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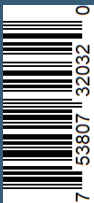
HE IS RISEN!
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Morgan County Today

Psalm 100:3
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WEEKLY WEATHER



Tue 15	62°/40°	
Wed 16	66°/41°	
Thu 17	72°/53°	
Fri 18	80°/61°	
Sat 19	82°/62°	
Sun 20	82°/63°	
Mon 21	79°/61°	



Know what's below.
Call before you dig.



Ms. Avery Pearl

Pet Columnist

Pet Perspective

with Ms. Avery Pearl

Break A Leg

5 years ago, when I was a puppy, I fell and broke my leg. It hurt really bad.

I only screamed one time. Then I just cried, cause I am tough! No sense in screaming and squalling. My Mimi was boo-hooing, while rushing me to the doctor. I kept giving her kisses, cause she was crying.

Well, when we got to the doctors office, Ms Heather got me right in to see Dr Bristol. I kept giving them kisses, too. Everyone around me seemed so upset.

Any-woof, Dr Bristol got my leg straightened out and put in a splint. It sure did hurt. But, I kept giving her kisses cause she was wuffin' on me and telling me I was such a good girl.

Dr Bristol got me into the Vet at UT Animal Hospital really fast. They had to do surgery on my leg, because the break was so bad.

I know it cost a lot of money to have my leg fixed but, I am so grateful that Mimi and Pappy did it for me. The vet said most people would have just put me down because they couldn't pay for it. Mimi and Pap say that they are happy they did because I have brought them so much joy, love, and laughter.

For more of my Pet Perspective like and follow me on Facebook at Ms Avery Pearl.





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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

The Deer Lodge Abner Ross Center meet on the third Monday of the month at 6:00 PM.

Coalfield Genealogical and Historical Society meets the second Tuesday of every month at the Senior Citizens Building at 6:00 PM.

Morgan County Republican Party meets the last Thursday of every month at 7:00 PM at the American Legion in Wartburg.

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— In Loving Memory —

David Trampous Phillips, 55
United States Veteran



David Trampous Phillips, age 55 of Harriman, passed away April 3, 2025 at his home.

He is preceded in death by his parents, David and Thelma Phillips; grandparents, Bill an Myrtle Morgan; and brother, Randy Phillips.

He is survived by his loving wife, Melissa Phillips; daughter, Nicole (Martin) Pulley of Kentucky; son, Joshua Phillips; siblings: Missy, Brian, and

Benji; grandchildren: Skyler, Xure, Lucas, Chloe, Priscilla, and Dominic; along with a host of extended family and friends.

The family will receive friends Monday April 7, 2025 from 5:00 – 7:00 at Schubert Funeral Home in Wartburg. David’s wishes were to be cremated and the family will have a private graveside service at a later date.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of David Trampous Phillips.

Jackie Franklin Branstetter Sr., 77
United States Army Veteran



Jackie Franklin Branstetter, age 77, of Deer Lodge passed away on Friday, April 11, 2025 peacefully at home surrounded by his family. He fought long and hard in his battle with cancer.

He was a 1965 graduate of Sunbright High School where he played basketball, baseball and football for the Tigers.

In September 1966, he entered the Army where he was promoted to sergeant while stationed in Thailand. Most of the career he spent working in cable construction across the country.

In lieu of flowers, the family request that donations be made to St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital.

The family will receive friends Friday, April 19, 2025 at Schubert Funeral Home in Wartburg from 5:00-6:00 p.m. with a memorial service to follow at 6:00 p.m. with Bro. Charles Webb officiating.

Schubert Funeral Home s honored to serve the family of Jackie Franklin Branstetter, Sr.

Lawrence Edward Hines
United States Army Veteran



Lawrence Edward Hines, age 80, of Wartburg, TN passed away peacefully surrounded by his family early Tuesday morning, April 8, 2025. He was born in Gobey, TN to Raymond and Lorene Hines on October 20, 1944. He was a follower of Jesus Christ and gave his heart and life to him. Those that knew him knew he loved traveling, the beach, keeping a lawn that could double as a golf course, and watching westerns. There was nothing in the world he loved more than his family.

Lawrence retired from his business, Tennessee Coatings, in January 2021. He was privileged to employee many of the citizens of Morgan County. It brought him joy to bring business and industry back to his home. He served in the Army as a tank operator and also served as a guard at Brushy Mountain State Penitentiary.

