

# **ANCHORS AWEIGH IN UTAH:**

## **The U.S. Naval Supply Depot at Clearfield, 1942-1962**

BY LEONARD J. ARRINGTON  
AND ARCHER L. DURHAM

The enormous build-up in military stockpiles, required by the intensive and far-flung activities of the United States Army, Navy, and Air Force during World War II, led to the establishment of a network of federal supply depots. Because of its central location among the Western States, a number of these key installations were established in Utah. These included Army ammunition depots at Ogden (Ogden Arsenal) and Tooele (Tooele Army Depot), an Army Service Forces Depot (Utah Army Depot), and a naval congregating storehouse (U. S. Naval Supply Depot, Clearfield). The latter, constructed in the last half of 1942, was one of three inland naval supply depots in the United States, the other two being located at Great Lakes, Illinois, and at Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania.<sup>1</sup>

The Clearfield Naval Supply Depot was established upon the recommendation of the Naval Bureau of Supplies and Accounts, which obtained public funds to purchase land on which to erect a physical plant with at least 7 million square feet of storage space. The site of the Depot was located in the heart of a placid farming community approximately 15 miles south of Ogden and 25 miles north of Salt Lake City.

Dr. Arrington is professor of economics, Utah State University. A graduate in political science at U.S.U., Captain Durham is presently plans officer of the 28th Air Transport Squadron, Hill Air Force Base, Utah. This study was supported by a grant from the Utah State University Research Council. The writers are grateful for the suggestions and assistance of Thomas G. Alexander, economics research assistant at U.S.U. and candidate for the doctorate in history at the University of California, Berkeley. All photographs in the article are courtesy Clearfield Naval Supply Depot.

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, this article is based upon *NSD Clearfield Tenth Anniversary Publication, 1952; Information Brochure, NSD* (Clearfield, n.d.), and from the Depot Command History. The latter is a typewritten, chronological, documentary record of the events of the Depot from its beginning to the present, kept by the many persons who served as historians since the initiation of the Depot. The Command History also includes: "Data for Presentation to the Committee to Investigate National Defense," which was compiled at the Depot in 1945; "Organization, Function and Operation of NSD Clearfield during the Six-Month Period Prior to V-J Day 1945"; and "Review of Facilities Pertinent to Phase-Out of Navy Activity at the Naval Supply Depot, Clearfield," by Ray L. Davis. Captain Durham also consulted Depot files, organizational manuals, personnel listings, letters, etc., which have been retained as historical items and as authority for the operation of the Depot. In many instances the memories of employees, who have remained with the Depot since it was established, were tapped to provide data regarding questionable periods. We are grateful to Lieutenant C. E. Hamel, USN, Depot administration officer, and Merlyn Goodfellow, Depot historian, who made the Command History available. We are also grateful for interviews with Gordon Atkinson, deputy dispersing officer; Larry Lundquist, management analyst; Charles Jenkins, assistant disposal officer; and Vern Frazier, chief of Plant Operations, all of the Clearfield Naval Supply Depot.



*U.S. Naval Supply Depot, Clearfield, Utah.*



## SELECTION OF THE SITE AND CONSTRUCTION

The announcement of the Navy's intentions did not meet with the approval of all Utahns. Citizens located on or near the proposed site sent strongly worded protests to Senator Elbert D. Thomas and Representative J. William Robinson, who carried the petitions to the Navy Department. Governor Herbert B. Maw, Senator Abe (Orrice Abram, Jr.) Murdock, and certain officials of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints entered the ranks in an attempt to find an alternate Utah site. Senator Thomas and David O. McKay (an apostle of the L.D.S. Church) inspected at least seven sites in Utah, and particularly recommended one near Woods Cross. But the Navy rejected all alternative suggestions as unsuitable.<sup>2</sup>

The Ogden Chamber of Commerce, on the other hand, favored the proposed site and wired counterprotests to Utah's congressional delegation stressing both the patriotic and economic advantages of the proposed depot's activities. For its part the Navy had already considered and rejected several other sites including Pasco, Washington (too far north); Winnemucca, Nevada (insufficient transportation facilities); and Sacramento, California (too close to the coast). Recognizing that the people had emotional attachments to the Clearfield area, nevertheless, the Navy found it difficult to understand their vehement response. It planned to exchange a \$35 million installation, with a huge staff of locally recruited employees, for 1,600 acres of farmland managed by 43 farmers; and it planned full compensation to the farmers for their lands and crops.<sup>3</sup>

