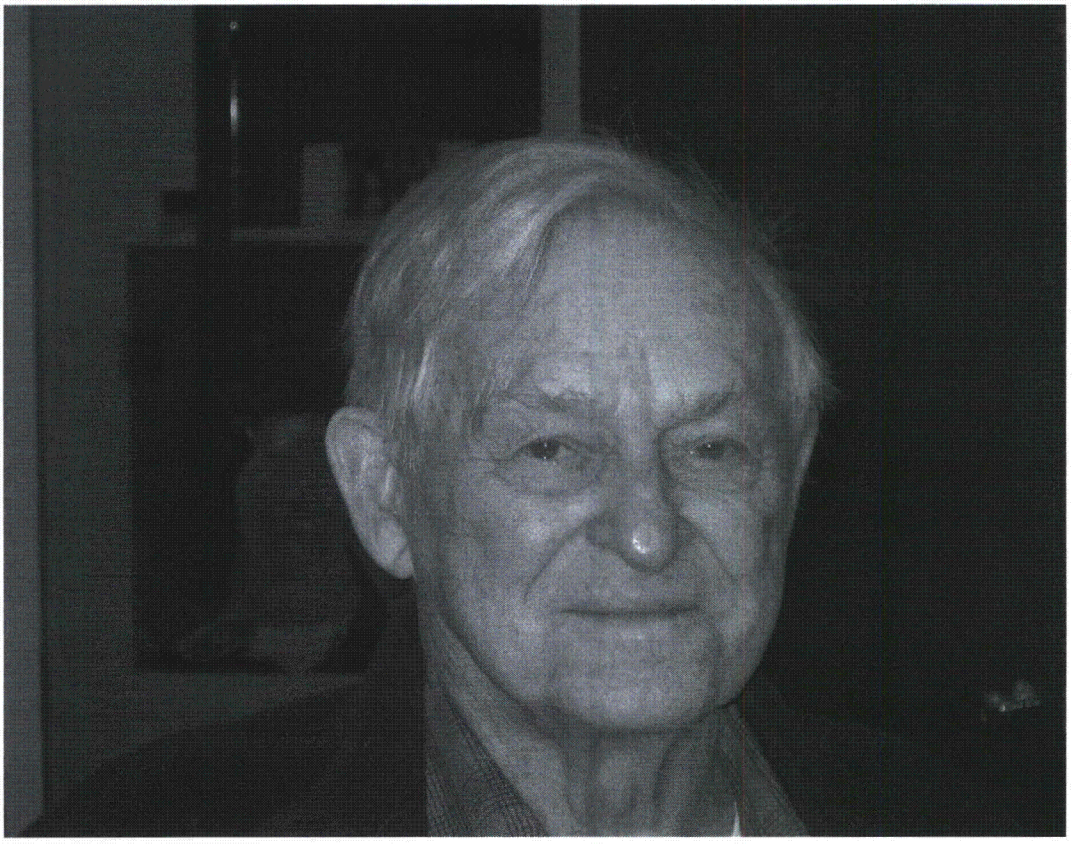
Interview with Ike Jenkins.

Retired from Jefferson Proving Ground
Date of Interview: 12:00 pm Thursday, December 13, 2007
Interviewer is Mike Moore



Ike Jenkins, former JPG Employee. Ike is married to
Betty Nicklaus Jenkins, former JPG resident.

I was born in Milltown, Indiana June 14, 1926. We moved to Madison in 1932, I believe. My dad was the poultry-man at the Madison State Hospital. I went to school at North Madison and graduated in 1944 and went straight into the Navy. I came back to Madison after two years and attended Hanover College for one year in 1946. I worked on a farm at Pendleton, Indiana which is about one hundred miles north of Madison.

Our kids turned out good. Jeffrey is a, was a hospital administrator and Jill is a school teacher in Kentucky. Jeff has two kids- Lucas Kent and Aaron Renee. My daughter has three kids- Trent Douglas Woodward, Trevor Woodward, and Whitney Renee Woodward. All the grandkids has gone through college. Lucas is an engineer, Aaron is a Doctor in Psychology, Trent is a coordinator for the city, I can't remember, he works at North Vernon. Trevor is still going to school. Whitney has graduated and she is a teacher in Special Reading. She is working at Vevay.

Mike Moore: What did you do when you quit the farm and got married?

Ike: I came back and went to Irvin's and worked as a "Grease Monkey".

Mike Moore: What was Irvin's?

Ike: It was a farm store. It also had Hudson cars. We did the repair and rebuilding of cars. I greased and lubricated the cars and changed the tires. When I wasn't busy, I helped put tools together helping Herdy Bumen.

Mike Moore: You worked with Herdy Bumen?

Ike: Yes.

Mike Moore: Was that in North Madison, or downtown in Madison?

Ike: No, It was down town Madison, right across from the Irvin Feed Store, the big building there. I worked there and I think for sixty cents per hour. Then I finally got a job at Jefferson Proving Ground. Walter Layton worked out there at the water plant. He wanted me to come and put in for a job out there. He made it strictly---, he said you never will know how long you will be working. He made that point. You may be working 30 days or you may be working 30 years, but he wanted to make sure that I knew that before I quit this job.

I went out there, after we got married, I think it was December of 1950. I started in as a water and sewage trainee. It took three years to be qualified to be an operator. After getting that the guy that I worked for was Lucky Ferrar. His name was Shrunk Ferrar. He was the one that fell off the bridge when they were building it and they called him Lucky after that.

Mike Moore: Which bridge was that? The Madison One?

Ike: The Madison Bridge. He was the only one that fell off. He fell into kind of a sand pile which helped him.

Mike Moore: Is that spelled like Ferrar?

Ike: No. It was Farrer. He was my supervisor. After a few years, I got to be a leader. I was over Water and Sewage. I worked my way up and learned the trade in both water and sewage. I learned to repair all the water lines and sewer lines and things like that. I worked my way up to a supervisor under Lucky Farrer.

Mike Moore: You wouldn't have a photograph of him would you? It is just interesting, a guy fell off a bridge.

Ike: No. I don't believe I do. He lived at Lawrenceburg and he drove in from Lawrenceburg. He was really good. He taught me a lot and he made me a supervisor, I guess because I was a fairly

good worker. Under him it was more like an assistant supervisor I would say. Over the Water and Sewage, the labor pool, (custodians, laborers, tractor operators).

We were laid off several times. I was never laid off, but I got cut back in salary. I had to go back to the water plant operator. I don't know two or three times. I would lose my supervisor pay, but then I would come back, they would re-hire me.

Mike Moore: You mean you stayed on when the proving ground closed after Korea?

Ike: I worked straight through from 1950 to 1981.

Mike Moore: My Goodness! You mean you worked right on through base closure.

Ike: Yes. We got down to fifty at one time. I did water and sewage then I started helping the plumbers, electricians and stuff like that. All fifty of us worked together. They really did a good job.

Mike Moore: Did you ever know about that cannon that stood at the Courthouse for several years?

Ike: Nobody knows where it went?

Mike Moore: No. We know it went out to the New Veterans' Cemetery, but Jim Griffith told me that when he was county commissioner in 1947, JPG donated that cannon to the County and he put it on the front lawn in front of the Jail. I was just wondering where it came from.

Ike: I was never connected to that.

Mike: Who was your commander at that time?

Ike: I cannot remember, but I went through 13 colonels from 1950 to 1981.

Mike: Did you always live at the same place? What is your address now?

Ike: When we got married, we moved to where my wife's father's farm was located. They had kicked him out of the proving ground in 1941. He bought a thirty acre farm from Yunker in North Madison.

Mike: Where was that?

Ike: Do you know where the State Highway garage is? We are right there on that corner, that stone house right across from the filling station, the Shell station with the big rock and the motel next to it. His name was William Nicklaus. He sold all the lots off on Wilson and [Hwy] Seven. He sold a section off to the Baptist Church. The now Coleman printing company had part of it.

It was actually sold to the Pepsi Cola Company. I think it was Pepsi. It might have been Coca Cola. Anyway they were going to put a plant there, but they never did. Coleman bought it from them. They have a die factory there now. It was North Madison.

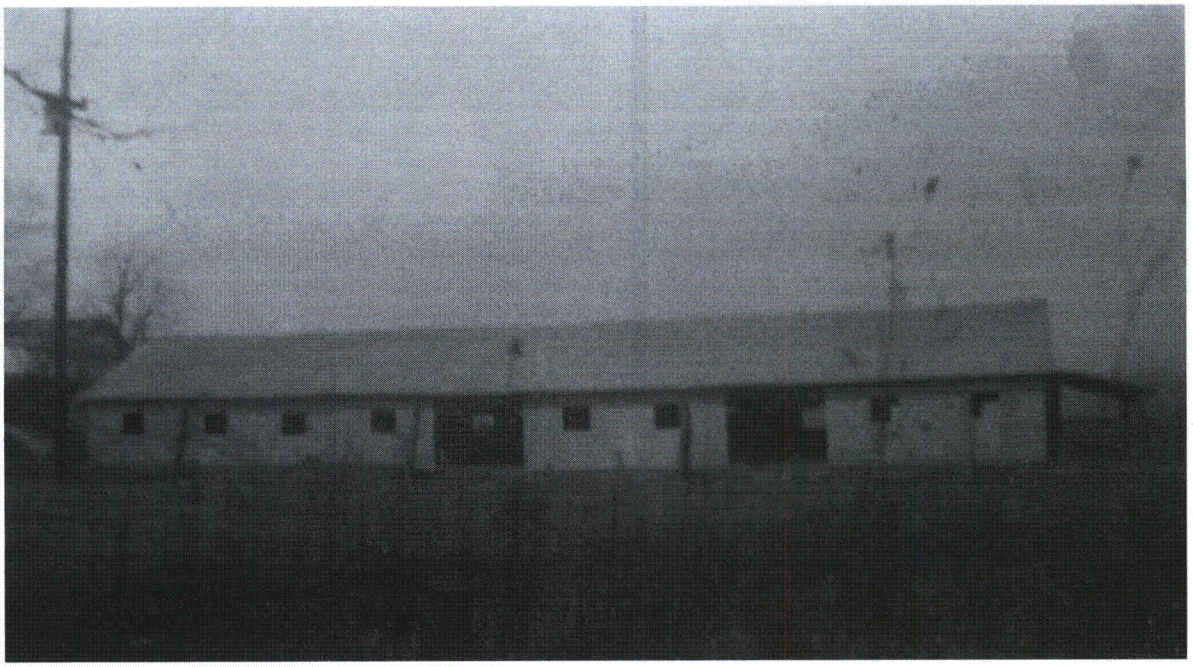
When William bought that farm, it was right out of the edge of town. I have the picture of the original farm house. We remodeled it in 1955. We had been married five years. It was a brick house originally. He added two rooms on the back which were wood. When we remodeled in 1955, we added a 16 by 32 foot room on the south side and had it stoned.

Mike: Did Mr. Nicklaus ever talk to you about his family leaving the proving ground?

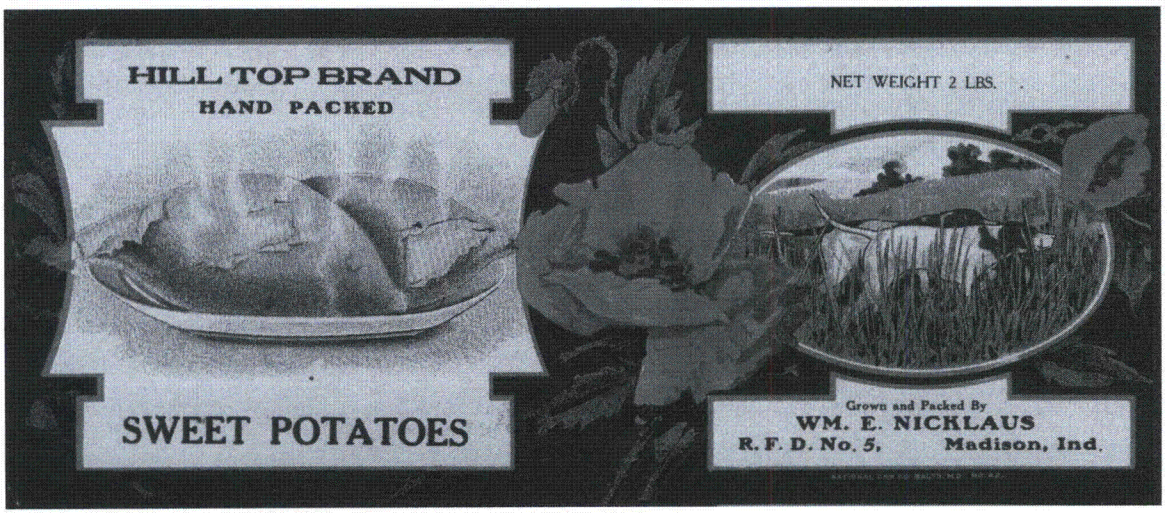
The Nicklaus Family Cannery. Left to right: Emma, Cora, Mame, William, and John. Photo is pre-1904.

Ike: He had a canning factory and he had thirty acres right south of the JPG airport on Harbert's Creek. They remodeled their house out there in 1904. One of the stories I might tell you is that they did not have refrigeration or electricity out there so he would work his grounds right north of the canning factory with a team of horses. He would work over there all day and when he would come back at night, he would water his horses in Harbert's Creek. There was a large pool there right south of the culvert on Paper Mill Road. He would have a cane pole there and some worms already dug, and he would go fishing there for ten or fifteen minutes, catch a bunch of

fish, nice big bluegills and catfish. He would take them up and put his horses away, clean the fish and they would have fish for supper. That was their meat for the summer time. They had hogs and stuff like that later on. So with no refrigeration this was their meat for the day. That was one story he told me.



Nicklaus Canning Factory located just south of the JPG airport. (Old Photo)



One of the many labels that the Nicklaus Cannery sold.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Madison, Indiana
March 28, 1941

William E. Nicklaus and
Alta Nicklaus,
R. R. #5,
Madison, Indiana.

Project:	Jefferson Proving Ground, Ind.
Vendor:	Wm. E. Nicklaus and Alta Nicklaus
Contract No.:	W 766 QM 3127
Acreage:	33.75
Purchase Price:	$8,720.50

Dear Sir and Madam:

I have received the check in payment for the lands optioned by you to the United States for the Jefferson Proving Ground.

This purchase will be completed at my office, 3rd floor Pythian Building, Madison, Indiana, at 11:00 A.M. Tuesday, April 1, 1941. Vendors, their husbands or wives, all tenants and other interested parties must be present at thattime. You must bring your copy of the option to the closing.

Very truly yours,

Paul R. Schnaitter

PAUL R. SCHNAITTER
Special Attorney

PRS:NF

cc: Commanding Officer
Proving Ground
Madison, Indiana

Letter to William Nicklaus

Another pretty good one on the canning factory. They never kept anything locked. He started missing some canned food. He took his shotgun and loaded it with blanks, fastened it up on the wall. On the big door on the north side, he put a string down to it so it would pull the trigger and the shotgun would go off. About 2:30 a.m. his shotgun went off. **I said what did you do?** He said I just turned over and went to sleep. He said, I never missed any more after that. He knew who it was pretty well, his neighbor up the road.

Another thing. My sister worked out there when she was sixteen. She would peel tomatoes. She would peel a three gallon bucket of tomatoes and they got ten cents for peeling a bucket. The way they kept tabs on it, they had a small card that was fastened to her clothes. Every so often Allison, his wife would come around when they got a bucket peeled and she would punch a hole in the card. When they got done, she would count the holes in the card and my sister was paid five cents for each hole.

Mike Moore: How did they peel a tomato in those days?

Ike: See he cooked the tomatoes. All you had to do was roll the skin off really. Then you took your knife and cut any bad places out. It probably went pretty fast to get a bucket full.

Mike Moore: Did he raise his own tomatoes?

Ike: No, he bought them. He hired about 22 people. It was the only factory in the proving ground. I do not think he got any extra pay from the government for having the factory. He got $8,000 dollars for thirty acres, his house, the factory and all of it. You have a copy of the Bill of Sale right there.

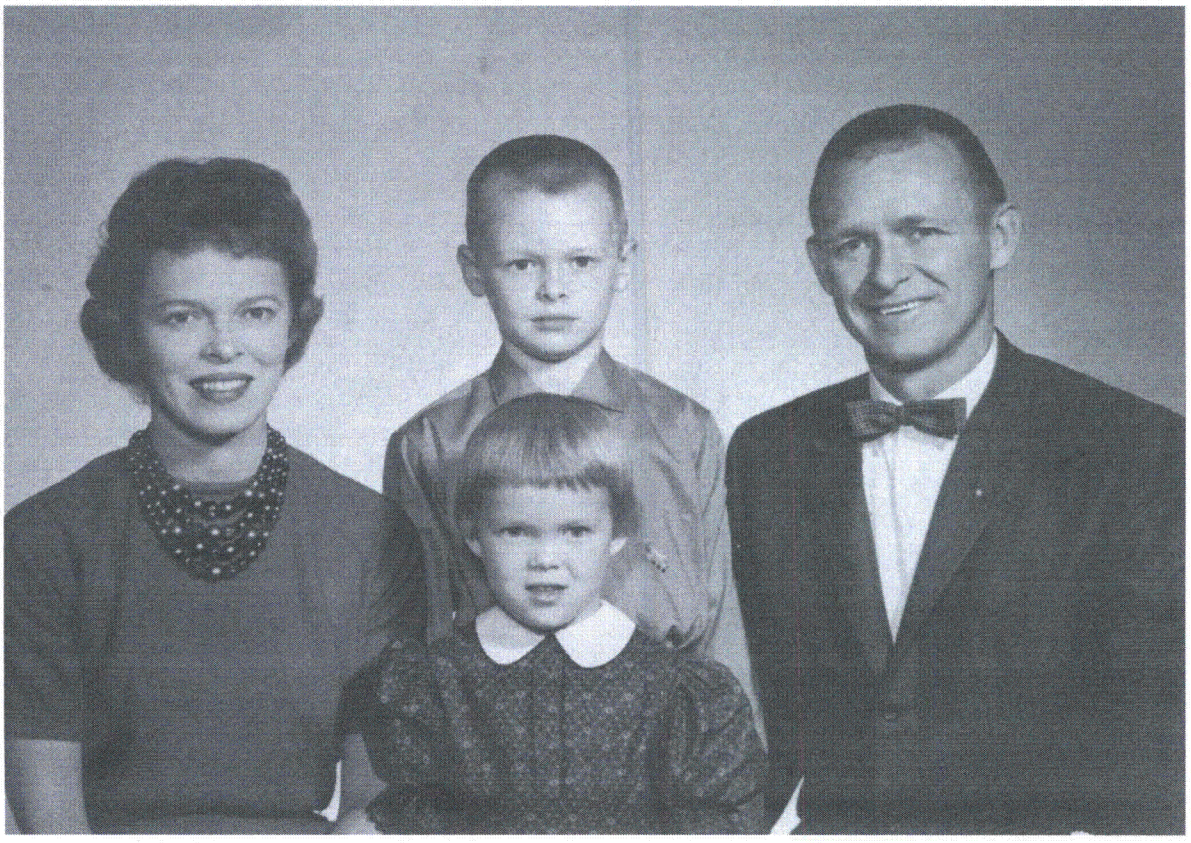
Mike Moore: Yes, I made a copy of it. Did they just can tomatoes? What was your sister's name?

Ike: My sister's name is Mary Ellen Bramwell. No, he canned cabbage.

Ike: Sure. He had green beans, potatoes. He contracted it all. He actually canned and labeled them and sold it to Cincinnati. I remember one time they couldn't pay him and sent back a bunch of canned food and it was not labeled. Actually when I first got married, he still had some of them left, so for supper my wife would open a can and we never knew what we were going to have for supper.

Mike Moore: That is pretty funny

Ike: We were married October 6, 1950 and I went to work at JPG December 18, 1950. My salary was a $1.34 per hour. Six years later I was promoted to $2.16. By 1979, I was making $12.00 as an Assistant Repair Foreman. When I retired in 1981, I was making $14.00 per hour. I had a perfect safety record and I retired with over 2,000 hours "Sick Leave". I had four and one half days off sick in thirty one years. I was never late for work. I drove all types of vehicles everyday and never had an accident.



Betty and Ike with their two children, Jill and Jeffrey.

In 1950 and 1951, I went to Purdue for a few days for schooling and Indianapolis. I also was trained as a welder and as a fire fighter. I went to Cincinnati to study "Bacterial Drinking Water." I learned how to tap a water line under pressure.

Mike Moore: How would you do that?

Ike: We would not turn the water off. We would take a machine that clamped around the water main and then we had a small valve that would open up and let the bit go down and drill the hole and thread it. We would take it all off and we would have a tap into the water line.

Mike Moore; I was wondering if your wife worked?

Ike: She worked. She worked at E. O. Muncie School. She started out as a substitute teacher. Then she worked as a teacher's aide and she worked there for thirty years.

Mike Moore: She almost worked at the same place as [where] she went to high school.

Ike: Well, they tore down North Madison High School and built E. O. Muncie. She was on the same spot. You can see the old foundation of the old school in the front. They put a stone out front. Edgar Joe Goley, Humphrey, I think that was some of them.

Mike Moore: Did your children go through E. O. Muncie? In other words was your wife there when the kids went through?

Ike: Yes. It worked out pretty good. The boy went to junior high school in Madison one year; then he went back up there. The kids could walk to school. They could go out the back door there almost. She had to walk about a mile to school at North Madison. I remember when it was down below zero. She was walking home and her face was freezing. Her dad came down in the car and picked her up. She was really glad to see him. She was in about the seventh or eighth grade.

I had to walk about a mile to school. I lived over in the State Hospital. I had to walk out the North Drive there to North Madison High School.

Mike Moore: Did you ever help your dad out with the poultry at the State Hospital? Could you describe that a little bit?

Ike: He used to let me help him a little. I used to help him with the chicken shed, I guess you would call it. He put them up on a roost. I would go up there in the evening and help him some. He had about ten patients that worked for him. They did not get any money at that time. It was all self sufficient at the hospital then. He had poultry and Don Launtz was foreman then. I think Hinds was the gardener over the green house. Dr. McCormick was the dentist. Earl Little was over the cattle. I believe that he had pretty close to a hundred cows. They were Holsteins and they milked them. They had pigs there. I went up there and watched them scald the pigs and cut them up. They had an ice plant, a deep freeze like and they would store their stuff in there. It was electric.

We moved up in 1931 or 1932 and they had electricity. The house we moved from we did not have electric. We had running water. We had electric during the night. They would shut off the electric in the morning. They would turn it on about 4:00 in the evening to save electric. They did have ice there that they gave us as part of the rent. You would have to go on over there and get it, a block of ice every other evening. One other thing they gave us was a gallon of milk every evening.

Mike Moore: Gosh was that part of the rent?

Ike: Yes. It was part of the rent. We had chickens all the time.

Mike Moore: How many chickens would you all have there at one time?

Ike: Oh! That would be hard to say. They had big long chicken houses, probably almost a hundred feet long. They were full. He raised all the chickens. We had eggs and bacon for breakfast. We raised turkeys, ducks and geese. They had turkeys and geese every Thanksgiving and Christmas for all the patients. It was good for the guys to work too, but you never could depend on them. I remember this one guy. He was really good. He never missed anything you know. He always fed and watered and everything. One day though he was sitting out front there playing with sticks. No chickens watered or fed, none of them. I mean that is just the way they were. One man, a Negro,

he worked there with the rabbits and stuff. And he cooked. He had a little old stove that would heat the front office where they loafed and he would cook rabbits and chicken or anything.

At 9:00am they went over and got fresh bread, baloney sandwiches for a break. The patients did. The old Negro would cook anything. I remember they cooked a Robin's breast and a sparrow's breast.

Mike Moore: Oh my Gosh!

Ike: I had to taste it when I was about twelve. It was..... it wouldn't be any different than quail. Small, just one bite all you got.

Mike Moore: Did your mom work out there?

Ike: No, she worked at the laundry where they did all the clothes and she worked as kind of a server. She was over the Officer's dining room. All the Officers came over to eat there. She would serve table style. She would put green beans and potatoes out on a table. Four people would eat there. She did not do the cooking, just the serving. The cooks were in the basement and they run the food up on a dumbwaiter and she would serve the dining room.

Mike Moore: So she was paid and you all had two incomes?

Ike: She wouldn't take the job in the dining room unless I got to go over and eat. Because it was right a five o'clock you know, I got to eat over there every evening. It was pretty good. It saved her from cooking at home and I got to eat too. I was a senior at that time.

Mike Moore: I think that was real interesting. To jump back to the proving ground, did you ever like to go out there and hunt for mushrooms, or did you ever go out there and go deer hunting?

Ike: I did mushrooms once or twice. I never did care for it much. My wife did not care for the mushrooms. I did go deer hunting. I took my father-in-law and my father deer hunting about ever year, because they both liked to hunt. Bill Nicklaus and Wilfred my dad. My dad's name was Wilfred Eli Jenkins and my mother was Mary Eunice Jenkins.

My brother was Wilfred Jr. Jenkins. My sister was Mary Ellen as I said before.

Mike Moore: Mr. Nicklaus must have been a pretty good shot, since he was in the Army. Do you know where he served when he was in the Army?

Ike: (Chuckling) He was a cook. He also had a bakery in North Madison after he left the proving ground. He started a bakery there. You know where the taxi is at North Madison?

Mike Moore: Yes.

Ike: There used to be three shotgun houses there. I don't know which house was his. I think it was the middle one. The beauty shop is there. He had the bakery there. A little story on that. After 1941 he was running his bakery during a big snow. He didn't have any flour. He had to come to Madison to get the flour, because the flour mill was down here along the river. He had a 1929 Ford, he put skis on the front two tires. He took barrel staves about four feet long and he strapped them on the two front wheels and chains on the back. He was doing good in the snow. When he got down here to Madison, The trolley that went on the railroad track up through town, well, he hit that first rail and the skis up front turned up under his fenders. I guess he made it okay. He went on down to the flour mill and got his flour and made it back to the bakery in North Madison. This would have been around 1942 or something like that. He was a cook during the World War I, but he had a bakery in the early forties.

Mike Moore: We could stop if you are getting tired.

Ike: No, I am not getting tired, I just can't talk.

Mike Moore: The one thing that we have not talked about is that you are a veteran of World War II. Let's talk about that. Where did you serve in the Navy?

Ike: The Pacific Ocean. First I went to Samson, New York for my training. Then I went to Pensacola, Florida.

Ike: I went into the Navy June 13, 1944 to June 15, 1946.

I went to Pensacola for almost two years. I went down there as a guard for the base. After that, I went to San Diego and got a ship out there- the U. S. S. Munda CVE 104, went over to Saipan. We went to Hawaii first. On the third day out, we hit some high waves. We were bobbing like a fish cork. The waves were way up there. Anyway when we got to Hawaii, we had to dock there for two weeks while welders came in to weld our ship back. It was sprung in the middle. We got it back in shape and then we went on to Saipan. We were there and then we came back to San Diego. I was Seaman First Class.

Mike Moore: Were you ever attacked?

Ike: No. It was Christmas after the war was over. We still had to do watch. We still had to watch for Japs. Communication wasn't that good. We did not know if they had found out the war was over or not. We did not have any problem that way. We were a troop ship at that time. They converted an aircraft carrier into a troop ship. All the insides of the ship was beds. They had beds six or eight high. We brought a bunch of them back. We got back to San Diego. I had my two years in and I went to Great Lakes and checked out of the Navy, and I hitchhiked home. I took a bus to Chicago. There wasn't anything coming to Madison. So I started hitchhiking. I finally took a bus out of town as far as it would go. I think I finally got a ride on a White Star bus. It was coming from Indianapolis at that time. I got out at the Madison State Hospital entrance and had to walk the rest of the way home.

I came home and worked summers on the farm like I said before. My dad bought a farm from the Carter and Murnie Bramwells. It is right across from Oak Hill, that white house.

Mike Moore: I am not sure where that is.

Ike: Up there on Highway 7. It is before you get to Bramwell's Corners. He bought a sixty acre farm there. Dad, my brother and I built that white frame house there. After my dad died, my mother sold it to Russell Smart.

Mike Moore: Oh I know him, he worked at the proving ground.

Ike: It has been sold again. I don't know who has it now. It is just right across from Oak Hill, the first house on the right after the factories. It was sixty acres. My dad divided it up. He gave my brother 18 acres on the south side. I got 25 acres in the middle. My sister got the house; she was married and she got 15 acres. He did that before he died. He and my mother both did it. My mother sold the house she was living in and she moved in on Wilson, a brick house.

Mike Moore: That about covers it. I just wondered if you remember anything outstanding at the proving ground. Did anything stand out about the colonels or any stories or anything? You said no one was killed on the job while you were there. I was wondering about that. Luckily it was pretty safe out there.

Ike: I think some of them got shot deer hunting. As far as the proving ground there never were any accidents. It was a nice place to work.

Charles (Deb) Loos, a personal friend who was running for U. S. congress for the 9th district asked me to write information pertaining to the use of JPG if they closed it. I went to the meeting and explained the information that I had prepared for Deb.

Madison Courier, Madison, Indiana, Friday, February 14, 1992. "Ike Jenkins, a retired JPG employee of 31 years service told me he felt the airfield was a key asset that should be revitalized. Even though it has deteriorated greatly, it has tremendous potential if rehabilitated. I will work closely with the JPG Re-use Committee and will work hard in Washington to secure funds for the rehabilitation of this field."---**Deb Loos**

Mike Moore: I was wondering if you could say anything about Paul Wells. His daughter donated some of his JPG papers to the Research Library, but I don't know a lot about him? I have some of his 201 file and his photograph, but not much else.

Ike: He was in the Army as a gunner. I don't know much about him other than he worked at the heating plant. As far as I know that was the only place he worked there.

I went to his auction. He did have a big picture of himself in the work room out there. You might talk to the daughter and get it. I think he worked on guns after he got home. He was in World War II also. He was with the gunners, I know that.

Mike Moore: That is about it. That will take me several days to type that much up.

Ike: I got it typed up for you there.

Mike Moore: Yeah you do. The only thing is some of those stories about Mr. Nicklaus, I really like them. Who was all in his family? He and his wife and he had three children.

Ike: No! Bill Nicklaus had Betty and her brother Don Nicklaus. Cora was Bill's sister. Mame was his other sister. Mame married John Andress. (See history of Big Creek Store). He is the one that had the shopping center [Clifty Plaza] for years. She has it now.

Mike Moore: Was he from Alaska?

Ike: He went up there and worked for several years. He was born and raised here, but he went up there to work. After he went up there for awhile, he came back and bought that. Mame is still alive. I am pretty sure she is alive yet.

Mike Moore: It seems everything has worked out well. Your kids and grandkids are doing well.

Ike: Yep .I am very pleased.

Mike Moore: There is a cemetery up at the state hospital grounds. Did you ever see anyone buried out there?

Ike: No, but I knew when I lived out there that several of them had been buried. A few years later it all grew up in grass covered over and my dad went out there himself and cleaned it out. He cleaned it all up real nice.

Mike Moore: They don't seem to have numbers on the crosses. I don't know how they keep track of who is buried where.

Ike: I don't either. It was just the poor ones who could not afford anything else. They buried them there. Anybody that had a little money they wouldn't bury them there. They would take them home or something.

Mike Moore: I went out taking pictures and discovered three tombstones that had 1937 on them and I wondered if there was some story there.

Ike: There was one story there. There was one guy, came by the house everyday. He worked over at Dr. Hamilton's house. He cut the grass, fixed the furnace, and he came by one day, I was sitting on the porch. He said, "You think I'm crazy don't you." I said, "No Charley I don't think you are crazy." He said, "I gotta be this way or they will send me home." He did not want to leave. He had meals, a nice warm place to sleep. He did not have to work. I believe he was smarter than what they gave him credit for.

Mike Moore: You are about the most organized person that I have interviewed. You have all these pictures, they are all labeled and you have your work history all together. I really appreciate that. My goodness we have been down here four hours. I did not realize how much we were going to talk about. Your wife must be wondering what in the world is going on down here. It takes a long time. That is why a lot of people won't do it.

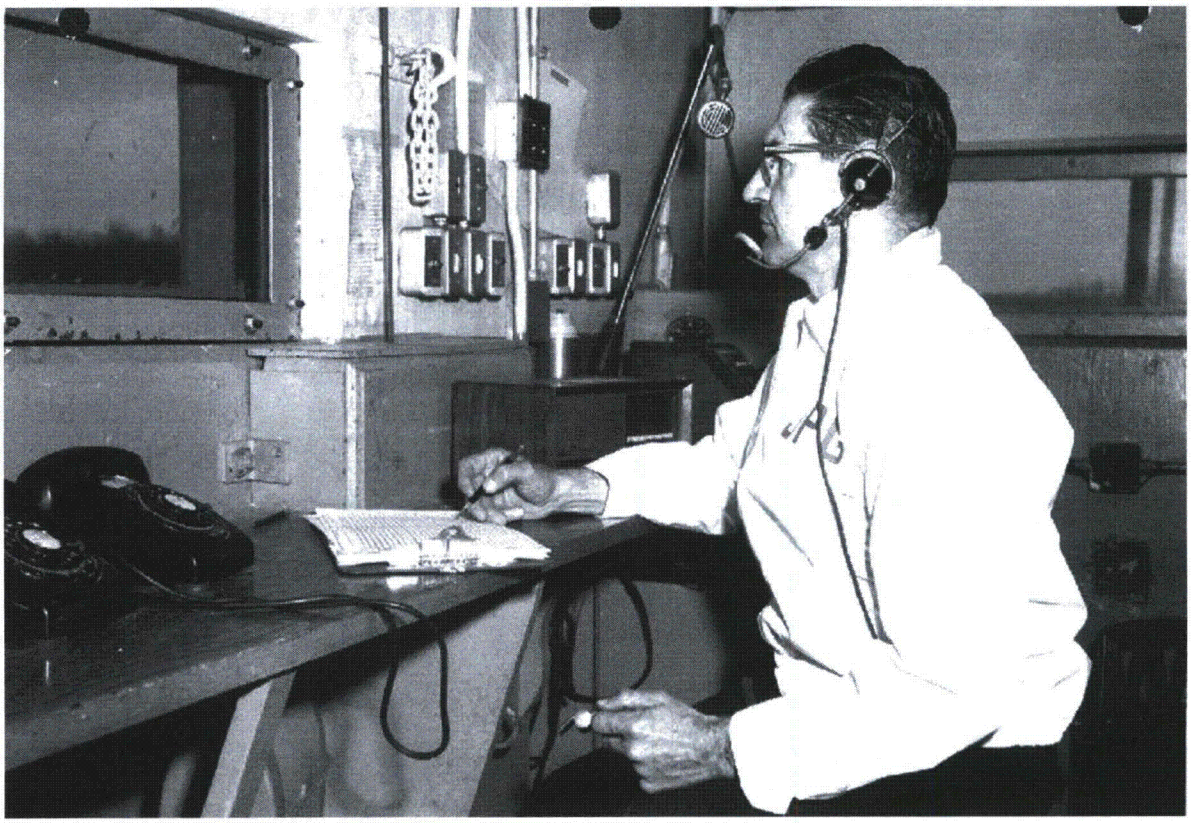
Ike: After I retired, one winter, I worked on my history.