Lawrence and his beloved wife, Eva were generous and discrete donors to many philanthropies. They provided funds for Central Middle School to send the 6th grade class to NASA in Alabama many years. They remain faithful donors to Shriners Hospital and St. Jude Children’s Hospital. They donated the land to Roane State Community College for the Morgan County Campus in Wartburg and provided funds for many scholarships for young adults to attend.

Lawrence is preceded in death by his father Raymond Hines; mother Lorene Potter Hines; brothers Raymond Hines, Jr., Clifton Hines, Russell Hines, Jackie Hines, Wayne Hines, Ernest Hines and Robert Hines and his sister Mary Human.

He is survived by his wife Eva Mae Hines; son Scott Hines and daughter-in-law Marla Hines; granddaughters Savannah Coker and Shianne Adkisson and their spouses Christopher Coker and Forrest Adkisson, and great grandchildren Theodore Coker and Bennett Coker. He was also survived by his sisters Della Trout, Betty Ellison, and Deena Jenkins and a host of beloved family members that he thought the world of and will miss so much.

He had 3 children from a previous marriage Adwina Hass, Freddy Hines, and Sherrie Davis.

In lieu of flowers the family request donations be made to St. Jude Childrens Hospital or Shriners Hospital.

In honoring Lawrence’s wishes, the family has chosen a private service.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Lawrence Edward Hines.

Obituaries must come from a funeral home to be in the newspaper.



— In Loving Memory —

Franklin D. “Bunk” Stringfield



Franklin D. “Bunk” Stringfield, passed away Sunday, April 13, 2025. He was dearly loved by many nieces, nephews, and friends. Bunk was a kind, gentle man that was always happy to be around his family.

Bunk is preceded in death by his parents Roy and Bertha Stringfield; sisters Nellie McCoy, Nancy Knight, Mable Armes, Betty Armes and Barbara Macklin; brothers Vanius,

Vivian, Carl and Roy “Junebug” Stringfield, Jr.

He is survived by special niece and caregiver Trula Hall and her husband Gene along with a host of nieces, nephews, extended family and friends.

The family will receive friends Wednesday, April 16, 2025 from 12:00-1:00 p.m. at Schubert Funeral Home in Wartburg with the funeral to follow at 1:00 p.m. with Bro. John Bonham officiating. Interment will follow in the Piney Church Cemetery in Oakdale.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Franklin D. “Bunk” Stringfield.

Josie Bowman, 82



Josie Bowman, age 82 of Deer Lodge passed away on Tuesday, April 8, 2025 at Methodist Medical Center of Oak Ridge.

She is preceded in death by her husband Willard Bowman; parents Jay & Christine Norris; brothers Lawrence & Sonny Norris; son Rusty Simpson; granddaughter Brittany Simpson.

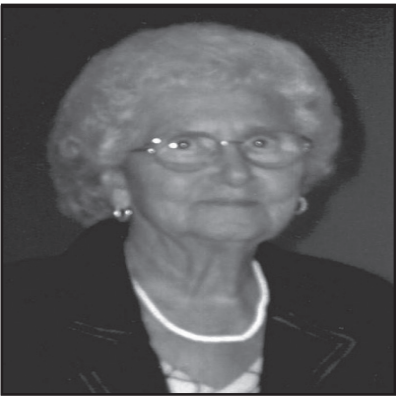
Josie is survived by her son John & Missy Simpson; daughter Suzi & Jason Harris; 4 grandchildren; 7 great grandchildren; sister Betty & Fred Cross and a host of extended family members and friends.

The family will have a graveside service Friday at 1:00 p.m. in the Pleasant Ridge Cemetery in Sunbright with Bro. Charles Webb officiating.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Josie Bowman.

Obituaries must come from a funeral home to be in the newspaper.

Dorothy Banks, 93



Dorothy Banks, age 93 born May 6, 1931, passed away on Friday, April 11, 2025, at the Life Care Center of Morgan County.

Former Resident of Mossy Grove Community, she resided in Philadelphia, TN for 17 years.

She was a faithful member of the Mossy Grove Primitive Baptist Church. She would always speak with zeal of her Jesus and His sovereign grace.

The Life Care remembers her singing hymns. She loved to read, and the Bible was her favorite to read. She could quote many verses from the Bible.

She loved her large family so much; they were her great joy. They loved her too; they have many wonderful memories of her.

Dorothy leaves behind her two daughters and one son: Daughters: Sharon K. Davis Clabough, of Philadelphia, TN, and Barbara Davis Clabough, of Wartburg, TN Son: Billy Davis, of Harriman, TN Her beloved brother: Billy McGhee She also leaves behind 13 grandchildren, 43 great grandchildren, 3 step great grandchildren, 11 great great grandchildren, 3 step great great grandchildren, and nieces and nephews.