After almost a month of argument, an understanding was reached, and on May 26, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt authorized Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox to acquire the property. At this announcement the citizens of Clearfield and others affected by the move asserted their patriotism and affirmed that if the Navy needed the land, they would not stand in its way. After gaining possession of the 841 acres it needed at a cost of \$750,000, the Navy sought to pay the farmers the fair market value for their crops which, owing to the beginning of construction, could not be harvested.<sup>4</sup>

On June 3, 1942, Captain Raymond V. Miller, the officer in charge of building the Depot arrived at Clearfield to commence construction. Headquarters of the installation were moved from the Hotel Ben Lomond to temporary quarters in a Clearfield elementary school, where both the Navy and its contractors maintained offices until construction of the administration building was sufficiently far along so they could move in (November 7, 1942).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Salt Lake Tribune*, May 5, 9, 10, 15, 22, 1942.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, May 6, 10, 22, 1942.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, May 27, June 10, 12, 25, 1942. The original decision was for 750 acres, and the rest was acquired later.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, June 6, 9, 14, 25, November 8, 1942.

From mid-June, 1942, when Captain Miller and the civilian contractors began construction, until April 10, 1943, when the Depot was officially christened, work moved ahead at a feverish pace. The combined services of three architectural firms (Ashton, Evans, and Hodgson; Blanchard and Mayer; and Clyde C. Kennedy) and four construction companies as prime contractors (C. F. Haglin and Sons of Minneapolis, Minnesota; Missouri Valley Bridge and Iron of Leavenworth, Kansas; Sollette Construction Company of South Bend, Indiana; and Winston Brothers of Denver, Colorado) were required.<sup>6</sup>

During the fall of 1942 (with some later additions), there was constructed a storage area comprising 84 large storage buildings, with a storage area of more than 8.3 million square feet (191 acres) of covered storage. There was an additional 8 million square feet of open storage, of which 1.3 million was hard-surfaced. Thirty-three of the large storehouses were heated; 19 contained individual dehumidification plants for controlled humidity; and there were 32 unheated buildings and sheds. The 66 general and heavy-duty buildings were 200 feet by 600 feet each, and another 8 were 100 feet by 500 feet each. Twenty of the major buildings were provided with inside, full-length rail access and overhead cranes for handling heavy material. The remainder of the warehouses had truck-level floors with full-length loading docks on the railroad side and truck access doors on the street side. All told, there were 38 miles of road/truck track on the base. The Depot was completely self-sufficient, so far as utilities and operating services were concerned, with the exception of purchased electrical power and contract sewage disposal. Total cost of the completed installation was estimated at \$37 million.

#### MISSION OF THE DEPOT

The predominant factors responsible for the selection of the Clearfield location were its relative security from enemy attack, and its nearness to the gateways of two major western railways. Other features were access to military air transportation at the Ogden Air Depot (Hill Air Force Base) only two miles away, and the excellent transcontinental trucking facilities, since the site is near three transcontinental highways. Also, the facility is located equidistant from the ports of Seattle, San Francisco, and Los Angeles, which afforded the Navy considerable savings through use of the "in transit privilege" resulting in lower transportation costs with the privilege of storage holdover when desired. Naval construction experts considered the gentle slope of the land and the ground's firmness to be money-saving features. The excellent comparatively arid climatic conditions also made possible the long-term storage of materials with a minimum of deterioration. Moreover, the close proximity to a number of other mili-

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, May 27, June 6, 1942, March 14, 1943.



tary installations encouraged the utilization of existing facilities through cross-servicing agreements. Finally, northern Utah had been an area of substantial unemployment and underemployment during the 1930's and was thought to have a supply of manpower at rates considerably below those of more highly industrialized areas.

