

The C/DPHS is an association of individuals dedicated to the preservation of the history of our community. To the preservation of the region's oral history, literary history, social history, graphic and pictorial history, and our history as represented by the region's artifacts and structures. To the preservation of this history for future generations. To the art of making this common heritage accessible to the public. And to the act of collaborating with other individuals and organizations sharing similar goals.

THE
CLAYTON/DEER PARK
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Mortarboard

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All In A Day's Work

The society has been working with former area resident Alvin 'Tuffy' Luhr on a transcript detailing the events of Tuffy's life. Although the story is not yet ready for print, below is a small segment of Tuffy's recollections, this particular one concerning life on the farm of his step-father, Clayton's Peter Berg, in the mid 1930's.

Tuffy told us ...

"We were using horses to work the farm at Clayton up until Dad got a tractor. Dad bought his first team, with harnesses, for \$125 from a guy who lived about five or six miles west of Deer Park. I

think it was \$100 for the two horses, and \$25 for the harnesses. We used the team for everything from plowing to hauling wagons of cordwood."

"The farm depended on the horses, so Dad was fussy about how they were cared for. We'd keep them in the barn at night. In the morning, we had to feed them at least an hour before starting work – to make sure they had time to eat everything. It took around half an hour to get them harness up for work. At night we made sure the horses were clean and that their bedding was down, and then at 8 or 9 we had to go out to the barn and make

**Peter Michie with his team, Queen and Dolly, on the Michie's Big Foot Valley farm.
Mid to late 1930's.**



Photo courtesy of Peter Coffin

Free — Take One

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sure they had something to munch on at night and so forth.”

“We also had to keep watch on the tack – patching whenever necessary. To keep the harnesses pliable and moisture resistant, Dad would treat the leather with this mineral oil concoction every once in awhile.”

“The first team Dad bought was a real good team. When they got too old for the amount of work Dad had to do, he sold them to Pete Michie out in Big Foot Valley.”

“Michie was known for caring for his animals. When he worked them he’d cut a switch from an aspen tree, but he’d leave the twigs and leaves on the switch so it wouldn’t hurt the horses. I think the swishing sound was enough.”

“For years, whenever we were out that way, I’d see those horses. Most of the time they were out roaming around the pasture.”

“On our farm we worked with horses until I was out of high school. Then Dad bought a little Farmall ‘A’ tractor. It was just big enough to do the work of one team. And it was running day and night.”

“It was so handy. Start it up and you were ready to go to work right then. I think Dad paid somewhere around \$800 for it new. There were bigger tractors. And a lot of guys needed bigger tractors. But dad got what he figured he could afford.”

“Compared to horses, that machine was fantastic.”

Society associate Pete Coffin of Deer Park sent the society several pictures of his grandfather working a team on the family’s Big Foot Valley farm. Pete stated that Queen and Dolly were the names of the horses seen in the photo attached to this article. When Tuffy Luhr was asked if he could remember the names of the horses his step-father had sold to Pete Michie, without hesitation Tuffy said “Dolly and Queen.”

There seems little doubt that the horses

seen in the Peter Michie photo are the same ones Pete Berg sold when they became too old, and the same ones Tuffy worked when he lived on his step-father’s farm.

Of Grandfather Pete Michie, Peter Coffin said, “He was an old man when he moved to the Big Foot Valley farm, so it’s unlikely he’d work his team too hard. I remember my father cleaning out the Michie stables after Grandfather became unable to stay on the farm. Although I don’t remember what he did with them, I recall Dad having to get rid of a set of work harnesses. It was the late 1940’s, and there wasn’t any demand for tack — tractors were just too common.”

“Grandfather was a gentle man, and I can’t imagine him physically abusing animals. Stories said Grandfather spoiled his animals, letting them get too fat for hard work. My dad and mom said Grandfather kept his horses so fat you could set a table on their wide backs.”

“My father, Elden Frank (Jack) Coffin, would have been livid had Grandfather abused his horses. There was a prominent family in Deer Park that was known to mistreat their teams, and dad could never talk about them without open contempt.”

“As a side note, there was a man by the name of Cox in Deer Park that maintained a team of horses well into the 1950’s. Because he was so tall and skinny, everyone called him ‘Slim’. In the summer he and his wife would mow and buck-rake the grass on vacant Deer Park lots for cheap winter fodder for the horses. He had a house and barn located on south Colville Street—about where the Middle School (the new high school in 1959) athletic track is located.”

We want to thank Tuffy and Peter for their insights into an earlier time, and to remind readers to keep their eyes open for the upcoming publication of Tuffy’s recollections of life in and around this community.