Mike Moore: I am glad you did.

Ike: Another little story on Bill Nicklaus. He bought a new gun. A 25/20, I believe. It is a saddle gun. At his home he shot straight due west. He just took a shot and shot it up in the air. It broke out his neighbor's window a mile away. He went down and fixed the window for him and that was all that was said.

Leroy E. Harsin: Employed 1953 at JPG

Interviewer-Kirt Knobel
December 3, 2000



Leroy Harsin, Test Director conducting an ammunition test from the proof tower.

If you can start off by telling us if you were born in this area or the first time you came to Southern Indiana?

My name is Leroy Edwin Harsin. I came to this area in 1922, in [what used to be hunting] area 53 in Jefferson Proving Ground. Anything I say here is not condoned, accepted or meant to be an official word of the U. S. Government.

I started working at JPG in 1952 and worked there until they shut down in1958 and went on standby until 1961. I was re-employed in the spring of 1962 and worked until January of 1978. I worked as a proof technician, you might say all over the proving ground. The proving ground has a firing line of about three and one-half miles and it had several, 30 or 40 gun installations [firing positions] along this firing line and I worked on most of them. I didn't live on the post.

I had more than one job on the post. I was employed as a proof director and after a certain amount of time I was advanced to the job of Chief of Proof Technicians. And then we had a slow down

and I went back to proof directing. In 1967 when the proving ground took on the additional mission of testing propellant they sent me to Aberdeen Proving Ground to learn the job of testing propellant. I became a propellant tester for some time and then was advanced to Chief of Proof Technicians, the chief of the section of propellant testers.

Training I received was simply [on-the-job] training by working under proof technicians to learn certain jobs and when I became proficient I would take over the job.

Equipment I used was-- I had a whistle that I blew that would signify the firing the weapon. I had directions, like specifications, of what the ammunition was supposed to do. I had a fully operation procedure that told me all the rules, such as how much ammunition to lay out on the test thing there, how many people were allowed to be in the test area & the direction how to set up the signs on the building we were firing, and of course a clipboard with the blank information I had on the test I was firing. The computers were just coming into being when I retired from the proving ground so I didn't have to much experience with computers. How much I made on the first job I can't really remember. I do remember in 1962 when I hired back in I made $7200 dollars a year.

The atmosphere we had was a very good atmosphere, work environment. Actually we dedicated ourselves mainly to testing ammunition so that it would be safe for the service to use and handle. We had explosions that showed the real purpose of that test. Explosions that happened-- that if they had happened out on the field with the gunners around the gun could have annihilated them.

I don't know that the atmosphere changed significantly. We had a good atmosphere. Various things that were handled by union and manufacturers and something like that.

Women were working even as the test directors. They had women that were my age, Chronograph operators, and even some that were good observers that went out in the field and observed the firing.

The best memory I had of JPG was that I was able to go out in the area. Since I was born there it was like going home. And I was able to hunt and fish in little groups and things like that.

The worst I remember is that after it was closed, I am not able to do that anymore.

We had one particular commander who made quite an impression over my life. I've got his picture around here someplace, I don't happen to have it with me. He's a Colonel, Ben Logerquist who lives at Bar Harbor, Wisconsin. Mary and I have visited him after I retired and after he retired and he has visited us here in our home.

Serious accidents, we had one fatality where the gunner was supposed to arm ammunition and then it would be placed on the fixture. He was supposed to arm the munitions and then he would retire behind a barricade and the proof director would note the firing. This thing, when he armed it, it went off and killed him and crippled another fellow for life. We had several minor accidents but no more fatalities.

My thoughts when JPG closed in 1995, was that I hoped that I lived long enough to see what happened to it. Whether it was cleaned up, whether part of it would be resold to the people or whatever happened. Apparently I have lived that long. It has been "delegated" a wildlife preserve now and renamed the Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuge.

Memories and stories I would like to share, not anything I would like to talk about.

Now then Lee (your nickname) why don't you go on with the rest of your story. As long as they have time, the things that they have prepared.

I think I already stated that my talk won't be a complete history of the operation or anything at all because the scope of it is so great.

Lee, why don't you start out by telling this group, since they are recording it, that you were born there and a little bit about your life there?

I am Leroy Harsin. I was born in 1922 at a place called Big Creek in which is now Jefferson Proving Ground. I lived over 18 and ½ years before the government procured this area for a proving ground.

I was a little old farm boy who grew up in the country and went to school in a one room school. I got married in October before the government took this over in 1940 -1941. I have here a picture of myself and three people who were at my class at common school.

JPG-- the best reason that I can give for JPG's existence was that it was to insure our people in service, our troops, that they are handling the best munitions that are possible to be made. Now the Charlestown Powder Plant that was connected to this testing was built in 1940 and 41. I was employed there from February of 1941 to May of 1943 when I was inducted into the Navy.

At the powder plant we made powder out of cotton. Now powder can be made either out of cotton or of wood pulp. It's a dry grade, very dry, and then soaked in acid and starts through a process of boiling, grinding and "ether" mix, pressing and cutting and so on. And then they elevate it into what they call a blending tower, which is 150 feet high and holds 150,000 pounds at one time. This 150,000 lbs. is the making of a 24 day continuous process, one product, one line and there were six lines. The idea of putting it up in this blending tower is that it was dropped, and in the dropping process it was mixed so that it was uniform all through the lot. It was given a lot number and it goes to the loading plant and a sample goes to the proving ground and that is loaded into the ammunition and the lot number is maintained until that ammunition is finally fired or disposed of.

Powder is the size depending on what use they are going to make out of it. Say as a grain is graded that long and an inch in diameter it will have seven holes in it. When it was pressed through the press, there are little wires in the press that leaves seven holes in this grain of powder. The idea of that is to give a larger burning surface to the powder. As it burns it burns in those holes and gives more burning space. It is called progressive burning. If it only had one hole in it, it is called "degressesive" burning, because as it burns the burning area increases instead of decreases.

I was in the Navy. I got out of the Navy in December 1945. In the Navy I spent 22 weeks in gunnery school and became an instructor in anti-aircraft gunnery. Those 40- millimeter shells, and they were the biggest ones there, was something I brought home in the 1940's for the holes in the casing means they are dummy rounds and I stored them in her garage. We used them in practice loading machines. They don't have any explosive charge in them.

After getting out of the gunnery schools, I was an instructor for 23 months. I was discharged in 1945. Then in 1952, I took the job as proof director in the proving ground. The work load was very heavy at that time due to Korean War. We had something like 1700 employees at the proving ground at that time. With seven sections, as I recall, each with a certain type of test to perform. I was on the night firing section. It was easy to get a job on the night firing section, and I worked on the night firing section until it was dispensed of in 1957.

Why we test! Ammunition malfunction in the tube.

Night firing sections had mainly firing of time fuzes, for instance, they had the machinery, you might say, to record the time of an air burst. We had one particular fuze I recall, we had something like 60 test fuzes out of a lot of 5,000 that were sent to the proving ground. Of those 60 we fired, about ten with a 30 second airburst and about 10 with a 45 second airburst and ten with a 60 second airburst and then we had about 10 rounds of that group that we fired at 400 feet at wood targets and another 90 millimeter test that was a fire burst also. Now we had great mirrors, such as the spotlights in the Army, that would pick up this airburst and set it in and stop the clocks that had been started when the gun fired. Something like a 60 second airburst. On a 30 second airburst the gun was elevated to 300 mills and on a 45 second airburst it was elevated to 460

mills, and on 60 second airburst it was elevated to 600 mills. Now that gun had the capability of firing outside the proving ground beyond the JPG fence.

To observe these airbursts, we had observers located in Building 488, which is the building south of K Road, which is made out of concrete and had windows that were slanted on the second floor, so the observers could watch out. These windows, of course, were bullet proof glass. The observers were on that road (indicating a rough sketch of the proving ground) and these last 60 second fuzes would break in the air at about 16,000 yards. They were close enough to these airbursts that sometimes a little shrapnel would rain down on that building. Well one night we were firing and the observers said, "There is some coon hunters out here with lights." Lanterns. We hadn't started firing yet and they said go ahead and fire- which I fired a round and the light went out. They didn't stay around very long.

In this proving ground they had numerous bunkers [observer shelters] at the firing impact area, and at that firing impact area we would have a concrete bunker at approximately the south end and at the north end we would have another concrete bunker which were 3 feet concrete, reinforced, and then they covered them with about three or four feet of dirt. And they had a door opening to the north and inside was a bench, a telephone, a little stove and a sighting bar. We had telephone contact with these observers all during firing, and we would fire around and they would observe it hitting out here on the field. Now these of course were not airburst. We fired a lot of HE that we need to know if this round hit too far to the left, too far to the right, too far to the range of.

So these observers with their sighting bars can take a reading on each impact and write it down. And the end of the firing they would bring that in and give it to the ballistic section and they would figure whether this round had come within specifications in its range, and in azimuth and everything. The weather had a lot to do with that. We had a weather station that sent up a balloon every morning and during the day if it was necessary.

EOD [explosive ordnance demolition] specialists retrieving a round for inspection.

Incidentally on the day that we had the tornado on April 3, 1974, this radio station reported that the overhead winds at 20,000 feet were clocked at over 200 knots during all that day. That had something to do I am sure with the tornadoes.

When a lot of ammunition came to the proving ground, it was reported to the section chiefs and each section chief would have a board where he would record this lot of ammunition. The proof director was assigned to it and the ammo was fired. The date the teletype was set, you accepted or rejected and the date the record left the proof directors hands. [JPG prided itself on its three-day turn around of ammunition. No other installation had this level of production.]

We had a scheduling meeting which met with these section chiefs and branch chiefs and anything concerned with conducting a mission [such as] electricians and machinists. It was about 20 people, met at 10 o'clock everyday for a scheduling session. The [ammo] assembly people were there, we would decide what would be fired the next day. Of course range control people were there, and they would tell us whether it was going to interfere with things that they had planned. They planned the road work, the electric lines and the telephone lines and everything. When this was completed, they made up a copy of all the ideas that what would go tomorrow. They would make several copies of it and distribute it around to all the people in the proving ground, and they would know what to expect tomorrow. People at assembly might call the test director and ask him something about the makeup of the ammunition. In fact in some cases the test director had to go to assembly and check the makeup of the powder and such as that.

Going to the firing line:

The proof director would take the standard operating procedures, his workers and his whistle and go to the firing line. His gun crew would be there and have the ammunition laid out on the bench in a crew shelter. And the proof director would check to be sure the ammunition was laid out correctly, and it applied to fuze setting, weather and everything that applied to the firing. And then he'd go out and he had to check the gun number, the tube number, the recoil number, and he would check the laying in of the weapon with the gunner's quadrant. Then whether he was taking his sighting off the correct sighting stake and so on. And after he did this he measured the coils that were necessary for taking the velocity of his round. And then he goes back into his shelter and calls up chronograph and she can tell you how fast the ground went through the coil. From the chronograph information he could calculate velocity for each round fired. He would call range control, this place called B Tower. And he has to do with all the clearances that are given from the entire proving ground. You give him the information that you are going to fire, such as a type round, the gun, the gun position, range and all. He has plastic firing fans made up where he gives you a clearance, or gives anybody a clearance, and lays these things on the gun position [a big map] to outline the danger area. He may have as many as 20 or 25 of these during the course of the day. So he is able to at a glance [to respond to] anyone that calls in for a clearance, if they would be in the danger area, and if he can grant them that clearance. You see many of these danger areas would overlap.

Now when we get our reports, you would get the chronograph operator on the line and ask her if she's ready, and get the observers on the line and say, "Are you ready"? They would need the type of ammo and what we expect of it and all that and they keep a written record of course. That being done then you would give the gunner's the okay to load. So they took one round out to the gun and load the gun and close the breach, come back to the proof shelter. But first if it is a coil taking velocity, we would magnetize the round, which would kick on these coils that we shoot through. Using the magnetic field of the coils and the magnetized round, we could calculate muzzle velocity.

Some History of Big Creek Store (2009)

Albert (Ab.) Andress married Mayme Nicklaus and ran Big Creek Store from about 1920 until it burned in 1929 0r 1930. When the Big Creek Store burned, Albert bought the train station at Middlefork Creek and moved the store there. Louis Munier mentioned that it is still in the family as of this date October 7th 2009.

Albert and Mame Nicklaus Andress had four children namely: Kenneth (K), Harold (Ho), John, and Ruth. The mother died in 1928. Ab remarried and daughter Virginia was born before the store was burned. Eventually K and Ho went to Alaska and K stayed until WWII when all three boys went into service. They eventually married- Nola to K, Geneva to Ho, and Bernice to John. Ruth was raised by Ab's brother Chance and she married Buzz Pogue.

K and Nola lived all their lives in Alaska. The boys are all dead, but all wives and Ruth are still living. There was no store in Big Creek until one was started by Joe Stevenson in the fall of 1940. (Leroy Harsin September 2009.)

Andress Store until it burned about 1930. The store started up again in a barn by Joe Stevenson in fall of 1940. Mr. Stevenson's store then lasted a few months until spring 1941 when the Army took it over.

Interview of Mrs. Betty Jean Neff, Widow of Joe Neff

Joe Neff was an employee of JPG for 27 years. Mr. Ron Harsin Interviewer with Mr. and Mrs. Leroy Harsin in background. August 2005

There was a bunch of men one time, he was working second shift, they found a nest of turtle eggs and they brought in turtle eggs and cooked them up and the men began to fight over them they were so good (laughter). They really enjoyed them. And then one time Joe put a turtle in his friend's lunch box. And when they went to eat dinner, the turtle had eaten right down through the man's sandwiches right through the middle of all them and he had nothing to eat. Joe had to give him his own sandwich. Another time they had a can of beans and put it on the stove in a bombproof and they did not poke a hole in the can, now Joe did not do this. The can exploded and there was beans all over the bomb shelter.

They had a woman to work with them one time. A newspaperman came out to interview them and take pictures. They wanted to put her picture on the front page, you know how a woman could do this. Well, she couldn't even lift a shell and put it in there. The men would not help her, because she was going to get all the publicity and she really was not capable. They had to back off from that.

Joe had a woman ride with him from Kent. I work at the hospital with her now. She was never ready, never. He waited and waited and waited. He told he was not going to wait anymore, you had to stop right in the middle of Kent, you know how narrow it is right there in Kent. Well one day she was late and Joe just went on to work. She got awful mad at him. She had to call a taxi to take her to work at JPG. She told Joe he had to pay for the taxi and of course, Joe paid for it.

He worked there 30 years, well he worked there 27, because he had three years in service counted as government, so he could retire after 30 years. His dad worked at JPG and one night about 9:00, he came over and told Joe if you go to the proving ground in the morning you can get hired as a radar operator. The minute he stepped in the door they started paying him. That was the first radar equipment that they used. He had to go to Charleston to get his physical and get processed in, but was paid from the time he went in to ask about the job. He was the first radar man that JPG had.

He was an observer for a long time too. After they did away with the radar. He was out in the bunker. They shot at him.

(Ron) Was he nervous at anytime?

He got shook up a lot of times. They had explosions right outside of the bomb shelter. This was right after he served in the Marines.

(Ron mentions) Bob Everhart said one time they fired a shell that they had to recover. The round came in, went under ground, came up, spun around twisted, and came up out of the ground at the door. He said now there is your round that you want to recover.

(Mrs. Neff) Joe had to work. I believe it was as an observer, they flooded the ground, really flooded. He had to have boots, he was in the mud. It was some kind of test in the mud. They had to test them a lot of times when it was really, really cold. He had a coat where the fur came out passed his face, it was so cold. A lot of times he could not tell me what he did.

(Ron) Did you ever live on post?

No.

(Ron) Did the roles of women change?

I don't know when or how only the one that they wanted to put in the paper. They had to have a certain percentage of women out there working with them.

When Joe retired, he would have to go to school, because radar was getting more complicated. I don't know what they was called, bosses or something on second shift. He was over 16 men observers, and I know he had to wear a white shirt. He got his radar training in the service.

(Ron) Out there in those bunkers with the shells flying in, I have heard about these famous euchre games.

Oh Yeah! All government employees play euchre (laughter). There would be time lags and they would have to leave the bunker and go out and see what happened to the shells. They had a lot of waiting time; things had to be just right when they fired.

When they closed the proving ground, Joe said that there was no way they could ever clean that mess up out there.

(Ron) How did Joe feel about the closing of JPG?

Well, he did not think much of it. You would not want to hear what he had to say. I think he hated to hear of the closure, because he worked there many years. It was a good place to work; he enjoyed it.

(Ron) What were some of the best memories?

He loved to go out there hunting and fishing. I went hunting with him when I was 40 years old. It was my first time to hunt. We went with our son and Joe's brother. It was raining so hard they told me to stay in the truck. After they left, a buck came out the trail. I got out of the truck and shot him. I left him laying right there. When the men came back, I asked them if they got anything, they said no. I told them that my buck was laying over there. They did not

have anything and I had shot a buck. That was the first time I went hunting. That was 35 years ago. We had an old station wagon one time and they brought eight, no seven deer back. There were about 4 or 5 of them hunting.

(Ron) Was he close to any commanders?

Oh, I can't remember their names. He liked two or three. One time a commander was out there and said, "Well any monkey could do that." Joe replied back, "Well you are watching it". That was about the only time I can remember anything about the commanders.

We went camping up there at Old Timbers [Lake] a lot. You had to protect your fish while you were cleaning them or the raccoons would fight for them.

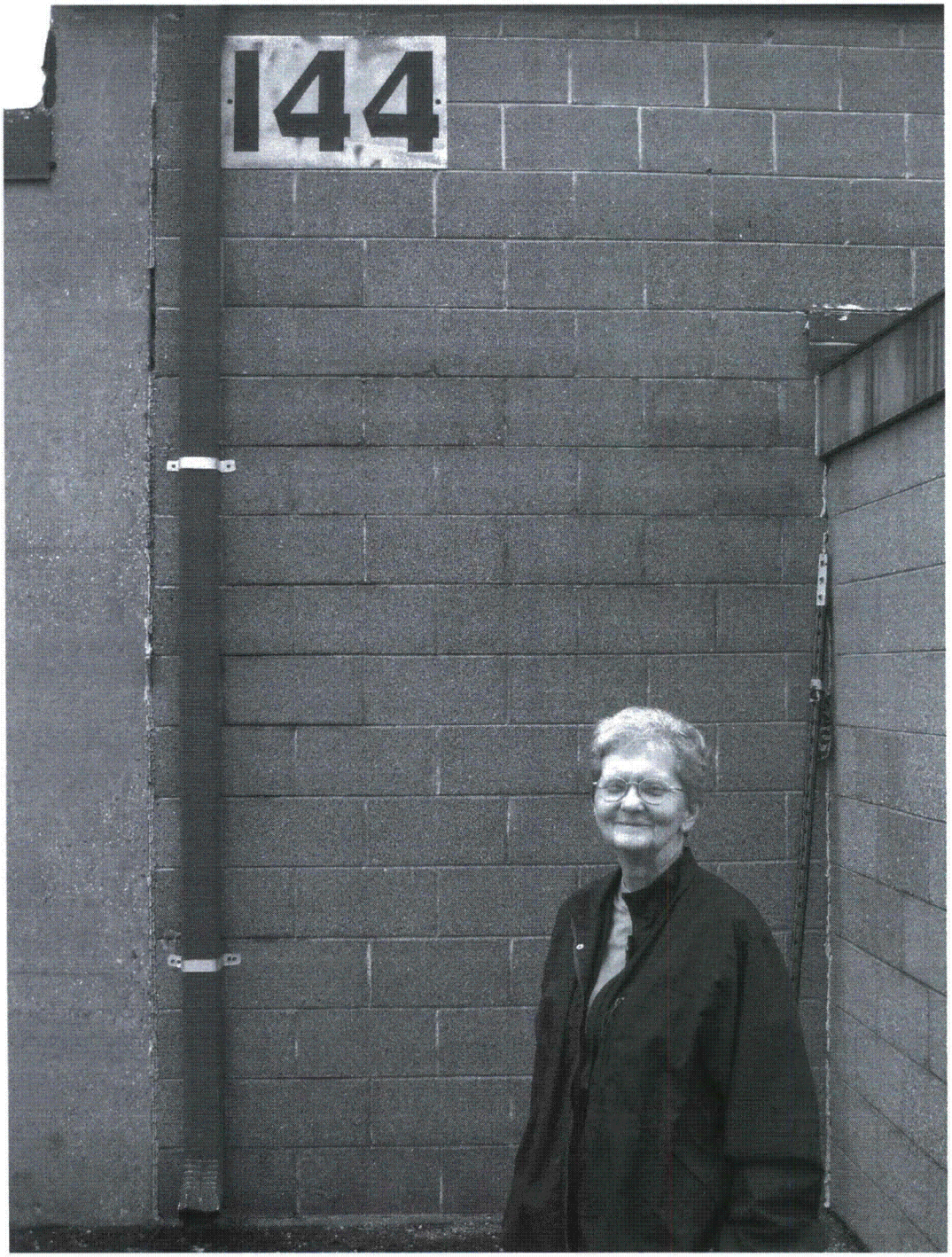
Joe retired on the 30th of August 1980.

Butch, our son, worked out there too. When he was in the Navy, he worked 21 years in the Navy. He worked as a boiler technician. When the proving ground closed, they hired him to close down the boilers. He hated to see the proving ground close also. He liked to hunt and fish.

After the tornado in 1974, JPG employees were sent to Hanover to work on the school out there. Joe ruptured himself. The doctor came out of surgery and told me that they took Joe's bellybutton and hung it on the courthouse door. So he never had a belly button after that.

Interview of Marilyn Meisberger Browning

By Mike Moore, Sept 14, 2006



Marilyn Browning is standing in front of the Communications Building where she first worked at JPG.

My name is Marilyn Meisberger Browning. I was born in 1936. I was from a family of eight, I was third from the oldest. My early years were spent in New Marion and I graduated in 1953. It was an untimely year for us, because our father was taken from us by sudden death. That was a rough year for us, but we got through it and Mother managed with all seven of us still at home. In addition our older sister was staying with us, because her husband was in the service and was stationed in Germany. We had an addition to our family because Janet gave birth to a girl named Barbara. That year, I was selected to go to Hoosier's Girl State representing Versailles Women's group which was a most interesting and valuable experience. I went to Indiana campus and connected with a lot of friends and am still connected with some of them. From that point on, I was looking for employment. I had worked the summer before in Indianapolis and was employed with Bell Telephone Company. During my time frame there, a contractor from Jefferson Proving Ground contacted me as to employment. I decided I did not know all the ends and outs or the extent of it and didn't have a personal interview, so I declined.

A short time later within a few months, my mother called and the government person had contacted her. It sounded like a good shot, so I went for it. Lo and behold the person that interviewed me was Marie Torline. Our family had known her husband Joe for many years, at least my father did so it was an easy interview. She just moved me on through the process and at the end told me I was hired. I was most happy to be in a working status and receiving pay for it. My first job was in what I would call Materiel Testing Directorate and I was starting in this typing pool. There were approximately 25 to 30 people. Anna Ackva was the supervisor. She was originally from Chicago. She was stern but always fair. She often mentioned when she left the room for whatever it was, that when she came back and all the folks were typing she would say, "That is music to my ears."

I don't know the exact time frame, but I moved to Logistics which at that time was in Building 100. I left after I married. My husband was in service, and he was stationed at El Paso, Texas. The personnel officer at JPG gave me a recommendation so that I could seek employment there. So as soon as I arrived in El Paso, I proceeded to get employment there at Fort Bliss. That was certainly an interesting experience. At that point I worked with a lot of Hispanics, only at that time they were called Mexicans. Surprisingly though people may think differently they were really good to me. But by the same token, I tried to treat them fairly too.

When we returned to Indiana, he went on to employment and we were going to have an addition to our family and I did not go forward with that. In 1958 we had a daughter Carol Ann, so things went okay for awhile. Susan Marie was born in 1959 approximately a year and a half apart. We had a rocky road there and we parted ways and went in two different directions. That left me with two children to raise.

Materiel Testing Directorate was the "bread and butter" of the proving ground, because that was the unit that tested weapons and ammunition, basically ammunition and a lot of other things that people from foreign countries came to the proving ground. At one point in time there was a group from Taiwan, I believe that rented a house on post. During that time the post commander and supervisors made a trip to Germany to check out different things and perhaps to bring more work to our facility. The folks that went to Germany were Doyle Schafer, Director of MTD,

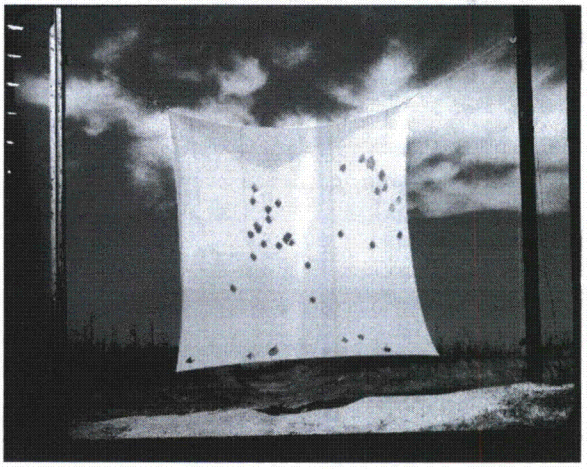
Elsworth Chambers, and the commanding officer. Lo and behold when they returned to JPG, they invited JPG personnel to Old Timbers [Lodge], my first ever trip there, to view and see things that they had learned over there. We went up there and they had a big slide screen, and they did a presentation up there which was helpful to the employees. That was another strong tie, to behold that marvelous building and I did not really appreciate it that much until years later.

I saw a vacancy announcement that showed maybe a little more promise in learning about the proving ground and what have you and perhaps advancement in the future. It was in a building that had one door and no windows, so it was very confining in a sense. [Marilyn is talking about the secure communications building.] It was a very vital place because it sent the classified information, basically firing record results, and other classified material. I remember distinctly the "Pueblo Incident." I don't remember the exact year. The supervisor was advised to send some information and they decided that the AUTODIN system that we used for this that she would do it offline and encrypt it in her manual way. That was something that I had never seen before, but I got to watch the process. They tell me that that was one of the largest compromises to our security. I believe the name of the man that was in charge was Commander Butcher. So that was another experience my life of work there.

Note: On January 11, 1968, the Pueblo left Japan for its first mission and sat off for the coast of North Korea. For two weeks, it operated relatively quietly outside North Korea. It was later surrounded by North Korean forces. Attempting to flee, the Pueblo was attacked which resulted in the death of one sailor. The ship surrendered and the remaining 82 crew members were taken prisoner by the North Koreans.

Another vacancy came open and one of my co-workers explained that you do a lot of these things in this building that is comparable to these requirements, so why don't you apply for it. I did not know, but they said go for it. There probably will be some training for some of the areas that you are not familiar. So I was selected there and I was employed in Instrumentation Division. My supervisor was Arnold Tilley. It consisted of a photo area and the other area being the testing area. Arnold Tilley was supervisor of the whole instrumentation at that time and we were like the field workers (observers). Lots of times we worked together, because lots of programs called for camera coverage as well as the gunners and most importantly of all you have to have the proof director in there blowing the whistle so the program would start. Many times the observers would be at the impact area gathering data. Sometimes we were confined in those shelters (bomb proofs) and often times we would be getting data of ground impact, and we would get the angles on them and record them and turn them in at the end of the day.

Another program, I thought was quite interesting was when you did the cloth target screening. The 20' by 20' cloth target was threaded top and bottom with a metal cable. The gunners on the front line would align on the target cloth. When the alignment was correct, the proof director would prepare all personnel on the program to load the weapon. When the program was completed, the observers took the target to Building 231 and placed it on the floor where each round on the target was measured. Then Data Reduction would calculate the target accuracy. Some personnel were very accurate with their visual call to the proof director. They used binoculars to view the target.



Tank ammunition accuracy on a cloth target- One of the few pieces of secret information at JPG.

When we did the VT [veritable time] fuzes out along Jinestown Road, a proof director would be in one shelter, two observers would be in two different shelters, and they would set their scope up to get our angles. I forget what they called them. (Aiming circles or theodolites, etc.) They had been surveyed in. There were poles across the field. When the round was fired, we would get the burst height for each individual round. One person recorded and one was relaying. We just scoped it out. At "M" building we used theodolites. We would report their angle and my angle and that would be for someone else to transcribe that information. It was a paper trail.

Impact field for VT Fuzes along Jinestown Road.

For another program up on the field at "M" building, representatives from Germany came in. They would store their equipment there in the building, because they knew they were coming back in a short time. Bob Congleton was normally the one that shot that program. He had a good rapport with the people. I asked him, "Why did the Germans come here to conduct this test?" Bob said it was because they did not have that range anywhere in Germany to shoot these

particular rounds. We would come in and set up the equipment. You would get air burst on it, you would get deflection, rate of descent, all recorded during the firing of that round. There were units [anti-personnel sub-munitions] packed into this round.

Different numbers for different types of rounds anywhere from 88 to well, I don't know how many different ones. Then when that round hit the ground, the EOD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) person would go out and walk the field. The air burst that was the most important was the first light, but also we had to identify how many air bursts there were. Maybe, I see three and some one else would say I saw four, so we probably would put down four, but that would help them when they would walk the field. They would see how many duds there were and how many air bursts. That would help them figure how many units they recovered from that round. That was at the other end of the proving ground. It was just right behind New Marion, so we had to be prepared to go up field. We usually knew the day before. We would fill up our water jugs, take insect spray or what have you. So that was an all day job. It was interesting and you always learned something new. Most people would help you if you were not familiar with all phases of it, they would bring you up to snuff on it.

Betty Sullivan and I worked together on some programs. We did not always get scheduled together, but on the ones that we did work together on, she would go in and check out the "bomb proof". She said, "If there were mice in there you get it." I would then say back, "If there are snakes in there then you get it." (Laughter). So we had an agreement on that when we went out and utilized those "bomb proofs".

One program that I remember required a helicopter that came in from Fort Knox, Kentucky. Usually two persons went up in the helicopter with the pilot. The one time I went, Mike Mancuso was on the video and I was the visual observer and took data on that. That was something new for me, but it was something more I could learn and it certainly was information that they needed. The only bad time I had during that trip was we got into some wind and I got really sick. Needless to say, there were only three people, the three in the helicopter and the proof director knew this and when I recovered I had already gotten sick on Mike's jacket. When we finished, we landed in the field at the south end of the White House [Building 100 HQ's], and I came tumbling out real quick. I had already sworn the other two to secrecy, nobody told and then I saw Debbie Tague, the proof director. She started talking about it and I just started off to the van; I did not want to talk about it. I just thought that was not official news that needed to be talked about by everybody. Needless to say, I was never selected to ride in the helicopter again.

Often times there are either three or four cameras off the "Line of Fire." And they had to be set up and surveyed in before they could start. So I was helping load film into the cameras. When the proof director blew the whistle and the round fired, then we had time to go out and load the camera with film- high speed, high tech film. One thing that impressed me was when I found out that one of the rounds had a velocity of 5,000 feet per second. I couldn't visualize that even though I was watching it.

Another time, I think that they might have been shorthanded in the lab, and you would go down there and help them out and you would run a reel slowly and identify that shot. They would

clip the film with that round and attach it to a folder. There were velocity coils measuring the velocity of the round and some of them had markings on the shell to show some characteristic. That particular program gave them a lot of information.

Mike Moore: How did you like working outside? Was it nicer than working indoors in an office?

Marilyn: I think probably that was some of my healthiest times. I was not exposed to the smoke from smokers. I had fresh air. Even when it was cold you survived. I will back up in this story. Do you remember the program up on K Road around "M" building up there? One day they were short of EOD personnel (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) and I was designated to walk the field. I don't know why they selected me, but anyhow that was kind of a scary situation and I remember at one point the head of EOD, he walked right behind me all the time. He tapped me on the shoulder like that and I looked. He said, "Don't move. I will just show you." I was walking along like this. (She raises her foot off the floor.) If I had of walked forward, I probably would have hit that "dud." He looked at it and it had a ribbon on it or something like that denoted that it was still live. That was the one and only one time that I was required to do that.

Mike Moore: Did you ever join the Federal Women's Program that was run by Dr. James Clark?

Marilyn: One year Pat Sipe and I went to the south side of Indianapolis. Now it is called the University of Indianapolis. They sent us up for a one or two day workshop. We both attended this one workshop and we were so impressed. The instructor so impressed us. JPG had this annual event put on by the Federal Women's program. Any employee could attend if they wished. When we got back to JPG, Jim Clark called this lady to come and speak. Her name was Francis Dodham Rhome. She was originally from California. She did come and talked at the picnic grove. There were not as many employees attending as we wished, but she was a delightful person because she wasn't really young and she told about when she went to USC and she played on some baseball team. She had never heard of JPG so I feel we accomplished something.

Was Ann Christe on that? Oh yes and Hildred Reid was on the Federal Women's Program, and Paul Torline was also a member. I remember when Paul and Pat Sipe were given an award by the committee. You had submission from the employees for the award. I believe it was $200.00 they each received. One time when I was a member, I went to a meeting. It was hard to get off work to go, but I was sitting there and they called my name and I was selected for that award. My Mom was called and they asked a lot of questions. She did not know whether she should go or not.

Of all of the commanders, one of them that comes to mind is Colonel Benjamin Logerquist. I believe he came from Wisconsin. He was always referred to as "Gentle Ben". That is what the employees called him. He seemed to be a people person which must have made it hard as a colonel, because there are certain things that you have to do which is always hard. Another commander that I met was Colonel Benick. He was very supportive of the Federal Women's Program. I think we asked him for some money for our program one time for we had virtually no money. He seemed to have a certain amount of health problems, I don't know if it was in the

back or not. I think he said when he retired, he was going to go to Florida. Maybe that is why I thought it was his health. "Some [commanders] were soft and some were salty."