As construction continued, various installation facilities were occupied and used as they were completed, but the base was not officially commissioned until April 10, 1943, when all construction was finished. At this time Captain Omar D. Conger was installed as the Depot's first commander. Piped onto the platform with the traditional bosun's pipe at the services, were Rear Admiral J. F. Hatch of San Francisco, Twelfth Naval District supply officer; Rear Admiral W. J. Carter of Washington, assistant chief of the Navy's Bureau of Supplies and Accounts; and Utah Secretary of State E. E. Monson. At the services Mr. C. J. Pankow who had directed construction for the combined contractors turned the keys over to the Depot officials, and NSD, Clearfield, officially began its service.<sup>7</sup>

The mission of the Clearfield Naval Supply Depot, in a broad sense, was to provide a reservoir of materiel in support of West Coast supply points and the advance bases of the Pacific Fleet. They were also to provide a supply of automotive and materiel-handling equipment to all service activities in the Eleventh, Twelfth, and Thirteenth Naval Districts and the states of North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. The Depot also received, warehoused, distributed, and controlled designated types of naval materiel required for support of assigned shore activities and furnished necessary administrative services and maintenance functions incidental to these operations. The Depot was directed to receive, store, and issue such newly procured materiel as the Navy might require; to act as a center for holding reserves until needed by major consuming and issuing activities; and to assemble such material for overseas shipment as would be requested for transshipping through such points as a naval commander might designate.

Finally, the Depot was a depository for the personal effects of Navy, Coast Guard, and Marine personnel who were lost in action or otherwise separated from their property. These materials were sorted, inspected, and sent to the next-of-kin or returned to the rightful owners.<sup>8</sup>

#### THE BUILD-UP OF PERSONNEL

The acquisition of sufficient, trained personnel during the early stages of Depot operation presented a major problem. As with most war installations, available manpower in the local communities was limited by military obliga-

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, January 14, April 11, 1943.

<sup>8</sup> "Operating Personnel of Huge Utah Naval Supply Depot," *ibid.*, Sunday Magazine, June 13, 1943.

tions and other demands. Administrative officials issued an urgent call to the community offering employment to anyone willing to work. An excerpt from the Depot Command History indicates the nature of the response:

The call was answered by many, elderly men, mothers, war wives, girls fresh from college, high school boys who worked after school and during the summer and local farmers who worked swing shifts, night shifts and during the winter months. Whole families came to work at Clearfield, including old folk, seventy, eighty and even one ninety-nine-year-old. Some of NSD's workers were handicapped, crippled, deaf, mute or blind; but they, too, found a vital role in the the battle of supply. Additional personnel were recruited from many sections of the country to fill requirements after local sources had been exhausted.<sup>9</sup>

Despite the wholehearted support of Utah civic and religious organizations, however, Clearfield was always in need of more workers to handle the base's ever-burgeoning workload. At frequent intervals announcements appeared in the newspapers calling for more workers. By December, 1944, the administration threw all requirements for typists to the wind, and, with the admission that they "couldn't find enough girls who could pass the tests," the base agreed to accept "high school graduates who flunk speed tests but express willingness to learn."<sup>10</sup>

The labor force was further supplemented, on December 21, 1944, with twenty Pueblo and San Felipe Indians from New Mexico. Others arrived later. Most of these had been farmers and cattle ranchers in the Rio Grande Valley, but some had worked as silversmiths, turquoise drillers, and moccasin makers. At Clearfield they lived in dormitories near the installation.<sup>11</sup>

Late in the war, in April of 1945, 500 German prisoners-of-war were also assigned to the Depot as work crews. The quonset huts formerly used as a contractor-civilian worker camp were converted to a prison compound. While the POWs were not used to replace civilians, they completed many important functions which could not otherwise have been undertaken, particularly loading, unloading, and packing naval supplies and equipment.

Peak employment at NSD was reached in 1944, when 7,624 persons worked at the base. Complete annual employment data is given on the following page.

The tremendous influx of workers created special problems of housing, transportation, and training. Some of the workers found themselves housed in Ogden Canyon summer homes, others took up housekeeping in quonset huts, many lived in dormitories near the base, and the government later built the cinder-block Anchorage Acres near the installation to house many employees.

<sup>9</sup> Command History, 5.

<sup>10</sup> *Salt Lake Tribune*, January 22, February 7, 1943, January 21, July 14, 29, 1944, February 28, May 12, 1945. The quotation is from Edwin D. Ellis, U. S. Civil Service Commission branch manager, *ibid.*, December 1, 1944.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, Sunday Magazine, January 9, 1944.