Society Minutes — September, 2008

In attendance: Bill Sebright, Mark Wagner, Patricia Parker, Wally Lee Parker, Rob Higgins, Bob Clouse, Mary Clouse, Don Ball, Marilyn Reilly, Warren Nord, Betty Burdette, Sharon Clark, Eldon ‘Swede’ Hutchins, and Tom Costigan.

Society president Bill Sebright called the meeting to order at 09:00 AM.

Society treasurer Mark Wagner submitted his report regarding the society’s finances. Said report was accepted, and added to the official min-

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utes.

On Friday, September 5th, Marilyn Magney Newkirk held a public introduction and signing of her new book recounting the history of northwestern Spokane County and southeastern Steven County. This volume, “*The Legacy of Yesteryear*”, is Marilyn’s second regional history book. Her first, “*Spokane, 22nd Street, and The Fifties*”, was published in 2005. The material in Marilyn’s new book was drawn from interviews with local area residents, as well as local literary and newspaper accounts.

Quite a few society members met Marilyn at her Deer Park Library signing. Marilyn gave Lorraine and Don Ball, Betty Burdette, Bill Sebright, and Wally Parker ‘thank you’ copies of her new book. She also donated a copy to the C/DPHS archives. The ‘thank you’ was in reference to general assistance, and to our permission to use published C/DPHS material in her book.

Society webmaster Robert Clouse met Marilyn at her Saturday signing at Aunties Bookstore in Spokane—and was impressed. And Marilyn Reilly arranged to purchase 10 copies of Ms Newkirk’s new book at discount, and at Missus Reilly’s own expense, for resale on the society’s behalf.

There was some discussion of the positioning of the C/DPHS booth at the Clayton Fair this last August. It was generally decided that next year we should attempt to find a place closer to the food booths — an obvious area of increased foot traffic and visibility.

Tom Costigan, editor of the Deer Park Tribune, has been researching the location of the ‘probable’ first cemetery in the Deer Park area. Marilyn Reilly thinks it might be where her boys camped during a Boy Scout outing many years ago — on what was then the Jack Hopkins place. Tom’s source material placed the location at “one mile north of Cleveland Road”, T29N R42E Section 34. It’s believed that one concrete headstone may still exist on the site — though the wooden crosses of the other graves have doubtless all disappeared by now. We’re looking forward to Tom’s discovery of the facts in this matter.

Sharon Schimke of Deer Park’s Zion Lutheran Church contacted the society regarding the original location of the Trysil Church. Sharon Clark let her know that it was located on Spotted Road, south of the McLean ranch and almost straight

across the road from O. T. Westby’s place — which was once occupied by the Warren Stevens family.

Editor of print publications for the society, Wally Lee Parker, reported that the upcoming volume about the life of former Clayton, Deer Park, and Loon Lake resident Alvin ‘Tuffy’ Luhr appears to be on track for publication in December. It is slated to be printed in volume 5 or the ‘*Reports*’, and will likely fill the entire issue.

Wally is attempting to keep track of the cost of printer toner and other print expenses in order to get a better grasp on the cost/benefit ratio of in-house publishing. Wally prints the society’s books and newsletters on his home laser printer, with the society covering the cost of materials. A limited number of free copies of the society newsletter, the *Mortarboard*, are distributed in the local area. Wally hopes to be able to gauge the break-even point — that point being the number of booklets that must be sold at the requested rate in order to pay for the free editions of the *Mortarboard* distributed.

It was pointed out that there are a number of advantages to in-house printing — not the least of which is quality control. But there’s also the fact that small volume printing allows errors to be corrected and put into print much quicker than when we were printing booklets in lots of 200, since the number of volumes in stock at any given time is much lower. With small volume printings of twenty to twenty five volume lots, if a correctable error is found, the uncorrected stock left in inventory is negligible — meaning the number of uncorrected issues that will be put into circulation is significantly reduced. And any fatale errors that would require recalling an entire run of booklets would involve far fewer editions — and much less expense.

Society webmaster Bob Clouse reported that there are now 94 “pages” on the society’s website. Twenty-four of these “pages” are essentially text files of varying lengths. Among these are PDF facsimile versions of all prior volumes of the society newsletters. Others within that group include assorted stories from prior society publications. The remaining 70 pages are mainly photo albums — ten of which are of Clayton.

Several months ago our highest website activity was 803 different email addresses signing on one or more times. Last month that was down to 569 visitors. After the first sign-in in any given month, we don’t know how many times that particu-

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lar visitor may return during the rest of the month.

Bob also reported that Gene Nord's pictures of moving the old Clayton grange to the Nord farm are now on the website.

New society member Betty Burdette brought pictures of the original Williams Valley Grange — photos likely taken in the early 1930's. She also had several photos of the 1990 Williams Valley School reunion.

Betty brought a Clayton brick plant time-card that her father, Earl Wright, had filled out. Clayton's Eddie Olson had saved the card from

when both he and Earl worked at the factory.