The family will receive friends on Monday, April 14, 2025, from 12-1 pm Schubert Funeral Home, Wartburg. Funeral services will follow with Elder Daniel Wood and Elder J B Huskey officiating. Interment will follow in the Mossy Grove Primitive Church Cemetery, Mossy Grove Community.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Dorothy Banks.

Psalm 86:4-5

4 Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.

5 For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.



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& Blessed Easter!***



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Historically Speaking
Rediscovering the Forgotten Creators
of the German Atomic Bomb
(Part 2 of 2)

By Ray Smith - Oak Ridge City Historian

EDITOR’S NOTE: This “Historically Speaking” column contains the opinions of Dr. Todd H. Rider based upon the research and information contained in his book, “Forgotten Creators: How German-Speaking Scientists and Engineers Invented the Modern World, And What We Can Learn from Them.”
[<https://riderinstitute.org/revolutionary-innovation/>]

Bringing you the second part of the story about Germany during the Manhattan Project and World War II era. This story is based on extensive research and is published online for your review...see above link in Editor’s Note. Todd Rider has also been featured on Hidden History: Stories from the Secret City:

Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E0j4vsrz5XE&t=175s>

Part 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t1pPh048r0o>

Part 3: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LQ8AQm6kboY&t=20s>

Part 4: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DHss4fDGCAY&t=76s>

Enjoy the conclusion of the two-part series regarding the history of German atomic weapons.

Spring 2025 is the 80 th anniversary of the end of the World War II German nuclear weapons program. Although the standard historical view since the war has been that the German nuclear program was quite small and primitive compared to the U.S. Manhattan Project, recently declassified and rediscovered archival documents reveal a very different story.

Part 1 last week discussed what the rediscovered documents tell us about wartime German methods to produce fission fuel suitable for atomic bombs. According to these archival documents, Germany had large and advanced programs to produce uranium-235 by enriching natural uranium and to produce plutonium-239 from uranium-238 in fission reactors. While the details of that production remain classified even 80 years later, currently available documents shed light on other aspects of the German nuclear program.

During World War II, the U.S. Manhattan Project focused on two major nuclear weapon designs: the cylindrical “Little Boy” type device that used an internal cannon to rapidly combine two pieces of fission fuel, and the spherical “Fat Man” or “Gadget” type device that used an outer layer of conventional explosives to implode a spherical piece of fission fuel at the center. According to recently rediscovered documents, the wartime German program focused on at least three major nuclear weapon designs.

The smallest known wartime German nuclear weapon design was described by Heinrich Himmler’s adjutant Werner Grothmann as being about the same size as a German conventional explosive 250-kilogram bomb. According to documents from German army physicists Dr. Erich Schumann and Dr. Walter Trinks, this design would have used implosion from two opposite ends acting on a small central piece of fission fuel, plus possibly a little fusion fuel.

Grothmann said that the expected explosive yield was less than one kiloton (one thousand tons of TNT) and that the weapon would have been used for tactical military targets. After a thorough postwar investigation, U.S. General Thomas J. Betts and U.K. government science



Dr. Todd H. Rider with the Ohrdruf military base in the background (Courtesy of Lori Rider)

advisor Sir Reginald Patrick Linstead stated that German rockets were redesigned to accommodate these small warheads.

A German soldier who worked at Magdeburg (named in other documents as a nuclear production site) was captured by U.S. forces on March 1, 1945, informed Allied interrogators that he had seen a stockpile of such warheads, and gave a detailed and accurate description of the external and internal structure of the warhead.

A number of sources also describe a medium-sized German nuclear weapon that closely resembled the U.S. Fat Man yet had some features that were more advanced. According to Schumann, Trinks, and top-level Soviet intelligence reports sent to Joseph Stalin, this device was a spherical implosion bomb weighing approximately 2,000 kilograms (4,400 pounds) with a diameter of approximately 1.3 meters (51 inches).

According to the documents, the center had a sphere of fission fuel and a small amount of fusion fuel. With enough fission and fusion fuel, such a design might have an explosive yield of several tens of kilotons, equaling or surpassing the yields of the first U.S. fission bombs. Postwar reports by Allied investigators prove that this was not merely a paper design: they contain photos of suitable explosive lenses being tested in 1942-43, specifications of suitable neutron initiators that were mass-produced during the war, and information on other German manufacturers that made all the components necessary to assemble such a device.