I retired in 1993, two years before JPG closed. I just felt that I had enough service time and it would be a good time to go. Things were already getting in a flurry, so I just went. I am also a member of the JPG Heritage Partnership group. Their main goal, I believe, is to collect the memories and the times they lived there and the folks who worked there. There were some folks that had combined living there in the past and working there after JPG was established.

I would just like to bring a little of my heritage to this part of our interview. Our parents, George Edward, called Eddie, and my mother Marie Ebel Meisberger, they were married at St. Magdalene. I and four of my siblings, the five oldest, were baptized at St Magdalene's. It was a most unhappy time in their life when the government decreed that that land would be taken over. Even sadder still was when I was older and employed out there and saw the ruins and devastation and wondered why they did that.

One story was told to me by Bill Corning. He said, and he knew it was true, that his cousin, who had some coal yards in Madison at that time and he got the contract, "cuz" I had always wondered what happened to all that stone in the church and school. He said that his cousin had the contract to get all that. Why the church people or the congregation did not get that, but you know it was such a time and turmoil they did not know that they had that option of bidding on that. Anyway it was getting near the end of the contract and he was supposed to have a certain amount of things removed and what have you. The house or the rectory had not been removed, so he got some kind of skids and he removed that house or the rectory off the foundation and let it set. The Army came back and said that "you did not do it." He said, "I have fulfilled my mission, I got it off the foundation and that is what our contract agreed to." This Taylor built a home out of the stone. But to this day I don't know where it stands. His last name was Taylor and he was Bill Corning's cousin.

My childhood memories are minimal, because I was not that old. I was between 5 and 6. I remember a few things about Mass. I know I got in trouble once by playing with a lady's Rosary. I always liked to get behind this lady, because she had such a pretty Rosary. Of course I got into trouble for doing that. I feel that I can remember the music. I think part of that was because my mother was a music teacher. I see pictures of some of the statues that people have. It just brings tears to my eyes. We celebrated 150 years of continuous operation. One church member said, "Oh that isn't true." I said, "But it was continuous service." We weren't in the same building, but the church members moved on to New Marion.

Sometime when they no longer went over to the store to worship, my mother and dad gave the Archdiocese the old [New Marion] bank building to be used as a church. I found the paperwork verifying that in the Ripley County Courthouse. Most of my little friends were Baptists. My mother told us that you can go on down there with your friends, they would invite us you know, but you all know how to act in church, but they all do it differently. Just don't be concerned if they do something different. I used to have a picture of the nuns that visited. They would come to St. Michaels in Madison and they would come to New Marion to give us instructions. In the

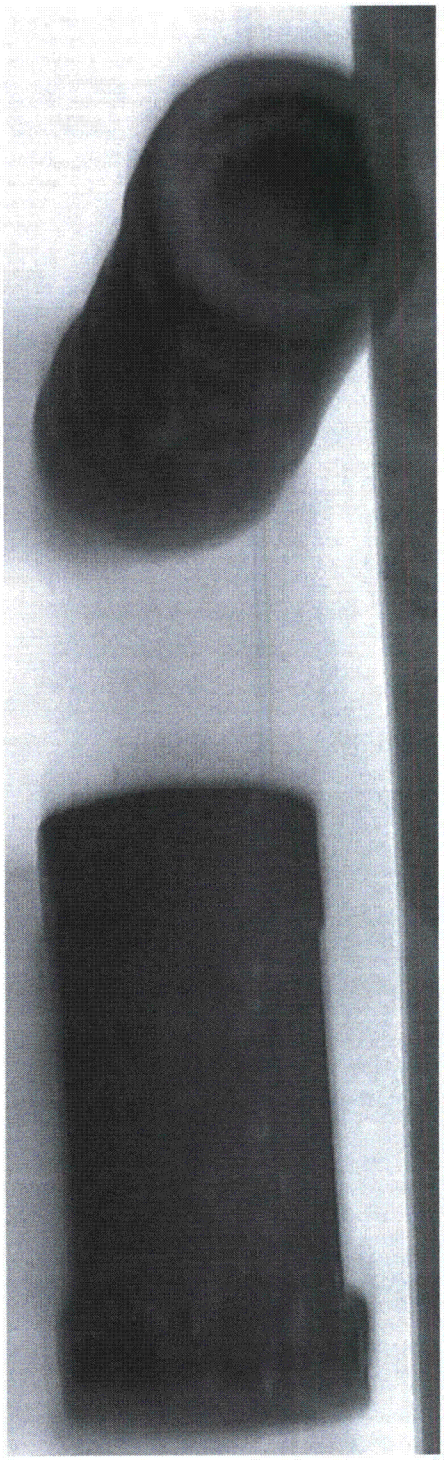
summers, I can remember that we went to China on a school bus and had our religious classes in the summer down there. I remember the Pastor named Morand Widoff. He was responsible for the renovation of the appearance of the church. He was from Ireland. That was in the late 1940's or early 50's in the new church building at New Marion. He told us how his friends and relatives were so joyful that someone from America had returned home. He had a joyful time and I was glad for that.

Marilyn Meisberger Browning family gathering.

Copper Crusher Gauges: Nellie Jones

Nellie Jones measuring the width of copper crushers
to obtain chamber pressure after firing.

The crusher method of determining [gun tube] chamber pressures has been around for a very long time, and the methods used have become very rigid and standardized. Measuring pressure this way is expensive and tedious, but works well if done correctly. No method of measuring chamber pressure is 100% accurate. If you measure 100 rounds of exactly the same load, in exactly the same gun, with exactly the same test equipment using the crusher method the measurements will typically vary plus or minus 5% from round to round. Some rounds may be off from the average for that group by 10% or more. A small portion of those variations is caused by actual differences from one round to the next, but most of it results from errors, or variations, inherent in the crusher measuring method itself. This is not a perfect science.



Gauges containing small metal balls. When crushed in the chamber of a gun pressure can be measured.

During the 1960's another method of measuring pressure was developed. This second method is called the "Conformal Transducer" or "Piezo" method. It is similar to the crusher method except that a quartz crystal transducer replaces the standardized copper pellet. The Conformal

Transducer method is somewhat less expensive as the transducer is used over and over. It is also significantly more accurate. Readings obtained this way may typically vary about plus or minus 3% from identical round to round. Exactly how precise either the crusher or conformal transducer methods are is impossible to determine, as there is no way to know exactly what the pressure actually is.

The Piezo method has become the most common method used today to measure pressures. But the crusher method is still also widely used for verification and other reasons. The bottom line here is to know what you are looking at when reading pressure numbers, CUP or PSI.

From a February 1970 Madison Courier Article by Boyd McClung.

Pressure Gauge Expert, Mrs. Nellie Jones is shown, at the intricate work she accomplished at her job at Jefferson Proving Ground. Mrs. Jones initially came to the proving ground in 1942 and worked here until 1945. She worked again from 1951 to 1958. Then she went to work at the Census Bureau, and returned in 1961 until the present.

Her job was titled munitions operator; however since 1942, this same job has been called engineering technician, explosives operator, and machine tool operator. Mrs. Jones was also qualified to weigh propellant powder and operate a sewing machine to sew powder bags. It is estimated that Ms. Jones took over a million pressure readings during her career—which represents nearly 5% of the total rounds fired at JPG.

1980's and Closure

Base Closure Discussions of JPG Always Prevalent

By Mike Moore

Mike Moore in woods near "Blue Hole" on Otter Creek.

"I was working at Holoman Air Force Base, New Mexico when I received a call from Nancy Thurston, Personnel, JPG in January 1974. She wanted to know if I would like to work at JPG. I said that yes, I would, since my contract with Grumman Aerospace Corporation was ending. Shortly Jim Selig, Chief of Data Reduction, interviewed me over the phone, offered me a job as GS-9 mathematician, and I quickly accepted. Naturally when my family and I arrived in Madison, we needed a house. Since this was my first job with the government, I had no leave. John Scott, a Madison realtor took my wife, two children and our dog in his big white Lincoln Town Car on a tour of the town looking for a house after a major tornado had gone through the area six weeks before. I went to work on May 16th, 1974. The first thing that Lilian Smith, a colleague in the Data Reduction section said was, "Do not buy a house! The proving ground will close." I received the following litany. "The base closed after World War II. It closed after the Korean War, and it will close again someday."

I told Ann that night that the current wisdom of the proving ground personnel was that we should rent. That was not in the cards. We bought a house that had the roof blown off in the tornado. We stayed in a motel for three weeks until the roofers finished the house and then we moved in. However, the conventional wisdom ultimately proved right; the last round was fired at the proving ground twenty years after I was hired.

The beginning of the end: On the 24th of September 1969, the Commander of JPG received a letter from our headquarters stating that plans were being made according to a secret document titled "USAMC Detailed Study Plan and Directive" requiring a consolidation study of the TECOM [Test and Evaluation Command] proving grounds. In other words, in our opinion, a plan to move JPG and combine it with other testing centers. This program was to reorganize the Test and Evaluation Command on a "commodity basis" such as ammunition testing, vehicle testing rather than "category" testing. This change would mean that test centers would test weapons and the ammunition together, rather than separately."

By May of 1970, one of the recommendations from Yuma was to build a duplicate JPG test center at Yuma as an adjunct to the facilities planned for long range artillery testing. Due to the costs and other factors, TECOM rejected this part of the Yuma plan. Basically the folks at Yuma never lost an opportunity to plot taking over JPG's mission.

JPG replied with a "Briefing for Study of Consolidation of Test Facilities 15, July 1970." This report listed the "Unique Capability" for a full mobilization mission and all the capabilities of JPG with detailed maps of the firing line down to schematics of diagrams of the communications and instrumentation of each firing position. JPG historically could provide preliminary firing data within 72 hours within the receipt of a test item. This was in contrast to Yuma's record of weeks to get an item tested and reported.

On 1 April 1976, the employees of Jefferson Proving were informed that JPG was identified by the Secretary of the Army as a possible candidate for closure by the end of FY78. A note on July 1976 to each JPG employee stated that The JPG Steering Committee was still alive! This committee was formed shortly after 1 April 1976. Of 375 employees, seventy six percent contributed $1885.00. They spent $667.74 on printing, $348.16 on travel and $24.40 on postage and telephone calls. With the help and cooperation of Local 2797 AFGE, a group was sent to get the attention of the Secretary of the Army. By 7 October the JPG Steering committee ceased to exist and the "Concerned Citizens for the Preservation of Jefferson Proving Ground" became active. The meetings and activities had to be moved off post.

Mayor Warren R. Rucker wrote a letter in 1977 that stated, "The loss of Jefferson Proving Ground would have a serious impact upon the City of Madison. The civilian work force totaled 490 persons, 328 of which resided in Madison or Jefferson County." Mayor Rucker went on to say that the area would be economically depressed without the $7,835,000 payroll. Perhaps nine to ten businesses in Madison would go defunct.

From an article in the [Louisville] Courier Journal by Joe Holwager, it can be found that the employees had a happy Christmas in 1977. "Christmas will come early for the approximately

450 employees at the Jefferson Proving Ground, who learned that the army installation will not be closed. Colonel James M. Bishop, JPG Commander announced the Army's decision. He called the timing most appropriate because after spending five years as the Proving Ground's commander, the announcement of not closing JPG came on his 50th birthday.

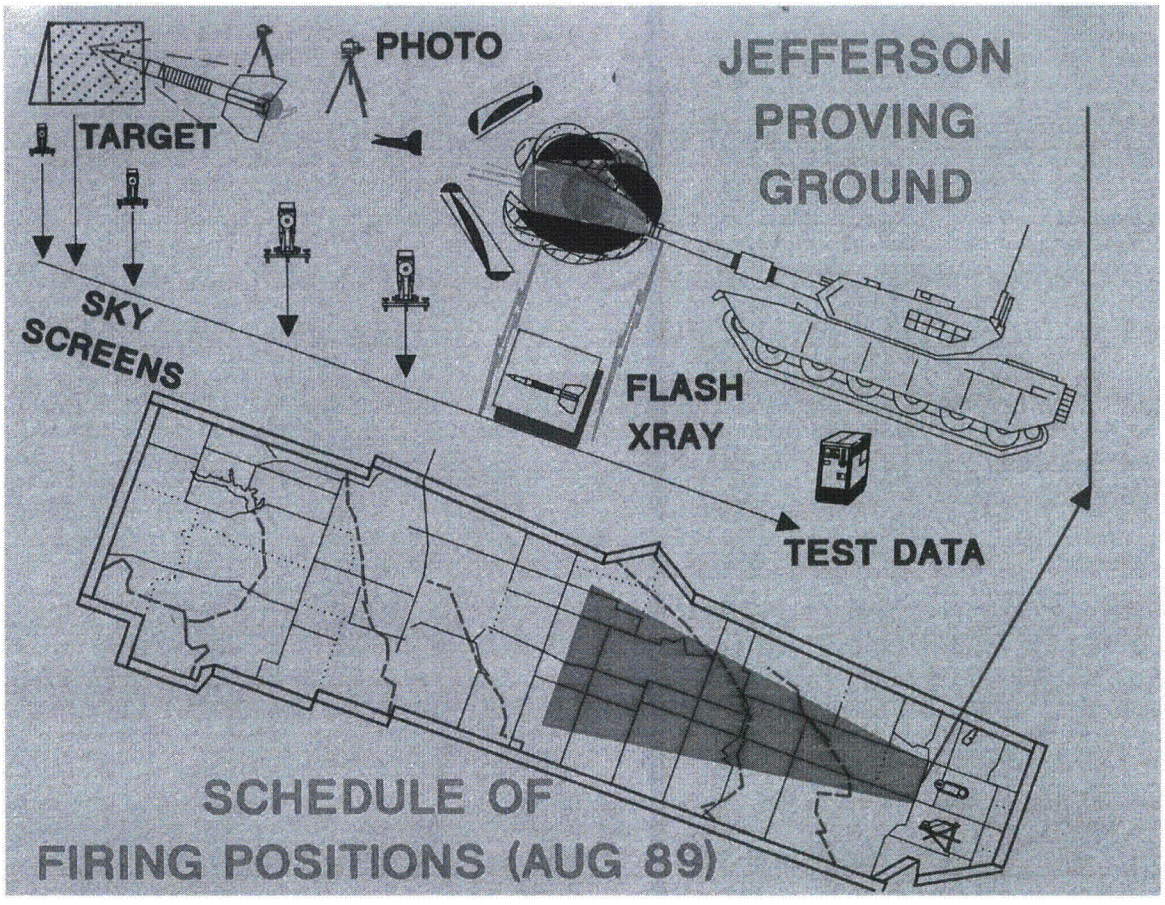
The employees did not savor victory for very long. By 1979 the Army decided that a contractor could run JPG cheaper and more efficiently than the government. The Local Union AFGE 2797 ran a full-page ad in the August 18, 1979 issue [of the Madison Courier.] The gist of the text largely written by Vernon Gudkese and the President of the Union, Frank Inskeep goes like this: "Well,--The Army is at it again. However this time the Army doesn't intend to close JPG. Rather, JPG is to be put on the chopping block and contracted out to the cheapest bidder."

To make a long story short, the employees could put in a bid to run JPG and it would be considered along with all the contractors with the contract going to the lowest bid. The Contractors had to bid lower than the government by ten percent to win the contract.

Vernon Gudkese and Frank Inskeep spearheaded the fight against contracting out. They made three trips to Washington, D. C. to talk to officials and made presentations favoring keeping JPG in house. Their main argument was that it was illegal to contract out JPG because it was core to the defense of the United States.

Interested corporations such as BDM, Aerojet, Science Application Inc., Bendix, Vinnell Co., AVCO, Batelle Columbus Laboratories, and Northrup Corp received a day to come in and tour JPG in response to a "Request for Proposal". They received a copy of all the paperwork required to submit a bid. On 1 April 1980, Colonel Benjamin A. Logerquist had a "flagpole" meeting at 3:30 p.m. to announce that JPG would "Not Be Contracted Out." The JPG [government] bid totaled $15,799,928 per year; the contractor bid was $16,519,071. "We have been under the gun since 1975," Gudkese said, and "we're pretty damn tired of it."

Through 1988 the employees thought that they were pretty safe from base closure. The employees and the community had fended base closure off many times, and JPG was conducting a $40 million dollar modernization program to keep going until well into the future.



Firing Line Automation 1989.

"During the Christmas vacation period 1988, I had pulled up into the parking lot of a travel agency to get tickets to Disney Land. I was going to take my family on a trip to Florida and I believe that I was going to write a check for $1500 dollars for tickets. Just as I was getting out of the car, I heard a blurb on the radio that JPG was going to be closed again. I hesitated a little while, because I did not know if I could afford spending so much money when I would be out of a job. Then after a little while," I said, "The hell with it and went in and paid for the tickets and we went to Disney Land anyway."

BRAC [Base Realignment and Closure] '88 was different in that Congress passed a law that if any base got off the closure list they all got off. Congress knew that each senator and each congressman was going to raise cane about closing their state bases. One southern congressman said that the Army would close his base over his dead body. A base in Massachusetts somehow stayed open, but most of the bases on the BRAC list were closed or given to the National Guard or Reserves. Anyway, the employees organized the JPG Survival Committee and fought the closure much like the 1976 effort. Trips were made, the community put up a good fight, but the base did not escape closure this time.

Dora Grace Lee Interview: July 7, 2006 by Mike Moore

Dora Grace Lee was the secretary for the Instrumentation Division (1988).

I started to work at JPG in November of 1952. We had moved from Cincinnati in October. I thought well I would go and put my application in. I thought maybe they would call me after the first of the year and I could have a few weeks vacation, but it didn't work out that way. I got called right away to work. In the first of November, anyway it was one of my favorite places to work. I worked with some of the best people. Oh, there were some that did not work like the others, but basically I worked with very fine people. I went to work in what was called the proof division, which was the largest division at that time.

My boss was Major William Stuart. He was very knowledgeable, and he was sharp as a tack. In our office there were five people: Major Stuart, myself, a man named Mr. Gray, some kind of office manager. Across the room was Mr. Harold Foerstner, who was really a brain. He was the counterpart of Major Stuart. Maizy Nellor worked for him. He was in charge of any of the programs that were classified "Secret" or "Top Secret." Other people on the proving ground would have a certain part of the test, but Mr. Foerstner would have all the details of the program for each test. He was really a very capable man. I respected both Major Stuart and Mr. Foerstner. They

were never foolish, they were always serious. There were several branches. Colonel Mathews, he wore little round army glasses, he wasn't too tall, slightly balding. He was another capable man. I found that all the military that I ever worked for or saw at the proving ground were always efficient. In the proof division there was a chief proof officer which was Major Stuart. There were these various branches. There was Proof Control, headed by Doyle Schafer and Emra Nay, and they were very capable men. The Assembly Branch was in charge of..... [led by] Herschel Braimeyer and Joe Owens. The Testing Branch was headed by Jack Webb. The Testing Branch was those in charge of the ammunition testing and then there was Ballistics and Records headed by Mr. Roy Holwager, Instrumentation Branch, headed by Dick Thomas, and Range Control. I cannot remember who was in charge of Range Control.

Under the Testing Branch was Small Arms, led by Leroy Gassert; Complete Rounds, Norman Arbuckle. Dick Chadwick had one section and there was always a Navy man who served in that area of testing. When I went to work for the proving ground, I did not know what we did. I was a youngster and I married at 22 and moved away. When I came back I was 27. I remember when I went to work, I said, "What do we do here?" Well, we test ammunition. They would have representatives come in from various companies. One day, my husband Lester Coleman Lee had served in the Philippines, and had told me that he had a commander that he really respected. He liked Lester and wanted him to go to West Point. You will always know him by the shoes he wears. Lester's commander always wore some kind of heavy brogans. Whenever we had visitor's come in, we always had a list. I saw that man's name on a list. I told Major Stuart that this man was my husband's commander in the Philippines. I said that I will know if it is him by looking at his shoes.

When he came into our office, there were those brogan shoes. So Major Stuart asked him if I could speak to him. He was very courteous, a great big rawboned man, soft spoken. I said to him, my husband served in the Philippines under a man by your name. And he just grinned; it was him. He went down to the Firestone Store where Lester worked and they had a good chat. I really appreciated that. People came in to the proving ground who were really into and knowledgeable of testing ammunition. I think they did a fine job out here. There was never a question of what they did out here. Some of the commanders were of course better than others, but those Colonel Mathews was really sharp. He was meticulous about cleanliness. One time he told me I should get my car washed, it was so dirty. It was winter time, but I had it cleaned. I told his secretary, Sue Kimmel that it was black and white, so that's alright.

Major Stuart was promoted to lieutenant colonel. I don't think he made full colonel, because I think he became a civilian. When this commander transferred to another base, Major Stuart went with him. They had been together a long time at various installations. Major Stuart was a real "go getter". Then I worked for Lieutenant Colonel Sammy Burns, who was another fine officer. At the time I went to work I think there were about 1800 employees at JPG, about 900 of them were in the Proof Division. But he [referring to LTC Burns] was a little slower key. He was not as aggressive, but he got his job done. Then I worked for Major Valenzuela, who became Chief Proof Officer. Now he was a very capable, but I think the other two were better. When the proving ground was closing, I worked from 1952 until 1958. I lost a lot of sick leave because I never took a sick day. I went out in September of 1958.

In 1961 when they reactivated, now they had fireman guards, combination as I remember and they maintained fences, protected from fire, that sort of thing for three years. Mr. Doyle Schafer came to the Firestone Store and asked my husband if I would be interested in coming back to work. Well I was. I went back to work. I was the second one called back. Elsworth Chambers was first. Now when I went there the first time, Elsworth was in charge of night firing. Leo Pendleton served under him. I went back to work in Personnel. I then took a job in Finance and Accounting which was for a better grade. I went up there and worked for Russell Smart. I did not find that office work very rewarding. I transferred and took a grade cut to work for Dick Thomas in Instrumentation, which I loved.

He was really great to work for. When he died, he was at Lytle funeral home and Harold Hamilton and his wife was there. He was friends with Dick. I sat with Harold and his wife. His wife asked, "Do you know what Dick Thomas said about you?" I said, "NO!" She said, "You know I dictate correspondence to that girl and she has it done before I have it thought about what I wanted to write about," but I really liked working for Dick Thomas. Then I went back up to Personnel and at that time we adopted our daughter, Helen Dee, and I had to go on leave. I was supposed to be on leave for a year, but they let me go back to work in 9 months. So I went back to work on a 90 day appointment, I think it was- and stayed three and a half years. Then we thought that Helen Dee needed me so I stayed at home.

In 1978 my husband died, I was away from work for about 10 years. I needed work so I called out to the proving ground. Marguerite Ligon, who was head of Personnel, said, "You come on out, I already had your personnel file sent over from records center." I thought that the Lord really shined on me, because I had to work. So I went out and I was hired and I worked 11 years- until I was 64 and it was a beautiful time in my life. I loved the first and the last. Of course, I was younger at the first and we needed the money and the last because I needed the money because I was a widow. So I worked in Personnel. So again I worked with very fine people, knowledgeable people. I never thought that as a personnel officer that the men were quite fair with Marguerite. She was kind of put back on the back shelf, I thought, but we had fine commanding officers. I liked all of them; oh there was one kind of windy. He said to always go first class, anybody can go second class. I heard him say that more than once, but you know it is difficult for me to remember their names. But when I signed out, I was 64 years of age and Colonel Glover was the commander.

There were several others who signed out the same day. Boo Schafer, and a [Grover] Scroggins, and a, gosh, I cannot remember. I will always have the best memories at JPG. I made a lot of friends out there who are still my friends. And boy, I have seen a lot of them pass away. One thing I loved about the proving ground was I loved the change in seasons. When you would go to work in the morning, I went up the main entrance road and I loved the four seasons change. In the fall the foliage was always colorful, in the winter there was snow and you could see the deer of early morning and late evening, the spring was so green kind of like Ireland and the summer it got pretty dry at times. They always kept it mowed. It was just a beautiful place to work. But we did not have air conditioning when I went to work in Building. 100. I mean we had windows up and it was pretty hot there in the summer time. And in the winter time we'd have to turn our heat off on Fridays, because we had to economize and I wore lots of layered clothing.

I wore a lot of Pendletons because they were wool and they were warm. But no slacks were permitted. You had to wear suits or skirts, but no fad stuff. The people who did the cleaning were meticulous in 100. The lawns were well kept for. It was just a beautiful place to work. I remember many happy occasions out there. We would get some award or something when the IG would come in, Inspector General, I believe we always got a good report. I know we worked to get ready for the inspection.

We always had a Christmas party in the office. When I was working in the office of Major Stuart, we had a man whose name was Steve Whitaker, and he brought in a jar of "white lightning "from the hills of Kentucky. He brought that in, and of course you always have someone go overboard. You know just because it is free, I guess. But Major Stuart took some of that white lightning and put it in a paper cup. His desk top was glass. He sat that paper cup on his desk and you know that the white lightning after awhile ate that paper cup. I mean it just destroyed it. He said, "Do you think I would put that stuff in my stomach?" We always had a lot of food. I did not go to the night parties.

What I liked about the proving ground..... on holidays when you would have a gathering out front you know. The large flag you know. I have always been a patriot, but my husband was a special patriot. He thought..... Lester thought everybody ought to serve in the military after high school for two years and then go to college or do what they wanted to do. They still had a lifetime. He believed in mandatory military training. So I guess I picked up on that too you know. Love of country and that sort of thing.

I loved the big flag (Chuckle). I remember one time Bill Raisor was on the guard force, and they put the flags up each morning. One morning the commander came in and he saw the flag upside down. Bill was in charge that morning and he got two or three days suspension. They were very strict about that. I think that means distress, but I tell you, we laughed about it, everybody should have checked it. His wife was the nurse out there. JPG had a health department. They had some good nurses. Another man that I especially respected was Boyd McClung, who was in charge of security. He really knew security and I remember when I went of course, I had to ask what they did out there. (Phone rings)----------Sue Kimmel is on the phone. Dora had called her to ask the commander's name. Sue had the answer.)

The commander of the proving ground when I first went out there was Colonel Mathews. I worked under 4 or 5 commanders. It was the experience of a lifetime. I worked during the Korean War and Vietnam. I was not out there for the Gulf Wars. I retired on 31 December 1988. Russell Shorten was the personnel officer after Marguerite retired. He had worked there before. When I knew he was coming back, I was glad, because he knew personnel too. At times I just thought it was a position for a man. There are certain positions I think should be, Marguerite knew her ritual, she knew the rules, she knew the regulations and all that, but there is just something about men being a counterpart of other men.

Mike Moore: I know. It was kind of macho out there, being military and all. They just started letting women go out on the firing line when I was there- like Tootie and Betty Sullivan, they went out as observers.

Dora Grace: Oh did they? Well, see when I worked there, they had women proof directors. Libby Akers was one and Marty Sullivan. Later there were several women that were proof directors. At that time in my lifetime when you got out of school, unless you could go to college, you either worked at a bank, or you nursed, or maybe a few doctors. But they did not hold positions as teachers, a few were teachers, but there was a time when teachers were restricted to men, but not in my life time.

Mike Moore: How did you learn how to type?

Dora Grace: Oh, I learned that in high school- at Madison High School. At one time, I am not bragging, I am just telling you. I was considered one of the better stenos at the proving ground. I did all my correspondence by shorthand. They would have like a seminar. All these people would come to the proving ground from all over and they would be over there in that hall across from the restaurant [Building 116] that became a gymnasium. They would have all their meetings in there and I would take the minutes. I always considered that an honor. I received several "outstandings" awards.

Mike Moore: Mildred Bersch [commander's secretary] said that she worked with you sometimes.

Dora Grace: Yes, Mildred when I worked my last job. I worked for the personnel officer and Mildred worked for the commander. When she was on leave, then I worked for the commander. I just moved across the hall. She always took Good Friday off. She was a very good secretary to the commander.

Mike Moore: She told me one time that she was in a meeting and that somehow they were talking so fast that she did not get what they were saying and she hoped that you got it.

Dora Grace: Yes, that is true because when we got back to our desks and I said, "Well, I hope you got a lot of that," and she said, "Well I didn't Dora," and I almost wilted. But we got through it. Sue Kimmel always oversaw the secretaries; she did not take the minutes.

One time when I worked in Personnel, they had a very large picnic over there in that grove of trees, and Marguerite was in charge of it. Colonel Logerquist was the commander. She had them take a wagon and had them put boards up along the sides. And they filled that with ice, and that is what they put the food on. I thought that was a wonderful idea. They really had a good turnout for that. They had guys with banjos and guitars. It was really great.

Over in that hall, gymnasium, they used to give quarterly awards. They used to give "on the spot awards." I got one once. Margaret Wilson recommended me. I got about $800 dollars. They had a good suggestions program.

I remember when there was an explosion. There were three men and one was killed. I don't remember his name, but Bill Lock was peppered with that thing whatever it was that blew. They painted his spots with something like fingernail polish to keep the air out. And they took him

to Louisville and he came out of that. I think the other man was from Scottsburg and he was killed. Whenever a gun would explode or ammo would explode in a tube, those weapons were really huge, Major Stuart would take me out to see what had happened, because people were talking about it and I needed to know what they were talking about, so he always took me out to see those things.

At one time when the government was getting ready to build the Air Force Academy, they flew in here and one of the men to help to make the selection was Colonel [actually Brigadier General Charles] Lindbergh. Major Stuart took me out there to see Colonel Lindbergh out to the airport. They landed out there. He would take me out to things like that. I really got to see things that other folks did not get to see.

Mike Moore: Did Col Lindbergh say anything?

Dora Grace: No, he was really a quite man as I remember. I did not really get to see him that long. Those folks were really high up in the world of business.

I remember the sad days when all the employees would meet out at the airport. A great big room [for] all the employees and they would tell us the proving ground was closing or there would be a reduction in force. And the first time in 1958, it started in 1957, they had a "bumping" process where you bumped into another position because you had more time. But the last few times they did not do that. Everybody just went. We would go out to the hangar. It would hold all the employees, some of those days were so sad.

When it was up and going, there was nothing like it. People were enthusiastic, willing to work. I was sorry to see it closed, because I still think they have a mission.

Mike Moore: Did you know Frank Inskeep? I once asked him if he had any training to do his job. He smiled and said all I did out there was run a shovel. You don't need much training to run a shovel. That was what he was first hired to do.

Dora Grace: Sure I knew him. Frank had a college degree. At that time black people really were not really treated fairly. As I look back on it, I think that is one of the saddest things that happened here. A group of them wrote a book on it. My sister bought it, and it was really sad. But Frank had a college degree. I am sure he did.

Mike Moore: I did not know that. I just met him when he was the union president.

Dora Grace: Yes, but I remember when President Kennedy issued one of his directives whereas you could have a union organized at installations, but I remember there were a lot of people opposed to it. I took the minutes at that meeting too. You had disagreements, and it was kind of hard to get those notes in shape. I remember going to a meeting, and Frank was active in that and that was alright. It turned out okay.

When my husband came up with leukemia, I called Sue Kimmel. I was not working there then and told her. I knew how willing people were out there to give blood. I had to replace 40 units of blood and I had enough people to give blood and they got more. And one woman who gave blood for Lester twice was Boo Schafer's wife, Helen. I always wrote to everybody who gave blood for him and thanked them. I was not working there. I was desperate for blood. I knew that I could get help there, but I will tell you on Election day they would peel out of there. I think they got two hours off to go vote and all they had to do was stop on there way to work, but boy come two o'clock they would peel out of there.

Mike Moore: Some of them would peel out everyday. They would have there cars backed in and they would line up at the stairs so that when the whistle would blow, they would run down those stairs to the parking lot and peel out. You would not want to get in their way.

Dora Grace: I remember that I never did close my desk until four o'clock. I always figured you should work until four o'clock, then close your desk. Frank Inskeep told me, "Girl you should close that desk before four o'clock." That just was not my way of doing.

One time Dick Thomas and Bud Schultz and me the secretary worked on some kind of project. It was classified. We worked down there in the instrumentation building. Now Bud Schultz worked with Herschel Braimeyer, and he was a very capable man too. We spent a week or two. At that time we did not have computers. I just had to make those charts. When we got through, Mr. Thomas said, "Dora Lee that was a good job- what can I do for you?" I just stood there and said make it money. Of course it was out of the question. We just kidded.

Don Eades, Observer

Don Eades, left, is talking to Ken Knouf about old times.

Don was assigned to a program that was to be fired into an impact field close to 8500 Center. The test director was spending a few minutes getting ready to commence firing into the field when Don spotted a bird of some kind over on a tree close to the field. Don lined up his theodolite which was used to observe the round when it came in to impact.

He radioed to Carroll Adkins, his partner and gave him the azimuth to the bird. Carroll figured the angle to the bird and said that is an eagle. Don radioed Bernie Jarbo, the range controller and told him that an eagle was roosting out near the bomb field.

Bernie said over the loud speaker, "I wish you hadn't told me that." Bernie had to cancel the firing program, because the eagle was on the endangered list.

Another story that Don told was of a narrow escape he had with a round coming over his bomb proof. Don was assigned to observe on a program and because of the "Two Man Rule". Amy Dean went along to assist. Don said that Amy took her purse under one arm, a pack of cigarettes, a lighter and a bible and her knitting and placed them out on a tree stump. She was way up north

for the day and since each round was fired, one per hour to allow the gun to be instrumented, she was going have "productive" time while waiting for the round.

Don said he heard a round coming in and by hearing the screaming of the round, he realized that they were in danger. He yelled to Amy to get into the bomb proof and they were both scared. He said Amy ran over to her possessions and grabbed her cigarette lighter and pack of cigarettes and dove into the shelter. The round came in pretty close. When the dust settled, they came out and Don kidded her that in the commotion she grabbed her lighter and cigarettes, but left her purse and the bible to deal with the explosion.

Talking to Phil Mann about some interesting JPG stories:

Sept 12, 2006

We are talking to Phil Mann about building things on the proving ground. Just a few weeks before he retired, Phil built a cradle out of walnut for me (Mike Moore) for my grandchild to be born in 2007. While I was sanding it, Phil told me stories of building at JPG. Here are two of them.

I was asked to build a silhouette of a Russian tank. The dimensions had to be the size of an actual tank and the outline of it. The only way we could get that was to have an overhead projection of the tank on a grid. So we took a grid cloth up to Building 100 and got the post projectionist to project the picture of the tank on the wall and enlarge the image until it fit the grid. We used a grid that would represent a foot. Then we drew the outline out on sheets of plywood and sawed that out. Painted it and even put the Red Star on it. And they hauled it out in front of "A" position, if I remember right and blew it all to pieces. That was the end of that. We worked on it for quite a while to get put together. It took several sheets of plywood to make it.