Bill said he would place issues regarding society membership and the degree of formality that should be observed at society meetings on next months agenda. He asked the membership to consider these topics.

Having exhausted what appeared to be current business, the official portion of the meeting was adjourned at 10:04 AM. General gabbing and gossip ensued.

Letters To The Society

**Please Note:
All comments, corrections, and criticisms printed
can and will be edited by the society for clarity, brevity,
and — if necessary — content.**

This note is from Florene (Eickmeyer) Moore.

Deer Park High School class of 1963 had a small get together at Mix Park on July 26th. It was among the many class reunions held in the park following the Settlers Parade. Our class graduated 56 people, in gold caps and gowns — in part to celebrate what was then the school's 50th year.

The day in the park was a 45-year reunion attended by 22 former classmates and some spouses. At least 3 in attendance had never been to any of our class reunions before, so we really enjoyed seeing them — seeing how much gray hair we have, and comparing notes about retirement and grandchildren. We took pictures of each other, though some of the classmates seemed camera-shy and slipped away early. One classmate had escorted her eldest sister to her 60 year reunion, and then happened to see that her own class was gathering nearby.

The main purpose of this get together was to renew contact information in preparation for our fiftieth reunion in another five years. We have expanded the list of classmates to include anyone who was ever in the class, whether or not they completed graduation.

Among those attending the Mix Park get-together were Allen Shallbetter, Rick Barnes, Al Holford, Ken Fesser, Rod Davis, LaFern

(Rasmussen) Janson, Florene (Eickmeyer) Moore, Brian Layton, Shirley (Sevey) Waller, Warren Kendall, John Grundstrom, Don Wiese, Sharon (Pulliam) Hawn, Neal Tobeck, Nancy Kilgore, Bill Sebright, Ralph Tew, Al Barnes, Glenn Perrins, Nancy (Lyons) Liner, Shirley Stanford, and Leo Cuff.

Anyone wishing to contact Florene regarding her reunion efforts can write or email the society and we will forward the message.

Karen Martino sent us the following recap of this year's Clayton Community Fair.

"This year's fair was a great success. We grow a little more each year — this being our third at the Clayton grounds."

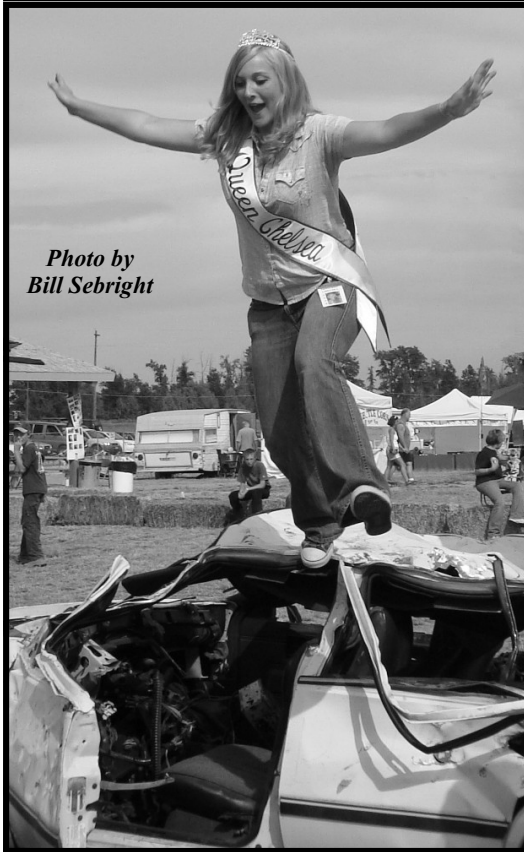
"We had many hundreds of volunteer hours donated. We are so grateful to all the businesses and individuals who donated products, services, and time. Without their help this fair year would not have been a success."

"The children's games included throwing ping pong balls into a cup of water with a little fish swimming in it — the prize being to keep the fish. Other popular games were the stick-horse races, the 'Pot-of-Gold', and looking for coins hidden in a stack of loose hay."

"For judging, this year's entries included home grown vegetables, sewing and quilting, flowers, creature features, photos and art — not to mention pigs, horses, cows, chickens, rabbits, goats, sheep, cats, and everything in between."

"As always, the vintage farm equipment attracted a ton of interest."

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*Photo by
Bill Sebright*

Newly crowned queen of the Clayton Community Fair, Chelsea Jansen, exhibits high spirits as she steps from the roof of the fairground's bash car. Purchasing swings at the car - intended as an annual fairground event - helps fund the fair royalty's activities. Among Chelsea's duties for the next year — according to Karen Martino, royalty supervisor — will be attending parades and fairs in other communities as a representative of Clayton's Community Fair, and helping with the Pumpkin Land Winter Fest and other community project. Chelsea is a student at Deer Park High School.

