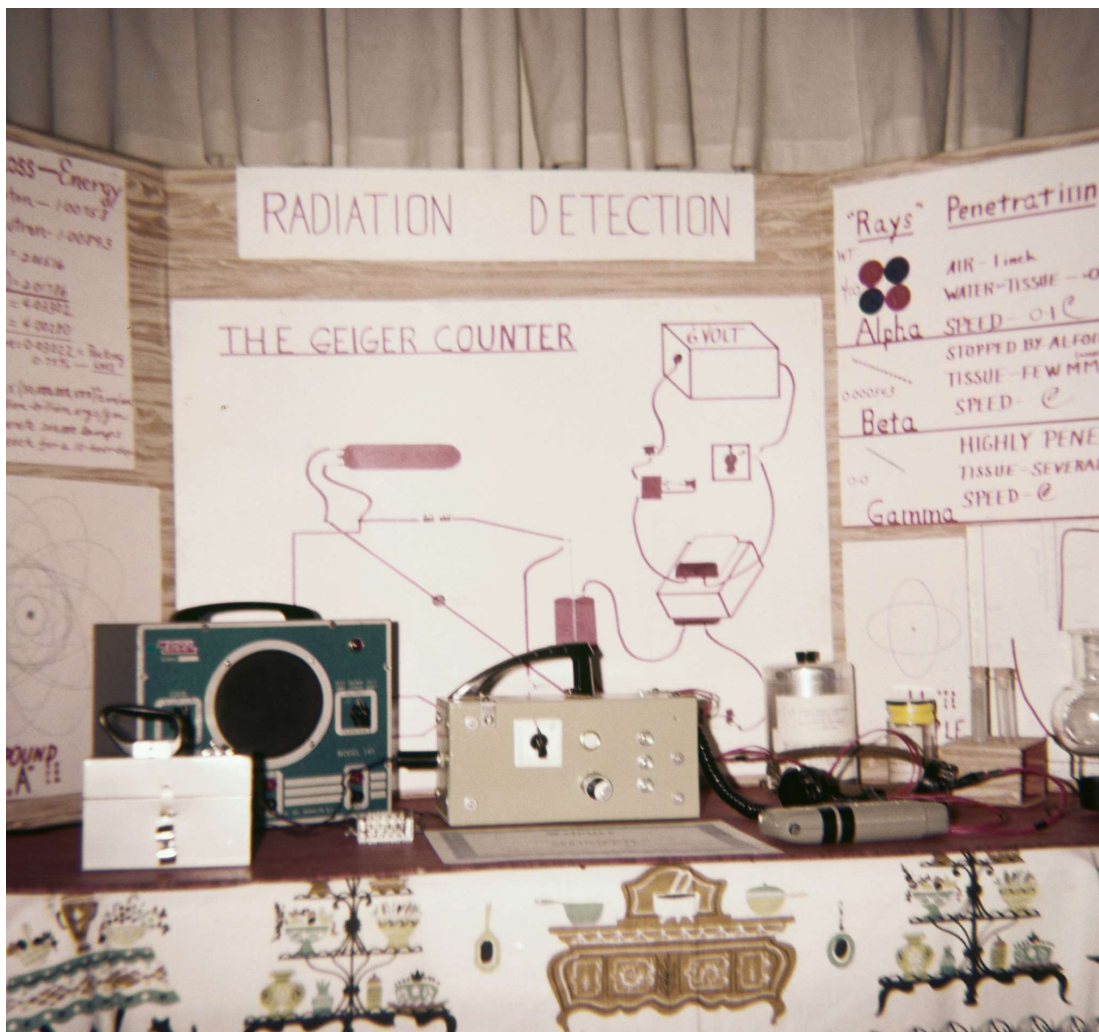


WHAT BEGAN AS A SCIENCE PROJECT

My Nuclear Interest
fran ridge



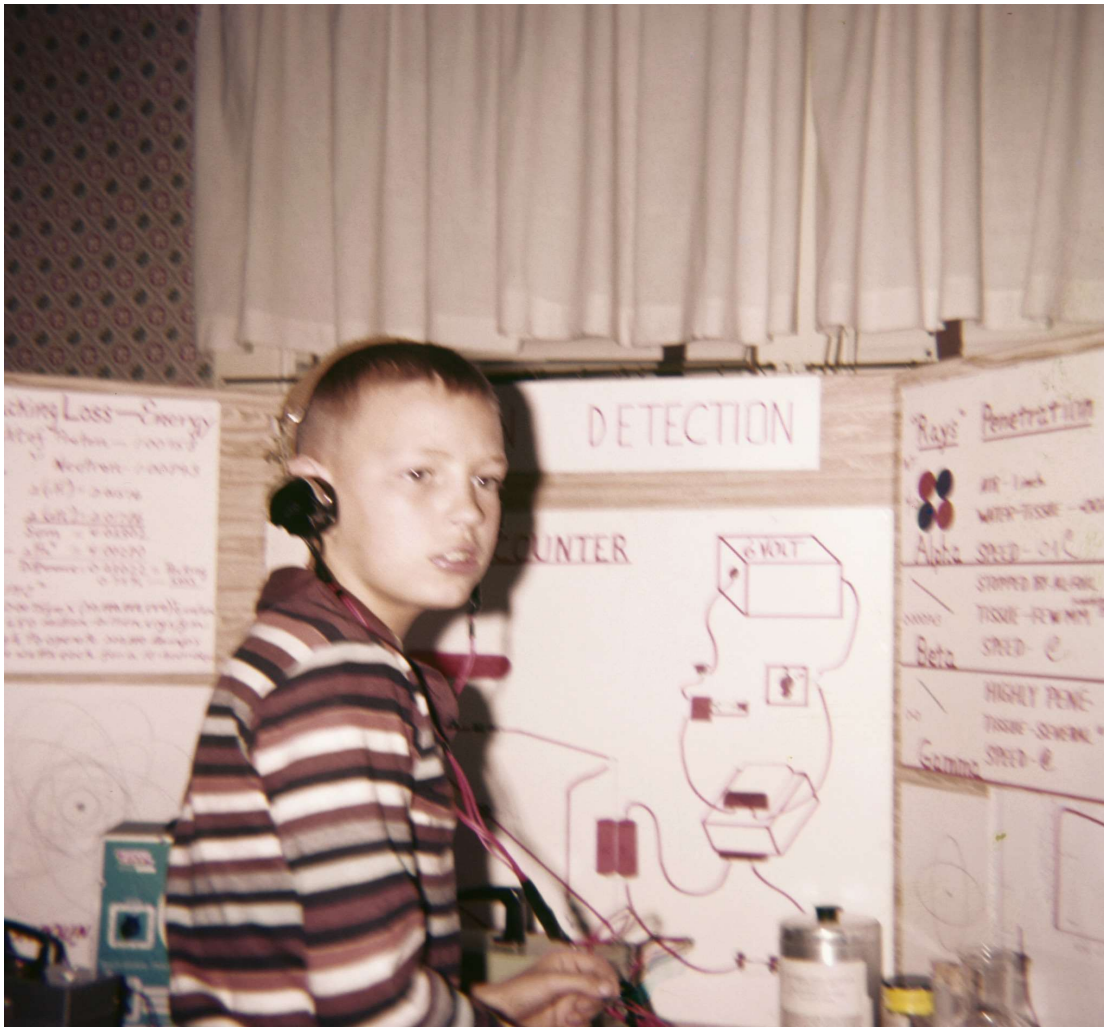
I didn't know that somebody had taken pictures of my science project in the spring of 1959. Last year I was extremely excited to find out that my brother had found some family "slides", and I was able to get them transferred into regular images.

I wish I had the schematic and parts list to show how I built this geiger counter. I would then be able to "brag" about how I improved on it. But that's really asking for a miracle because I don't even remember what magazine the thing

What really helped was I had an old Eico signal tracer and used it like an amplifier rather than the headphones to demonstrate, and the clicks could be heard all over the project-filled auditorium. It developed quite an audience.



I must have just gotten home and had called somebody (didn't have cell phones in those days) to tell them about my certificate for First Prize.



This is my little brother, Steven, with the headphones. He was 12 year's old back then. On the table is a container mimicking a shielded radiation sample holder, but of course the sample was only pitchblende and a low radiation grade.

A couple of years later I had three of my buddies who were interested in UFOs and I set up a 7-man NICAP team. We had three special advisers. A few days after NICAP authorized us I gave a UFO briefing to Ralph Meeks, the Knox County Civil Defense Director, and he was impressed enough that he asked me to make my team a radiological monitoring squad.

The deal was I was to study to be the County Radiological Defense Officer, then go to Battlecreek, Michigan and take the two-week course. In exchange, my NICAP team would be able to get a complete set of the CD V-700's and some of the other models, dosimeters and chargers.



Model 117B

Meeks also supplied my team with a professional scintillator the county had recently purchased from Montgomery Wards.

The Model 117B scintillator was a professional prospector grade radiation detector that used a sodium iodide crystal and a photo-multiplier tube to pick up the flash from a gamma ray. This device was 60X's more sensitive than a geiger counter. The bad part was it used odd-size batteries that were kinda expensive.