Mike Moore: Do you remember what kind of gun they used?

Phil Mann: No I don't. This was just something unique. Some manufacturer's Rep wanted it.

Mike Moore: Another story you told me was about George Kinnard. Could you tell me that story again?

Phil Mann: It was just an off the cuff display of his mathematical ability to calculate an arc that would be required for a hold down for a rough handling test. I was trying to figure out the arc for a 42-inch piece of 4' by 8' sheet of plywood. I wanted an inch on each end. I wanted the arc to pass through the full width of the 4' by 8' in the center. I had it all laid out on the floor and George just happened to be walking by and he said, "Oh that is easy," and he just grabbed a piece of plywood and started figuring with a pencil. He came up with what I thought was an outlandish number. We laid it out on the floor and it fit just exactly right (Chuckle) I was always amazed at George's ability after that.

Mike Moore: I was too. It seemed that he was always assigned to a weird project. He was stuck in a small cubicle. I mean you couldn't find him if you went looking for him.

Phil Mann: He was always over at the machine shop or hanging around the carpenter shop. He made a lot of different little fixtures over there or had them make them for him. He was pretty much a genius in his own right.

Mike Moore: These are the kind of stories that I would like to publish. A lot of people contributed to the efficient processing of the workload, but they are dead and we can't talk to them. Is George still alive?

Phil Mann: No, he really smoked like a freight train, sometimes two cigarettes at the same time. It eventually killed him. His son went to the machine shop after that. I cannot remember his name right now. [Donnie Kinnard, editor's note]

Mike Moore: I did not know his son worked here.

Phil Mann: Yeah, after George retired his son hired on here.

Another funny story was about Johnny Ingram. He worked for me in the carpenter shop. We were up in the White House [Building 100-HQ's] changing what had been a restroom into an office. So we put down new floors and covered up all openings for commodes and sealed all that up. Johnny was back in the corner leaning up against the wall about a half asleep. In walked the post commander, Colonel Glover. Of course, Johnny jumps right up and says, "Why Colonel how are you doing?"

He said, "Oh, I am doing terrible. I am up here hiding from the Inspector General." Johnny said, "You picked a damn poor place because I was a hiding from you." (Chuckle) They were pretty good buddies, he and the colonel. They had worked together on a few jobs. They didn't mind kidding one another.

Mike Moore: Yeah, I had a pretty good relationship with Colonel Glover, except he did not like a messy desk. I would come up in the morning to my desk, and I would have a purple "frowny" face posted to my desk. If the colonel was happy, you got a smiley face. If he was unhappy, you got a "frowny" face. It meant your area is a disaster area. I got to where I would clean off my desk every night and stuff all my work into drawers and then have to get it out again in the morning. He would poke around all over the place and check it out.

Phil Mann: It was his place.

Mike Moore: Yeah, he once told me that if strangers came around and saw a messy place that they would get the idea that we did a less than stellar job. He wanted the workplace to be attractive and professional so that visitors would get the idea that we were professional and not just Indiana farmers. He thought looks had a lot to do with it. He really revamped Building 100. Were you involved in that renovation?

Phil Mann: Yes, that was about the last thing that I did before I went to Roads and Grounds.

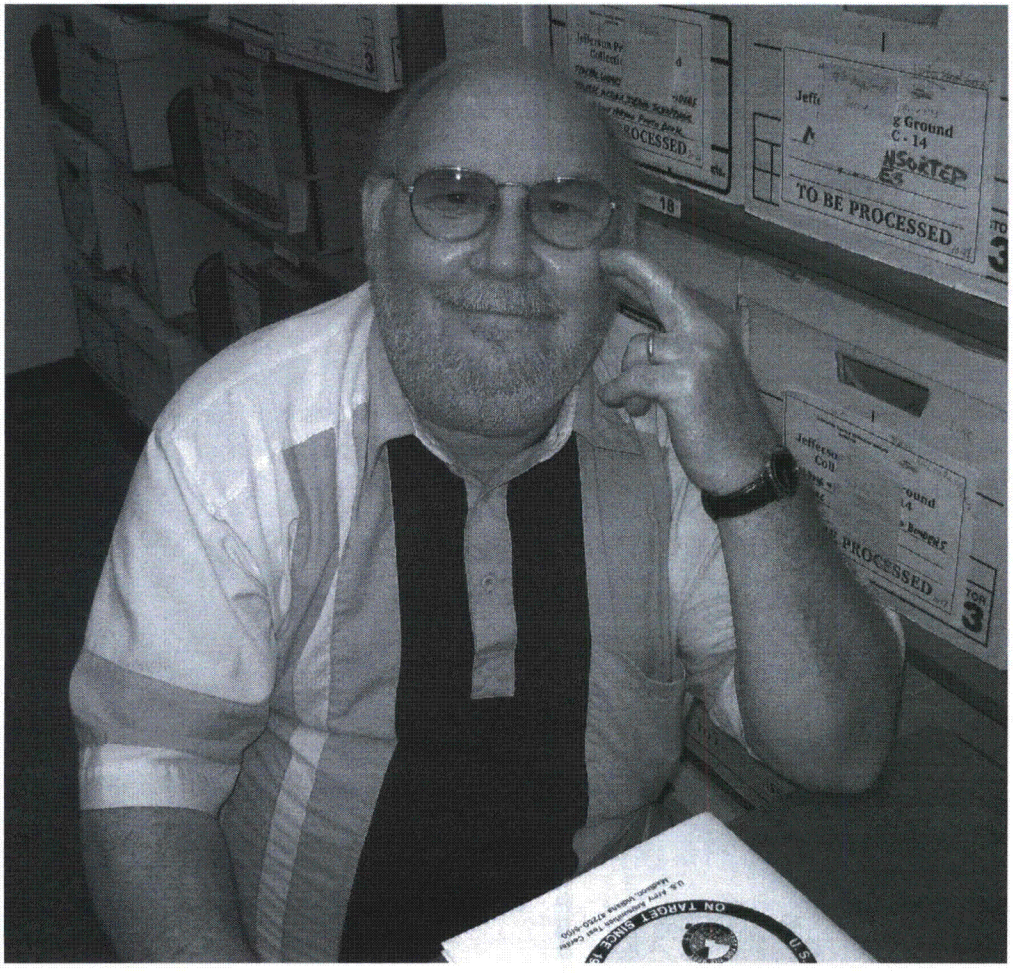
Mike Moore: I heard a lot complaints from the employees about the money spent on fixing up the men's rest room. It used to be a real hole.

Phil Mann: Sure. He fixed things up. He fixed all of them up though, but he didn't fix his own. His own restroom in his office stayed unfixed. And work in his secretary's office was done last.

Phil Mann and Margaret Wilson at JPG reunion.

Larry Smith Interview:

By Mike Moore: (Jan 20, 2006)



Larry Smith, Explosives Ordnance Disposal Specialist.

My service start date was 1961, and I retired in 1993. I first started with the Gunners. I started working with the 105's and 155's, 175 [millimeter size for guns] and stuff like this. After I left there I went to San Antonio, Texas and worked for the Post Office for 8 years, with no break in service. I wanted to come home, and my wife wanted to come home. I got a job in Security and from there I went into Explosive Ordnance Disposal (Demolition). I went to the Post Office because they were having cutbacks on personnel and I had just started at the proving ground. When they started getting close to laying me off, I went with the Post Office.

I went down to the Post Office to take the test and I walked in there, and the room was full of about 30 high school students. I thought for sure that I would not get the job. There was one other adult. I took an 8 hour test. After I took the test, I got 5 veteran points. I made 90.7. There was just me and two other high school students who passed the test. You had ear phones on and

listened to a person describing the problem. A train stopped for mail and went on and stopped again several times for water for ten minuets and went across country. Then there was a multiple choice to answer how much time did it take the train to go from New York to California. There were also vocabulary, math skills, and mechanical skills tests.

The Vietnam War was heating up too, so jobs were open at JPG and I came back to the proving ground. When I first started working as a gunner, they had night shift and day shift. During the Vietnam War, JPG was like a little city out there. It was all lit up at night.

My boss was Jim Morgan then. Payne Crafton, John Bayne and David Bayne, and Dickie Warren were the gun crew. Bob Keith was a gun crew leader, and Dickie Warren was a gun crew leader. JPG always had a demolition crew. Every time a weapon was fired, there were observers to see where the round went and demolition personnel to evaluate it. If the round was high explosive and it did not go off, the demolition folks found out if it was a dud or not. There were certain things that they evaluated. How many bomblets came out of the body of a shell, and more. There were so many types of things to evaluate.

To get rid of duds from the impact fields, we had C-4, C-118, or C-112 [explosives]. We would put it next to a dud to blow it up. At Shonk Farm[north of Big Graham Creek, south of the Air Guard facility], we used snakes (TNT). In testing, JPG had a lot of excess rounds and powder to accumulate- three truckloads of excess ammunition to the Shonk Farm and bury it in the ground. We would dig a hole, put the ammo in the hole and put in the plastic explosive, TNT, and tie into the neatly stacked rounds.

Each team would then run Det cord [detonation cord-an explosive], RDX which is fast. To illustrate, if you stretched Det cord from the proving ground gate down to the Courthouse in Madison, (this is how fast it is). If you lit the cord at the proving ground, it would already ignite at the Courthouse. It is just simultaneous.

All rounds would be stacked neatly in piles in this big hole in the ground. We would then get these TNT Snakes and wrap the Det cord around them and then lay the Det cord above the hole and tie it into a fuse. The hole and all the rounds and all the pyrotechnics would be covered up with dirt. The only thing showing would be the fuse. Everybody would be sent out of the Shonk Farm, except for two or three guys who would pull the igniters in a phased manner to allow all team members to get out before the explosions began. Pulling the igniters would send a spark through the Det cord to a receiver.

The timed fuse would be the initiator of the process of igniting and would allow the demolition team to leave the area and travel north to "M" building, a concrete building that provided safety to the crew. "We would be in M building a distance of about ½ mile from Shonk farm. You could hear it and feel the concussion. After the explosion, we would go back to the Shonk Farm and there would be a big hole down there. It was exciting.

White phosphorous you always had to blow it up. You could not blow it down, because white will keep burning if you did not have it open. If you blow them up in the air then the round would

burn out. If you blow them down in the ground, that stuff would lay there for years and years. Some buried rounds can start burning if they are plowed up and exposed to the air. It can burn a hole plumb through you. That is why you blow white phosphorous up instead of down.

Mike Moore: Do you remember when we were surveying JPG for the Range map in 1987? I was following you around all over the proving ground. You had a tractor with a post-hole digger attached?" I had a pickup truck. I remember one day at an interior road, next to a bomb field, you were going to drill a hole. It made a heck of an impression on me. You were bending down on the ground moving blades of grass around with your hands looking in the dirt for any metal or sign of unexploded ordnance. You then set the post-hole digger right on the ground and then you told me to take the pickup and drive down a ½ mile away.

"Yes, because if when I was drilling and blew that and hit a live round it would go off. The tractor was protected. It had a plate in the back where it would protect me while I was drilling."

"Do you remember what you told me?" You probably can't, but you told me if you hit a shell and it exploded and it blew that truck up and killed me that you would never get through filling out paper work. You would be there forever."

"Oh yes, there would be tons of paperwork". "Yes, I would probably still be there filling out paper work."

"Well I did. I drove at least ½ mile away, and I turned that truck around and sat there and watched you drill that hole and then you lifted that auger bit up and waved for me to come back to the site."

Armored dozer used by Larry to create line of sight for surveyors on Emergency Landing Road.

"Were you ever nervous or scared while you were blowing things up"?

I would work our impact areas with the tanks. You remember that old batwing plow on the back of that old tank? Especially at 22 Center when we were firing those 483 [not the number of rounds but the identification number for that specific munitions, in this case the anti-personnel "beehive" round] rounds. When we would go clean our impact fields, we would search the field to make sure nothing was hot. Sometimes the little bomblets would work themselves into the ground to where we could not see them. When we start working the ground and get those disks dug in, I have set off an explosion to where one of the plows was blown off. The tank had heavy thick metal to protect me, but I could feel them when they blew. I had ear muffs on, so I did not hear them, but I could feel them.

Interview with Phil Mann:

By Mike Moore July 27, 2006

I started in August of 1980. I worked for Jess Westmeyer in the carpenter shop, with Jim Bladen, Lawrence Eldridge, Marlin Davis, Charley Wagner, and Bill McDole. I learned carpentry with my father starting when I was 12 years old. We built houses in the summer time. We would farm and do construction work. I went to work for different contractors around when Dad came to work down here. My father's name was Emmett Mann. I came to JPG on a three month appointment in 1980. I believe they called it a 700 hour appointment. I worked down to the day that I told the post commander that I finished my appointment and that I was leaving and went back down to Personnel. The lady came out of Personnel, there were three of us there signing out that day. The commander came down and said you can stop signing him out, start signing him back in and the two others just continue to sign out. It got to the last few minutes. I stayed on at the carpenter shop then.

I worked at the carpenter shop from 1980 until after Jess Westmeyer left. Then they made me a leader. That lasted a year or so. Then I was made a foreman. I was the foreman until '89, then I went to the Roads and Grounds where I was foreman for six years. When we closed in '95, the post commander said that there were some things here that needed to be packed up and that I had all the equipment as the Chief of Roads and Grounds. He said you hang around for about three months- he thought to finish loading stuff up and get everything out of here- and that was eleven years ago. (laughter).

I have spent my whole civil service career at the proving ground, except for the three years I spent in the Corps of Engineers, US Army. I worked in 92nd Engineers at Fort Stewart, Georgia and 47th Engineers at Fort Wainwright in Alaska. Then I went back to Alaska after I got out of the Army helping a friend build a night club. I paid my Army time back and it gives me three years to civil service retirement.

Overall those years here I think maintenance of the impact fields is the job that I am most proud of. Changing the way maintenance was done was a big job. We did that without any increase in manpower. When I went to Roads and Grounds, the impact field maintenance was done by demolition at that time. So they told me that I was going to have to take over field maintenance, and when I asked them how many people I was going to get, they said none. We did get four wheel drive tractors with the tires filled with foam. They were armored tractors. We bought all kinds of field equipment to keep the thing going. The breakdowns were tremendous because of hitting rounds all the time, tearing up equipment all the time.

We [actually] exploded a round only one time. The round detonated while ZY Conner was leveling an impact field. ZY was driving the tractor when an ICM [improved conventional munitions] round went off. It blew all the tires off the drag that he was pulling, but I don't think it hurt the tractor at all. It burned a notch out of the cutting edge of the drag. Most of the breakdowns were from the big pieces of steel that you would drag up from the buried projectiles.

Ty Peters one time hit a 2,000 pound bomb at 22,000 Center [22,000 meters north of the firing line] that broke the cutting edge of the pan that was moving pretty fast. We were moving dirt from one part of the field to level it. The biggest job was to get the dirt from the high places to the low places so the field would be dry and you could walk on it and stay out of the mud. You cannot do anything with bushes over your head or shell holes in the ground.

Was there any commander that you related to or had influence over you?

Oh! Ben Logerquist was a super guy. Ben was the one that hired me. He was really an extraordinary commander I thought. I got to know several of them. Colonel Glover, I probably got to know as well as any. I got along with Glover real well. A lot of people didn't. Phil pulls out of his desk an order in purple [Colonel Glover's signature color]. It is a "Bite the Bullet" award. I got one because my desk was messy. He would go through the building and put a purple ugly "frowny" face on your desk if it was messy.

He was the one post commander that never went through the chain. In order to get something down, he would just call down and say I need this done. I got my ass chewed by my bosses doing things for the post commander that I was not supposed to be doing.

Yes he was sort of hands on. If he wanted it done, he wanted it done and that was it.

He would call and say he expected that there would be an electrical storm over at the airport and if the box pile was all pushed up it might burn. So I would send the guys out with the bulldozers and they would get the boxes all piled up. [Used ammo boxes]. The next morning there would be nothing but ashes. He would tell me that you know I was pretty good at predicting that weather. Somehow it would catch on fire in the night. An electrical storm! There would not be an electrical storm anywhere else, but it would hit right at the airport.

I did a lot of recreation here; more hunting than fishing probably, but we always got a lot of enjoyment out of that. I hunted deer, squirrels and turkeys. I never was a bow hunter. My father and brother tried that for a while, but I never tried it. I always figured if a bow and arrow would have shot better, then the Indians would have won. (Laughter).

I told you the last time we talked of a special test. There was a test of how rapid fire would affect a mortar base. If you could set the mortar up on the ground on its factory made base and rapid fire mortars, without the base getting out of whack, then the base was actually stable enough to rapid fire mortars from. I think what brought that about was the reconfiguration of the base from an older design. We then made one that was lighter and easier to carry. This redesign brought on problems. So the way to test that was to set it up and photograph what happened to the base during rapid fire. We went out and made different patches of dirt. Some with gravel, some with sand, some with dirt, some with clay, some packed, some loose. Wendell Rutherford was the mortar gunner that loaded the gun and fired the mortars. He was wearing his flak jacket and his crash helmet, and he would go out there and rapid fire as fast as he could drop them down the tube until it moved so far that they were afraid that the mortar would not go down range. They would record it all on photographs and write down how many would have to be fired to move the tube out of the proper firing configuration. This was the reason for the test.

What always struck me funny about it was that Wendell was a person that could set down and be asleep in two or three minutes from the time he sat down and he was so slow and easy going that you could never imagine him rapid firing mortars, but he could put them down that tube so fast that he would have three or four in the air at the same time.

Some dangerous things happened to my men down range. Once while replacing a culvert a round came in and knocked trees down right beside where they were. Denny Gosman was grading on Shaped Charge Road from K Road going north and had centered the stone with the grader coming back to lay it out, and there was a round laying in the road that still had heat waves coming off of it. So it had just got there. When he called on the radio and said there was a hot round in the road, the guys on the Range Control said, "Well how do you know it is hot?" He said, "Why I can see heat waves coming off of it". Then Range Control said, "It is time for you to leave! You go away!" (Laughter) If it had been an HE round and had not functioned properly and it was still hot enough from the firing to cook the explosives, it could go off.

I worked on the jobs and shelters at 16,000 East. We worked on a lot of firing shelters when I was in the carpenter shop. Higgie [James Higgins] was in Range Control, and he would call us and tell us to get into the shelter for awhile, and the rounds would go over our heads. Sometimes you could hear rotation bands coming loose from the round as it went overhead. As they go by you do not know where it is going. Higgie would say that they are going to fire a couple of rounds over your head, and we would hear the rotating bands go. We were concerned because we did not know where they were going. You could drive up and down the road and see rotation bands all over the place that came off. Most of the time they come off close to the muzzle of the cannon, but a few don't. You could find them 10 or 12 thousand meters from the gun.

I loved the work and had super people to work with. I always had plenty of top notch help available for any job. I hardly ever stayed in the office. I always had a secretary or summer hire to do the crappy paper work that I always hated.

Were you involved in putting those pillars in to stop the brush from stopping up the creeks and stuff?

No all that was contracted out. We had to clean them out. Take the debris out. They would get packed full. The creek would go out around them after the accumulators [concrete interceptor piers for catching debris to prevent material from floating up against the perimeter fence] got full of debris. Then it would wash the road out, wash the fence out and take everything out. We always said after the first one was built on West Perimeter, that they saw what a crappy design it was and how poorly it worked and they put them everywhere then (laughter).

They no longer have them at JPG do they?

No they took them out. What prompted the entire thing was a Provost Marshal that made the installation a restricted area. Once you have to formally consider this a restricted area, then you have to change all the security around the perimeter. It seems to me that the hole in the fence could not exceed six inches in any direction. So once you do that it changes everything. The

flood gates that we had previously had swing arms, and the debris would fill up and they would swing out and release the debris and all we had to do was to go up and close the swing arms. These new ones could not be like that because the status was changed to a restricted area.

Were they worried about people coming in through the flood gates when the swung arm was open?

That Provost Marshall was. He got his pay raise and went on up the road. He was happy with what he had done. When the next one came [Frank Reinert-the only security chief who doubled as a professional circus clown] He was an avid hunter and he found out that if you had the place a restricted area that no one could hunt. He was not going to have that so he changed back to a closed post. When we closed, we did not have any equipment to maintain those interceptor posts. The Corps of Engineers changed the design and hired a contractor to take them out. It cost a million and a half dollars to take them out. I think it was several million to build them. (laughter)

Interview with John Buchanan:

March 28, 2006

Well, it was a Mr. [Wilbur] Smith, the "Star Gage" man (measures inside the gun tube) So early one morning he came down to our Building 216 and was hunting for an oil patch to run through that gun tube before he did the "Star Gage" measurement. Well, what he thought was an oil patch wasn't, because that morning, Mr. Bob Gosman had found a "road kill" raccoon carcass.

He had skinned it out to get the hide on it, you know prior to going to work. He kept the hide and put the carcass in a small pile of rags and that was what Mr. Wilbur Smith, thought was an oil patch. So he put it in that chamber of that 8 inch gun and got a rammer staff and ran it through there. Gosman came back and he said, "What are you doing! What in the world are you doing?"

Wilbur said, "Oh I am running an oil patch through here." "No," he said, "You are running a coon carcass through there."

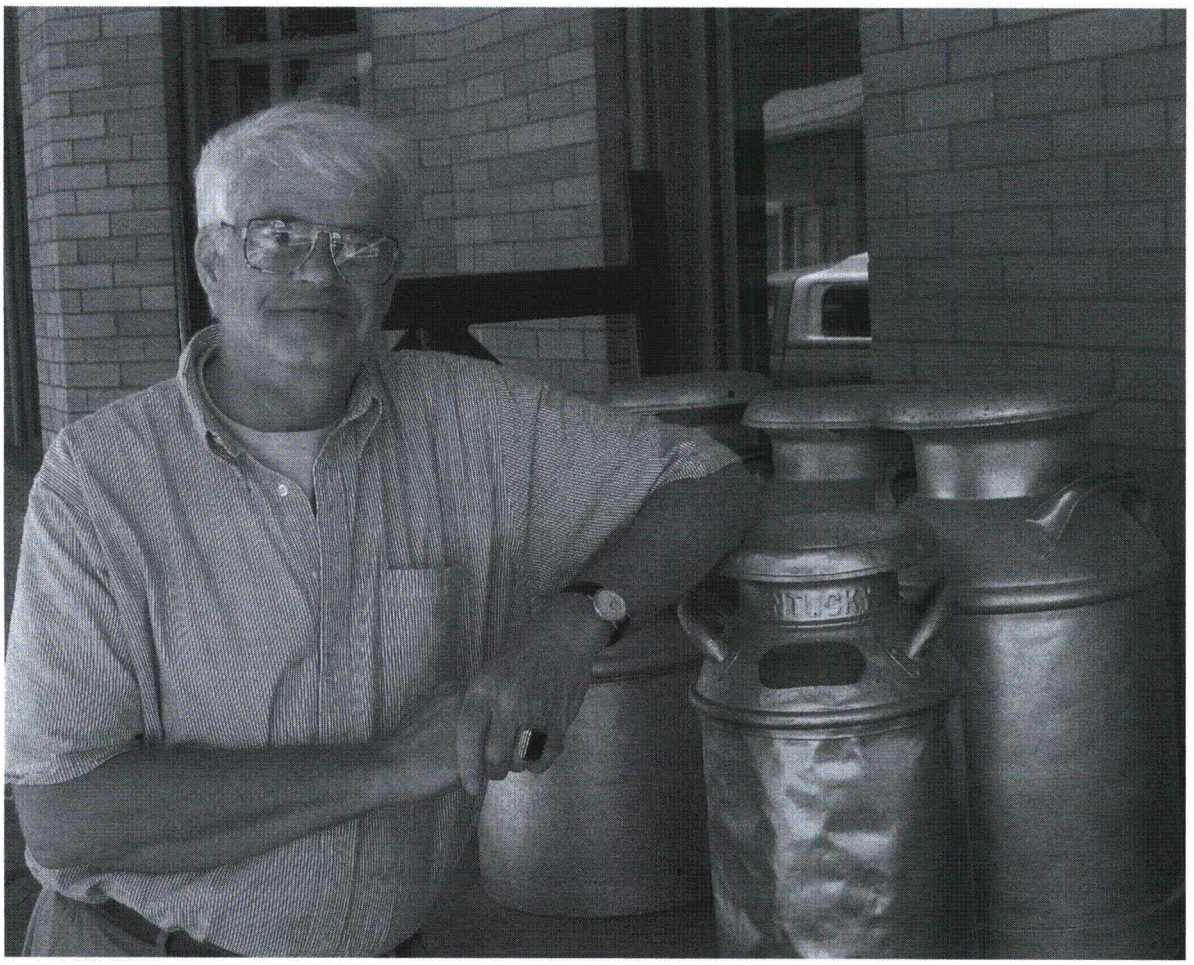
John thought that was funny and said, "At least the carcass did not bust open. I don't think it hurt the gun."

Dr. James Clark

Interview by Mike Moore 2007

Jefferson County Historical Society

This is Mike Moore. It is the eleventh of June, at Jefferson County Historical Society. I am interviewing Jim Clark, former employee of Jefferson Proving Ground.



Dr. James Clark upon finishing his interview at the JCHS.

Mike: Could you introduce your self and tell us where you currently reside?

Jim: This is Jim Clark. I presently live in Douglas, Michigan.

Prior to our move to Douglas, my wife Carolyn and I resided at 123 West Third Street in Madison. We lived in that house for approximately 35 years. When I retired from Federal Service, we decided to go north. Simply, we wanted to downsize our home, and also Carolyn has family in

the Douglas area, along Lake Michigan, south of Holland. We have been there approximately one year.

Mike: What brought you to Southern Indiana?

Jim: When I was working on my doctorate at Indiana University at Bloomington, my wife and I were offered the positions of Associate Deans of Students at Hanover College. Basically, Dean of Men, Dean of Women. We came to Hanover. We found that college life there was not what we were used to. It was quite conservative, we found that the duties there were so demanding, week ends, we had no time for ourselves. Carolyn, after one year, resigned and took a job in the community. I stayed one more year at Hanover College. After that I finished my doctorate and began looking for positions. We had lived on campus for two years, but once I resigned, then we moved to our house in downtown Madison.

I started my career with federal service in 1980. I started at the Office of Personnel Management in Dayton, Ohio. I was in what was known as the Ohio – Indiana Training Group. We provided training services to Federal agencies. We held seminars and provided consultation and so forth. OPM does not do that anymore, but at the time it was big business. When I worked for OPM, I happened to know Nancy Thurston, whose was a member of the personnel staff at JPG. She knew I was a Federal employee, and she called me once and asked if I was interested in working at the proving ground. At the time, I said no.

About six months or so later, she called me again and said there was an opening for an employee development specialist, i.e. training officer. I was kind of tempted but not really ready to go and then OPM downsized, and I was going to be in a Reduction in Force. I hated to leave the Dayton job, but the job was disappearing. I did not want to lose my federal service. I ended up coming to the proving ground in the fall of 1981.

Wherever I worked Dayton, Fort Campbell, we still resided in Madison for a couple of reasons. We had a nice house. Carolyn had a job, and in federal service you never really know how long you are going to be in one place. I worked at JPG approximately three years, until 1984. I went back to Dayton and worked for the Air Force as an employee development specialist for three years. In December of 1986, at that time the EEO office opened up. Fred Hill brought it to my attention. I figured, "Eh, what the heck". I applied and I got the job. I came in December of '86. I stayed until April of 1995 when I had to move on because of Base Closure. I was placed at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. I was the EEO Officer at Fort Campbell for three years, still living in Madison.

In 1998, I applied to be an Investigator in the office of Claims and Investigations, which I did until I retired in February of 2005. I was retired for a year, when my former employer asked me to come back for a year due to shortages of personnel. I returned to work in April of 2006. I worked for one year and I retired again in April of 2007.

Mike: Did you go all the way to the end at JPG?

Jim: I did not. I left in April and I believe the gate closed in September 1995. I was on the Priority Placement List. You know the story of the Priority Placement List. It happened to come up that I matched a job at Fort Campbell. If you matched and did not take it, then you might be out of luck. You might not get a second chance. I really did not want to go down that far, but I had no choice. I was too young to retire. I did not have enough years to retire. I was older and believe it or not [Jim Clark sarcasm] older employees might have trouble starting over again. I did not have any choice.

Mike: Who was your first boss when you hired in to JPG?

Jim: As an Employment Development Specialist, I was hired in to Personnel. The Director was Marguerite Ligon. Her major assistants were Nancy Thurston and Russell Shorten. At that time there was a large admin section, kind of like a typing pool and that was run by Biff Murphy. Personnel also included what we called Computer Services was run by Jeff Vaughan. There were also the copy machine and mail room. It was quite a large organization at that time. When I was an employment specialist, at that time there was a great emphasis on Individual training plans (IDP). There were a number of wonderful government sponsored schools all over the country. My job was primarily working with supervisors to help them develop training plans. I also helped them get quotas to schools. I helped place employees in schools, when all of a sudden we got spaces in schools.

I did in house training and steered various committees. I was an EEO counselor. I worked with Herb Inskeep, the EEO Officer. That was it.

Mike Moore: I was wondering. Some of the folks you worked with have died. I wonder if you remember Hildred Reid, Ann Christie, Frank Inskeep, Herb Inskeep. These folks are gone and we cannot interview them. I was just wondering if you could remember stories about them.

Jim: Well, let's take them in no particular order. I worked a lot with Ann Christie. She was various special emphasis programs manager, primarily women's programs. She was very interested in women's programs. She did a good job. At times some people thought she was a little too assertive in getting programs and ideas across, but she was very good to work with. She and I used to talk about issues. If there was an issue involving women, she took it until it was solved. Ann was in QUASIS [quality assurance], and she could handle it. She had two children, but I did not know her that well.

Biff Murphy was another wonderful person to work with. I always remember Biff. He would always walk around with a coffee cup in hand and smoking. He would go to staff meeting and it would be the same, coffee cup in hand and smoking. He would try to stay awake in staff meetings which were absolutely boring and a waste of time.

Herb Inskeep, the EEO officer, another fine gentleman, very interested in opportunities for other people. He was a nice guy. I was sorry to see him retire. I applied for his job when he retired, but I was not selected.

I remember as the EDS [employee development specialist] the last year or so, we ran out of room, so I was moved upstairs in a room that I think you [meaning Mike] had occupied. I was there all alone in that big room. Every afternoon, John Staley would come up and go to Herb's office and sit in there and smoke and talk for about an hour. Every day they were in there. Staley was a good financial administrator. His philosophy was to see what we can do rather than what we cannot do. He was a very professional person. He never got to enjoy his retirement. Herb Inskeep got a few years, but not as many as he would have liked.

I remember the first thing that happened when I first got there, besides learning the job, I was assigned to Arnold Tilley. Arnold gave me an orientation of the proving ground. I swear, he took me into every building that was there, which I appreciated, because some of them I never went back in. Like that big X-ray machine building. The building where they used mirrors to check why things did not explode. I never was back in there. Arnold was a very knowledgeable person, and he was an excellent guide. My orientation at that time was only to the firing line, I knew nothing beyond the firing line. I did not know what people did.

After my stint with the Air Force, I came to JPG again and this time as the EEO Manager. When I got there things were a mess. The EEO officer had been gone for a long time. He couldn't get along with the Personnel Officer. Reports and other data were not completed. The office was just full of boxes and files. It took a month just to get organized. Low and behold in six months the boss retired and every body was happy including me.

In the EEO office we had very few complaints, very few, so the emphasis was on counseling the employees. We did a lot of counseling. I did a lot of in-house training. Special programs, women's programs, etc. Spanish, Black history, Dr. King. We did well. The commanders supported us. I couldn't complain, but all good things come to an end. I had been over in Building 33 (Health Clinic). Bill Cook [JPG's auditor] and I shared an office. Ron Williams, the nurse was in the front, so obviously we had a good time.

Mike: You were always telling me of the jokes you played on Bill Cook.

Jim: It was awful and they played a few on me too. We got our work done, but we had a good time.

Then as part of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC), Russ Shorten, the Personnel Office was placed in Indianapolis, so I became the acting Personnel Officer and the Acting Public Affairs Officer, because Gary Stegner left. When Gary left, I think a lady named Mary Ball came in and she did not last long. So I had three jobs. When a placement opportunity came up I said it was time to go. By that time there was just a handful of people in the Personnel Office. There was no more Admin section, no more typing pool, etc. The computer system was under Information Systems at the headquarters at another place. There were a lot of changes.

Commanders that I worked for. I started out with Colonel Mabry. Then Colonrl Glover, then Colonel O'Brien, Colonel Benick, and then Colonel Terry Weekly. They were all good to work for. They were supportive. I could not say that I liked one more than the other. They were all good.

Colonel Glover made the smiley faces, a cartoon. According to Phyllis Wilson, she said that you were "Gloverized" when he placed a smiley face on your desk. Colonel Glover was a very dynamic person. He was a nice guy, but he was the wrong fit for the proving ground. He was black and I think some people resented this, which was unfair to him. He was a fully qualified colonel. His goal was to do things right and do them on time. He expected people to follow his orders. He did a lot of surprise inspections. He would go around at night and if he did not like what he saw, he made a little smiley face and it was always in purple. Smiley faces or frowny faces, if he did not like it. That went for everybody. If you were late for a meeting, his philosophy was when you are early, you are never late, which I appreciated. You could have a meeting on time and you could get out.

The smiley faces and the frowny faces. He would put it on these big flip chart pages and leave them in people's offices and waste cans and file cabinets.

Mike Moore: I got a few on my desk. He wanted all your work put away and have a clean desk.

Jim: I will never forget this. When I was first an EEO officer, my office was in 100. It was pretty near around the corner from the colonel. At that time it was the colonel's and the secretary's office. Staley was gone. I could hear what was going on. Colonel Glover put out a mandate that anything in purple was to be from him. Anything in writing in purple was from him. Nobody else was to use the color purple. One day I was sitting in the office, heard this yelling and screaming and stamping. I saw Gary Stegner going in. I saw Joy Polly going in. It was a big deal. He had ordered some purple pens and he had not gotten them. There was a big hullaballoo on that, but the best one was one day I heard this yelling and screaming and stomping and pounding on the wall and Gary Stegner goes in and then Glenn Murphy [finance chief] goes in.

Apparently when they issued the JPG flag, they did not go through the Army Heraldry Office and oh, Glover was mad at Murphy and Stegner. They did not do it right and probably Colonel Glover should have known that. We had a nice flag anyway.