NUMBER OF MILITARY AND CIVILIAN PERSONNEL EMPLOYED  
AT NAVAL SUPPLY DEPOT, CLEARFIELD, UTAH, 1942-1962

(Source: Data furnished by Naval Supply Depot, Clearfield. Figures are yearly averages.)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Military Personnel</i>	<i>Civilian Personnel</i>	<i>Total</i>
1942	94	50	144
1943	177	2,275	2,452
1944	1,590	6,034	7,624
1945	1,546	4,403	5,949
1946	292	4,479	4,771
1947	172	3,784	3,956
1948	187	3,991	4,178
1949	133	2,643	2,776
1950	130	2,664	2,794
1951	139	3,248	3,387
1952	146	3,001	3,147
1953	141	2,547	2,688
1954	131	2,158	2,289
1955	123	1,781	1,904
1956	44	1,641	1,685
1957	36	1,455	1,491
1958	33	1,331	1,364
1959	92	1,300	1,392
1960	86	650	736
1961	19	601	620
June 1, 1962	6	429	435

NSD also inaugurated, in November, 1943, bus service between Salt Lake City and the base to encourage commuting. Despite all these measures, 300 WAVES (female Navy personnel) who came to work at the Depot early in 1944 were unable to find housing. While a new dormitory was being constructed, they lived successively at the Ogden Arsenal, Hill Field, and Fort Douglas, until February, 1945.<sup>12</sup>

Funds for the institution of an intensive training program of the untrained personnel were provided under the "training-within-industry" program sponsored by the federal government, with the first instructors being supplied by the Utah State Department of Public Instruction. Pilot courses at Bayonne, New Jersey, were set up to train civilian personnel in those specialties where local facilities were inadequate for the type of training desired. Courses in the operation of fork lifts, proper storage, and car-loading and shoring procedures were emphasized. Naval officers who conducted the courses prepared training outlines which were then used in conducting similar courses at the Clearfield Depot.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, June 6, August 19, 1942, March 21, November 21, 1943, February 1, 1945.

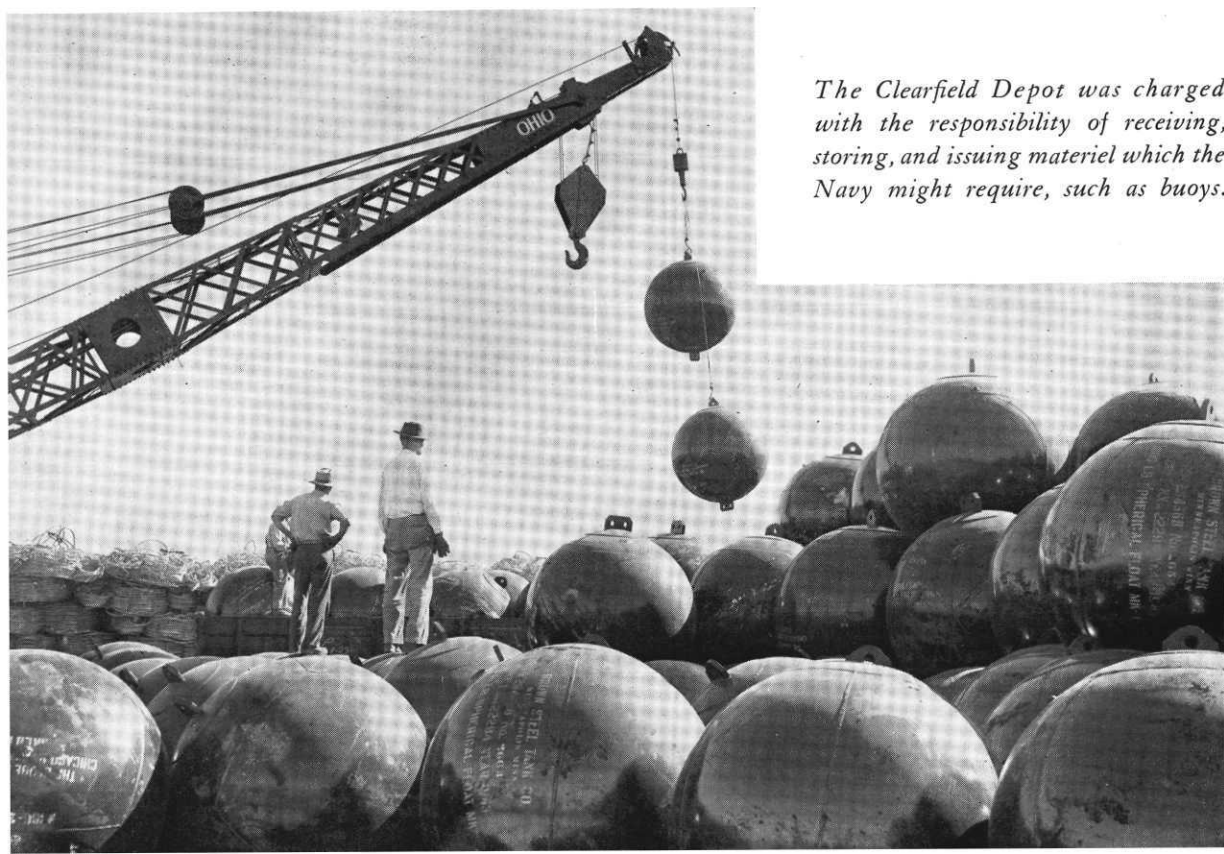
The Depot maintained a Training Division of some 23 members who conducted a Preservation and Packaging School for training boxmakers and packers, a Fork Lift Training School, and a Storage Procedures School for storekeepers, including many WAVES. As supervisors became better trained, the Training Division was reduced in size, and supervisors assumed the task of on-the-job training.