Most surprisingly, many rediscovered archival sources describe a large German nuclear weapon: a full-fledged H-bomb with a total weight of 6,000 kilograms (13,000 pounds) and an expected blast radius of 10 kilometers (6 miles), corresponding to a megaton-level (millions of tons of TNT) explosive yield! The documents indicate that the weapon would have used a fission bomb to trigger fusion reactions in lithium deuteride fuel. From postwar Allied reports, we know that wartime Germany was producing huge amounts of both lithium and deuterium, and that it was even separating the lithium-6 isotope that is more useful for nuclear applications.

As with the small and medium devices, this large warhead was not a paper project. In 1944 Germany began scouting for a suitable test site in remote Finland, and several sources state that this large design was expected to be tested later in 1945 or early 1946 if the war had continued. Documents mention that both German aircraft and rockets were designed to deliver these six-ton bombs to distant Allied targets. While this large design was not tested before the end of the war, there is evidence that the other designs were.

The earliest reported successful test of a

German nuclear weapon occurred in October 1944 on the Baltic coast (two sources thought it was October 12 and on the island of Rügen, although there are other possible locations). After the war, Luigi Romersa described how Benito Mussolini had sent him as his personal representative to observe the test and privately report back to him. Romersa told of witnessing the test alongside German officers in a heavily armored, mostly underground bunker two kilometers from the test site, having to wait in the bunker for several hours afterward for the radioactivity to decrease, and then briefly visiting the test site in a full protective suit to observe the devastation.

Summer 1945 interrogations of Rudolf Zinsser, a German pilot, revealed that he had been assigned to fly near the test site (likely with a plane full of instruments) during the test and again an hour later. Zinsser correctly described many details of the blast wave, electromagnetic effects, and multiple colors from beta decay of the fission products in the mushroom cloud that were not public knowledge at that time. After investigating Zinsser’s story for a few months, the U.S. upgraded his interrogation report from Secret to Top Secret. Several other German, U.S. Army Air Forces, Manhattan Project, and Office of Special Services reports also mention this test, yet the details remain classified over 80 years later.

A number of German, Polish, and U.S. intelligence sources reported a second test in Poland in or around November 1944. Currently available documents do not name the test site; Germany had weapons testing areas scattered all over Poland during the war. According to several of the sources, German forces placed many concentration camp prisoners at the test site as human guinea pigs, then delivered the bomb by air, with predictably tragic effects. U.S. Justice Robert Jackson even described this incident at the 1946 Nuremberg trial of Albert Speer. Again, more detailed reports remain unavailable.

The final two reported German nuclear weapons tests occurred in March (some sources report March 4 and 12) 1945 somewhere in Thuringia, most likely at the large and relatively isolated Ohrdruf military base. As with the Polish test, German forces reportedly placed concentration camp prisoners around the test site. These March 1945 tests are described in considerable detail by a series of wartime and postwar Soviet intelligence documents at the highest levels. Those details were independently confirmed after the war by Werner Grothmann. The tests are also mentioned in U.S. intelligence documents, although any details remain classified.

Historically Speaking
Rediscovering the Forgotten Creators
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(Part 2 of 2)

By Ray Smith - Oak Ridge City Historian

It appears that all these test explosions were kept as small as possible by using as little fission and fusion fuel as required, in order to conserve weapons-grade fuel, try to maintain secrecy, and minimize the mess made on German-controlled territory. Each test had a yield on the order of a kiloton or even less, even though the medium weapon design probably could have delivered tens of kilotons with a full load of fuel. After eight decades the resulting radioactivity would have decayed around a billion-fold, making it far below the levels of natural background radiation and undetectable with a Geiger counter now.