We had Colonel O'Brien. He liked to talk and was very people oriented.

Colonel Weekly, I did not work with him as long. It was kind of tough being commander when the base was being closed. It was very demoralizing. Little by little people go, buildings close, functions disappear and vending machines go out the door. Cafeteria service stops, the Credit Union moves out and the mowing contract was cancelled. It just gets narrower and narrower. JPG was probably the nicest place to work, but not the best job. The best job I had was investigator of grievances at Wright-Patt. (Wright-Patterson AFB in Dayton.)

When I was an investigator, I would sometimes stay with Mike Moore in his lavishly appointed apartment in Dayton, Ohio. Chez Lafayette (Jim's name for the apartment.) Mike was more confined to work in his office's workspace. I was more flexible for I was on the road a lot with the investigations. Mike retired before I did by the way.

Mike Moore: Did anybody stand out that may have had an impact on you?

Jim: None that changed my way of thinking. There were a lot of quality people out there. I thought Ike Peterson was great as MTD [Material Testing Directorate] leader. I thought he was good. I thought Nancy Thurston was an excellent "personnelist." I thought Russell Shorten was an excellent labor relations person. Biff Murphy was good in admin. This is not to say other folks were bad, it is just that these people stand out in my mind. Jeff Vaughn and his crew were very, very knowledgeable and I think that helped a lot. As far as on the line goes, I did not have as much contact with those folks, but they were hard workers. I got involved with Employee Action Teams. That was fun, we accomplished a great deal.

Mike Moore: When you were Public Affairs Officer, did you take folks on tours to their old home places?

Jim: Some, not a lot. A few. Took them up north. I remember one tour, I think Wiggum or Wiggins or something like that. Nice people. A man, his son and a brother who was a little slow. They took me out and showed me where their old farm place was and it was right there. He told me that that stone was the corner of the old stone barn. It was very interesting. The brother said, "Oh yeah, just down the road here was our church." I said, "Really" He said, "I remember that we had a handicap kid in a wheel chair. We built a ramp on the side of the church so that this young man could get into church."

So he walks up the road and in a few minutes he said, "Yoohoo! Come here" And there it was that cement ramp right there in the middle of the woods where their church had been. That was a very interesting day.

I thought a lot of Nadine Greenhill. She was very good as Contracting Officer. She was very, very good, very professional.

Mike Moore: Yes. I typed up her interview by the Hanover students. It was interesting. One story that you told me this morning at coffee was about Hildred Reid and his coming to work at the proving ground. Would you mind telling that story here on tape?

Hildred was a very talented mathematician. He and I worked together on a lot of Black History programs, Dr. Martin King programs, and community things. Often times we would go to Charlestown at the Field Safety Office. So we had a lot of chance to talk about things. He was a good man to talk to. I remember talking about Black-White relationships in the community. He said when he came up here, he and his family could not find a place to live. Nothing available, there was nothing for sale. People would not sell or rent to him, because there were not a lot of black people here. There were a lot of black families in Madison, but they were here since the town was founded.

He was a newcomer. He wanted to find a place that he wanted to live in. He could not find any place. He told me that he went in and talked to Colonel Bishop, who had hired him. Hildred

said, "Colonel I cannot find any place to live. I am not going to be able to accept the job. I am going back."

I think he came from Macon, Georgia.

Well, Hildred said that Colonel Bishop made a number of phone calls and before he knew it, Hildred and his family had a decent place to live.

I think Colonel Bishop basically told the community people that they had better get on the stick.

Mike Moore: I feel that Colonel Bishop was the most dynamic commander that we had.

I did not know him, he was before my time, but I have heard that.

Mike Moore: He just pulled JPG into the scientific technology of the computer age. Before he came, we could not have a computer. He bought the computer, but called it something else and kind of snuck it in as a data collection device or something like that. To get carpet for the floor it was called a noise elimination device. He did. He got the first computer there. He did. His determination was that all firing records were going to be computerized. We never quite got there, but he made a valiant effort.

I think when I started there, everybody wanted an IBM Selectric-Typwriter with a ball and a card reader. When I left everybody had gotten rid of typewriters and virtually everybody had laptops.

It was a shame the proving ground closed, because we did a good job. We worked hard for the Government and we had a good reputation.

Such is life.

Interview with Paul Torline

Paul Torline accepting award from Col Ronald Benick.

Wednesday 9th of April 2008

11:00 am Bldg 125 (the old JPG Fire Department)

By Mike Moore

Mike Moore: Just get comfortable. Usually I just ask the question, "When did you come to work at JPG?", then I just sit back and listen.

Paul: I think it was '65. I have to look that date up. When I got out of high school, I went into the Army Reserves. When I got back from six months training, I got a job at Grote. I worked at Grote for five years in assembly. I am an outside man and I got tired of being inside, so a job came open at the telephone company, and I went down there and became a cable splicer for the Indiana Telephone Corporation.

My children were being born and the phone company kept sending me out of town. I had to stay for a week at a time at different locations. I got kind of tired of that and Jefferson Proving Ground was picking up again. I put an application in at the proving ground. Because of my assembly history, there was a job open in assembly at Building 600, so I started there.

I worked there for three or four years then the two telephone people, Mr. Cook and Mr. Kirkham retired and that left an opening in the telephone section. I qualified for that so I worked out here as a lineman and a cable-splicer. We would try to keep the lines going every time they would shoot them down, we would go out and splice the lines together so they could continue the programs. That was quite interesting.

Mike Moore: You mean the shells we shot would actually go out and blow up the phone lines?

Paul: Well, what happens is that scrap pieces of metal through the years would hit those lines and kind of ding them. With the freezing and thawing and you get enough of those dings in them, they would just break. You had nature and the wind. Trees would fall on them. The wire on them through the years was pretty bad. As time went by they decided to do away with the wire and upgrade communications and a cable was buried. That helped a lot. You had to bury the cable in highly explosive areas with remote controlled diggers. Demolition was always involved in that by backfilling, checking and so forth. It was quite interesting.

Mike Moore: I remember you telling me that when you operated that remote digger called a "Barber Greene" that shells would come up out of the ground.

Paul: Yeah, they would come rolling out through the dirt.

Mike: Do you think they were live rounds?

Paul: Well, Demolition would say so. They would gather them all up nice and gently and take them to an area, put a charge on them and blow them up. I asked them one time how they knew the shells were live. The Demolition man said, "because of the noise and the amount of bang we got. They were sure that some of them were hot.

Mike: Where did you dig them up?

Paul: Pretty much all over. We tried not to go into the high explosive area, but you had to have communications in these areas. Sometimes it was difficult, because you almost had to hear the Barber Greene, because it would bog down. Demolition would get an armored personnel carrier (APC) and follow the Barber Greene at safe distance so that they could tell if the machine stopped. They could control the machine remotely from the APC.

Mike: Were Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) in the APC? Did you ever get to ride in the APC?

Paul: No, no, no. I never rode in the APC. It was EOD people and then Roads and Grounds, the operators would control the Barber Greene.

Mike: So you waited until the ditch was dug and then you would go in with the wire?

Paul: Yes, I would put the wire in there and then they would cover it up.

Mike: You said earlier that you are an outside person. What actually does that mean? Don't you think you could ever stand a bookkeeping job?

Paul: No I don't think so. I am an old farm boy and I am just like to be outside and working outside.

In fact, when we still had the iron wire, a pole would get knocked down by wind or whatever, where you could not set a pole. Then you would have to get Demolition to come and they would drill a hole and put a charge in and blow the hole before you could dig. That was interesting. If they put too much of a charge in, then the blast would scatter dirt for twenty feet. You would have to go find the dirt and bring it back to set the pole with. Most of the time, they did a good job. Just a nice clean hole and then you might have to clean it out a bit.

Mike: You had to work with a lot of different organizations to do your job. I mean you depended on them to make sure it was safe.

Paul: The electricians would sometimes have the same problem as we did. So on a lot of these things we would all work together to get the job done.

Mike: What was your boss's name?

Paul: Everett Bryan was the first guy that was over the telephone office and George Payton was the cable-splicer. When Everett retired, then George was promoted to boss and then I took over as cable-splicer. We were the installers. If any body wanted a phone moved, we would move it.

Mike: Did you ever think you were at risk or in danger out there?

Paul: No. EOD people were very conscientious. They did not want anybody hurt. They would not let you get hurt. They were pretty strict. You couldn't drive a particular place until they okayed it. If a line would go down and we had to get over there; they would send a guy out there and he would search the area making sure that there was no explosives on the surface. At the "all clear," then we would pull the line back up and splice it together. They were very good. They would stay

with us all the time and make sure everything was okay until you got the pole set. EOD would make sure that you did not get carried away and forget where you were. All in all I never worried about it being dangerous, because they were good at their jobs.

Mike: Did you ever get involved in the fiber optics that was installed up north?

Paul: Yes, we worked with the data communications people and the electronics people. It was kind of a gray area. The electronics people went to school on fiber optics and then they brought a team in here and all the telephone people got a quick course on it. We never spliced any out in the field. The electronics people did all that.

Mike: Who were some of the folks that you worked with?

Paul: Larry Stewart and I were basically the line crew at one time. Then Bob Alphin was an installer and he would help us. Sparky Brunton was in there for awhile as a lineman, then he left on a medical. There was not much turnover. When you needed help the electricians and our team worked together a lot. Of course Roads and Grounds. Those people always operated the equipment. Sometimes when they were busy they would let us use the "Ditch witch" and dig the ditch inside and here where it was safe. We got a license to operate the equipment.

Mike: I remember when your son, Mark, was working on his Eagle project for the Boy Scouts and you brought a bucket truck to the cemetery chapel where Mark and some scouts were refurbishing it. Did you normally operate that as part of your job? How did you get that from the proving ground?

Paul: I had training and I was licensed to use the truck. Some of these poles were kind of shaky. We used the bucket truck to install the wire on those old poles. We did not use it that much, but we also had a bucket fixed for that big crane. We could get to really high places with that. We had a three quarter [ton], four wheel drive with a winch.

Base Closure

1988 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC)

On October 18, 1988, I was sitting in my partition on the second floor of Building 100 and my boss, Bruce Cantwell came in and said that George Schroeder, TECOM gave us two hours to figure out how much JPG could be sold for and the mission be transferred to Yuma [Yuma Proving Ground, AZ]. Realizing this would be a wild eyed guesstimate for our headquarters, but being good civil servants, we complied and started calling real estate agents to see what local farmland was selling for. We received the figure of about $2,000 per acre from the realtors. George then briefed General Wagner, Chief of the Army Materiel Command that one time costs were estimated at $53.1 million excluding allowances for demilitarization, deactivation, standby mobilization costs or savings from sale of land or property.(AMSTE-PL 21 OCT 88------ Michael J. Early). The General was told that it would take 15 years to recover the cost of base closure. The AMC folks told TECOM not to notify JPG that it was the only TECOM installation on the recommended list. So, JPG officials were totally unaware of this process.

(For Official Use Only) Col Glover (revised input –27 October 1988)

Cost estimate provided to AMC on 20 Oct 88 to meet immediate response requirement was based upon cursory examination of previous studies and identified one time costs of $53 million. Re-examination by DEH&IL identified areas that were not properly considered. New estimate of $95. 8 million one time closure costs. ----Leo J. Appel, Chief PA&E Office. TECOM.

JPG Officials were asked to figure out what the cost of cleaning the proving ground would be. Using existing rates of cost for dump trucks, diggers, road graders, etc., it was calculated that to clean the approximate 52,000 contaminated acres to a depth of 10 feet would be a one time cost of $5 billion. So the cost estimate went from $53,000,000 to $95,800,000 to $5,000,000,000 in a few months. Unfortunately the Base Closure Commission under Senator Abraham Ribicoff would not consider the revised costs.

Lee Hamilton interceded with Les Aspin, the congressman who headed the Armed Services Committee to grant an audience to Bruce Cantwell and I. We took a range map of JPG and briefed Mr. Aspin and Mr. Hamilton for 45 minutes in the House Armed Services Committee. Bruce told both men that it would take $5 billion dollars to clean the UXO from the land. After Bruce concluded the briefing and we were headed out the door of the conference room, we heard Les Aspin quietly say to Lee Hamilton, "I don't dispute their figures, but there is no way in hell we are going to spend that kind of money for cleanup"---------Mike Moore

General Akin, Commander of the Test and Evaluation Command had a blustery, shoot from the hip type, folksy way of communicating with his employees. He spent several hours developing a briefing for his boss at TECOM on why JPG should be saved. In a meeting of several of the staff from both TECOM and The Army Materiel Command, General Akin proceeded to tell the General how it would be foolish to close JPG. As he began, his boss just told him to shut

up. The deal was done. Congress had passed a law and General Akin should just get in line and follow his marching orders. General Akin just sat down and not a word was spoken about saving JPG.----------Bob Hudson, Technical Director, JPG.

The JPG employees worked the five years to closure, working two shifts during Desert Shield and Desert Storm providing the army with top notch ammunition, while at the same time closing the base. They closed the base with honor and dignity and saved many lives in the mean time by quietly going about their jobs.

Due to the breakout of Desert Shield/Desert Storm, JPG's workload increased 15% as 321 lots, including 120-mm tank ammo and components, 155-mm smoke rounds, and 155-mm stick propellant, were tested for the Gulf War. Despite the increased firing activity, other operations at JPG began to slow in 1990. The JPG employees really worked hard under the cloud of base closure. Many employees worked overtime and some folks worked through the Christmas season to make sure all the ammo needed was tested before the Gulf War started.

The employees also had about 35 relatives involved in the war. A letter writing and care package program was started so that all the troops knew we appreciated them. To illustrate this spirit, an M1 tank was moved in front of JPG Headquarters, and as many employees climbed on it that could. Others surrounded the bottom. A banner was strung across the tank with the words JPG Supports the Troops. A photo was taken and sent to each of the 35 relatives involved in the war. A copy of this photo now hangs in the lobby of the Jefferson Community Federal Credit Union on Ivy Tech Drive in Madison.

The JPG employees supported the troops with packages of goods. Many employees had relatives fighting in Iraq during the First Gulf War.

To fight base closure the employees organized the JPG Survival Committee.

The JPG survival committee received $10,000 dollars from the local area realtors to help fight base closure. The JPG Survival Committee mounted a valiant effort to publicize the good works of JPG and the fact that the land was covered with unexploded ordnance. As a result of informational picketing at the Indiana State House, the legislature passed a resolution calling for the Federal government to clean up the UXO laying on and in the ground. The Survival Committee made four trips to Washington to lobby the Congress. When it became apparent that the base could not be saved, the Survival Committee lobbied for base cleanup.

On October 3, 1989, the JPG survival committee sent the following group to Congress to inform them of the problems with Base Closure. Left to Right: Mike Moore, Russell Mortara, JPG Union President, Bruce Cantwell, Congressman Frank McCloskey, and Roy Pannel, National Vice President, AFGE.

The last round fired at JPG Occurred at September 30, 1994. The base was closed in 1995. The guns were silenced. For 50 years the folks at the proving ground served as a vital link in the production of ammunition, all which went to defeat America's enemies.

"The Last Shot Fired at JPG". Left to Right: Earl Wilson, gunner, TECOM Commander General Tragemann, pulling lanyard, Wendell Rutherford, blocked from view, General(Unknown), JPG Commander Colonel Terry Weekly, , Robert C. Congleton, Test director. Sept 30, 1994.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
US ARMY JEFFERSON PROVING GROUND
MADISON, INDIANA 47250-5100

LOT: LAST ROUND
F.R. NO.: 94-1994-K9

LAST ROUND: THIS RECORD DOCUMENTS THE LAST ROUND FIRED AT JEFFERSON PROVING GROUND

ATTACHMENTS:
1. WEAPON AND COMPONENT DATA
2. ROUND BY ROUND DATA
3. BACKGROUND
4. PROGRAM
5. PHOTOGRAPH

APPROVED FOR THE COMMANDER:

ALLAN R. VOSBURGH
MAJ, OD
Director, Materiel Testing

ROBERT W. HUDSON
Technical Director

ROBERT C. CONGLETON
Test Director

DISTRIBUTION:
2 JPG
1 USATECOM, AMSTE-TA-F
2 AMCCOM, AMSMC-QAD-I; QAM-A (R)
1 APG, BRL; SLCBR-DD-T

Last firing Record (94-1994-K9)

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
US ARMY JEFFERSON PROVING GROUND
MADISON, INDIANA 47250-5100

LOT: LAST ROUND
F.R. NO.: 94-1994-K9

WEAPON DATA

HOWITZER	105MM	M119	NO. E070
TUBE	105MM	M20	NO. 22797
CARRIAGE	105MM	M20A1	NO. 22547
RECOIL	105MM	M20A1	NO. C930

TUBE ROUND NUMBER 618 CORRESPONDS TO EFC ROUND NUMBER 618. TUBE WEAR AFTER ROUND NUMBER 618 WAS .004" WITH 90% LIFE REMAINING BASED UPON PULLOVER GAGE MEASUREMENT.

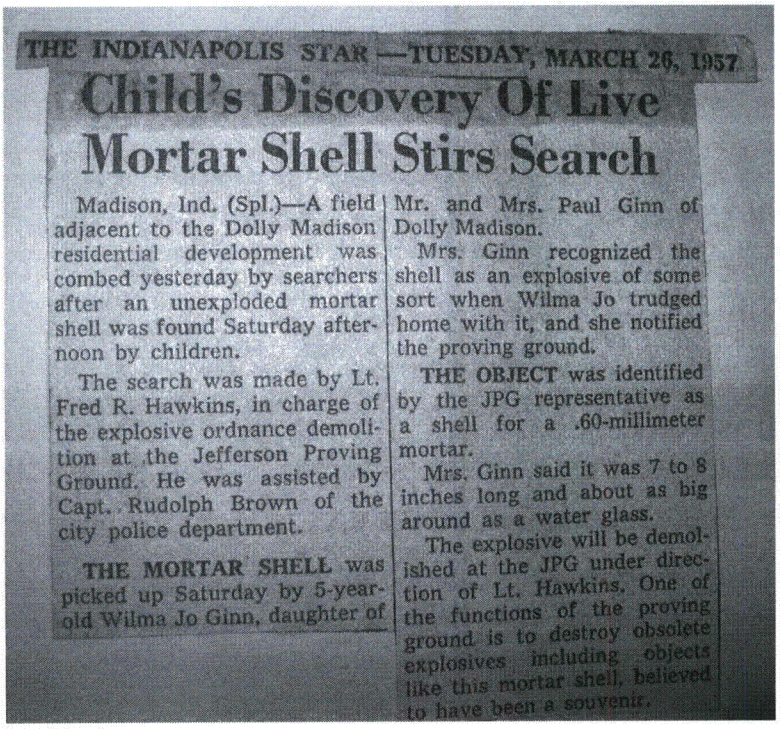
COMPONENT DATA

COMPONENT	MODEL	LOT NO.
PROJECTILE, INERT	M1	NPK-1-821
PROPELLANT	M67	IND88J311-002
PRIMER, PERCUSSION	M28B2	LS-174-34
CASE	M14B4	KXO-14-27
FUZE	M557	MIXED

LEGEND: GUNNERS: E. WILSON, W. RUTHERFORD
DEMOLITION DOWNRANGE RECOVERY TEAM: WILLIAM SMITH, ROBERT DRESSELHAUS AND JERRY WALKER
TYPIST: JOYCE HULING
EDITOR: LINDA GORDON
MAILING & DUPLICATION: ROSE GATES
PHOTOGRAPHERS: MIKE MANCUSO & CHARLIE ADAMS

Page 2

After it was all said and done, this is what remains to deal with.



THE INDIANAPOLIS STAR —TUESDAY, MARCH 26, 1957

Child's Discovery Of Live Mortar Shell Stirs Search

Madison, Ind. (Spl.)—A field adjacent to the Dolly Madison residential development was combed yesterday by searchers after an unexploded mortar shell was found Saturday afternoon by children.

The search was made by Lt. Fred R. Hawkins, in charge of the explosive ordnance demolition at the Jefferson Proving Ground. He was assisted by Capt. Rudolph Brown of the city police department.

THE MORTAR SHELL was picked up Saturday by 5-year-old Wilma Jo Ginn, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Ginn of Dolly Madison.

Mrs. Ginn recognized the shell as an explosive of some sort when Wilma Jo trudged home with it, and she notified the proving ground.

THE OBJECT was identified by the JPG representative as a shell for a .60-millimeter mortar.

Mrs. Ginn said it was 7 to 8 inches long and about as big around as a water glass.

The explosive will be demolished at the JPG under direction of Lt. Hawkins. One of the functions of the proving ground is to destroy obsolete explosives including objects like this mortar shell, believed to have been a souvenir.

Newspaper clipping of child finding UXO.

Joy Kinman

Joy was born in Madison and began working at Jefferson Proving Ground in April, 1966 at the age of 18 years old. She worked at Property Disposal and Transportation for four years, then left to have her two children. She came back in 1974 to work in the Procurement Office, then progressed to Supply in 1977, was promoted to the Transportation Officer in the early 80's. In the mid 80's she became the Logistics Specialist, and in another five years was promoted to the Equipment Manager. Joy had planned to take early retirement in 1995, but decided to transfer to Yuma, Arizona where she worked another 2 1/2 years before retiring.

Some of Joy's training was done off-post in Illinois, Virginia, Maryland, and Florida. Joy saw the evolution of office equipment from telephones and typewriters to copiers, fax machines, and computers.

As an 18 year old, Joy recalls being intimidated by the massiveness of the proving ground and its mission. She gradually overcame her intimidation and became more comfortable interacting with the many members of the proving ground family. She saw the role of women increase over the years and saw a lot of camaraderie of the employees.

As Equipment Manager, it was Joy's job to make sure all of the equipment on post was removed for base closure. Some of the equipment went to Fort Knox, KY and Crane Naval Weapons Station, IN. A lot of the equipment was shipped to Yuma, Arizona, who was taking over JPG's mission. Because JPG was the first of the base closures, guidance was hard to come by, yet there was a mandated time for having all of the equipment removed. This was a very stressful time but her co-workers were wonderful.

The base closure was crushing to Joy. JPG could have forfeited part of its workload to government contracted representatives rather than being completely closed, but the powers-to-be didn't make that happen. No one believed that JPG would ever be closed, its mission was too important. An enormous amount of taxpayer dollars were used shipping JPG's workload to Yuma.

Linda Wood

Linda came to southern Indiana with her husband, who worked at Conn Organ, in 1970. She began working at Jefferson Proving Ground in 1974, in the telephone office. Then she went to the Communications Center. Linda started in the Finance and Accounting Office in 1985 as the first female budget analyst. She was responsible for the $25 million budget and stayed there until her retirement in 1995.

In the Communications Center, which was an extension of the telephone office, Linda had one of six "Top Secret Clearances" on post at that time. Military communications came in and went out in encrypted code.

In the budget analyst position, she worked closely with the directors as monies were distributed, justified, and reconciled. The last year of operations was the most challenging, due to the lack of monies coming into the proving ground. Being the first base involved in the closure act, JPG had a coordinated effort with our Headquarters, at Aberdeen Proving Ground, for guidance in the closing.

Prior to computers, the accounting department used a keypunch system. The Department of Defense fiscal year ended on September 30, which was a big day for accounting. Working in the telephone office gave Linda the opportunity to familiarize herself with the overall organization of the proving ground.

95% of the proving ground's work was performed for Rock Island Arsenal, Illinois. JPG functioned more as a business and did not rely solely on the Army for funding. Therefore, no one believed they would ever close the base. Some employees had never worked or lived any place else. Jefferson Proving Ground was a family.

Commanders brought in there own personalities. Generals would arrive via helicopter on the grounds outside of Building 100. Working for the military meant working under Army regulations. There was a regulation for everything and if there wasn't one, it didn't happen.

Charles Smith

Charlie was born in southern Indiana, as were his parents and three out of four of his grandparents. He's lived here all of his life. After serving two years in the Army, Charlie began working at Jefferson Proving Ground, on April 23, 1974, as a technical publications writer with Bud Shultz, who was the plans officer. When Bud died of lung cancer, Charlie applied for and became the plans officer in July 1984. Charlie also handled the training for the National Guard and was the claims officer. As claims officer, he would deal with civilians who filed claims with the government for damages received due to the explosions of ammunition. Charlie retired from JPG on December 26, 1992.

Training was on-the-job for the technical publications writer. The test directors, gunners, observers, and other testing crew were all very helpful. It was Charlie's job to write down, step-by-step, how the ammunition was tested. He then published SOP's, Standing Operating Procedures, for future test directors to use in performing the tests. Charlie also prepared ATP's, Acceptance Test Procedures, which were used in determining the parameters for testing. The typing pool would then prepare Charlie's handwritten notes for publication.

As the plans officer, there was absolutely no training. Very few people knew what Bud did because his job was confidential. Everything Bud worked on was for emergency mobilization. So, Charlie had to evolve the position from scratch. From Bud's files, he wrote the Disaster Control Plan, Severe Weather Action Plan, and the War Emergency Plan.

Approximately three times a year, Emergency Mobilization Operations were performed. Secretly, exercises would be performed to prepare our base for war. Charlie was on call 24 hours for these "war games". He would report to the Communications Center for these drills, which were performed in order to learn the procedures needed for any base emergency.

Colonel Ben Logerquist was an outstanding Commander and gentleman. He is still a friend. He helped Charlie through a tough time with a RIF, Reduction in Force, by telling him about the technical publications writer position. Later, during another RIF, Charlie's position was eliminated, so they were going to move him to a contracting position. Charlie's RIF'ed position was reinstated at a grade two levels higher, which meant that he was no longer qualified. However, that's when he became the plans officer---such is how the government worked.

Women in testing have been very important. In 1955 women were handling 155mm projectiles. Because men weren't available, the women stepped up to the plate. Prior to and after Charlie, the technical writers were women. Women's roles definitely increased over the eighteen years Charlie was there. The women were very meticulous in their work.

When computers came to JPG, they looked like some big toy. Then after spending $6-7 million dollars on a Hewlett Packard 3000 Mainframe, it was realized that the computer could be adapted for the ammunition testing. Charlie also handled the Production Base Support Program for the base.

When Charlie started at JPG, he made $8,056 annually as a GS-5. Upon retiring, he was a GS-11.

JPG was a close-knit organization. Charlie had the opportunity to work with just about everyone. It was a very professional, knowledgeable, pleasant place to work.

THE HIGHEST HONOR scouting can pay a member was bestowed on Charlie Smith last night when he was presented with his Woodbadge Beads. Smith, who just finished his training program, is shown here receiving the beaded necklace from Arthur Mickler, Chairman of Leadership Development for the Old Kentucky Home Council. Also speaking at the presentation was Charles Kilander, Council Director of the Wood Badge Course, Louisville. (Staff photo by Greg Heard.)

Charles was very active in Boy Scouts as well as being the JPG Plans Officer

Vernon Hargeshiemer

Vernon has lived in southern Indiana all his life. He worked in EOD on the ordnance disposal crew; as a gunner; with Roads and Grounds; and in all four of the assembly plants. Vernon was at Jefferson Proving Ground from April, 1966 to September, 1971 then went to Naval Ordnance in Louisville. He returned to JPG in 1982 and retired in September, 1990.

Explosive ordnance disposal required twelve weeks of on-site training. The crew searched for unexploded ammunition and destroyed it. Working in the four assembly plants involved making inert and live rounds. EOD crews worked with Roads and Grounds clearing roads of unexploded ordinance.

Vernon recalls starting at $2.58 an hour with $0.05 an hour hazard pay.

JPG's employees were good and knew how important their job was.

Women were observers and did good jobs. Their roles improved over the years.

Vernon still has shrapnel in his head from exploding ordnance. He shared that is was a rare misfortune, but didn't stop him from doing his job. Closing the Proving Ground was a sad thing. It affected a lot of people from several surrounding counties.

Ken Knouf

Interview by Mike Moore
Sept. 12, 2006, JPG Old Fire House, Bldg 125

Collage of JPG activity after Base Closure

My impressions go back to October 1982. I was recruited for JPG's first and only natural resource manager. Up until that time the different components of the natural resource program, hunting, fishing, camping and timber management, were all done by various people around the installation. Colonel Hawkins Conrad, base commander at the time decided that he wanted to consolidate those into one position. I was the fortunate one recruited for that job, even though I was a little apprehensive coming on to a regular Army installation.

My background was with the Corps of Engineers as a recreation planner working in Seattle, Washington. I didn't really know what I was getting into coming into southern Indiana at a World War II era installation. I pretty much had to develop my own job that evolved in time into a very interesting position. I was responsible basically for administering the hunting, fishing, and camping and other outdoor recreation activities, the cultural resources program, which included archeology and historic preservation, and timber management. That was done through a cooperative relationship through the Corps of Engineers at the Louisville District, in particular with a fellow named Dan Puckett, who was a super forester. I did a lot of wildlife management activities and other odd jobs such as grounds management and fertilizing trees. I worked in that capacity until JPG closed in September of 1995.

I was one of the very fortunate ones, "one of three" to be selected to stay after closure. I think that was because the way the process was going, we had an idea that the Fish and Wildlife Service would become a major player and with my background, I had dealt with the Fish and Wildlife Service people over the years, and I think the feeling was that I could continue to deal with them to make the transition somewhat smoother. So Colonel Weekly, the base commander, told Phil Mann and I that we would be here about a year after closure. He told Yvette Hayes that she would be here about six months. It has now been eleven years [15 years as of printing of this book] and we are still here. It's a case where the bureaucracy has certainly worked in our favor.

Mike Moore: You are not military at all. I would like to get your reactions to working for a military person.

Ken Knouf: My first boss was a man by the name of Bill Chapman, who was the Facilities Engineer. Bill was a good guy, but maybe a little eccentric at times. I enjoyed working for Bill; his staff meetings were hilarious. When I came here to work, he was not really sure what I was supposed to be doing. He had not been told very much. Like I said it was a job that just kind of evolved.

When I first came to work, I did not have a desk, I did not have an office space, I did not have pencil. I remember one of my first requests was to Sue Berry, who was the secretary to Mac Collins at the time. Mac was our Director of Logistics. I just asked Sue for the basic things like a pen and pencils. She rounded those up for me. Bill Chapman did finally find an old surplus metal ugly desk and put me in some corner.

From there it was just a matter of getting used to the installation, being oriented on the mission, understanding how my job fit into the mission. Sometimes that was looked at rather strangely. I think a lot of people felt that maybe what I was tasked to do would conflict with the mission. I tried to make sure that what I would do would complement the mission. I was not always successful in that regard.

I was exposed very quickly to the way deer hunting was done at JPG. I felt it was a little draconian (people being treated very disrespectfully) at the time and saw that the next year when I was responsible that some changes would be needed. I very quickly got my feet wet and started to understand the system here.

One of my first tasks was actually to have some of the old maple trees on the Main Drive fertilized, and they told me that I would be supported by a crew from Demolition-heck, didn't even know what that meant at the time. I remember that about the second or third day of going out and having bags of fertilizer and waiting an ungodly amount of time for a crew to show. I was told that the day started at seven or seven thirty and I thought that was when the job began. I waited out on the Main Drive probably until eight thirty or so and quarter to nine some trucks finally showed up and some guys from "Demolition" jumped out. Nice guys, but I don't think that they were real enthused at the prospect of having to drill holes into the ground and filling them up with fertilizer.

They introduced themselves, and promptly dug about one or two holes and decided it was break time. They all piled back into their trucks and headed back to their building and kind of left me there wondering what in the heck is going on? They came back at nine thirty, quarter to ten and maybe put another ten or fifteen minutes of effort into the task and then they told me it was lunch time. They got back in their vehicles and went back. I went back had a quick lunch came back out and about twelve thirty they showed up and we worked another hour or so and then it was afternoon break. By then I was getting a feeling that maybe this was not going to work real smoothly so I went back and asked Bill Chapman about it and he got with a fellow named Tom Roller, who was over part of MTD (Materiel Testing Directorate) and very quickly, I found that really I was not there to supervise, but merely to tell them what needed to be done and then let them work at there own pace. Once I understood the ground rules, it made the assignment a lot easier.

That's the key to JPG. You think you know how things should be done, but really you need to understand the behind the scenes ways things are done. When you come onboard a place like this in a strictly military sense, you look at an organizational chart and see the ways things are supposed to flow, but it does not take you long to realize there are certain people that maybe don't show up on the organizational table who are really the one's you need to get to know and develop some rapport with in order to be successful in doing anything. It took a while to develop that familiarity with who you really needed to get to work with in order to get the job done, but that is probably at anyplace.

Mike Moore: Tell me about the time that the Army destroyed the beaver dam. JPG was going to take back the land claimed by the beavers.

Ken Knouf: When I came to work in 1982, there were no beaver at JPG. In about two years we started getting reports about these critters coming in naturally. They were not introduced. When we got reports of the flooding of some of the roads up in the range area, I was asked to take a look. It did not look like trapping or shooting the beavers was the way to go so we were going to try to destroy their dam. It was a big horseshoe dam right along "E" Road near the headwaters of Big Creek. Again my good friends from "Demolition were the ones charged with destroying the dam. I remember distinctly riding up with them in a truck listening to them complain the whole time that they hated to do that kind of thing. It went against "Mother Nature" and they were all friends of "Mother Nature" and the thought that that was the cruelest thing to do to destroy a beaver dam. When we got up there they went into the project with an amazing sense of dedication to do the job right. I remember them pulling the big snakes [explosive tubes] out of their truck and these tubes, oh my, they were probably three or four feet long and three or four inches in diameter all filled with explosive charge. They put these charges right on top of the horseshoe dam there and as I said there were four or five of these snake tubes, and they set the fuses and we were told to move back and I think we moved back at least a quarter of a mile and in three or four minutes there was this huge explosion. It looked like a miniature "A" bomb going off. There was a mushroom cloud of water and we all watched with fascination. Then we went back to admire the work of "Demolition". They had completely blown that dam to smithereens and we thought that took care of the flooding problem on "E" Road.

Lo and behold, we went back the next morning and those critters had started to rebuild that dam. At that point, Phil Mann, who was one of the three employees left after closure, was at that time head of "Roads and Grounds" decided that what we needed to do was to ditch the water away from "E" road and not worry about trying to take care of the animals. Phil's people did that pretty quickly and before you know it, we no longer had a problem. That seemed to be the way we did things here.