#### DEPOT OPERATIONS DURING WORLD WAR II

The Clearfield Naval Supply Depot was "the materialization of a naval theory developed over many years, the location inland of a supply unit to serve smaller coastline units." Some idea of the size of World War II operations at the installation can be seen when it is noted that each of the warehouses at the Depot was nearly as long as a city block and that three buildings the size of ZCMI Department Store in downtown Salt Lake City could fit inside. In 1943, NSD's warehouses could hold 6,000 trainloads of materiel, and the amount of lumber used during one day in 1944 (more than 200 tons) could have built 29 five-room frame houses.<sup>13</sup>

The first materiel received at the Depot for storage consisted of a carload of safes which arrived December 21, 1942. The first shipment from the Depot was made on January 6, 1943, and consisted of a one-ton safe sent to the Naval Ammunition Supply Depot at Hastings, Nebraska. By May 1, 1943, the Depot had received 1,253 carloads of materiel, and had shipped 51 carloads to various naval stations. By July, 1943, receipts of materiel were such that the Depot was

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, November 13, 1942, March 14, 1943, August 13, 1944.



*The Clearfield Depot was charged with the responsibility of receiving, storing, and issuing materiel which the Navy might require, such as buoys.*



required to function at its full capacity, and all storehouse space was allocated to various programs. During 1944, hundreds of carloads of materiel overflowed allocated storage areas, and considerable quantities of materiel were stored on unimproved open areas adjacent to the railroad tracks and warehouses.

During 1944, the peak year of operation, some 30,696 carloads (representing 2,609,160 tons) of materiel were received, and 15,942 carloads (1,355,070 tons) were shipped. These included general stores, clothing, spare parts, electronics, and other materiel of war. By June, 1945, more than 500,000 different items were stored at Clearfield, representing a value of over \$580 million. (This was nearly 3 times the total assessed property valuation in Utah in 1944.) These items were funneled through the Depot every hour, day and night, 7 days a week, with thousands of carloads being sped on their way each month to fighting fronts throughout the world. Internal movement of materiel within the Depot, not reflected in the above figures, amounted to approximately 21,000 carloads, or 1,875,000 tons, during the period July 1, 1944, to June 30, 1945. The high month was September, 1944, when there was a turnover of 4,108 full freight carloads, or 349,180 tons.

According to historical records, one of the fastest moving departments at Clearfield was its Instrument Supply Facility. As part of the Navy's welfare and recreation program, its various installations could order musical instruments, phonograph records, and music from the Depot through a catalogue similar to that used by Sears Roebuck and Company.