"The Clayton Grange provided a free breakfast for all the kids showing animals at the fair, and assisted the Clayton Junior Livestock Committee with the Buyers Lunch held on Saturday."

"We appreciate all of the exceptional buy-

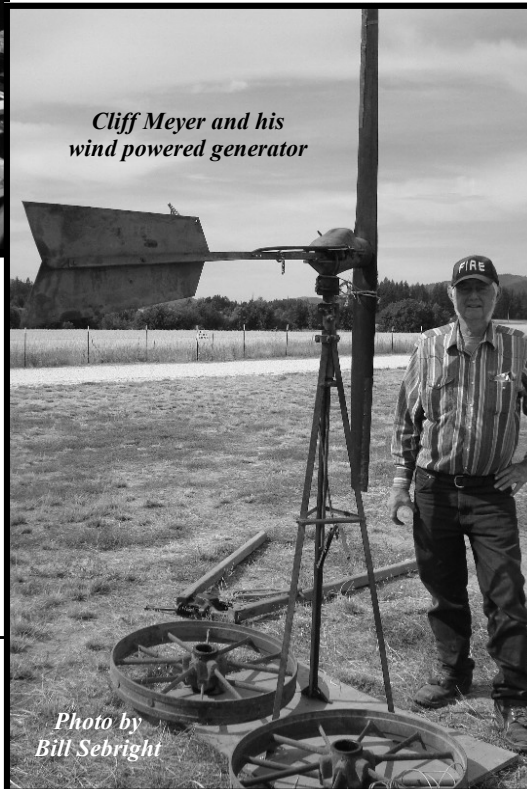
ers support at the livestock sale — they always go above and beyond when it comes to supporting our kids."

"Our fair will only get better as time goes on. We will always be a grand old country fair where children can explore, investigate, and learn. And where adults can enjoy catching up with old friends, and make new ones."

Society President Bill Sebright sent the Mortarboard photos taken of some of Cliff Meyer's antique machinery when they were on display at this year's Clayton fair.

Below is Cliff standing by the wind generator that had been mounted on the roof of his grandparents home. His grandparents lived just ten miles from Grand Coulee Dam, but didn't get power to their property until 1950.

A wire went from generator down to four



*Cliff Meyer and his
wind powered generator*

*Photo by
Bill Sebright*

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batteries located in the house. The batteries powered a radio, a light in the living room, and a light in the kitchen.

Cliff also brought a unique piece of horse powered machinery as seen below. As Bill explained ...

“Cliff said they called it a hay press — not a stationary baler. The horse was hooked to a wooden bar at the far end of the bailer’s beam. The horse would walk in circles, stepping over the beam. The front wheels — attached at the point of the pivot — were taken off, and part of the rear wheels buried in order to lower the beam and make it easier for the horse to step over it. Power moved from the circular pivot by a driveshaft running the length of the beam.”

“One man put hay in the baler, another one brought it to the baler, and one poked and tied the wire bales. Another person might be needed to manage the horse — depending on the horse. Some

would respond to voice commands alone.”

“Cliff reported that his maternal grandfather, August Fox, homesteaded between Priest River and Sandpoint, on the southeast side of the Pend Oreille River. In 1913 he bought the hay press. Hay was stacked loose in the summer, and made into bales during the winter. Wagon loads of bales were taken to the rail siding at Vay, stacked into boxcars, and ship to livery stables in Spokane. The machine was retired about 1940.”

Bill reported that Cliff Meyer has brought other antique farm equipment to prior fairs—a stationary thresher and a stationary baler — and his presentations are always fascinating.

Deer Park’s Pete Coffin sent the photo on the top of the next page to the society with a question. The photo appears to have been taken during an Old Settlers picnic at Mix Park — on the grandstand. Pete’s grandmother, Kate Coffin, is the lady seated between the two gentlemen. Pete is asking if anyone can identify the other three adults in the photo — and if anyone might have some idea of the year the photo was taken. If anyone can supply the





requested information, they are asked to contact either the Society, or Pete Coffin directly.

Pete added that he couldn't resist telling this otherwise unrelated story.

"The old Warner/Westby station on south main was operated by a couple of Californians (Gosnell/Wylie) in the early 1960's — after Bob Warner took over Alm's Chevron distributorship. They sold in turn out to Eugene Lubess from Spokane. Lubess had just installed a new electronic testing machine, and badgered my dad to have his old 1950 Plymouth analyzed. It was a Sunday morning, and Dad had to leave for his work in Lincoln that afternoon. Dad foolishly let Lubess hook up the machine. Lubess turned the machine on and the first thing heard an electronic pop. The mechanic had no idea what had happened. The car wouldn't start, and had to be pushed out of the garage. It sat in the

lot while Dad considered choking Lubess to death. After a number of tries, the car started — though what caused it to start was as big a mystery as what caused it to not start before."