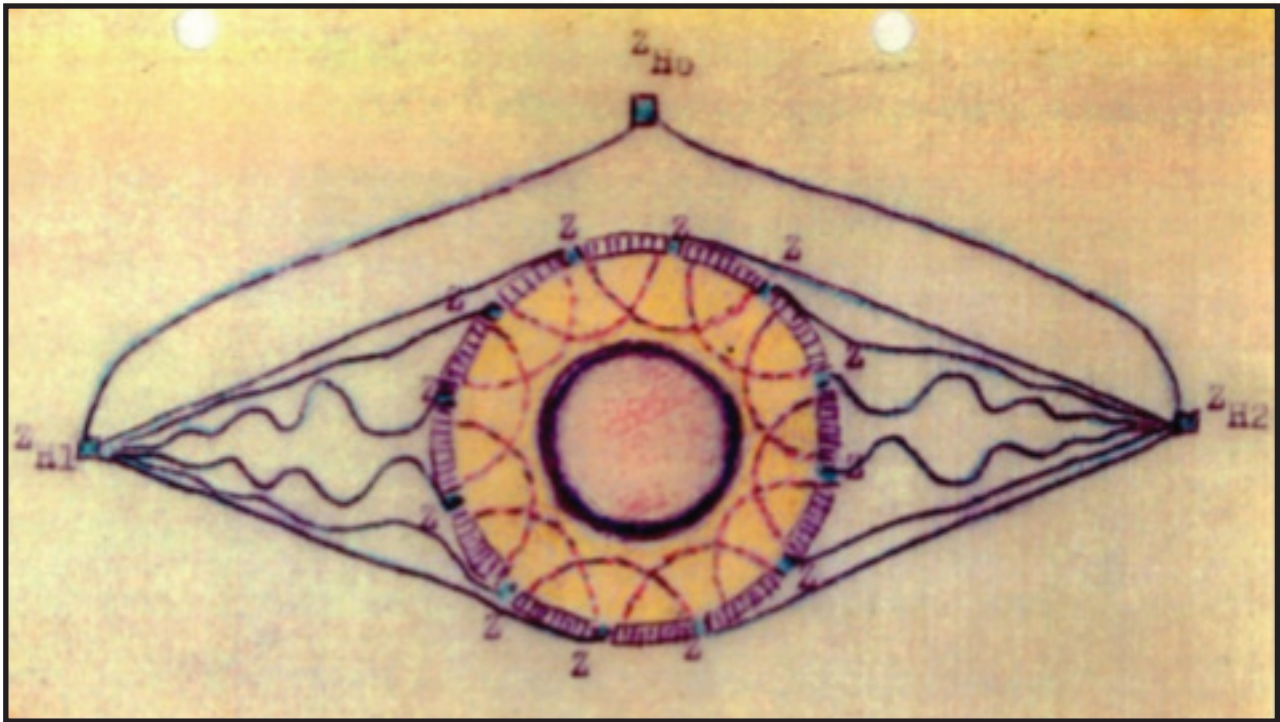
If Germany possessed nuclear weapons, why did it not use them against the Allies? Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill made repeated public threats that if Germany employed any kinds of weapons of mass destruction, the U.S. and U.K. would respond by dropping vast amounts of mustard agent and other weapons on Germany, which could have killed millions of German civilians. Clearly that successfully deterred Germany from using its stockpiles of nerve gas, other chemical weapons, biological weapons, and fuel-air explosives. According to several independent sources in Hitler’s inner circle, it also successfully dissuaded Germany from employing its nuclear weapons before the end of the war.

Due to U.S./U.K. bombing, the majority of German nuclear production sites were built in the eastern areas of German-controlled territory, so they were taken over by Soviet forces at the end of the war. In the decades since, leaders from the Soviet nuclear weapons program have admitted they acquired from the German programs thousands of scientists, thousands of tons of uranium ore, and huge amounts of materials and information that (along with information from several spies in the Manhattan Project) greatly accelerated the postwar Soviet nuclear program. Other than a few revealing memos, the overwhelming majority of what the Soviets learned about the wartime German nuclear program remains classified in Russian archives.