We would approach tasks one way then if that did not work then sometimes we would use common sense to solve problems. That was certainly the case with the beavers anyway. So the beavers to this day in 2006 have completely taken over this place. There are ponds everywhere. The Fish and Wildlife Service of course encourages them to be here, because it creates some valuable "wetlands habitat." Beavers are very interesting to watch. You can generally see them very early in the morning or late in the afternoon (dusk). It is just amazing to think that not that many years ago there were no beaver in Indiana. They are kind of like deer and other animals, they have just kind of taken over.

Mike Moore: One other thing I remember when you first came here, at Krueger Lake you put some kind of device out there that sprayed water up in the air. There was kind of a joke about Ken's sprayer out there. Could you tell us a little bit about that thing out there?

Ken Knouf: Krueger Lake of course was the first lake built by the "Old Timbers Rod and Gun Club". It was kind of an experiment to see if they had the means of building Old Timbers Lake. Krueger was built in the late 60's. It remains to this day a nice little fishing lake. It is about seven acres. One of my jobs was to coordinate with a U. S. Fish and Wildlife Services Fisheries Biologist by the name of Chuck Surprenant.

He would come in every year and survey both Krueger and Old Timbers Lakes. He would go out into the lake with an electric-shocker and he would basically shock the fish. He would not kill the fish, just shock them. He would momentarily stun the fish. They would come up to the surface, and we would net the fish and we would take readings of size, weight, length, age, and record that data and write a report. That would give us a record year to year of the productivity in the lakes. He decided one year that the productivity was faltering and decided that the water quality was a little bit on the acid side and he thought we needed to sweeten it up.

There were two ways to go. The first was to spread lime flour in the lake. We did this by having a volunteer work party and hot dog cookout. The second method was to put an aerator in the lake. We purchased an aerator and ran an underground and underwater electric line to power it. We were spraying the water in the air putting oxygen into the water. It worked well for a couple of years, but then it got damaged. We had a model boat club here that used to run a Mini-Regatta at Krueger Lake. At one of their first regattas, one of their radio controlled boats ran smack dab into the aerator and the aerator was never the same after that. That is what led to its demise I am afraid. For the time it was working it looked like a little fountain out there at Krueger Lake and as I said, it did improve the water quality.

Mike Moore: Could you talk about how you got a couple of buildings out here on the National Register of Historic Places?

Ken Knouf: We basically have six structures that are placed on the National Register of Historic Places. That is Oakdale School built in 1869, Old Timbers Lodge finished in 1932, and four stone arch bridges. I knew enough, even though I am not a trained historic preservationist, I knew enough that these structures were historically significant. At that time the Army was encouraging installations to nominate structures to the National Register. The first go around involved doing Oakdale School. We did that in the early 1990's, kind of in conjunction of the 50th anniversary of JPG being built. We had a consultant from Columbus, Indiana. Her name was Laura Thayer who actually did the nomination form for us.

She did research on the school and prepared the nomination form which was fairly detailed. That was presented to the State Historic Preservation Office in Indianapolis. It was approved at the state level and forwarded to the Keeper of the Register, The National Park Service and it was approved. We got Oakdale listed relatively quickly. As we were getting near base closure, I felt that if Old Timbers Lodge and the four bridges being listed might afford them a little more protection. With the Commander's and my supervisor's approvals, we again engaged the services of Laura Thayer, who prepared the nomination forms for all four bridges and Old Timbers Lodge. That was one of the last efforts in terms of historic preservation here, and they were submitted in the mid '90's and were approved after Base Closure. The Air Guard is responsible for the maintenance of those structures and they are doing a pretty good job. [Currently the Big Oaks Conservation Society is responsible for the lodge]

Mike Moore: I was wondering now what are some of your thoughts on the last eleven years that you have on taking tours out to old ancestral homes, individual family tours, groups sponsored by the JPG Heritage Partnership, etc. I find it fascinating that you have co-habited here in an old firehouse with the Fish and Wildlife Service for eleven years. You are not in charge of anything, you have no power, you are just here. Tell us about the last eleven years.

Ken Knouf: First of all, if someone had suggested to me years ago that my career would end up like this as one member of a three person caretaker oversight Army staff at a closed installation looking over the shoulders of another Federal agency whose task is managing the property, I would have thought that they were crazy. I could never envision my career ending up like this. I have been very fortunate to be allowed to stay in Madison. I kind of look at our position here as not so much what we do as to what we know. Between the three of us there is probably seventy years of institutional memory of this place and given our experience, Yvette Hayes, Phil Mann and myself, one of us will generally know when and where to go to get something done. I think that is our strength.

It has been an interesting eleven years. Of course one of my focus areas is to make sure the story of this place is not forgotten. There is a tremendous amount of sacrifice and personal contributions made in operating this place; making sure our soldiers were given the best ammunition possible. The history of this place is a story that deserves to be told and shared and I am just afraid that it will be forgotten.

That was the impetus for developing the JPH Heritage Partnership. It was a group of people that felt the story needed to be told, whose ancestors lived here before the Army displaced them, but felt that was their patriotic duty to leave and let the Army develop the land to be a bombing and artillery testing range. Not to take anything away from the Fish and Wildlife Service, but their mission is fish and wildlife management, not history and not cultural resources. We felt that kind of effort needed to be done aside from the refuge operation and we are doing that through a variety of ways. We have a book. We have some book reprints that are available, a number of oral histories, some exhibits that we hope to place with the Jefferson Historical Society [An exhibit was completed in 2008.] and maybe even up in Ripley county and Jennings County.

We have sponsored seminars for the past five years dealing with different aspects of this place's operation, put out several brochures and fliers and hope to continue this. One of my favorite tasks has been to guide or escort families back out to their "old stomping grounds" where perhaps they were raised or where their ancestors farmed or lived. I am amazed that over the years, I will be taking people who are well into their 70's or 80's who have not been up to their old home site for fifty or sixty years or longer since the Army displaced them. Where I just see a track of woods or some open area, in their minds they see where all the buildings were, their barn, outbuildings, cisterns, everything and it is as clear in their mind today as it was in the late 1930's and that just absolutely astounds me. I will take groups up there and they will point out where their neighbors lived. And where things happened that are significant to their lives. Like I said where I just see trees and maybe a field, they will see that landscape intact in their minds. I just think that is a wonderful thing to allow people to do. Generally over the last few years,

I have averaged about two or three of these tours a month. I do know as these folks get older they are starting to die off, and the last thing they want to do is to see their old home place. If we can, we give them that opportunity. We don't walk them into dangerous areas or restricted areas, but we get them as close as we can to their home site. If the former home is in a hunting area, we take them back there. It is amazing how spry these people are when they get close to their home. People who have a hard time getting into and out of a van all of sudden get new legs, and they start tracking out through the woods. I have a hard time keeping up with them. That is one of the nice things about my job.

Mike Moore: Over the years you have had a lot of contact with Louis Munier. You want to tell us about the time you met him and he was in the van when you were having a tour of the John Hunt Morgan trail through out the proving ground.

Ken Knouf: One of my favorite people that I really, really admire is Louis Munier. Louis right now I think is eighty seven years old, a friend for twenty plus years. One of the first things that I did when I first got here, I am little bit of a Civil War Buff, and I was asked to do a tour showing people General John Hunt Morgan's route across the proving ground. I had a van full of people and we were following "D"Road which is basically Morgan's route across. We had just crossed the arched bridge over Big Creek and we were coming up on this property that I was told was the ruins of Big Creek Methodist Church.

I was still new and I did not know any better. I was pointing out to the people the ruins of Big Creek church, and all of a sudden there was a voice in the back of the van that said, "I don't think so." I can't really do Louis's voice, but he has a good Midwest, southern Indiana accent, and I said, "You don't think so. Well, what do you think it is?" "Well I think that is the Munier home site." He introduced himself as Louis Munier. I said "How do you know for sure Mr. Munier?" He said, "Well, I was born there." (Laughing) Everybody in the van just started laughing and hollering and to this day Louis reminds me of our fist contact and how he corrected me. We still get a chuckle out of that, because it was really funny.

That is what happens sometimes if you just go by what people tell you and what you read without doing your research. And it takes someone who knows to set you in your place. Since then Louis has been a tremendous friend and shared a lot of information on the proving ground and for a man of his age he has a tremendous memory. He can remember names, dates and features. Gosh, I can hardly remember what I ate last night.

Mike Moore: Here are some thoughts that Ken is thinking about, say like it is fifty years from now and he is looking back on these times.

Ken Knouf: Well I think Mike that a thought that occurs to me frequently is that as a civil servant, down the road someone would look at me as not real aggressive, not really a failure, but somebody who did not have a lot of drive and ambition. You look at my career. I started out as a GS-9 recreation planner with the Corps, which is not a bad level to start with, but I got my 11 out in Seattle came into JPG as an 11. I have been an 11 for the last 20 maybe 25 years. A promotion would have meant moving, and I didn't want that. I enjoyed most of my time working here. There were a lot of challenges, a lot of interesting things.

The people here were particularly nice and I got to know them very well. Consequently you develop some intense relationships, both positive and negative. There were some people that I enjoyed working with and that made my job so much more worthwhile and I owe a whole lot of big thanks too them. If my kids, my grandkids, or my great grand kids ever listen to this, they will kind of know what kept me in this area. It was important to me and my wife, that the kids be afforded the best education possible. I thought the Madison Schools were doing a good job. I didn't want to uproot them.

The kids were flourishing within the school system, so when a lot of other people here were dealing with closure and were transferring or retiring, I really fought like heck to at least increase my chances of staying here. I was very fortunate to be given that opportunity. It afforded my kids a chance to graduate from Madison. All three of them were co-valedictorian to their respective classes; I am very proud of that. They all went to private schools, and they have all done really, really well. I am not sure that would have been the story had we moved. It may have been, but they developed some very close ties to the Madison Community and they never forget that when they come back home to visit.

I hope maybe twenty five years down the road I will be able to take my grandkids on a tour of this place and that my memory will be as sharp as some of the old timers I take now. I will tell

them where I used to work and where things happened and take them up into the range area and I hope by that time there will be a magnificent stand of woods up there, some tracts of forest that approach "old growth". And I guess to some small part, I can take some pride in that I had something to do with that and had something to do with the decision to make this into a national wildlife refuge. I knew a long, long time ago that this place had the attributes and the qualities to be just a tremendous national wildlife refuge, and it took a lot of tweaking to get people to understand that. I felt very confident that the folks at the Fish & Wildlife Service could see that, and I feel very pleased how that turned out. It is almost by default that this place has to be a refuge. It has worked out very well for this generation and I think for future generations.

Ken Knouf exhibiting techniques of tomahawk throwing
at seventh JPG Seminar at Old Timbers Lodge.

Interview of Mike Moore

By Ruth Turner, Hanover College (1995)
Subject: Experiences at Jefferson Proving Ground.

Ruth Turner: Before we start could you give me your full name and when you first came to Southern Indiana?

Mike Moore: Michael S. Moore, I was working in New Mexico. Actually, I was on unemployment. Nancy Thurston gave me a call in March of 1974, and asked me if I was still interested in working for the government. I was working for the Grumman Aerospace Corporation then. I said yep. At that time, Jim Selig was in charge of Data Reduction at JPG and they were hiring mathematicians for a slot that had been open for 9 months. I don't know why. I guess there was a hiring freeze or something like that, so I said sure.

Ruth Turner: You are a mathematician?

Mike Moore: Uh huh. I was on a contract for Grumman Aerospace at Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico and it had completed. We stayed in New Mexico, and like I say I was on unemployment. I had been on unemployment for a couple of months, I guess. I was thinking about staying there in New Mexico. I had honestly never heard of Indiana or Jefferson Proving Ground, so I said sure. It was a GS 9 job, Mathematician. It was paying more than I was making there at Grumman, so it sounded like a good thing.

I had been trying to get on with the Federal Government for three or four years, because the aerospace business was dying at that time, there were PhD's driving taxi cabs at that time. Like I said, every year the Office of Personnel would send me a postcard and if I was interested in working for the government. I would check it off and mail it back in. So after about three years, Nancy Thurston called from the JPG personnel office. I forgot exactly how she said it, something about throwing your hat in the ring, something like that. I said sure. They did not even interview me. Jim Selig might have called me, but they did not even have a resume or anything.

Ruth Turner: His position was Chief of Data Reduction?

Mike Moore: Yes, he was a mathematician himself. The Data Reduction Branch did a lot of mathematical things on trajectories. As the projectile leaves the muzzle of the weapon it takes on like the same as an airplane or a jet engine. It has a trajectory and you have drag, going against the nose and you have gravity on it and if you know all that stuff you can calculate where it is going to hit on the ground. That is why you have to be a mathematician so you can understand all that stuff. An engineer or physicist would have been alright too, but then you had to be a programmer too and I had a lot of programming background.

Ruth Turner: Computer Programming?

Mike Moore: Yes

Ruth Turner: This was in '74? So they were doing computers in '74?

Mike Moore: Oh in the '60's the government had big IBM computers and stuff. It was just that we had to punch in everything in on cards. We did not have any monitors or terminals. You just wrote your program out on these blank coding forms that had numbers from one through eighty on them. You wrote your code down and then it was somebody's job to keypunch these cards. You would submit your job in a basket to somebody in the computer center. In two or three days they would come back with a run. If you had mistakes in it you would have to correct them, so it took months to write programs in those days.

Ruth Turner: But the main frame was on post?

Mike Moore: Yes.

Ruth Turner: So you came in '74 and what title did you begin with?

Mike Moore: GS-9 mathematician. Like I say that was working for Jim Selig.

Ruth Turner: Was that the position that you had throughout your career then?

Mike Moore: For most of the time. I got into supervisory ranks about 15 years later.

Ruth Turner: In the same division or the same area?

Mike Moore: Well, I changed over. Lets see, about 1979 I got to be a GS-11 mathematician working for the same person. About 1988 Dale Padgett was the person who used to schedule all the test firings and he retired. I applied for his job and I got it. It was not a grade raise or anything; it just got me out of the mathematician's job.

Ruth Turner: Oh, how interesting and what year was this?

Mike Moore: Somewhere around 1989 or so.

Ruth Turner: And what title did you have then?

Mike Moore: Something about ammunition specialist, administrative, but any way what we had to do is they had a daily scheduling meeting and all the supervisors from all the branches would come in the morning about 10:00 and you plan all the guns you were going to fire for the next day. On Friday you would plan what you were going to do on Monday. The chief of the Artillery Division [Gunner's Branch], Fielding Jones, might report that he only has enough people on hand to fire 4 guns. Well, so that was a given, we are only able to fire 4 tests on Monday. Then a chief named [Norman] Arbuckle would say, "Well, we got a shipment of M-735 ammunition and Friday my folks have to put it together" [The ammunition would come in to JPG in parts, so

Arbuckle's people would have to assemble it according to the test needed], so my folks will have 20 rounds ready to fire on Monday. So that would take of one gun crew. Then he would say, "We have some M-60 mortars, and that would take care of another gun crew." Well, lets see, we have some rocket-assisted 155mm". We would just go on until we used those 4 gun crews up.

Then Mike Everidge, our range safety officer, would be there to make sure that we were going to aim them and shoot in the right fields. He would make sure that we would not have any hazardous conditions.

The Data Collection folks, Arnold Tilley was the person who would be in charge of the radar that would trace the projectile out to where it hit on the ground or the cameras. They would set up cameras under the muzzle to take pictures of the projectile as it came out of the muzzle. Arnold would say, "I could cover three of those guns, but I cannot cover the fourth." Then we would say we could shoot something on the fourth gun that does not require cameras or anything like that. So we had to sit down everyday and plan all that out. You would have to be planning out 35 or 40 people's work every day. You would just give and take with everybody and my job was to get all these people together, get all these jobs scheduled and publish a firing schedule for the next day. So we would get this all typed up. Then we would make a hundred copies, and they would go throughout the whole proving ground so everybody knew what was going to be fired the next day.

Ruth Turner: How did you like doing this kind of work as compared to your mathematical work?

Mike Moore: It was different. The reason that I wanted to get out of my math job is that I thought I was going to go blind for awhile. We would sit and read nothing but radar traces. And one mortar program, 81mm mortar, they would take a photograph of it as it leaves the mortar and you could tell if it was bent or not. Let me see what was that- Oh I remember. I was measuring the fins to see if they were coming out of the tube straight or if they were cockeyed, or if the projectile was tumbling or not.

I was in a dark room and I was staring at this film for six months, straight eight hours a day and I got to think my vision was going bad. I said, "I don't want to spend another ten or twelve years doing this," and everything was visual. I mean if it was a radar trace you had to get a ruler out and you had magnifying glasses. We had these magnifying glasses that were attached to your table. They had lights inside around your magnifying glass.

You would go down and count the number of scan lines on the radar trace. You could multiply them by a factor and then that would tell you the muzzle velocity of the projectile. After ten years of doing that, I wanted to get into something that my eyeballs were not going to lose their vision.

These folks were pretty loud and sometimes these discussions would get pretty angry. They would say, "I am not going to have enough people to fire that. I'm not going to do this." So you had to mediate between them. I traded one kind of headache, visual, for another kind of headache trying

to appease everybody. I actually was kicked off that job. You cannot really fire a civil servant, but I lasted about a year.

We got Major Arthur Alphin in from West Point. He wanted somebody to kick ass to force the guys to schedule what he wanted them to do. The way we worked at JPG was bottom up. The employees on the lower level decided what we were going to do in effect by what we had on hand you know. There would be a low level supervisor saying, "Well if I don't have these people coming in, if I don't have these talents on any certain day, I can't do this job." It was very frustrating at times.

We had laid off and laid off until we only had about one person who was good in any field so if that person was off, then that type of work just did not get done. He [Major Alphin] wanted top driven down. He wanted me to schedule certain type of rounds to be fired and then force these guys to do that work. Actually I ended up getting a promotion. He sent me over to a GS-11 Operations Research Analyst. Then by the next year, I had been promoted into a twelve.

They got Mike Warren in. Well before that, they got Eric Schrader in for a few months and then he left to go to Washington DC. Then they got Mike Warren, and they thought he was more aggressive and would kick ass harder than me. I was a consensus person. They wanted a military type, "You're going to do this on a certain day and we're going to do that on a certain day type of guy". Since I was not involved with that much anymore and I had enough stuff to worry about, I don't know how that worked out really.

Ruth Turner: Interesting story! In your research analyst job how did you do?

Mike Moore: We were trying to modernize JPG. I created the survey. We had this Lt. Colonel Watts, I cannot remember his first name [Charlie], but he was a real nervous type of guy. He always wanted to make sure that he was not getting into any kind of trouble. He would kind of stay in his office and not really get involved in a lot of the work. I created a survey with a lot of questions to give to the Ammo supply people and the field artillery people on just what did they think it would take to modernize the place. It had been built in 1941, all the buildings were the same, all the procedures were the same, all the equipment was the same. We had 200 pound shells that it would take four people two on each side of this crate. It was a metal crate that the shell would fit in, with four handles. So four men in their fifties- our age group out there was pretty high- there were no young people. Anyway it was fifty five year old men out there lifting this 200 pound shell into the back of a howitzer and then they would pull a lanyard or push a button and it would fire. The army was coming out with these vehicles that would resupply ammunition to the front. They were tracked vehicles that had conveyor belts where you could bring the shells out and stuff like that. We were working on a way to modernize the firing line so that we could use conveyors.

I had looked into purchasing this piece of equipment that they used in timbers and logging where they would take a huge timber lying on the ground. You would have this machine with these wheels on the side (wide axle) and you would just drive this timber tractor over the timber, attach it to the vehicle and then drive the timber where ever they wanted to saw it up. I was thinking

that we could use this for cannon tubes -rather than just throwing it in the back of a truck and using a winch to change gun tubes.

Sometimes you used a worn out tube, a mid wear tube and a new tube all on the same test. The ammunition had to work in all tubes. In wartime you would wear your gun tube completely out and still you had to keep on firing. In one day of firing you might change three tubes in one gun. We would just stick them in the back of a truck and then winch them in and winch them out.

I was going out and looking for these big timber haulers. I don't even remember what they called them. I thought they could straddle this gun tube and drive it from the warehouse to the firing line and just drive it up and just slide it into the weapon. I was looking into all kinds of conveyer systems and all kinds of these things like that.

Ruth Turner: What year did you start doing this kind of work?

Mike Moore: Well, we stopped doing any planning for modernization in December, 1988. That is when we got the notice that we were going to close. The modernization program was some where from '84 to '88.

Ruth Turner: The idea of modernization. Is this the bottom up that you felt you were doing 1940's technology and you were the initiator of this kind of thinking for?

Mike Moore: Well, I think I was given the job of studying the thing. Somebody else had the idea. Arnold Tilley was always pretty forward in his thinking out there on improving ways. Like I say, Lt. Col. Watts and when Major Alphin got there he was pretty convinced that we were backwards. Part of his work was thinking of ways to modernize the place. His ideas were not always practical at the proving ground, because he wanted to do it like you were in the field artillery combat situation, and it really was not conducive to testing. You have to be scientific about this testing. You cannot just do it—one of his ideas was to go to Fort Knox and bring in these ex-sergeants and gunnery folks that used to drive tanks and stuff like that. We hired a few folks like that, but they weren't really technical types. They could shoot the weapon, but they really did not understand the dynamics (testing and measuring) of the shell going out. I would say that those folks coming in from the outside looking in felt we were pretty containerized. It was hard for new ideas to come in to JPG because most of the folks said, "This is the way we have been doing it and there is no other way". That's it.

Ruth Turner: In '88 when you ceased future thinking, did your job change?

Mike Moore: It really did change because that's when we went into fighting to save the proving ground.

Ruth Turner: And that was part of your job?

Mike Moore: No it really was not--not officially.

Ruth Turner: I must have misunderstood.

Mike Moore: All that stuff that we did to save the proving ground was not looked on favorably by the Army. It was not an Army sponsored thing. It was kind of our commander just did not see what we were doing. He had to follow orders, even if his heart wanted the place to stay open, he had to close it. He let us go ahead and let us do all the stuff like make trips to Washington to brief Lee Hamilton. Senator Coates was really big in those days. [Madison Mayor] Morris Wooden was a real big fighter for keeping JPG open.

(Note: The employees who went to Washington used their vacation time and paid their own expenses-i.e. all the meetings and efforts to stay open were on the employees' own time.)

When Base Closure was announced nationwide, reporters from all the news media descended upon JPG. Gary Stegner was the official JPG public affairs officer. On the times when multiple news media teams were on the post simultaneously, Gary would ask me to take reporters on tour. These accounts would get into the media and then folks started asking to interview me. Congress established an environmental panel to study the environmental problems associated with Base Closure. If a media person wanted a story on pollution, the panel would point them in the direction of JPG. They used JPG for an example of the site of the largest pollution of the land in the United States. Sometimes I officially represented the Army and sometimes I represented the employees. It all blended in together.

Ruth Turner: He was Mayor of Madison?

Mike Moore: Yes. And the Jefferson County realtors gave us $10,000 dollars.

Ruth Turner: Oh! How interesting!

Mike Moore: The JPG Survival Committee consisted of Robert Hudson and Ken Knouf as Co-Chairmen. Then of course the union was a big player, because it represented quite a few employees and stuff like that.

Ruth Turner: What union was that?

Mike Moore: The American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE). The president, Russell Mortara was the first president that I dealt with. We went to Washington one time and then other presidents came along. I can't remember his name but they called him "Radio Bob." [Robert Falls] He was the next president after Russell left. Right in the middle of the beginning of the battle, Russell quit and began selling cars in Milan. He was a very calm smooth person. With "Radio Bob", we did a lot of informational picketing. We went to Indianapolis and the State Capitol, and we walked around the Capitol with signs saying "It will cost five billion dollars to clean up Jefferson Proving Ground. Unexploded ordnance all over the place." All that stuff was not looked on with favor by the Army. In fact I was glad to get out of there. When I went to work for the Air Force, I said I am going to be low key. I am not going to do anything to go on television. I am not going to worry about what I am going to have to say. It is going to be a total divorcement from all my activities at JPG.

Ruth Turner: How long did you work on this at JPG, or when did you leave?

Mike Moore: I left in February of 1994. About a year before it officially closed. Lee Hamilton along with Senator Coates got $500,000 to educate us so that we could go out for other jobs. Ivy Tech came in there and brought their mobile van and so we were in there taking computer classes.

Ruth Turner: Did you do this?

Mike Moore: Yes, during the work day. I spent three hours [each class] in that trailer learning how to do spread sheets. I think it was something like Excel. Lotus was what it was. Word Perfect, DOS, that was before al the Windows stuff. The Army released us so that we could go on what they called a priority placement list. All our names went out all over the United States. I knew that I was not going to move, so I put a 200 mile limit on my placement list search, and I got one search from Scott Air force Base in Illinois. Russell Shorten, who was running our personnel office came down and he said, "I don't think you are qualified to do that." Now you could not refuse the job or you would go out of the computer system. You had one choice and that was it. So you had 90 days to become proficient in the job.

We read this "god awful" job description and I did not want to go to Scott anyway. I investigated a little bit. It is just outside St. Louis, man that was terrible. I did not want any part of that. I did not tell Russell that I did not want any part of that, because that meant that I would be kicked out of the computer system. I could not refuse to go. He just did not think that I could do that job. Now I don't know why he didn't think so. He wrote them a letter saying he did not think I was qualified, and then they let my name stay in the system.

The odd thing was, I got this job offer at Wright Patterson Air Force Base, practically the same thing. Russell was still not convinced that I could do that job. So he called the person at Wright Patt, told them about all the classes that I was taking at Ivy Tech, so we copied off all my transcripts and I sent them over there. The director said, "Yes, I think you will do alright over here." And I went on over to Wright Patt.

Ruth Turner: That is about 200 miles from here?

Mike Moore: No, it is just at 120 miles from Madison. I could have gone to Fort Knox, or the Corps of Engineers in Louisville, or Indianapolis. Everything was closing in Indianapolis. There was not much hope of staying in Indiana.

Ruth Turner: So I am not quite clear about what you did once you knew the closing was coming.

Mike Moore: As I said the real estate folks gave us $10,000 so that is when we became lobbyists.

Ruth Turner: Yes, I am very interested in that part of the story, but for your employment purposes what did you do?

Mike Moore: Well that is what we did for our employment. It wasn't recognized by the Army, but that is what we did. I wrote articles. We were inundated by press from newspapers, I was on television, I could go up to any store in town, and start to write a check and they would already know my name.

Ruth Turner: Did you find that all your training at Ivy Tech help you in your work at Wright Patt?

Mike Moore: Yes, because at JPG we weren't really on top of the line as far as computers go. We had a big main frame computer, and we had graduated from punched cards into a terminal that you could type it in, but we did not have a network. We did not have e-mail. In fact if someone sent an e-mail to me at JPG, I would have to walk down to the computer center and pick up a printed copy of my e-mail, then walk back up to headquarters building. So we weren't what I call computer literate as opposed to what the rest of the world thought. Wright Patterson was the most technologically advanced governmental agency in the nation, I think. I mean I went from people working like they did in the fifties to people working in the future. It was kind of a culture shock. The courses that I took at Ivy Tech at least let me walk in equipped to work in an office environment.

Ruth Turner: How interesting! You have so many perspectives, I am curious about the training that you received for each of the positions that you held. I understand that you had the Mathematical background, but.....

Mike Moore: The way that I got shifted over in to the scheduling of firing missions and being placed into the operations research analyst position is I also went down to Louisville and got an MBA. I worked on my MBA from '74 until '78. I took two courses per semester. I would drive down to Louisville. My supervisor had it to where I could go to school and pick up 6 hours. My bosses would let me rearrange my schedule where I could come in at 6:00 am and leave at 2:00pm.

Ruth Turner: You began a new job and an academic program in '74. Wow, a busy person!

Mike Moore: Yes, I had the GI Bill. I was stationed in the Army; I was in the Army three years. I had the GI Bill sitting there so it did not cost me anything except the travel back and forth. It was pretty grueling. It was tough on my family. My wife had to take care of our kids. I did not get to see them very often. I did not see any of the "dadgum" regattas, because I was studying, and she would take them down to watch that. But it paid off in letting me shift from being a mathematician over into administrative stuff. It has been a great help to me at Wright Patt. They recognize a master's degree more than JPG did. At JPG they did not recognize the master's degree in itself, just the course work that I was in. They recognized that I was capable in doing that kind of work, but they didn't really recognize, like some companies would give their employees

a bonus when they got a master's degree. We did not get that in the government. As soon as I walked over to Wright Patt, then a Master's degree meant a lot. That was respected.

Ruth Turner: So when you came with your mathematical background, what kind of training did you receive on a projectile analysis?

Mike Moore: Well, you just got on-the-job training. I knew all the math formulas, so you just got on the job. Now I didn't know a lot about statistics. The way they accept ammunition is they take a random sample of 10 out of 300,000 rounds. There are inspectors in the plants, and by some random plan they go pick out a shell and they send that to JPG for test. I had to go to Rock Island Arsenal, Illinois to a school called AMETA- the Army Management Engineering Training Activity. It was a classroom where they taught courses for the Army. They taught me basic statistics, statistical inference, where you take statistical data and you infer things to it. And then you can determine populations. You say, okay, these ten rounds represent 300,000 rounds. How many failures can you take out of those ten sample rounds before you reject the ammunition?

One of the pressure points out there is that the ammunition manufacturers were always hiring these retired generals, who would call you up and complain, "I know that JPG fired lot number so and so last week. You failed that lot. Hey what the hell you guys doing? Don't you know what math formulas to use? Don't you guys know what the hell you are doing down there?" So we took a lot of flack like that. It was probably the wrong thing for them to do, because it just set you in the mode that you weren't going to change your mind at all.

Contractors were always trying to get you to shade this or they would argue with you, because they sent a representative out to each firing. If you were testing fuzes, Bulova would have a man standing right there watching you test. Ever single shell that Bulova made they would have a representative watch it. If you rejected that lot, he would complain, and he would say that you had done something wrong and stuff like that. By the time I spent twenty years here, I pretty much hated any contractor in the abstract. Some of the local Madison folks that were contractors were nice, but you still had to be careful. Their duty was to the company, not the government.

I had been a contractor for Grumman Aerospace for five years before I went to work for the government so that is why I could see both sides I guess. When I went to Wright Patt, the Air Force treats contractors like part of a team. They hire them to do work for the government. At JPG we treated them like the enemy. The Air Force could not get along with out them. I had a cultural thing to contend with. I had to work side by side with contractors that I really enjoyed and liked, but it took me awhile to get over that feeling that they were blood suckers, you know, etc.

Ruth Turner: So when you had your MBA and you went into supervision, did you receive further training?

Mike Moore: Well yeah! When you become a supervisor in the government, you have to go to school on supervision. I think they call it leadership. There used to be a school down in Memphis,

Tennessee that would teach leadership to supervisors. I went down there one or two weeks. That's when I became a fan of Elvis. I went to see Graceland, and I got to eat barbeque ribs- all that kind of stuff. It must have been two weeks, and I went to Graceland on the weekend in between. I did not know how a supervisor rated employees. You know a supervisor every years has to rate his employee's performance. I did not know how to do that. I did not know how to counsel my employees. I was unfamiliar with the rules on what you are supposed to do when your employees don't get along, or if they don't get their job done and that kind of stuff, Yeah, I took that class even though I had a little of that in MBA training.

Ruth Turner: Were there people on post that you could turn to for advice on a particular problem, other supervisors?

Mike Moore: I think I went to every supervisor for advice. When I was the operations research analyst, I would go and talk to Fielden Jones about artillery weapons. Usually, he would say that our ideas were foolish and not worthy, but I went and asked him anyway. If it was something different than what he had been doing for twenty five years then it was not worth doing. So I would listen to that, but I was under orders to plan for modernizing the place anyway. Oh, another thing too. They had these huge log books where every round that was fired in what tube on what date it was fired. Oh, gosh his name was Willard Smith, in Artillery Repair. He would write these things down. I would ask, why don't we computerize these things. Why in the world do you still keep writing these things in these huge books and spend all this time. After I got through listening to him, I felt we could go ahead and computerize this, but we had better keep those books too. In those days a computer would crash a lot more that they do now.

A few of the mistakes we made in modernization were to stop doing things the old way; go to the computer and then when it crashed or something you were just totally dead. It is like when the computer in Krogers is down. No one knows how to sell you anything. In some ways Willard was right, he could always go back to his books.

Ruth Turner: Where do you think those are today?

Mike Moore: I don't know. They were too big and too heavy for anyone to want to carry home. They could always go back. We had firing records all the way back to the fifties, we had to keep those on file, because foreign countries were still using weapons and ammunition that we had discarded thirty years ago. They kept wanting to get rid of those firing records. Bob Hudson was one person who just would not give away the firing records, but one colonel came in, and he was going to put them all on microfilm. So he hired a couple of kids from school during one summer, and they just sat there and micro-filmed the tar out of that stuff. We pulled those things out later trying to find data and you couldn't read half of them. It was pretty horrible. You know if they had gotten somebody that was reliable and did a quality control it might have been okay.

Ruth Turner: Have you been following Nicholson Baker, who is arguing against libraries going virtual because he wants to hang on to the actual newspapers?

Mike Moore: No I have not been following that, but I am the only guy at work (Wright Patt) that prints out my e-mail and then reads it. I don't read that damn stuff from the screen. I don't have a sympathetic ear to somebody that wants to computerize their library, but one thing I get a real headache reading. I could not even think about reading a book off the screen. There is no way they could focus it where I would be comfortable. Now one thing I should do is get computer glasses. You can tell a guy is a fool if the first thing he says, "When we get new equipment, we can throw all this stuff a way." That guy is a fool right there.

Ruth Turner: It seems to be in part you participate in this culture that you describe to me as "We have always done it this way and this is the way to do it?"

Mike Moore: Gosh yes and I did not like that either.

Ruth Turner: That was the first time somebody described it that way, but it makes perfect sense to me that this would be the case.

Mike Moore: Someone would say that everyday at the proving ground. We were a real insulated society where grandpa, son, grandson, wife, husband, and cousin all worked out there. I have never been in a place like that. Occasionally they would hire guys like me from the outside-if you had to have a special degree or something.

Ruth Turner: I understand what you are saying perfectly, but are there other ways to describe the work environment?

Mike Moore: I want to balance this with everybody out there; I loved them to death and everything like that. I don't want to sound anyway that I am deprecating them in anyway, but I am from the outside and I can see it in a different light than people that grew up here. We weren't too respected by the east coast folks. Our headquarters was at Aberdeen Proving Ground, and those folks were used to doing things east coast style. They had a more rapid pace than we did out here. We didn't give them the respect that they thought they deserved when they came out here.

Ruth Turner: Were these civilians?