"For about 3 or 4 months the car ran fine. Then, whenever the car was going sixty or more miles an hour, it would act as if the key had been turned off."

"Dad was livid. Finally Charley Hawn — at least I think it was Charley — had his head under the hood and, while looking at the distributor, found that the little primary wire's insulation had burned off where it went into the body of the distributor. The wire was changed, the car ran fine afterward, and Lubess was saved. Not forgiven, just saved."

the address for your Mortarboard emails is
print_publications@claytondeerparkhistoricalsociety.com

Over The Kitchen Table
Ruminations Regarding The Business End Of Missile Site Road
— by Wally Lee Parker —

It was Thursday, the 21st day of August. It was cool. After a hot, bright summer, the last several days of rain soaked thunderstorms had moved on, leaving a thin, humid, afternoon overcast. I was piloting my Toyota pickup eastward on Crawford Street — out of Deer Park. Bill Sebright, president of the Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society, was riding shotgun.

We rolled pass the turnoff to the high school, pass the Evergreen Truss Company, pass the eastward creep of something we thought we'd never live long enough to see — a suburb to the town. We passed all this on our way to our 13:00 hour meeting at the north end of Missile Site Road. We were about to tour Deer Park's former missile base — now an explosive's storage bunker for a company called Northwest Energetic Services.

Bill Sebright had made the arrangements. As Bill explained, "While I was substitute teaching at the Deer Park Middle School this last spring, I was talking with Dan Huffman about some of the society's local history projects. Dan's a music and computer teacher at the school. The discussion got around to the Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society's book about Deer Park's cold-war-era missile base."

I know something about the society's book — *Standing Watch: the Story of Deer Park's Atlas Intercontinental Ballistic Missile*. I wrote it.

Bill continued, "Dan knows Lori Lipke. She works for the explosives company now operating at the former missile site. Dan suggested I contact Lori to see if I could arrange for a tour of the old missile bunker."

Lori, who works in the company's office, was really nice about attempting to accommodate us. One of her superiors was concerned about us taking photographs of the 'product' and the 'storage bunker'. There also seemed to be a feeling that there was a lot of misinformation about what the company was doing at the site, and the managers were concerned as to whether our visit might compound that even more.

After all was said, we reluctantly agreed to leave our cameras behind, and the tour was on.

Down a narrow paved road, crowded by pines, we rolled to a stop by the portable building used as the company's office. Dan Huffman was waiting for us.

After introductions and a short conference, we entered the office. Lori met us. She assured us the tour was still on, and we waited a few minutes until she was able to arrange for someone to cover for her at the office.

Bill, Dan, and I piled into the Toyota and followed Lori's car onto the base proper. The area was singularly unimpressive — since most everything of interest was underground.

We were now driving over what was once some of the most sensitive national security ground in the entire nation. I pointed this out by saying, "Gentlemen, I hope you realize that if this was forty-five years ago, and we were here, by now we would likely either be laying face down with an M-1 pointed at the backs of our heads, or quite dead." After all, missile site security guards were well known for being rather humorless in so far as intruders were concerned.

Standing on the north side of the missile base proper were several large sheds. Another metal shed stood alone, several hundred yards away against the southeastern tree line. Lori pulled to a stop and stepped out onto the gravel roadway. I rolled down my window. "Pull your truck down the ramp and park along the right retaining wall — by the small entry door. Wait there while I get Walter Dukes, one of our drivers, to come unlock the bunker for us."

The bunker was actually two buildings. To the southeast the larger complex containing the missile bay. To the northwest the smaller command and power generation complex. The two were connected by a tunnel, and separated by a blast door.

The area under which the bunker was buried was somewhat elevated compared to the surrounding land. Burying the bunker wasn't intended to obscure its location. It was buried to offer it some protection from a conventional or nuclear blast. Otherwise the ground above was marked by numerous pipes, ventilation stacks, and several large,

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horizontal slab doors — including the massive one covering the missile bay itself. From our location, I couldn't tell to what degree the bunker hatch had been covered over with soil in the years since the site was deactivated.

All this aside, it was with some wonder that I guided the Toyota down the tarmac loading ramp to the missile bay. This was the ramp down which Atlas E missiles were backed. This was the ramp down which 3.75 megaton thermonuclear warheads were transported. And at the end of this ramp was the huge door leading into a missile bay bunker that once contained an early version of the world's ultimate weapon combination.

At the bottom of the ramp, built flush into the surface of the ramp's right side retaining wall, was the solid steel personnel entry door — looking uncommonly small and insignificant compared to the mammoth launch bay entry door just beyond. Unlike the overhead hatches, both these doors were still quite functional.