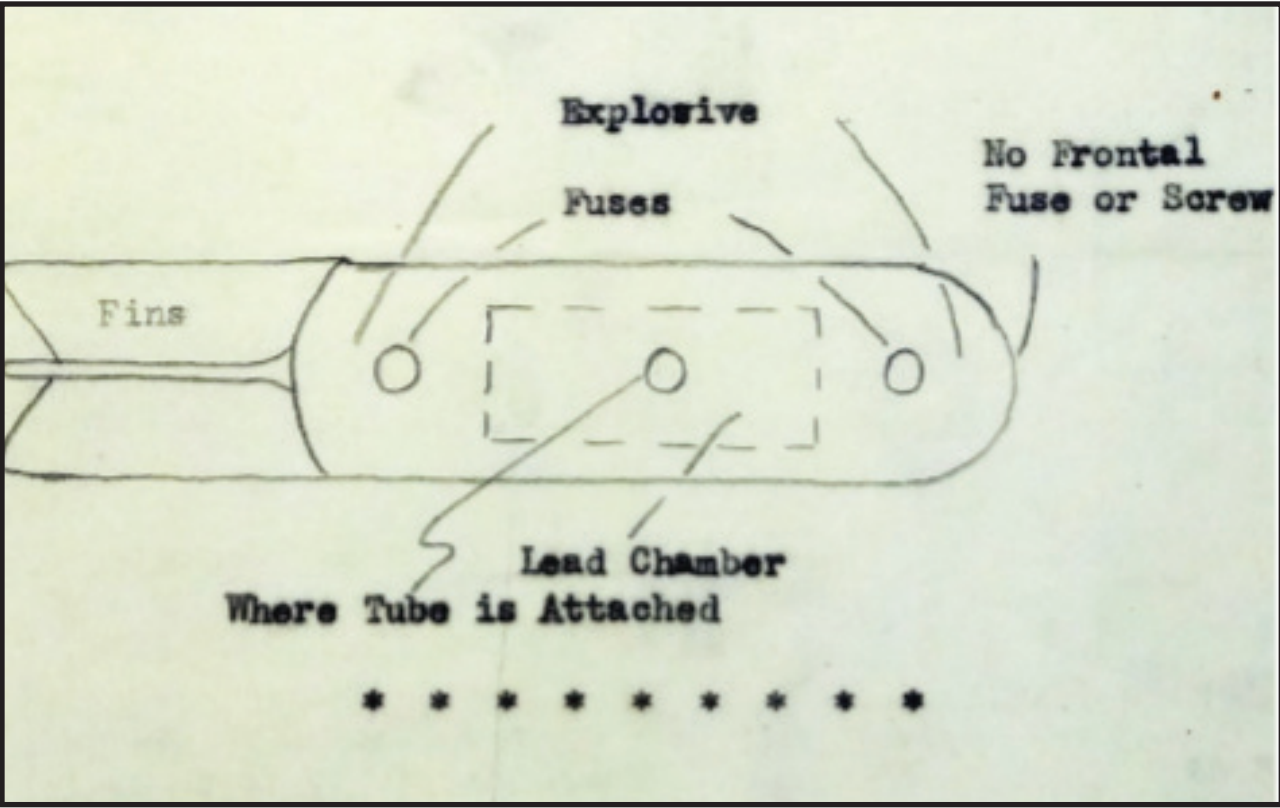
Despite the geographical limitations, western Allied forces took over a number of German nuclear production sites at the end of the war. Almost all the site inspection reports and personnel interrogation reports from those facilities are still classified 80 years later. The Allies also seized at least six submarines loaded with high-tech weapons headed from Germany toward Japan at the end of the war—and almost all those reports are still classified as well.

Rediscovered archival documents show the United States obtained many key personnel from the wartime German nuclear program. Dr. Hans Kammler, the SS general and engineer in charge of the German nuclear and other advanced weapons programs, secretly surrendered to the U.S. and was interrogated for at least six months after the war. Dr. Siegfried Flügge, the top theoretical physicist of the German nuclear weapons program, was brought to the U.S. after the war at the specific request of Dr. Edward Teller to “be of marked assistance in carrying out” a “physics... program... of interest and importance to the national security.”

Dozens of other experts with knowledge of the German nuclear program (including the advanced German H-bomb project) were also brought to the U.S. and/or U.K. after the war.



Sketch by Dr. Erich Schumann of a two-ton spherical implosion bomb with ignition wiring
(Courtesy of Schumann estate, as provided by Rainer Karlsch)



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Authority AND 750122


Sketch of a ~250 kg prolate bomb with two-point ignition and a dense metal tamper surrounding a small central pit, by a German prisoner of war who reported handling a stockpile of such weapons at a nuclear site in Magdeburg
(Courtesy of NARA RG 165, Entry NM84-187, Box 137, Folder BW 55)

Unfortunately, the details of their wartime and postwar work are also still classified. How much impact did information from the wartime German nuclear program have on postwar nuclear programs in the U.S., U.K., France, Soviet Union, and other countries?

If you found hundreds of pages of reports from a wide variety of reliable sources stating that some modern country suddenly started doing all of the activities described in these two articles, would you conclude that that country clearly had no significant nuclear weapons program, or would you decide that all of that evidence raises real concerns and warrants a more detailed investigation?

All of the archival evidence mentioned in these two articles and much more is available for free at: <https://riderinstitute.org/revolutionary-innovation/> (Everything discussed there and in these articles is based entirely on unclassified and declassified sources.) If you find this evidence of interest, please use it as a starting point and see how much more evidence you can find in public archives and private collections around the world, or (very carefully, with all appropriate precautions, permissions, and procedures!) at some of the suspected wartime sites in Europe.

Thanks Todd! Great insights discovered through your research!