Mike Moore: Yeah. I think partly that was the reason that we were closed. We did not cooperate with them unless we just had to. An odd thing was that we had orders not to computerize. We were not supposed to put computers in, because we were a test and evaluation outfit, not a research out fit. If you are not a R&D outfit, it makes a big difference in funding. The Army felt that only the research facilities needed computers, not just the testers. Our colonel that did put a computer out there had to call it other things. There was a lot of book work in calling things like a controlling system for a computer. He would order an IBM 366 controlling activating device which was a computer. In the '60's and '70's that was the only way we could get modernized is by getting our computers by calling them test equipment and stuff like that. It was a real rigid thing. It was almost like the cards were stacked against us to ever modernize in the first place.

Ruth Turner: This was before the '88 time frame?

Mike Moore: Yeah back in the '70's early '80's.

Mike Moore: Each person thought their job was important, because they were saving some ones life.

Ruth Turner: I have read historically about how proving grounds have not always existed. What a difference it made when proving grounds tested ammunition. A number of soldiers would die from what they referred to as "friendly fire?"

Mike Moore: Our test crews were behind concrete bunkers. There would be a little hole bored through the concrete with a rope, and they would pull that rope to fire the weapon. And they had roofs that were constructed where the bombs would roll off if they went up and landed, so we were really safety conscious for our employees. You can imagine what it would be like to just stand by the gun unprotected. You have to depend on the shell being perfectly accurate and safe.

I did not really appreciate the retired generals calling up to complain about rejected lots. One time I had to copy the math formulas out of a text book to mail to the contractor, because I had written a program using these math formulas to reduce the data. They went through the formulas to see if our models were correct.

I don't know if you are interested in this. It is when the last round was fired. Bob Congleton was the Test Director. George Miller came out there. Of course he had been affiliated with JPG since World War II.

Ruth Turner: Oh! I did not know that.

Mike Moore: Oh yeah, he worked out here as an observer. Up in the bomb field, a plane would come over and drop a bomb and he would be recording it. Before the war [December 7, 1941], if you worked for the proving ground, you could not be drafted. George tried for a couple of years to get in the service and finally they let him go. He joined the Navy. He was an officer in the Navy. He served down in New Guinea. I corresponded with George, and he would print stories about the proving ground in the paper. He was an invited guest on the last day of the firing. So we went out and had this picture taken. Bob Congleton died just a few years ago. He was so young.

Ruth Turner: Who was the third guy?

Mike Moore: That is me. I took a picture just before that. It was unbelievable. I actually got a picture of the shell. There is trick to doing that. What you do is you put your camera centered on the muzzle of the gun, then you press the shutter down half way. The concussion of the shot forces you to push down on the shutter and you take the picture. The shell was going pretty slow for it was a small charge in the breech. That was September 30th 1994.

Interview with Yvette Hayes

Yvette Hayes- the last JPG Army employee.

by Mike Moore
25 April 2007, Building 125, JPG Indiana
(The Last JPG Army Employee)

Mike Moore: Where were you born, if you don't mind saying and who are your parents?

Yvette Hayes: My mom and dad are Elsie and Tilford McKay. They live in Bedford, Kentucky which is where I was born.

Mike Moore: What high school did you attend?

Yvette: I graduated from Trimble County High School. Then I went to Sullivan Business College in Louisville for a year and obtained an associate's degree. I met my husband and he was in the military, so we moved a lot. I moved away from this my home town for sixteen years. My husband and I divorced and I came back to Kentucky in 1987.

I worked at Hanscom Air Force Base in Boston, Massachusetts for a few months before my husband and I separated. I transferred from Hanscom to here (JPG). I did not know however, if I was going to get hired. I came to the Personnel Office and put in my application. Rosemary Brown was in the personnel office when I arrived. They called me two days later for an interview.

She told me after I was hired that as soon as I left the office she went back and told Kendall Bradford, who was in charge of the Recruitment and Placement section of personnel, that this is the woman I want to hire. So I got the job. I will always be grateful to Rosemary for that.

Mike Moore: I always thought that you came here right out of high school. Isn't that weird?

Yvette: No. I lived away from here for a long time.

Mike Moore: What grade did you come in as?

Yvette: I came in as a GS-3 in March 1987.

Mike Moore: My goodness, you only had one year left before they started closing the place.

Yvette: Yeah. We were notified in 1988. So I was just here a short time. I thought that was a fast career!

Mike Moore: When you hired on, did you figure it was for thirty or so years?

Yvette: I thought it was a government job, and usually they are pretty secure. I thought that I could stay here for as long as I wanted to and be able to retire. At the time there was a lot of talk about closure. I think it was like an on and off thing. It had closed a couple of times before. I think it was in the back of a lot of people's minds. I never really thought about it, but then we did come out on the closure list in 88, and I thought "oh my gosh," what am I going to do now? I am a single parent raising two kids now I am going to have to look for a job again.

Mike Moore: When you came here did your prior government time count?

Yvette: Yes, I was able to count when I worked at Hanscom AFB for four months. I had worked in the private sector a lot during my marriage. I never really considered getting a Federal job. Most of the time I was married, I did not work. We were in Hawaii and Germany for several years and I never really had to work.

Mike Moore: When you came into Personnel, did you have to go to school for training?

Yvette: It was basically a clerical position. I did not have any real training in personnel actions. I did take some correspondence courses after I was here for a year to try to get into the actual

working of the personnel department. I worked in recruitment for awhile, then I transferred into the training office which was not so technical.

Mike Moore: Who was your boss then?

Yvette: Steve Ryan was the training officer. He was the one who hired me for that position.

Mike Moore: So, during Base Closure, were you involved in setting up the classes in the mobile classroom from Ivy Tech?

Yvette: Yes, I helped set those classes up, and I took a lot of the classes too. A lot of people took those computer classes. Ray Harsin was the instructor. He pretty much parked his Ivy Tech computer van out here and left it.

During that time, Linda Gordon and I met [Indiana] Senator Richard Lugar, and we had our picture taken with him. Colonel Glover was also in the photo. I thought it was funny that he picked two Kentucky girls to be in the picture with him, and we couldn't even vote for him.

The article and photo appeared in the Madison Courier.

(In the article Senator Lugar was asked about JPG Closure. He said, "Our best information is there is no news regarding Jefferson Proving Ground"

However, he did say there will be an evaluation at the end of the year of the 5,000 installations throughout the country and there could be some closings. And Lugar said, "I will be making a strong case for JPG."

Mike Moore: We did not have a computer network at JPG. Those courses helped all employees that were looking for new jobs.

Yvette: Oh we didn't even have email. The fax machine or the telephone were the basic forms of communication. We did have a personnel system ACPERS called. I couldn't tell what the letters stand for now. That was the personnel computer system that generated all the personnel actions. Every time someone would resign or we would hire someone, we would have to poke in all these codes and get 50's [Standard Form personnel actions] printed out. We had to take training and the Army sent an instructor to JPG. We had the whole week of training on that computer system. It was a bear. Nobody liked it.

Mike Moore: Was that using punched cards?

Yvette: No, it was not punched cards; you actually typed codes into the ACPERS system. Then those codes spit out the English version of what the codes meant.

Mike Moore: Could you list some of your co-workers?

Yvette: When I first came in it was Rosemary Brown, Dennis Jerrell, Kendall Bradford, and myself. We were in the Recruitment and Placement Section. Then Dora Lee was the secretary for the personnel officer. Marguerite Ligon left on a Friday and I came in on a following Monday after she retired. I never worked for her. I think the acting personnel officer was Jim Adams. I believe that was who it was, because they hadn't hired anyone yet. Shortly thereafter they hired Russell Shorten to be Chief Personnel Officer (CPO). Then there was Sue Anderson, Rose Ann Dalgleish, Etta Vickers, Janice Bradley, Wanda Klopp, and Kathy Andres. Eric Shrader was the training officer when I first started here. Steve Ryan was the training officer later.

Towards the end, before we did close, we did not have a training office. As people would leave, we kind of merged into one office and everyone did everything. That is when I started counseling people on retirement and PCS moves. We did all the job searches. We put their name in the computer to be picked up at other agencies. They called that the "stopper list".

Mike Moore: Did you ever go on the "stopper list"?

Yvette: I went on the "stopper list" for this job and I was picked for the Corps, but I turned it down. You just had one chance. I did not want to leave, because my kids were getting close to being out of school. I didn't want to move and drag them somewhere else so I stayed here. But that didn't happen until after I started in my current position.

Mike Moore: Were you here on the last day?

Yvette: I was here when they locked the gate. No ceremony was conducted as far as locking the gate. There were three of us chosen to stay on. Ken Knouf, Phil Mann and myself. My appointment was for six months, and Ken and Phil's was a one year appointment. TECOM said that was all the longer we were going to be needed. On the last day, we were working in personnel until the last minute. I mean we were still processing paperwork. We were getting calls for people getting picked up for different jobs. I was doing travel orders and trying to get things wrapped up. We worked up until 4:00 that afternoon. Most of the other offices had moved their furniture out and they were just closed down. They were just mingling with each other saying their good byes. We were working! Everybody was crying. We went out the gate and that was it.

The Commander, Colonel Weekly, lived here on post. He was living in a camper that was parked right outside of building 125. When everyone was gone, he locked the gate. I think there was an employee taking pictures of him locking the gate, and I think it was Debbie Moreland.

The three us had keys to the gate. That was on a Friday, and that next Monday we came in to work. We had to unlock the gate and come in. Colonel Weekly was here at the whole proving ground all by himself in his little camper. He said it was so quiet out here he couldn't stand it. His wife had already moved to Florida. He was getting ready to retire from the military, so he had to stick around and do his retirement physical and out processing at Fort Knox. He stayed here about a month.

Yeah, we came in the next work day and unlocked the gate and locked the gate behind us. There were Joy Eaglin[now Kinman] and Richard Herring and maybe a couple of other people working in Building 108 getting things shipped out that were supposed to be going to Yuma. I think there were a couple of people from TECOM there helping them. They were here about 2 or 3 weeks. There is a button underneath the desk in the guard house and if you leave the gate unlocked, but shut, you could push that button and it would open. There was a call box out there and we had one put in the office. Whenever someone came to the gate and pushed that button it would buzz in here and we would tell them how to get in the gate, rather than us having to run out there every time a truck came in.

Mike Moore: When those six months were up, what did they say?

Yvette: Well, having worked in personnel, I knew I had better contact someone and find out what was going on. Whether they were going to extend my position or what they were going to do with me. They found out that they needed me longer. So they extended my appointment another six months, which brought me up to a year, which equaled Ken and Phil's time too. When the year was up we had to be extended. They made us term employees, but we got to keep our sick leave and annual leave and all of our other benefits. We did not lose any benefits whatsoever, because we did not have a break in service.

Mike Moore: So that now would be 1996 and this is 2007. That would be twelve years later?

Yvette: Yeah, and it was only going to be a six month appointment. Everyone that we talked to before we closed said that we would be able to retire here. I thought I don't know about that.

Mike Moore: I always thought that they would never get the ammunition thing settled. I did not think they could sell it to Dean Ford, but somehow they did.

Mike Moore: Did they keep extending you every year?

Yvette: You can only be a term employee for four years. After that they have to let you go or hire you as a permanent employee. OPM several years ago came out with a regulation that you could not just keep an employee on term forever because they weren't getting any benefits. It wasn't really fair to that employee. If you need them beyond four years then you need to make them permanent.

Mike Moore: Do you know how long you will be here now, or what does your current appointment go out to?

Yvette: We don't have a date, because we are permanent employees. We do not have a not to exceed date.

Mike Moore: So far Phil has retired, Ken is thinking about retiring and are you thinking about retiring here?

Yvette: Well, I am thinking about retiring when they tell me I have to.

Mike Moore: So you will work as long as the let you work?

Yvette: Pretty much. I could go out next year on an early out if I have to, but I would like to stay until 2010. That's not too far away.

Mike Moore: Is there anyway to average your twelve years here and say kind of what you have done? How have you managed to pass the time away here for twelve years?

Yvette: It has been boring at times. But other times we are real busy. We are on call! We are like the Maytag repair people, something breaks, and we go fix it. If someone from headquarters calls and says something needs done, we do it. We get that done and something else may pop up.

Mike Moore: Do you remember when the Secretary of the Army visited JPG?

Yvette: Yes, I looked it up in the files and it was October 24, 1996. The then Secretary of the Army, Togo West came to visit. All the years of JPG's operation, the Secretary had never once been here as far as I know and then a year after we closed he comes to visit. He was here to meet Dean Ford, because Dean had already won the bid to purchase part of JPG. He was also here to talk about the 220 acre Krueger Lake parcel, about it being signed over to the county.

It was interesting meeting him. There were a lot of hoops to jump through before he got here. I did not realize, I mean the Secretary of the Army I know is an important person, but I did not know he was as important as all that. Secret Service people showed up and were talking to all of us and checking out the building, finding out who was going to be attending this meeting with the Secretary.

I do have kind of a funny story to tell you about the Secret Service people. Paul Cloud and Mike Early were TECOM employees at the time, and they were involved in the closure process at JPG . The Secret Service people had come in to check out the building. Well, we needed some chairs for the visitors to sit on for the meeting. The only person we knew that had extra chairs was Cathy Hale, who had bought a building from the Army for the Madison Railroad. She had received all the chairs that used to be set up in the gymnasium when we had our public meetings. We were getting those chairs from her. The people that delivered the chairs here were from the Madison Department of Corrections. The Secret Service people were here, and Paul Cloud is going around having a panic attack, because we had prisoners delivering chairs and the Secretary of the Army is on his way in. It was just too funny watching Paul. He was definitely in a panic mode that day. I still remind him of that day every once in a while and we laugh. That was a very interesting day.

The three of us were given coins from the Secretary. It had the Secretary's seal and his name on it, Togo D. West, Jr.

Mike Moore: Did you get your picture in the paper this time?

Yvette: No. The Secretary's picture was in the paper though. It was in the Madison Courier the next day.

Mike Moore: Did you join the Federal Woman's Program and other organizations?

Yvette: I was in the Federal Women's Program for several years. I was chairperson for a year. We brought speakers in and had other projects. We sponsored annual lunches during FWP month. We also honored two employees for outstanding work during the year. I think you were one of the people recognized.

Mike Moore: What was it like being a woman working out here?

Yvette: It did not seem any different than any other place. I worked in an office that is the kind of setting I was used to. There was a mixture of men and women. Even then the men were more of the management type and the women were more of the clerical type. That's just the way it has been for as long as I can remember. I don't know what the setting was in the other buildings. The Federal Women Program was to recognize women's contributions. That was how we got where we are today, by the past contributions of women to the mission. I guess we've come a long way, but it's still a man's world!

Mike Moore: Tell me about your new job, the one where you go bail water. How are you going to do that when Ken leaves?

Yvette: Yes, I could do that or they could send in the contractor a week early and let them do it and spend gobs more money. The contractor would have to be here for two weeks instead of one week. They are Depleted Uranium (DU) monitoring wells. Basically they are around the outer perimeter of the DU area, but there are a couple of wells inside the DU area and they are just off the road. You don't have to go into the wooded area. We take bailers which hold one liter of water each. You drop them down into these small, I don't know, I guess the diameter for the holes of the wells are about four inches.

They are ground water wells and they do have locking tops on them, so no one can put anything down in them. We unlock them and bail out all the water for the contractor. When we empty it, we hope that a week later the well will be recharged with ground water so they can get good samples to find out if there is any DU leaking into the water system that comes through the proving ground.

Some of the wells you can empty in 15 bails. Some are not empty when you have done 60 bails. We pour that water into blue barrels that sit next to each well. When those barrels are full the contractor will check the water and if it checks out OK then basically the water is dumped out onto the ground. It takes awhile to fill them up. They are 55 gallon barrels. The contractors come in and sample twice a year, so that is how often we would have to bail the wells. It is kind of interesting.

Mike Moore: As you are probably the last person to work at JPG, that makes you kind of a celebrity. Are there any real interesting things that you would like for future generations to know? Does it strike you as odd being the last person or can you figure out why you are the last person?

Yvette: I don't really feel like I am a celebrity. It is kind of interesting that I could possibly end up the last person here. I don't know, I really don't have any words of wisdom. I have enjoyed it and I feel very, very fortunate that I got to stay. I love this place, it seems like home to me!

Mike Moore: Did you put in for the job?

Yvette: No, the list of qualified employees came from the "stopper list". They needed a personnel type person. Kathy Andres, I thought would have been the perfect person to stay. She had been in personnel a lot longer than I had. She had been doing the work that needed to be done in this office. The "stopper list" continued on after closure and there were still people waiting for jobs. Job offers were still coming in. Travel orders still had to be done. There were some personnel actions to be done and pay problems that needed to be fixed. There was lot of pay problems when we closed. People were not getting paid for some reason and I worked with DFAS at Charlestown, SC to help get our people paid.

Well, Kathy decided that she did not want the job. I think she thought it would be too boring and there would not be enough for her to do, she always liked keeping busy and solving problems. She told Colonel Weekly and Bob Hudson she was not interested in staying. They had to have a person that was familiar with all that had to be done. I was the only person left in the personnel office that wanted/needed to stay. There was a list and the commander was the selecting official. It was the same thing for Ken's job and Phil's job.

The first Monday after closure I brought in a loaf of Amish Friendship Bread for us, the Site Management Team and Colonel Weekly. On my last day I will bring another loaf; only I won't have any JPG friends to share it with and that will be sad.

What to do With 51,000 Acres of Contaminated Land?

By Ken Knouf

The Final Year Before JPG Closed

Amid military pomp and with hundreds from the invited public and the work force sadly watching, the ceremonial last round was fired on September 30th, 1994. Test director Bob Congleton wrote in the firing test record that the 155 mm inert howitzer round was fired into Impact Field 4200E and later retrieved. Perhaps to some relief of surrounding residents, whose windows had been broken by the reverberations of constant testing, this final pull of the lanyard ended 53 years of firing at Jefferson Proving Ground. To those in attendance, however, this last shot was very emotional.

The last year until JPG officially closed in 1995 was spent shipping equipment out, packing boxes, and filling dumpsters with paper---tons of paper once deemed critically important that were now being shredded. It was a year when employees grew weary of attending farewell luncheons, so many that Commanding Officer Colonel Terry Weekly directed that there be one last sendoff luncheon that everyone would attend. This was held in the spring of 1995 at the Madison, IN Ponderosa, and quite a few tears were shed.

The hundred or so employees remaining on the rolls were assigned jobs that few ever believed they would be doing, but all work involved getting Jefferson Proving Ground ready to shut its gates. So many times JPG had been threatened with closure, but now it was for real. M1A1 tanks, howitzers, and other pieces of military ordnance were loaded on trailers and transported to Yuma Proving Ground, AZ. The massive JPG designed Rube Goldberg-like mine dispenser was loaded, but left only after a complicated route that avoided overpasses and other potential roadblocks could be charted. And with Yuma being nearly 2,000 miles away from Madison, this was no small task. Electronics technician and union president Don Laymon who spent some of his career videotaping the firing now was assigned the task of destroying miles and miles of videotape. Government equipment was either turned in to be reclaimed by other government agencies or sold through auctions. It was humorous and a little ridiculous to see people bicker over ugly used metal government furniture. Employees mostly seemed to work either in a stupor or conversely in absolute frustration and anguish. Management remained alert for signs of violence, but that thankfully never occurred. There were understandable outbursts of anger, but even near the end there remained a feeling that we were all in this together -and perhaps a naive sense that a large military installation like JPG still could never close. But plans progressed as preparations were completed to put the facility in a shutdown status. Plans for the closure of Jefferson Proving Ground continually evolved as re-use ideas emerged.

Soon after the closure announcement was made in late 1988, a reuse board had been established comprising representatives from Jennings, Ripley, and Jefferson Counties. Frequent meetings were held among Army officials, politicians, and the board, but often these ended in frustration and despair. Land use proposals included locating an egg production facility in the Jennings County portion, an industrial park in the extreme northeast Ripley County portion, a landfill, and prison. For real reasons such as the land being contaminated with unexploded ordnance or more emotional ones such as the fear of escaping inmates, these ideas were all rejected. Descendants of the families whose land had been taken by the Army now requested repurchase the original tracts. These were denied.

Perhaps the most viable reuse options involved managing the 51,000- acre range area as a national wildlife refuge and transforming the south industrial area (south of the firing line) into a large national training center for the International Union of Operating Engineers. IOE officials proposed converting the family housing area into dormitories for students and utilizing JPG's buildings and infrastructure for various training opportunities. Boiler plant operation and maintenance, helicopter maintenance, road construction, and heavy equipment repair were among the programs which would be a perfect fit into the proposed south area plan. And the IOE indicated that their plans would mesh with a refuge operation. They could utilize their students in grading and improving the gravel roads, maintaining and paving East Perimeter Road, and constructing visitor facilities. Local businessmen and politicians, however, vigorously opposed the IOE proposal. Whether it was fear that union wages would affect the pay scale of local industry and lead to a mass exodus of workers, or just a historical distrust of unions in the county, we may truly never know. But it didn't take long for the IOE officials to realize that they were not welcome, and consequently they chose another location for their training center.

The local Redevelop Use Authority prepared a master plan that called for the south end property to be transferred over to Jefferson County and developed. Unfortunately the Army did not approve the plan, rationalizing that the plan was unrealistic and too heavily based on further government subsidies. To this day, Jefferson County's plan has been the only reuse plan of all the BRAC reuse plans denied by the Army. Needless to say, this was a lose-lose proposition for all of the vested parties, and hard feelings are still evident among those involved.

In the meantime, interest by the US Fish & Wildlife Service continued to fluctuate. Ever since the March 1993 report prepared by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources documented the presence of numerous rare and endangered plant species, Dave Hudak and Scott Pruitt of the USFWS's Ecological Field Services Office, located in Bloomington, IN, had been advocating JPG's transition into a refuge. In this report, entitled" An Inventory of Special Plants and Natural Areas within the U.S. Army Jefferson Proving Ground, in Southeastern Indiana," one main reality stood out. The botanists from the Indiana DNR Division of Nature Preserves wrote, " JPG is extremely important, not just as a large block of land with lots of rare plants and animals living there, but as a regional treasure " Although the Bloomington office staff continued to push for establishment of a refuge, support for the concept at the Minneapolis regional level was patchy and lukewarm. Liability issues over unexploded ordnance were a huge concern, and for the time being, the idea was dead in the water.

Immediately the Indiana State Department of Natural Resources expressed an interest in managing the property. A number of state officials traveled down from Indianapolis to gain a better understanding of the area, and almost all saw the potential value of JPG in being managed as a state forest , state park, state reservoir, or state fish & wildlife management area. JPG's size and diverse natural resource attributes defied categorizing it by any one designation. Despite awareness of the UXO hazards, state officials talked of establishing a state conservation area that would take into account all of the features. Eventually though through the perseverance of Dave Hudak and later Scott Pruitt, the US Fish & Wildlife Service renewed their interest. Since other Federal agencies had priority over a state interest when Federal property is disposed, the IDNR backed away from the process.

The Gates Shut

On Tuesday, September 26, 1995, the JPG flag was retired in a very emotional de-activation ceremony in front of Building 100. The large crowd of invited community leaders, local politicians, interested public and the remaining workforce listened to the 389th U.S. Army Band from Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD. After the invocation presented by Reverend Byron Hunt, pastor of Madison's First Church of the Nazarene, Acting Director of Personnel J. Stephen Ryan narrated a brief history of JPG's 54 years of service.

Flags were presented by a color guard unit brought in from Aberdeen Proving Ground, and JPG Commander Colonel Terry Weekly furled the installation flag and enclosed it in a leather case. Colonel Weekly stated in a clear but very much affected voice, "Truly Jefferson Proving Ground has been a force for democracy for over 50 years." A cannon fired a last report near the end of the ceremony, and after the Army band played" Auld Lang Syne" and the "When Caissons Go Marching Along," the large American garrison flag was lowered for the last time from the flagpole. Although Midwesterners are known for their stoicism, there was certainly an outpouring of tears and hugs. The Madison Courier reported that the gates would be shut on September 29th but that three Army personnel would remain as a site management team.

Those three included the designated site manager, Ken Knouf, who had been the natural resource manager at JPG since 1982. He would be assisted by Phil Mann, working as an engineering technician. Mann had started as carpenter, promoted to foreman and at the end was Chief of Roads and Grounds. His knowledge of the buildings and institutional memory was invaluable. The third member of the team was Yvette Hayes, who came out of the personnel division, was selected to serve as the administrative assistant. Knouf and Mann were told that they could expect to work another year; Hayes was told six moths---but all were counting on the bureaucracy to add a few extra years. The site management team was to work out of Building 125, the old firehouse, because it was the only building that had a stand-alone heating system, office space, storage, and a shop area and was centrally located in the southern cantonment area.

Friday, the 29th of September 1995 remains a blur for most 100 workers who remained to the end. There were still tasks to complete and more to inventory and ship, but at midnight the gates would close. There were still a few workers who believed that JPG would be given a last minute reprieve, but by late morning, some employees started to drift out-first individually and then by early afternoon in small groups. There were more hugs and handshakes but by 4:00 p.m. only a handful of Security folks and Colonel Weekly were left. At midnight, Lieutenant Vickie Stephens of Security tied a black ribbon onto the Main Gate and then sorrowfully locked it. Former employee Debbie Dixon watched from outside the gate and wept. JPG was officially closed. The only person remaining on the installation was Colonel Weekly who lived in his trailer that was parked in front of Building 125, the old firehouse.

A Summary of Post Closure as of March, 2010

It's been fifteen years since JPG closed its gate, and amazingly two members of the Army Site Team still remains. Over the winter of 1995-96, the area south of the firing line that contains most of the buildings was sold to Dean and Debbie Ford, from Dupont, IN. in a sealed bid format. Their bid of $5.1 million proved to be the winning amount and gave them access and use of 3,600 acres and over 400 buildings. The Ford's converted buildings formerly used for military purposes into apartments, and leased the industrial facilities to small company operations. Army contractors performed a series of unexploded ordnance clearances over areas in the south, and this has enabled the Fords to farm nearly 1000 acres. One final property transfer is scheduled to take place at the end of 2010 or early 2011.

In the northern range area, after a series of site visits, US Fish & Wildlife Service staff from the regional office in Fort Snelling, MN were finally convinced to proceed with negotiations in managing JPG as a national wildlife refuge. Although discussion among the Army, Air Force, and US Fish & Wildlife Service were at times a little contentious, progress was made, and eventually a memorandum of agreement was hammered out.

Even after the Army's closure of JPG, the Indiana Air National Guard continued to operate Jefferson Range along K Road, but they did so without any post closing formal approval. It seems that the BRAC forgot to consider the Air Guard. Still the approved MOA officially authorized the operation to continue and the Air Force granted a real estate license to the Guard. The Guard was also tasked with basic maintenance of the historic structures including Old Timbers Lodge, Oakdale School, and four early 1900's stone- arch bridges, all of which are listed to the National Register of Historic Places. But of most importance to conservationists, the area north of the firing line was finally established in 2000 as Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuge, and a dedication ceremony was held in July up at Old Timbers Lake. The area was established as an overlay refuge, meaning that the Army still owned the land, but that the US Fish & Wildlife Service would manage approximately 50,000 acres as a refuge. The name "'Big Oaks" was purportedly suggested by the daughter of Congressman Baron Hill who championed the establishment of the refuge and had stepped in when negotiations bogged down.

So if you can envision a doughnut hole of military activity surrounded by a vast wildlife refuge operation, you have some sense for how things are today. Over 30,000 acres of the refuge is closed off to the public due to known high explosive UXO contamination. Much of the refuge consequently is pure sanctuary to the myriad of wildlife species that inhabit the former proving ground. Prescribed fire provides the main land management tool used in these areas---and even then the USFWS folks who start the fires back away a long distance in case a round would "cook off."

Both the Army Site Management Team and the Big Oaks staff continue to work out of Building 125, but Joe Robb, the Big Oaks Refuge Manager, hopes to move the staff north sometime in the future. A visitor center or interpretive complex is desperately needed.

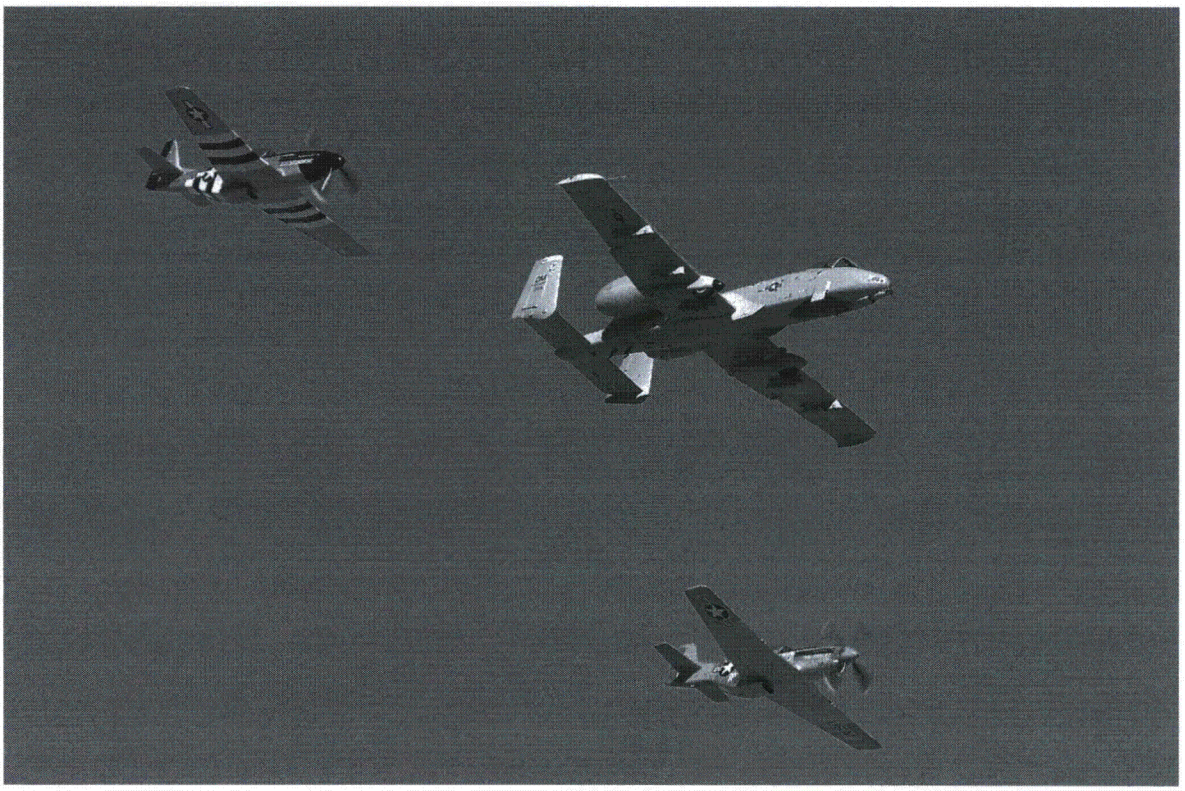
The future of Old Timbers Lodge, the installation's best-known historical structure is in good hands. The Big Oaks Conservation Society, non-profit friends of the refuge group, signed an agreement with the Air Guard to assume management responsibility for the structure. The friends group has been very successful in being awarded historic preservation grant funds, and so far has had the lodge re-wired and brought up to code and a new waterline has been installed. Funds are needed for a new roof and septic system, but overall the future looks bright so that future generations can enjoy the lodge and appreciate all that it represents.

The transformation of the land from wilderness to farms and small communities to an ammunition testing facility and to a refuge has virtually come full circle. But it is essential to remember that with each change in land use, people's lives were greatly affected. Those affected have stories to tell and memories to share, and these will be found in the appendix of this volume. Most are pretty basic and reflect the attitude and feelings of people who have strong ties to the land and communities. The establishment of Jefferson Proving Ground was heart wrenching to the 2,000 plus Hoosiers who were forced to hastily vacate homes and farms, many of which had been in the same family for a century. Most left willingly, displaying a sense of patriotism and sacrifice that likely would not be seen today. Ironically those who left the earliest had the easiest time finding a new location to call home. Those who waited experienced land prices that had escalated to almost unrealistic prices, and they could not afford to relocate in the immediate vicinity. Many of these families ended up moving north to Rush County, IN.

Jefferson Proving Ground's mission was extremely important to the nation's defense. While the number of soldiers lives saved because of the quality control provided by JPG in testing ammunition can never be accurately computed, it is significant. JPG provided steady and relatively lucrative employment to thousands of Hoosiers and Kentuckians. Chances are that few workers still alive recognize or appreciate their own contributions. But all who worked at JPG were important in accomplishing the ammunition production acceptance mission. There is a lot to be proud of. Let us never forget!