If it's possible to think of a nuclear weapons system as primitive, in certain ways the Atlas E would fit that description. For example, at least several times a year, on clear evenings, the huge missile bay door would be cranked to the side so an airman with a theodolite — a sophisticated surveyor's transit — could take sightings of the North Star from the bottom of this ramp (probably the reason that all Atlas E missile bunkers were laid out with the entry ramp on the north side of the complex). Those readings would be used for line-of-sight fine-tuning of the mechanics of the missile's guidance system.

The most advanced part of the missile — the eight cubic feet of solid state on-board computer — was less intelligent than a modern wristwatch calculator. But at that moment it was state of the art — and top secret (and as with most top secrets, probably unknown to almost everyone except the Russians, Chinese, and Israelis). And even as primitive as the state of the art was, it could still rain unstoppable destruction down on a target many thousands of miles away — and do so with all necessary accuracy.

Although I had written a booklet for the society about this bunker, I hadn't been able to arrange a tour of the site while writing the story — probably due to the same concerns the explosives company's management had recently expressed.

Instead I had depended on declassified government documents and the memories of several dozen former missileers. I was anxious to find out how closely those diagrams, photos, and descriptions, after being reconstructed inside my imagination, meshed with the physical reality.

As Walt pulled up, Lori asked us, "Did you bring flashlights? There's lots of dark corners and holes."

Bill, always the diplomat, replied, "I hadn't realized we were supposed to."

Lori, waving her flashlight, returned, "Just don't step out of the light without one of us along."

Walt unlocked the metal personnel entry door, and swung it outward. Beyond this door was a small vestibule perhaps four feet deep, then a second door. This second door of heavy plate steel also opened toward the outside.

This vestibule was originally a security containment area. It was much smaller than it had appeared on the diagrams — so small that two men secured between the doors would have had difficulty pulling the inner door open and squeezing around the edge. Watching the five of us walk through the portal, I couldn't see how a five man launch crew would manage.

Spokane's Bob Lemley had been a Ballistic Missile Analyst Technician with Fairchild Air Force Base's 567th Strategic Missile Squadron — and an Atlas E launch crew member. He was also one of my most valuable consultants while I was writing our booklet — *'Standing Watch'*. I asked him to explain how security protocol passing through such a cramped impoundment was possible for a five man crew.

"The entire missile complex was being monitored by a closed circuit television system," Bob replied. "Most of the cameras were fixed, though there was a movable camera topside that turned 360 degrees to sweep the entire complex. Other fixed cameras were located strategically throughout the exterior complex — among those was one over the large launch bay door, observing the entire loading ramp, and one over the personnel entry door, giving a detailed view of anyone requesting entry."

"Views from all these cameras could be displayed on monitors in the launch control room."

"Incoming airmen would have identified themselves at the main gate by telephone link to the

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bunker before that gate would have been unlocked. Once inside the perimeter fence they were under constant observation as they approached the personnel door. If protocol had not been followed to that point, the approaching airmen would be challenged by the outside guards.”

“Inside, the missile bay had several cameras, the warhead was under constant watch by a camera, the long tunnel leading to the launch control room had its camera, and the impoundment area between the outer and inner personnel entry doors had a camera.”

“The impoundment area was very small — really designed for only one person at a time. But there was sufficient room for that one person to pull the outer door shut behind, then pull the inner door open into the impoundment area.”

“Missile crews consisted of five men. The missile crew commander was the first person through the door system — the outside door being unlocked remotely from the launch control room. He would pull the exterior door shut behind, and it was relocked from the control room.”

“Confined in the vestibule, and under observation, the crew commander used the impoundment area’s telephone to talk to the on site crew commander — giving him the day’s password. Once the incoming commander’s identity was confirmed, and it was clear he was not under duress from the outside, both interior and exterior doors were remotely unlocked, and the entire crew was allowed to enter.”

“Crew officers knew each other by sight and voice. Other incoming airmen, such as maintenance personnel, would be left in the impoundment area until one of the inside personnel was able to meet them at the second door and escort them directly to the commander for identification. After that, one of the missile crew — often me — would have to babysit the maintenance crewman — keep him under constant observation — as he did his work.”

Bob’s explanation solved the extra small impoundment area problem.

Entering the bunker, we moved westward down the 20 some foot long access tunnel. The site’s two tunnels were both made from corrugated metal pipe. Enough concrete had been poured and leveled on the bottoms of these pipes to form a walkway several feet wide. At the end of this first tunnel

was a landing. From this dividing point the second tunnel ran north toward the launch control bunker. A doorway and a few steps down in the opposite direction took us into the launch bay equipment area. This large space — approximately forty-five by one-hundred and some odd feet — at one time contained the logic units used to monitor the missile’s preflight condition, and store its flight program. In the southern portion of this room were all the pumps, engines, tanks, and control devices needed for retracting the overhead launch bay hatch, elevating the missile, and pumping the petroleum part of the rocket’s propellant into the missile from storage tanks buried outside the bunkers walls. The room had long since been stripped of every vestige of its original purpose. Scattered across the floor were pallets stacked with sacks of the Northwest Energetic’s product.