The 117B was so sensitive that when we took our equipment out to where they were building the Red Skelton Bridge and had used bulldozers to shave the ground near the Wabash River, the scintillator went offscale, so much so I had to switch to a different range. All because of background radiation there at the excavation site.



Me holding a V-700 in 1973



Earlier picture of me in early 1960's



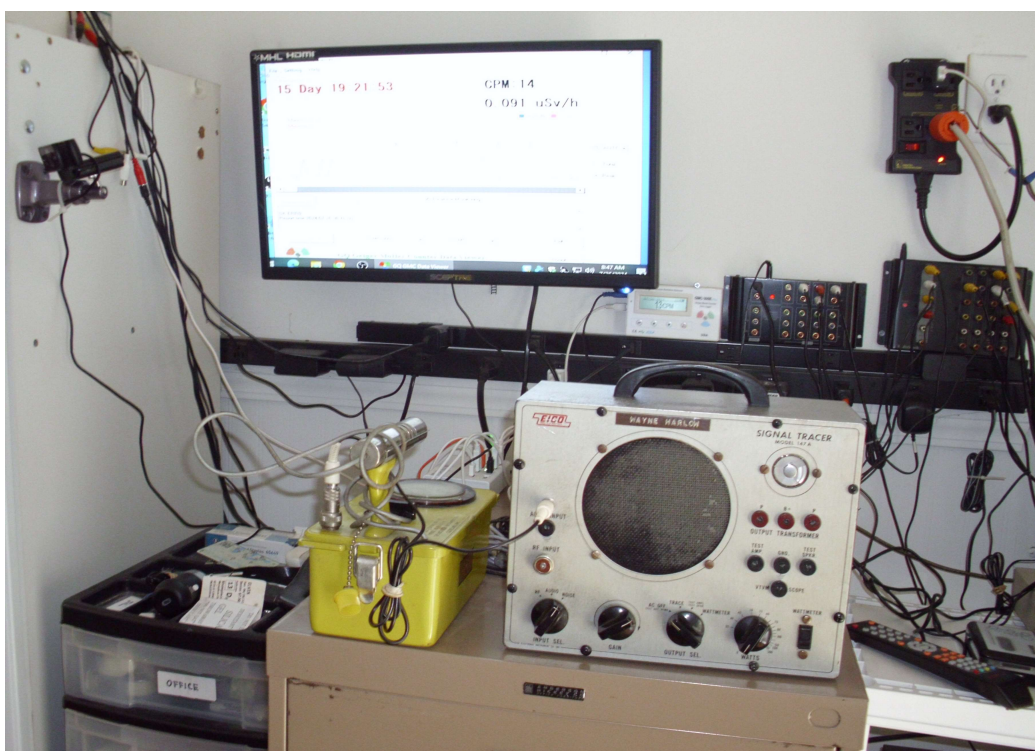
[More info...](#)

Today all my MADAR people now routinely use a digital GMC-500 (or one of the other models) which sends data to a website and displays in two locations in the MADAR Operations control room. I have the one above, right near my RAD

Section in the northeast corner of the control room at MADAR Operations.

All of the original geiger counters, including the scintillator had become so degraded they had been pitched years ago, except for one V-700 that I had sitting around and not being used anymore.

My brother, now 76, but still involved in electronics, buys and fixes old radios and other electronics items, and he had found an old Eico signal generator. This reminded us of the earlier days. I just had to have it so I bought it for \$125 and when I got it I found out that the only V-700 I had left after all these years had quit working. So I reached out to my MADAR team in July of this year and Craig McManus, one of my Ops, donated one.



You can just barely see the GMC-500, running on the top of the long power strip. The “new” CD V-700 sitting on the top left of the file cabinet is plugged into the Eico signal tracer. During an alert all I have to do is to turn them on and set the volume level and listen to the clicks of the counts per minute while the pips from the analog readout move from right to left on the LED monitor.

Final note:

I have been unable to find any images of the types of geiger counters I used in the U.S. Army National Guard. When I enlisted for six years in 1963 I was

assigned as 36A10, Field Communications Crewman, Commo Section. Because I needed a security clearance somebody checked me out and they found I was studying to be Radiological Defense Officer for Knox County, so I was assigned as CBR Specialist in my unit at A Battery. The radiation meters we used were called RADIAC. I was surprised because when I had set up the NICAP team and needed special advisers to be approved, Lewis Blevins had become our number one. His resume stated he had worked on RADIAC in the late 40's or early 50's.



Me and a TA-312 field phone

Hopefully someday in the near future I'll be able find some photos of a RADIAC unit for that period, 1963-1969.

ENDREP