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John Chapter 7



Melvin Howard

(John 7:1-13) The Challenge from His Brothers: After the events chronicled in the previous chapter, Jesus “walked” (the verb suggests a sustained period of time) in Galilee, the northern region of the land. This was because the Jews kept on seeking to kill him---with the greatest concentration of hostility focused in Judaea. Since the feast of tabernacles (September-October) was near and the Passover had just transpired (6:4), this indicates approximately six months passed between the end of chapter six and the beginning of chapter seven. The feast of tabernacles celebrated the harvest season and commemorated God’s care for his people during the wilderness wondering. It lasted for seven days and the people lived in huts constructed of tree branches (Lev. 23:39; Dt. 16:13).

Jesus’ brothers urged him to go to Jerusalem so that “[his] disciples” (they were not among them) might see his “signs” (v. 3). They argued that if one desired to be “known openly,” as they assessed the situation with reference to their celebrated brother, he would not operate “secretly.” Thus, they pressed: “If you can do these things, manifest yourself to the world” (v. 4). John plainly explains that “even his brothers did not believe on him” (v. 5).

But the Lord responded that his “time” had not yet come (v.6). He then rather sharply rebuked his stubborn brothers, declaring: “The world hates me because I testify its works are evil”; but, “the world cannot hate you” (v. 7). The implication obviously was this: “You have not yet identified with me; you are of the world and it loves its own.” Christ then told his brothers to go on up to the feast, but regarding himself said: “I am not going up to this feast; because my time is not yet fulfilled” (v. 8). The text subsequently says: “But when his brothers were gone up to the feast, he then went up also, not publicly, but secretly” (v. 10). Hostile critics allege the Lord was duplicitous regarding his intention.

Some translations render the controversial verse in this fashion: “I go not up yet to this feast.” Many scholars believe, however, this reflects a scribal insertion. A careful examination of verses three through five clearly indicates that Jesus’ unbelieving half-brothers were daring him to do what they surmised he could not do. The issue was not whether Christ would go to that feast; such was required of Jewish males. Rather, the crux of the matter was the manner in which he would go. It was not his “time” to go in an open, demonstrative way (v. 8). It was his aim to go up “not publicly, but in secret” (v. 10). He would go publicly six months later---at the beginning of the passion week.

After his brothers were gone, the Lord went up to Jerusalem, but unpretentiously. The Jews looked for him but could not find him. The buzz about him was everywhere and the review was mixed. Some believed he was “a good man,” but others said, “Not so; he is leading the crowd astray.” (The Hebrew Talmud would later say that Jesus was crucified on the eve of the Passover because he “led Israel astray.”) The discussions were kept very private, for the people were afraid of the Jewish leaders (v. 13).

(John 7:14-24) Teaching in the Temple: About midway through the week-long feast, Jesus went up and entered into one of the temple courts and began to teach. The people were amazed; they could not figure out how he could be so brilliant without having matriculated formally through a rabbinical school (v. 15; Acts 4:13). His retort, elliptically framed, was that his teaching was not exclusively his; he spoke also by the power of him who sent him (v. 16). If a man really has the ambition to obey God, he will be able to discern whether the teaching is divine or merely human (v. 17). The Lord describes the egotist who seeks the attention of men (as the Pharisees commonly did [Mt. 6]) versus the one who seeks the glory of God. The latter is genuine and no unrighteousness is in him. Jesus was in this category.

Christ asked his critics: “Did not Moses give you the law? Yet none of you practices it.” He pressed: “Why do you keep on trying [the force of the verb] to kill me?” The crowd chided: “You must be demon-possessed; who is trying to kill you?” If they are too cowardly to make the case against him, he will make it for them. The Lord said, “I did one work and all of you were amazed.” The context indicates he was referring to a miracle performed on the Sabbath, perhaps the one at Bethesda (5:2). “Yet you practice circumcision on the Sabbath when the prescribed time [eight day (Ex. 12:44)] falls on that day.” The point being, the Sabbath limitation could be suspended for a higher cause. The example also may have included the implied contrast between a small “wound” and a major “healing.” Their objection to his Sabbath activity was negated by their own inconsistency. He concluded: “Stop judging [the force of the Greek] according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment” (v. 24).

(John 7:25-36) Controversy Flares in the Temple: Some of the citizens of Jerusalem were puzzled at the turn of events. They knew some were out to kill Jesus; yet he was speaking openly and nothing was being done. Was it possible that the rulers knew this man really was the Messiah? (v. 26). That did not seem logical, however, since they knew that Jesus was nothing ore than a “Nazarene” (Mt. 2:23). It also was rumored that the real Messiah would appear secretly (v. 27). But Christ passionately called out that there had been evidence aplenty as to his identity and from where he had come. He had been sent by God---a God they did not know! (v. 29-30). The courage of Jesus was beyond our ability to grasp.