A doorway through the thick concrete eastern wall led into the missile launch bay. At the north end of this bay was the huge metal entry door — just outside of which my Toyota sat.

The missile would have rested in this twenty foot wide, twenty foot high, and one hundred and ten foot long bay — would have rested slung under its erection tower. The missile’s engines would have been on the south end of the bay. When the missile was erected and launched, the rocket’s blast would have been directed down a flame tunnel which curved to the south and reemerged at the surface some distance beyond. The tunnel’s exit was capped with a sliding hatch that would retract at about the same time the launch bay’s overhead hatch was withdrawn. The well dropping into the flame tunnel was covered with wooden planks.

Again, almost everything metal had been salvaged from this area.

Overhead was four hundred tons of hatch. When operational, that four hundred tons could be jolted upward six inches by pressurized nitrogen gas, and then winched away to the west — all in thirty seconds. Without the original equipment, the only practical way to remove the hatch was jack-hammers and dump trucks.

Walt Dukes stated that on numerous occasions he has parked two fully loaded semi trailers and their trucks side by side in the bay, with plenty of room to spare.

We moved on into the most easterly section of the bunker — the liquid oxygen room. This area was roughly eighteen feet wide and seventy

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some feet long. The floor level varied, some section being four or more feet lower than others. The east wall was pierced by a corrugated tunnel that once housed the liquid oxygen tank. The entire area had been packed with the machinery necessary to maintain and pump the volatile three hundred plus degrees below zero liquefied gas. Most everything metal had now been stripped away.

We retreated back to the landing at the west end of the entry tunnel, then walked north along the long tunnel to the command section. This corrugated metal shaft had once been lined with power and communication conduits. Now a single plastic retrofit conduit carried electrical wires to that section of the bunker.

The wall at the end of the tunnel still carried the painted Strategic Air Command shield. Around that wall to the left was a door leading to the launch command room. And straight on was a half dozen steps leading down to the bunker's kitchen, and then on into the power room.

The small kitchen, except for a missing refrigerator, was exactly as it had looked when the site was decommissioned in the spring of 1965. The range was enameled in a not quite pleasing shade of Autumn Gold — an upscale choice when the site was activated in 1961.

West of the kitchen was the doorway into the empty power generation room. When operational, the entire missile site was totally isolated from the outside world. Not a single power line entered the site — and not a single phone line entered or left the site. All power used by the base was created by the huge diesel generators situated in this room. One of those two generators was running at all times. During launch drills both would be activated.

As we walked around the remains of the pillars on which the motors had set, we noted a dark patch covering the floor. A flashlight across the dark revealed the patch to actually be a mirror calm surface of startlingly clear water, areas of which were a centimeter or two deep, and other areas of which dropped at least four feet down into a maze of concrete trenches and open pipes.

“Okay”, Bill said. “Safety hint. Let’s do exactly what Lori said and not walk into dark corners.”

In the northeast corner of this room was the command bunker's escape hatch. Opened by a

cable attached to the wall some distance away, the ceiling hatch consisted of a bottom door — now hanging down by its hinges — then perhaps four feet of circular pipe lined with metal bars intended for hand and foot grips. This section of pipe would originally have been filled with sand to cushion against outside blast and radiation. Pulling the cable released the lower hatch, allowing the sand to drop to the floor. Metal bars cast into the wall below the hatch allowed the airmen to climb through the bottom hatch. Once inside the pipe, they'd open the outer hatch and climb out of the bunker.

A hallway to the east side of the crew's kitchen led to the crew quarters, shower room, and such.

The red door first seen when rounding the wall from the access tunnel led into launch control. Signs indicated that this was an area in which the ‘two man rule’ applied. No less than two authorized members of the crew were to be in this section at one time. No one should have ever been alone in this area — not out of concern that they might launch the missile by themselves (a possibility that the layout of the launch system made physically impossible), but rather because of the top secret codebooks always accessible in the area.

The space below the elevated wooden floor of this area was used to thread webs of cables to and from the machines in the room above.

At one time this dim and dusty room was the potential launch point for World War III. Now it sits as still and lifeless as the tombs containing the bones of the two men who once came within a breath of ordering the death of an entire planet.

Once back into the sunlight, we all commented that the complex was smaller than we had expected — expectations probably inflated by our recognition of the site's historic importance.