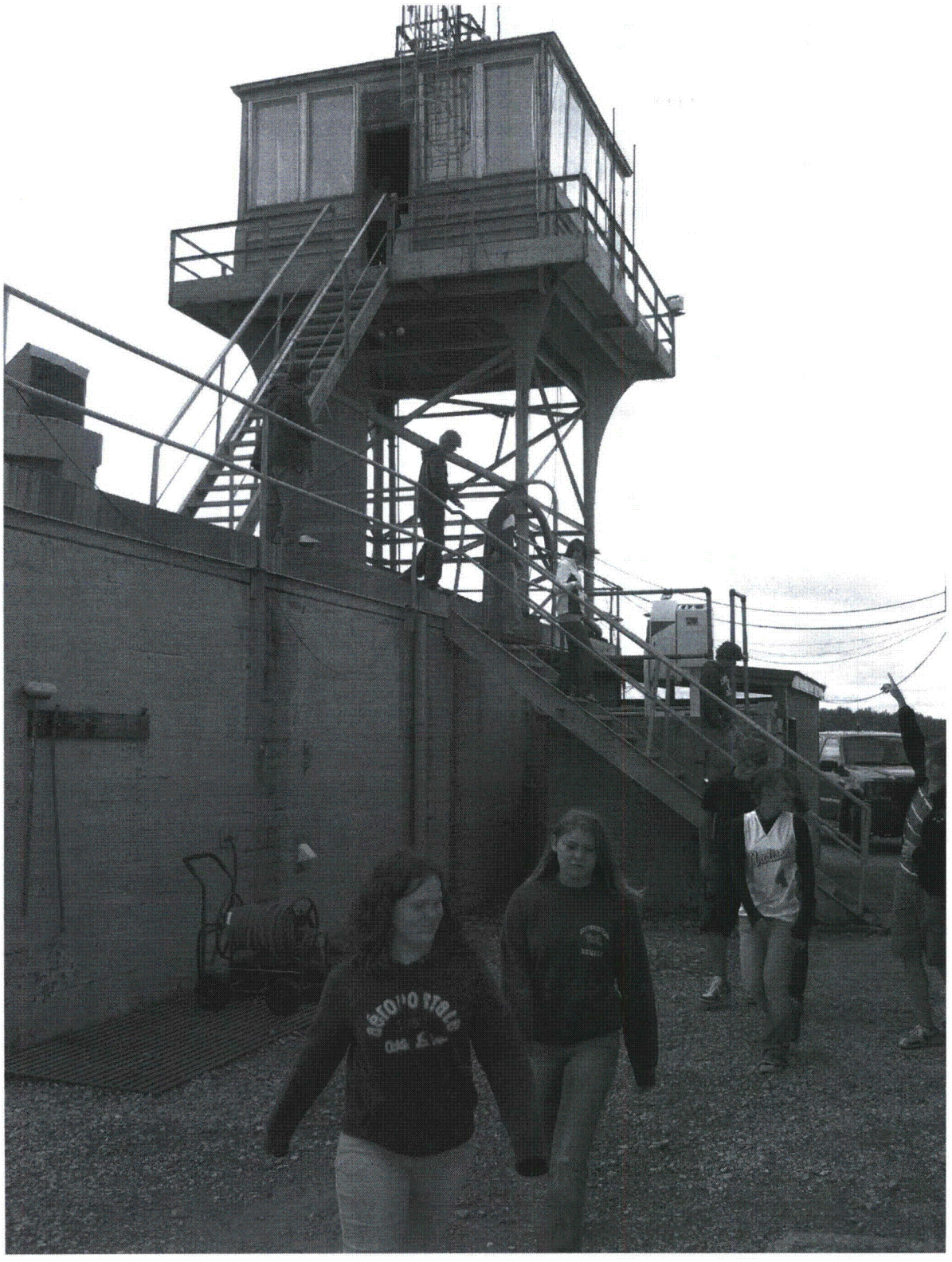
G position on the firing line. It hasn't taken "mother nature" long to reclaim the facility.

Jefferson Range



An A-10 Warthog flying over Jefferson Range.

In 1977 the Indiana Air National Guard established a new target testing range at the north end of the proving ground. This range was used by the Air National Guard and the Air Force Reserve fighter bomber pilots from Indiana, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Missouri, and Michigan to drop practice bombs and fire 20mm aircraft guns at targets on the ground.



A Madison High School history class toured "M" Building in 2008. The old control tower was originally on top of JPG's hangar building at the south end.

The 181st Tactical Fighter Group, Indiana Air National Guard Detachment 2 provides air/gunnery operations for Jefferson Range. This includes traffic control, target hit scoring and evaluation of air exercises. The Air National Guard remained at JPG after the Army moved the ammunition testing to Yuma Proving Ground in 1995.

Jefferson Range is surrounded by the area being managed as Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuge, formerly known as Jefferson Proving Ground. The range is located on 1033 acres in the northern third of the old proving ground in Ripley County, Indiana. The current charter for Jefferson Range was established in a 1998 Memoranda of Understanding between the U.S. Department of Army and the Indiana Air National Guard.

In exchange for continued use of air to ground operations, the Air National Guard provides assistance to the Army. Air Guard personnel are responsible for perimeter security including the fence and the roads and also maintain interior roads required in their operations. Range personnel are also responsible for maintenance Oakdale School and four stone arch bridges, all on the National Historic Register of Historic Places. They also maintained Old Timbers Lodge until management responsibility was turned over to the Big Oaks Conservation Society.

Surface to missile site practice bombing field for ANG pilot training.

Jefferson Range primarily serves units in Indiana and the four surrounding states; although, units as far away as the Netherlands have trained at the facility. Jefferson Range remains at the forefront of training by constantly constructing new targets to accommodate new weapons systems and fighting tactics.

Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuge

Old Timbers Lake and Dam, constructed by JPG employees in the 1970's is the best known recreation facility at Big Oaks.

Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuge consists of approximately 50,000 acres within Jefferson, Ripley, and Jennings counties in southeastern Indiana. Under a 2000 agreement with the US Army and US Air Force, the US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) operates the refuge through a 25-year real-estate permit. The Army retains ownership of the land (the closed Jefferson Proving Ground) so Big Oaks is called an overlay refuge. The Air Guard retains use of a bombing range which is not included in the portion designated as a national wildlife refuge. Large safety buffer areas separate the Air Guard range from public use areas of the refuge.

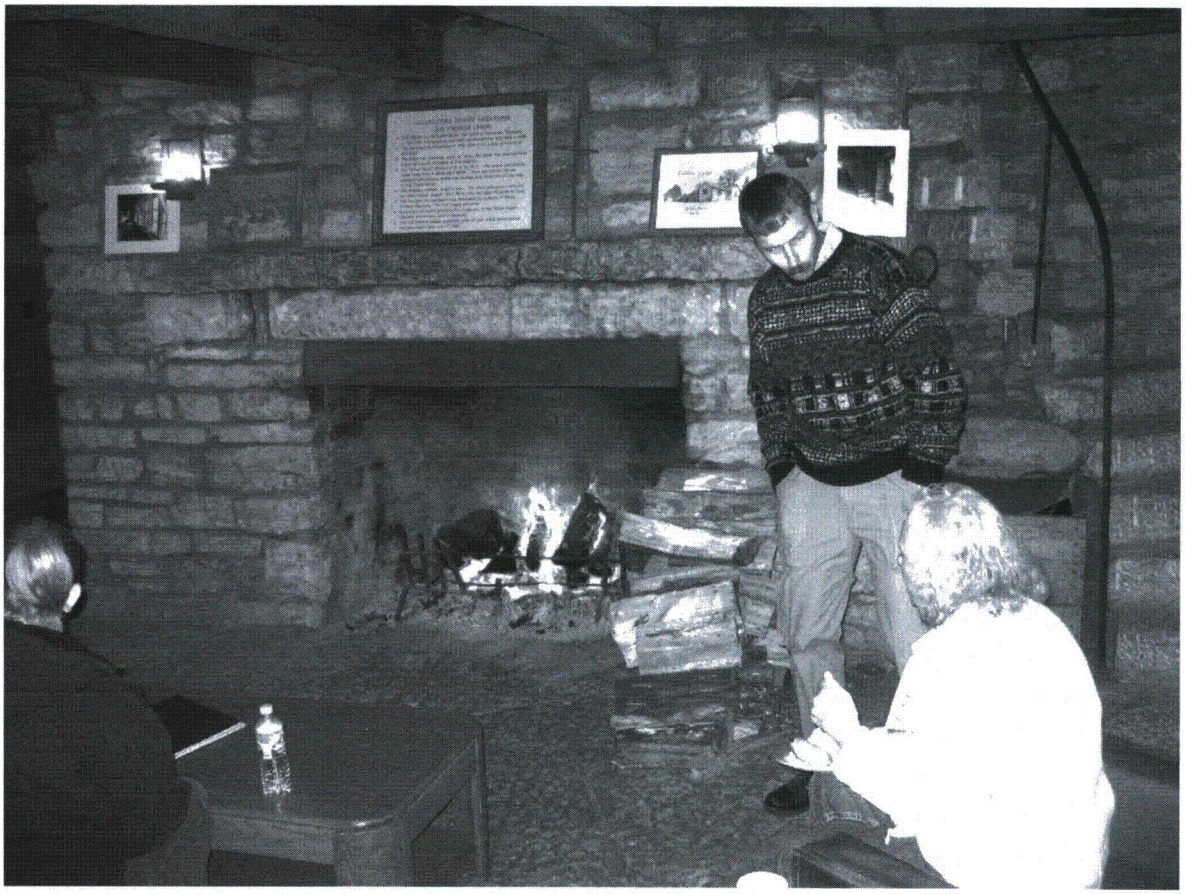
Big Oaks Refuge contains the largest unfragmented forested block in southeastern Indiana and some of the largest grassland areas found within the region. The refuge provides habitat for 120 species of breeding birds, the Federally endangered Indiana bat, and 41 species of fish. The refuge also is home to white-tailed deer, wild turkey, river otters, and coyotes.

Over 25 state-listed animal species and over 46 state-listed plant species have been discovered to date on the refuge. Many bird species of management concern are also found here, including Henslow's sparrows and cerulean warblers. Over 600 pairs of Henslow's sparrows use the large grasslands on the refuge. Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuge has been designated as a Globally Important Bird Area because of its value to Henslow's sparrows and other migratory birds.

Existing habitats are managed to provide large contiguous blocks of forest, grassland, and shrub habitat. Grasslands are maintained by carrying out an extensive controlled burning program. Forests are managed for large contiguous blocks, a habitat rare in the present landscape of Indiana and required by "forest-interior" species. Examples of these species include cerulean warbler, wood thrush, worm-eating warbler, and wild turkey. New beaver impoundments are rapidly and naturally increasing the area of permanent water and diversity of wetlands found on the refuge.

Big Oaks provides food and shelter for a wide variety of plant and animal species. Over 200 total species of birds and 46 species of mammals are found on the refuge. Stream corridors and forested areas on Big Oaks provide excellent habitat for the Federally-endangered Indiana bat, which uses the refuge for summer foraging, roosting, and rearing young. The refuge also supports breeding populations of the state-endangered river otters that were re-established here in 1996.

The Henslow Sparrow that lives in the old impact fields is one of the signature species managed at Big Oaks.

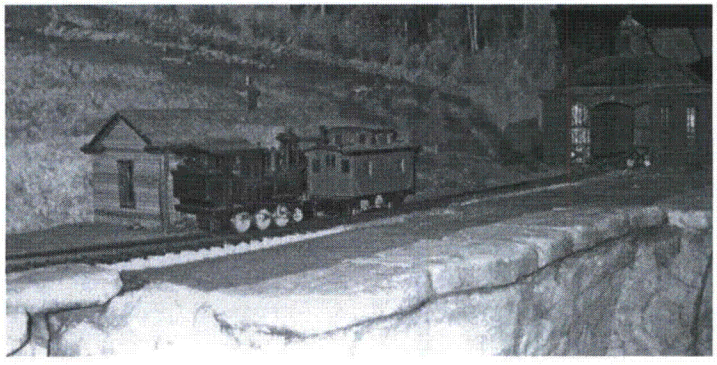


Jim Levelle, president of the Big Oaks Conservation Society
took the lead in preserving Old Timbers Lodge.

Madison Railroad

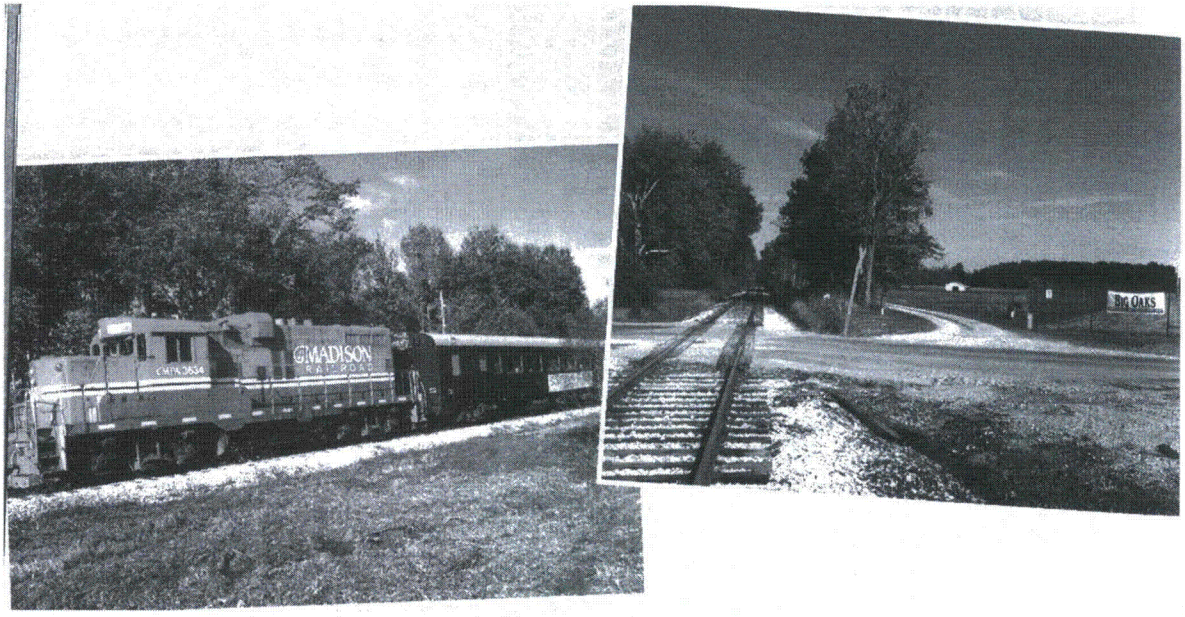
In 1995, the conversion of over 3,600 acres of the former Jefferson Proving Ground from government to private use created the opportunity for an industrial park. During that year, the Madison Railroad purchased Building 216, the former "gunner's building," which ironically was constructed in 1941 as a locomotive repair facility. The RR works closely with Madison – Jefferson County Industrial Development Corporation (MIDCOR) to attract industry to the community. The railroad operates a 25 mile mainline extending from Madison to North Vernon. Presently the MRR has about 17 miles of track for car storage use on a short or long term basis.

The Madison Railroad is historically connected to Madison by the Madison Hill, a straight as an arrow, 7012 feet of track makes a climb of 413 feet to achieve a grade of 5.89 per cent. The Madison Railroad began in January 27, 1836 when General Laz Noble of Indiana signed a huge internal improvement bill.



Model of Reuben Wells, first locomotive to push a railroad car up the Madison Hill to the roundhouse at North Madison without cogs (1868 to 1898). The locomotive in now located at the Children's Museum, Indianapolis.

The Railroad contributed to the 2009 Madison Bicenntenial celebration by running several short excursions for the public in partnership with the Jefferson County Historical Society. Each excursion ran from North Madison to the Middlefork Bridge.



Bicentennial train runs past Jefferson Proving Ground
to celebrate Madison's 200th Birthday.

Appendices

A. Oral Histories Dealing With JPG on File at The Jefferson County Historical Society, Madison IN

Over the last 25 years, there have been efforts to interview or take written questionnaires from people who either had family connections with the land before it became the proving ground or worked at JPG. Former employee Mike Moore and Hanover Professor Ruth Turner, who assigned a sociology class to gather oral histories, are responsible for many of the histories, but many others assisted too. The following is a current list (as of 2010) of folks who have provided information on their life stories and JPG:

Abner, Ernie: JPG employee
Akers, Charles {Don): JPG employee
Akers, Lema {Libby): JPG employee
Andress, Kenneth: Early pre-military resident (personal memories from a book excerpt)
Barnes, Sarah: Early resident
Bayless, George: Early resident
Bentley, Rusk and Opal: Early residents Bloom, Collette: Early employee
Bramwell, Elvin, Early JPG employee
Browning, Marilyn: Member of St. Magdalene Church and JPG employee
Buchanan, John: JPG employee
Burns, Leroy: JPG employee
Busch, Carl: Early resident
Cantwell, Bruce: JPG employee
Carlson, Warren {1st Lt): WWII military assigned to JPG
Casey, Otis: Early JPG employee
Clark, Dr. James: JPG employee
Clemons, Pauline, Early JPG employee
Cook, Robert (Bob): JPG employee
Crum, John: Early resident
Eble, George: Early resident
Ehlert, Allyn: JPG employee
Everhart, Bob: 1970's JPG employee
Facemire, Lester: Early resident and JPG employee
Foerstner, Harold C.: Early JPG employee
Gamble, Ruby: Early resident
Geisler, Doris: Early resident
Glesing, Carl: JPG employee
Gray, Harvey: Early resident
Hammack, Charles and Dorothy: WWII era JPG employees
Hargesheimer, Vernon: JPG employee

Harsin, Leroy: Early resident and JPG employee
Hayes, Yvette: JPG employee
Heath, Fred: Early resident
Hensley, Edna, Julie, and Jeff: JPG employees
Hill Fred: JPG employee whose family were early residents
Hill, Mary Lou: Early JPG employee (wife of Fred Hill)
Holland, Robert (2nd Lt): WWII military assigned to JPG
Holt, Allen: 1950's JPG employee
Holt, Charles (Bud): 1950's JPG employee
Hudson, Robert (Bob): JPG employee
Huelson, Norman: Early resident
Inskeep, Frank: WWII era and later JPG employee
Irwin, Jesse and Steven, Ruth & Wilson: Early residents
Irwin, Norma Lou: Early resident
Jackson, Leland: JPG employee
Jeffrey, Karen: Family housing resident, daughter of JPG employee
Jones, Nellie: JPG employee
Jones, Ruby (Sparks): Early resident
Kellar, Robert: Early resident
Keller, Elizabeth Curren: Early resident
Kimbrell, Marjorie: Early resident (daughter of Claude Rose)
Kinman (Polly) Joy, JPG employee
Kirch, Marie (Bray): Early resident with information provided by Francine Lock Bray Klopp, Wanda: JPG employee
Knoebel, Alice: WWII era JPG employee
Knouf, Ken: JPG employee
Kuhns, Sara Maragret Johnson: Early resident
Laswell, Clarence & Nadine: Early residents
Lawson, Harriette Elliot: Early resident
Lee, Dora Grace: JPG employee
Lincoln, Abraham: Early resident
Liter, Fauna: Early resident
Mann, Graves (Phil): JPG employee
Mihalco, Fauna: Early resident
Miller, Hallie: Early resident
Miller, Helen: JPG employee (newspaper article)
Miller, June: WWII era JPG employee
Moore, Hemy: WWII era JPG employee
Moore, Mike: JPG employee
Munier, Louis: Early resident and WWII era JPG employee
Neff, Betty: Spouse of JPG employee Joe Neff
Neff, Stanley: JPG employee
Paugh, Leroy: Early resident
Pendleton, Leo: Early employee
Pratt, Dr. Ralph: WWII era JPG employee
Raiser, Nancy P.: Early resident (daughter of Carl & Blanch Richmond)
Reid, Hildred: JPG employee

Richards, Morris: JPG employee
Rogers, Lee: WWII era JPG employee
Rogers, Lynn: WWII era JPG employee
Rose, Mae (Facemire): Early resident
Schafer, Bernard (Boo): JPG employee
Shinkle, Robert L.: Early resident
Smith, Arthur: Early resident
Smith, Charlie: JPG employee
Smith, Larry: JPG employee
Smith, Leslie D.: Early resident
Smith, Wayne: Early resident
Stegner, George: JPG employee
Stewart, Charles (Keith): WWII era JPG employee
Storie, Roscoe: Early resident
Stucker, Dr. William Irving: WWII era JPG employee
Sweeney, Charles (Major): WWII military assigned to JPG
Thomas, Martha: Early resident
Torline, Paul: JPG employee
Vogt, Jim: JPG employee during the Korean Conflict
Waggoner, Leona: Early resident Weber, Lois: Early resident
Weber, Mary Louise (Heitz): Early resident
Wildman, Opal: Early resident of Marble Corner
Wilson, Elroy: Early resident Wilson, Opal: Early resident
Wood, Linda: JPG employee
Wooten, Kenny: JPG employee

As the interviews were being transcribed and questionnaires reviewed, two main realities emerged. One was that the people whose families sacrificed their land so that JPG could be built were very proud of their contribution and wanted to make sure these sacrifices were not forgotten. The second insight was the realization that many of the employees who worked at JPG had only a vague understanding of how valuable their work was and how it fit into the national picture. A great many employees thought their work, whether it actually be the testing or in support of the firing, as routine and inconsequential. They really didn't think about how many lives were saved by ensuring that the soldiers were provided with quality munitions. Accordingly many of their interviews tend to be somewhat dry. Hoosiers tend to be laconic. But each individual made a significant contribution in his or her own way, and the JPG Heritage Partnership is aware that as time passes, these oral histories may be more significant to future researchers and genealogists. Thus we felt it important to document "who" is available. It is our hope that this list will continue to grow.

The above listed oral histories are on file at the research library of the Jefferson County Historical Society, 615 West First St. in Madison.

B. Proving Ground Drawing Workers Back

Dale Moss, Louisville Courier Journal

Madison, Indiana 2005

The Harsins' signed over their farm the day after Christmas in 1940.
They had to be gone by January, off land that had been in the family perhaps a century and out of a house that had been built only months earlier.

The Army began testing munitions there within four months. Jefferson Proving Ground swallowed and sealed 55,000 acres of Southern Indiana just like that. It claimed not just farms but also schools and graveyards and entire rural communities in three counties.

One of many stone arch bridges At least located at JPG 2,000 people relocated. But Leroy Harsin knows only of two families that dug in against the government. "In those days, you were scared to death to talk to a lawyer, or go to court," he said.

Ironically, the announcement that the proving ground had been deemed obsolete also came out of the blue. Locals got no more say in the demise of the place than they had had in its creation. Testing stopped 10 years ago and is now carried out in Arizona.

"Looking back, it doesn't surprise me," said Bob Hudson, the proving ground's highest- ranking civilian at the end. "That's the way they do things, you know."

Hudson is helping plan a reunion to be held Sept. 17 (2005) for former employees or former residents or, in Harsin's case, both. No doubt they will discuss what was and wonder what could have been. Has the trauma of the proving ground's wham-bam demise finally diminished?

"I would argue some are still not over it," Ken Knouf said.

Hard to believe it's been a decade, said Knouf, who still works there. On the Army's behalf, he oversees the conversion of most of the proving ground into the Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuge and some of it into a commercial development. Indiana Air National Guard activity continues there.

The community may disagree about the ideal reuse for a behemoth littered with unexploded bombs and artillery shells. And those who sacrificed homesteads will yearn for heritage undisturbed.

"It will always be home," Harsin, now 83, said, "whether I live to be 100."

Not that those closest to the proving ground ever doubted its importance. Mike Moore, who was a mathematician there for 20 years, said he gets angry when he is reminded about the closure.

He was on a committee that lobbied hard for a reprieve but won only a delay. Moore saw his job as protecting soldiers --"as corny as that might seem."

The Army could rely on what was tested and approved there, Hudson said. "The big picture: We saved the lives of many troops,"

The area recognized the proving ground for its window-rattling booms, and merchants knew the paychecks its workers spent were the best around.

But memories must be preserved for the story to be told on and on. Harsin's son, Ron Harsin, is leading an effort to videotape employees and the recorder will be rolling at the reunion. Books on the proving ground are being put together and others reprinted.

"People don't understand the history of the place," Knouf said.

One important memory is that unexploded bombs remain scattered. The tapes, the books they must play a role 50 years from now, 100 years from now. "That fence will fall down someday," Moore said.

The early work force --like the World War II military it supported --is dying. Its versions of the history of the 85-square-mile installation are particularly vital.

"It would be a shame to take that much area and that many people's lives and just lose it," Ron Harsin said.

Those interviewed are glad to aid their country and wish it all would have lasted. Many, if not most, are military veterans. And even if any particular war is debatable, Moore said, the troops obviously deserved trustworthy arms. His own son turned 18 --eligible for the military --during Moore's tenure at the proving ground. "It gets real personal," Moore said, "when you think about this stuff."

Talk about personal. Leroy Harsin remembers that his family was paid less than $10,000 for its 162 acres plus house and assorted outbuildings. Louis Munier said his family got even less --$7,500 -for almost 200 acres that Munier's grandfather had purchased in 1853. "They can tell you down to the penny," Knouf said, "and it's almost 65 years ago." Knouf has a list of about 700 former workers, some of whom Moore doubts have ever returned to the grounds and maybe will not. Returning would upset them. Knouf surmises that some may not easily accept the way the south end of the property is being converted to use by small businesses.

Then again, Knouf added, the crew at the Jefferson Proving Ground was like a family, and families are inclined to reunite. "Ten years is a significant milestone," he said.

C. 19th Century gravestone finds a permanent home

By Laura Hodges, Madison Courier Staff Writer, Saturday, May 30, 1992

A nineteenth century gravestone quietly completed a journey over Memorial Day weekend.

After years without a home, the stone marker of Maria (Yager) Rohrman, who died in 1876 at the age of 20, was placed in St. Magdalene's Cemetery by her brother's granddaughter, Margaret (Brunson) Cole of Indianapolis.

The Rohrman marker surfaced at Jefferson Proving Ground in 1982. Steve Hamilton, an explosive ordnance disposal specialist, found it near the foundation of old St. Magdalene Catholic church, which had been destroyed in the 1950's after the proving ground was established in 1941.

It was in two pieces, a base and a long shaft of carefully carved stone. The inscription in German, provided this information:

Maria Rohrman,
born Yager, date of birth Dec. 22,
1856, date of death Sept 14, 1876.

The Rohrman and Yager families were German Catholic families of the area.

Since it's discovery in 1982, the stone has been housed in various places in the proving ground (at Mike Moore's desk), but JPG officials continued to look for a more permanent resting place.

In 1991, for JPG's big 50th anniversary celebration, the grave marker and its base were joined together with epoxy and transported back to the former St. Magdalene Cemetery. During the anniversary open house, Cole with her cousin Patricia (Jines) Ruegamer and Ruegamer's mother, Freda (Yager) Jines, toured the site and informed JPG's unofficial historian, Mike Moore, that the grave marker belonged to Jines' aunt. Maria was a sister of Freda's father, Peter Yager.

Left to right: Patricia (Jines) Ruegamer, Freda Jines and Margaret (Brunson) Cole talk to Mike Moore about their ancestor Maria Rohrman.

She expressed a desire to move the 85-pound monument to the current St. Magdalene Cemetery on State Street, Madison, north of St. Patrick's Chapel. The cemetery had been moved in 1941. This mission was accomplished with the help of JPG employees.

Some 350 St. Magdalene's cemetery graves were moved from the proving ground to Madison. Why Maria Rohrman's was not moved remains a mystery. Cole, who has done a lot of genealogical research, thinks that many of the very old grave markers had been used to make the foundation for a vestibule or addition to St. Magdalene Church, but Maria's was not.

"Grandpa (Peter W. Yager, Maria's brother) objected to Maria's marker being used in a foundation," writes Cole. "He was very young when she died. Maybe he felt that he was protecting the only memory or object that he had of his sister." So it was agreed, Cole thinks, that her stone would be buried face down on her grave.

Now the stone rests between those of her father John and her mother Lena Yager and close to the marker for her brother and other family members.

D. Charles Heberhart Letter

Director, Jefferson County Historical Society

In 1941, Charles Heberhart composed a letter to the Indiana State Historical Society providing a summary of the historical resources on the land that the Army took over as Jefferson Proving Ground.

JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NORTH ELM STREET

MADISON, INDIANA

CHARLES E. HEBERHART
DIRECTOR

March 1 1941.

Mr.Christopher B.Coleman,Secretary,
Indiana State Historical Society,
Indiana State Library,
Indianapolis,Ind.

(419 W Main

Dear Mr.Coleman:

Work has progressed to the point where I now can give you a picture of accomplishment so far.The wind up of two or three phases still offers some problems ,which,however,we are meeting in what I hope will be a satisfactory way.The worst of these problems is the outgrowth of the assumption that the Ripley county cemetery lists,as supplied by Miss Violet were complete to date.Coupled with the report of your office I had her personal assurance early in the work that these cemeteries were covered in her transmissions to your office.But,on a hunch,making some rechecking,Miss Hill and I found that her work extended only up to 1936.This left four years to be accounted for .As there were and are no records to turn to it was necessary to revisit these cemeteries and add the later burials,which are quite numerous ,as well as difficult to identify because in many instnces headstones have not been erected.

This is no criticism of Miss Toth's field work which had been excellent,she having in the past talked with many descendants of old settler and accounted for graves in several family graveyards we could only list as unidentifiable...

The whole proving ground project has been unusually trying, what with bad roads-some to certain areas being almost hub deep in mud-the necessity of ,in one case ,climbing several hills,crossing creekbeds and wading through mud and snow to find a family plot with a score of graves and no burial later than a half century ago.,this being the Rice family cemetery .In the Custer cemetery hunt,like in the Rice,we not only climbed five hills ,forded a creek three times but walked a half mile in mud to even get near the abandoned farm on which the cemetery lay hidden.

The checking of mill sites in theproving ground was almost as appalling.By some perversity of fate I have been enabled to get a complet survey of all of the mills east and west of the proving ground with a fair account of their history but the six within the area have been as elusive as the sun in the last six weeks.However,I have finally confirmed their location after much wear and tear and that is that .

Old and present school sites in the proving ground area in the three counties have been established.Only two Indian camps have been positively located,although three more have been tentatively accepted on tradition.A careful combing of the district fails to reveal any certain mound to be accredited to mound builders ,even plausibly,although near St. Magdalen and the Meisberger farms there are two rises in ground that have always been referred to as mounds.Arrow heads,stone axes and other artifacts have been found near both,but as these places are both on or close to an old Indian trail to Big and Camp creeks,I believe little exists to justify their classification as mounds.

Here is a tabulation of what has been achieved so far:

(a) Twentyfive (25) cemeteries located and checked in the proving ground area.Six of these were unknown to government authorities until reported by us.Cemeteries visited were:

~~Bayless~~ ---------- Monroe twp.Jefferson cty.

JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
NORTH ELM STREET
MADISON, INDIANA
CHARLES E. HEBERHART
DIRECTOR

Jefferson county.

Monroe	Monroe church	Monroe twp.
Big Creek	Big Creek ch	" "
Baxter	Private-family	" "
Smart	Family	" "
Marble Methodist church		"
Bayless(first cemetery moved	Family	Madison "

Ripley County.

Marble Corner	Church	Shelby "
Bethel	Church	" "
Harrell	Farm-family	" "
Matz	" "	" "
St.Magdalen	Church	" "
Hughes(Shonk)	Farm-family	" "
Hannah-Naylor	Farm-family	" "
Meisberger	Farm-family	" "
Custer	Farm-family	" "
Elden Wyne	Farm-family	" "
Mathews	Farm -family	" "
Hallett (negro-one white)	Farm,family-church	" "

Jennings County.

Otter Creek church	Church	" "
Kibler	Farm-family	" "
Huelson	Farm-family	" "
Rice	Farm-family	" "
Old Timbers	Farm-family	" "
Struben	Farm-family	" "

All the above are located by section,twp.and range in the reports on each and confirmed by the county recorders of the respective counties.

(b)Nine(9) old school and present sites visited and fixed in report.Three located in Bigger and Campbell twps in Jennings county and three in Shelby twp. Ripley county.

(c)Nine living churches visited and located in proving ground area of three counties.

(d) Six mill sites in the three-county area of the proving ground area located;some photographed.

(e)Two doubtful mounds visited and described.

(f)Two former Indian camps definitely located.

(g)Morgan trail,xxchecked and rechecked and photographed.

(h)Old highways and roads in area checkedwith origins.

(i)Route of underground railway to Old Timbers and beyond checked with visit to famous cave way station on edge of Hughes(Shon farm .

(j)Old stone houses checked.

(k)Old surviving log cabins recorded.

(l)Famous farms listed.

Work to come after field job ends includes text for some of the above and the following:

(1) History of proving ground;selection,why,scope and factors

(2)List of persons leaving area and farms sold with notes on

JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
NORTH ELM STREET
MADISON, INDIANA

CHARLES E. HEBERHART
DIRECTOR

(2) List of persons leaving area and farms sold with notes on when entered and by whom.

(3)Complete lists of members of churches to be extinct with short history on lesser known churches an d fuller account of most important.

(4)Schools-Short history of each with sketches of most famous teachers and early pupils.lists of final classes and ~~xxxxxx~~ teachers.

(5)Mills-History,character and location.

(6) Morgan trail-Detailed coverage from new and old materials.

(7)Roads-Historic sketch.

(8)Streams-Their role in area history.

(9)Pioneers-Outstanding men and women.

(10)General sketch on cemeteries.

(11)Depopulation-Where bulk of families have gone;what percentage remains within the county and what percentage scatters over state and nation.

((12)Sketch of economic conditions in area before expropriation of land.

(13)Taxes-Effect on schools due to loss of productive area and probable compensations due to permanent high-wage groups to be retained at proving ground when completed.Much of this is speculative and will have to be reduced to its factual content.

(14)Summary of all effects on counties involved and conclusion.

I shall welcome at this time any suggestions before starting on the writing end.Any ideas for improvement of the schedule will be gladly complied with.There undoubtedly will be many amendments and new materials develop as I go along.

For your files,if agreeable ,I propose to transmit this material under the subject classifications given above ,each to be a complete unit although a part of the whole.Any other arrangement you may prefer,of course I shall readily comply with.

As you can readily see the bone has come near to wagging the dog in this undertaking.However,I hope to do a decent job and one that may serve as a model for similar future eventualities.

In closing I wish to say I have given a great deal of myself, all my time and a considerable amount of my own money to this project. I can see no immediate return except in satisfaction as the outoftown newspapers have trimmed the cream off the photographic end ,although they have used few of the pictures they have taken at that..

Miss Mary Hill has been a devoted and inspired associate while Mrs.Heberhart,who did most of my early driving and all the photographing ,has been my excellent support,as always,despite ill-health and at times damnable weather conditions.

I hope this summary is pleasing to you.I should like very much to have you send along the balance of the appropriation as I have reached the point where it is embarrassing to go on.I shall recompense Miss Hill from that money.

Sincerely yours,

Charles E. Heberhart

Manufactured By: RR Donnelley
Momence, IL USA
January, 2011

Louis Munier is standing in front of the home that he was born in on Big Creek, Monroe Township, located on the former JPG.

On December 10, 1940, a year before the attack on Pearl Harbor, over 500 rural Hoosier families were notified that they would immediately have to move out of their farms and homes to make way for an immense Army munitions testing facility. The government had exercised its power of "eminent domain" in acquiring over 50,000 acres north of Madison, IN, and farmers from three counties were notified they had from 30 to 45 days to vacate their premises.

This is the story of some of these families from Jefferson, Ripley, and Jennings County, IN. and the establishment of Jefferson Proving Ground.

While recognizing the sacrifice of these families, this volume also acknowledges the contributions of military service personnel and civilians who operated JPG 55 years, making sure our soldiers received tested and proven munitions, which ultimately saved the lives of countless Americans. With JPG closing in 1995 as a result of the recommendation of the Congressionally mandated Commission for Base Realignment and Closure, this narrative also looks at the impact on the community and how JPG has come full circle now being managed as Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuge.

Gone are the homes and farms that once dotted the landscape, but the memories are still vivid. Take time to understand what makes this place special, and share the pride of an installation that helped to protect this nation for over half a century.

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