They moved to take him, but for some inexplicable reason they could not, the ultimate explanation being that it was not yet time. He would die according to the divine schedule---not theirs. It was plain that many in the crowds believed on him, and they argued: “When the Messiah comes, could he possibly do more than

this Jesus has done?” The Pharisees and chief priests, therefore, sent a delegation of temple police to arrest Jesus. The Lord pointed out that they could take him in “a little while” (about six months); eventually, they would seek him but would be unable to find him---reason being he would have ascended back to his Father (v. 33-36).

(John 7:37-44) Another Attempt at Arrest: During the feast of the tabernacles, there was a daily ceremony in which the priest poured water from the pool of Siloam on the base of the sacred altar. Sacrifices were offered, and there was joyful singing. On the eighth day, which some considered to be the “last day” (v. 37), more sacrifices were offered, their temporary booths were dismantled, and again there was singing. Some scholars contend that the water ceremony was not done on this day. At some point, Jesus stood and cried out: “If any man is thirsty, let him come unto me and drink. He who believes on me, as the scripture has said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water” (v. 37-38). There is no Old Testament scripture that contains this precise phraseology, but there are many passages that reflect the sentiment (Prov. 18:4; Isa. 58:11; Joel 3:18; Zech. 14:8), and such a procedure was not inconsistent with the manner in which the Old Testament occasionally was referenced.

From this statement the following facts are gleaned: (a) A person can spiritually thirst and be unable to find any human remedy. (b) There is, however, a quenching source---the Son of God. (c) This blessing is available universally. (d) One must be willing to drink, access knowledge regarding Christ and develop a steadfast faith (the thrust of “believeth”) that is accompanied by “coming” to the Lord in his prescribed way. (e) Such a promise is undergirded by the general teaching of Scripture.

John adds his comment. “But this he spoke of the Spirit, which they that believed were to receive” after Jesus was “glorified”---likely a reference to his resurrection and ascension (Lk. 24:26; 1 Pet. 1:11). The promise of the Holy Spirit is believed by some to refer to the supernatural manifestation of the Spirit in the apostles (on Pentecost [Acts 2:4]) and to others later (though the laying on of the apostles’ hands [Acts 8:18; 19:6]). More likely, however, since it was promised to all believers (v. 39), it speaks of the “gift of the Holy Spirit” received at the time of one’s immersion into Christ (Acts 2:38; 1 Cor. 6:19; 12:13; Gal. 4:6).

When they heard the Lord’s call, some of the crowd said, “This is the prophet” (Dt. 18:15), while others hailed him as the Messiah (v. 40-41; Dan. 9:24). Still others argued against the “Messiah” theory on the ground that Jesus was from Galilee, which appeared to conflict with Micah’s prophecy that the Messiah would be of the lineage of David and from Bethlehem (v. 41-42). What they did not realize was that Jesus was from Bethlehem (Mt. 2:1). There arose a division among them. Some would have captured him, but, strangely, “no man laid hands upon him” (v. 44).

(John 7:45-52) The Officers’ Report: The temple officers who had been dispatched to arrest Christ (v. 32) returned to the Pharisees and chief priests empty-handed. When asked why they had not brought their prisoner, incredibly they replied: “Never man so spoke” (v. 46). Their four-word sentence conveyed more than they intended. (a) “Never” means not ever---and they were absolutely correct. No person in the history of the world had a message like Christ’s, nor was one ever conveyed with such power and skill. (b) His message was beyond that of any human philosophy. It was a communication from God. (c) “So” is a term of degree; his message and methods transcended all others. (d) “Spoke” amply illustrated that truly he was the eternal Word, the supreme exegete and communicator of divine truth (Jn. 1:18).

The Pharisees were highly incensed. “Are you also led astray?” they snapped. “Have any of the rulers [possibly members of the Sanhedrin] believed on him, or the Pharisees?” This may require a serious internal investigation! The crowds who have gone after him are perceived as stupid; they know nothing of the law. Actually, it is they who are ignorant of the law (especially its prophecies---several hundred of which pointed to Jesus as the Messiah).

Suddenly, almost from the shadows, Nicodemus steps forth and speaks. (John identifies him with his earlier account [3:1]). “Does our law pronounce judgment upon a man, without first hearing his testimony?” Jewish law gave an accused criminal great latitude in defending himself in court. Nicodemus suggested that the present procedure was out of line. His quiet courage is transparent. They lashed out: “Are you of Galilee?” As if to say, maybe you are in league with him! Their only argument was: “Search and see---no prophet arises out of Galilee.” The argument was totally without substance. He did not “arise” out of Galilee!

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