On the way out of the site we drove by the microwave pillbox — a rectangular concrete box with an opaque fiberglass dome on the southwest wall through which microwaves were beamed southwest toward Lookout Mountain. This was part of the secure communication web connecting all nine Atlas missile bases with the 567th Missile Squadron's headquarters at Fairchild. After the site had passed into civilian hands, a metal building had been built over part of the pillbox.

As we left Northwest Energetic Services' property, I consider to what extent my booklet about

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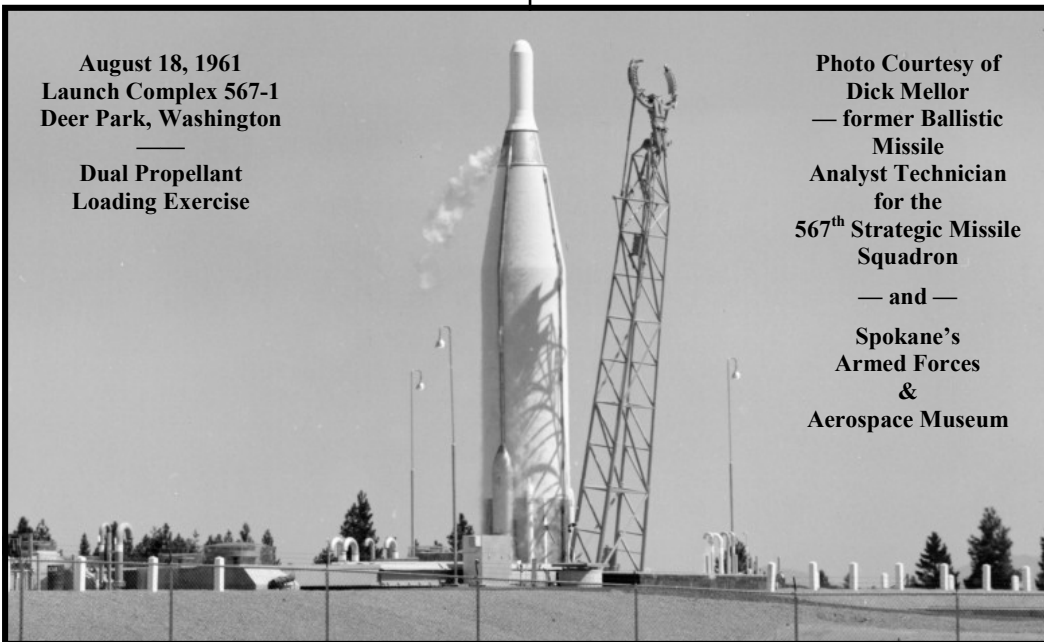
the missile site might have differed if I'd had access to the site while writing. I'd have used a tape measure to get accurate measurements. I'd have had a much better sense of the scale of the place. But since the bulk of the story was drawn from original government documents, and the recollections on the missileers who served at Deer Park and the other Atlas E bunkers around the area and around the nation, there's little I feel I would want to change.

Over the years inaccuracies and misunderstandings about the weapon systems have become commonplace. The Atlas E bunkers are often described as silos — which they obviously were not. People envision the missiles sitting upright, fueled, and just a push-button away from launch during the first several weeks of the Cuban Missile Crisis. The nature of the Atlas E missile's mechanical systems would have made that exceedingly dangerous for

both the missile and crew. Besides which, the missileers manning Fairchild's bunkers during the crisis have indicated such did not happen. And then there are suggestions that the Deer Park bunker is the nexus of a vast, underground, cold war survival complex. But for those entertaining that X-file style theory, there's little point in suggesting otherwise.

Bill, Dan, and I want to thank the management of Northwest Energetic Services for allowing us to view the remains of Deer Park's missile base. Due to the nature of the business being carried out on the property, public tours, though likely popular, would be extremely problematic.

And we especially want to thank Lori Lipke and Walter Dukes for quite literally shining some light into several exceedingly dark corners of Deer Park's history.



**August 18, 1961
Launch Complex 567-1
Deer Park, Washington**

**Dual Propellant
Loading Exercise**

**Photo Courtesy of
Dick Mellor
— former Ballistic
Missile
Analyst Technician
for the
567th Strategic Missile
Squadron
— and —
Spokane's
Armed Forces
&
Aerospace Museum**

Missile Base History Available Through Society

Volume II of the *Reports to the Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society* recounts the history of the Deer Park missile base, the Atlas E rocket, and the work of the now decommissioned 567th Strategic Missile Squadron that was once stationed at Fairchild Air Force Base near Spokane.

This 48 page booklet is available for a small donation at the Clayton Drive In, at the Loon Lake Historical Society's Old Schoolhouse, or by writing the Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society, Box 293, Clayton, WA 99110

Special thanks to proofreaders Sharon Clark, Kathy Millick, Jay Hubal, and Sue Newell.