As the burden of America's war effort began to shift to the Pacific in 1945, supplies poured into Clearfield in ever-increasing numbers. It was during this "Big Push" that Clearfield developed the concept of the "basic boxed base load" or "Triple-B." In this system each load was designed for a particular duty at a specific prearranged destination. One load might contain a complete 1,000-bed hospital unit destined for a Pacific island, or a weapons repair depot bound for a newly conquered atoll. Each load supplied over 5,500 basic items ranging from general stores, clothing, and small stores to major ship stores. Some of these Triple-B loads were so large that they filled 100-car freight trains.<sup>14</sup>

Owing to this stepped up operation, it was fortunate that one of the biggest breakthroughs in materials preservation could be used at NSD. To preserve engine parts against corrosion, NSD used a "soup" consisting of a plastic and just enough oil to protect the machinery. With a fiberglass string embedded in the coating which dried in several seconds, the part could be stripped open like a package of chewing gum and was always protected against tropical heat and seaborne rust.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, February 18, 27, April 1, 1945.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, March 18, 1945.

As the war which gave birth to the Depot ended, NSD Clearfield became a part of the peacetime Navy supply system. More than 950 veterans of World War II came to work at NSD. It was at this time that the necessity of secrecy was eliminated, and the gates of the Clearfield facility opened to the general public. At an open house, held October 27, 1945, about 8,500 persons visited exhibits ranging from a 28-foot motor lifeboat, demonstrated by a sailor whose life had been saved by a similar craft, to one of Clearfield's Triple-B machine repair units.<sup>16</sup>

#### POSTWAR YEARS

During the war NSD Clearfield had been keyed to expediting shipments to the various continental West Coast naval facilities and to overseas bases in the Pacific Ocean area. On V-J Day (August 14, 1945) and immediately thereafter, this objective was thrown abruptly into reverse; instead of rushing supplies to our naval forces and activities as in the past, Depot authorities faced the immediate cancellation of orders assembled for shipment and the necessity of making plans to receive numerous carloads of materiel being returned by former requisitioning activities. This action resulted in a tremendous backlog of returned materiel accumulating in the storehouses. The first and hardest hit was the Clothing and Small Stores Group, which received many freight cars daily for redistribution among its eight storehouses.

By December, 1945, roll-back supplies and equipment started to arrive from the Pacific in quantity. Materiel arrived in various stages of preservation and packing. Many containers were broken, mislabeled, or not labeled at all, and the contents were damaged by water, rust, and deterioration. Problems of identifying, repackaging, preserving, and storing resulted. Sorting and repackaging lines were set up, and materials fit for reissue were stored in regular stock classes. Unmarked items were identified where possible. Damaged materials were salvaged where practicable, and disposition of others was requested from responsible bureaus. Roll-back materiel received during 1946 amounted to a total of 1,647 carloads.

The conclusion of the war brought other major problems. Many civilians who had remained on the job through patriotic loyalty during the shooting war felt less responsibility to remain and began to go back into private business in increasing numbers. Moreover, on April 12, 1946, the Prisoner-of-War Camp was deactivated and all prisoners were removed from the Depot. In the same month a dispatch ordered the detachment of the remaining WAVES. The separation of reserve officer personnel to civilian life also occurred at this time; some 163 of the 209 officers serving on September 1, 1945, were released to inactive

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, October 28, 1945.

duty during the next 12 months. This necessitated considerable shuffling of remaining officer personnel and in many instances required assignment of junior officers to key positions. Through careful planning the reassignment of the Depot's remaining staff officers was accomplished without appreciable loss in Depot efficiency and production.

Another phase of the personnel problem was the loss of trained enlisted personnel who were assigned to key positions in almost every department. Under the general demobilization program, most of these were released. Whereas on September 1, 1945, 1,328 enlisted personnel were utilized at NSD Clearfield, only 296 remained a year later, with practically none of this number having been "on board" in 1945. The mass egress immediately called for many organizational adjustments and streamlining of procedures and methods to absorb the shock.

The major problem of recruiting new personnel fell to the Industrial Relations Department. It was not long until veterans began streaming in. Anxious to become settled in civilian life once more and often disturbed and troubled as to the proper course of action, they were not sure what work they wanted to do, where to make their homes, or whether to take advantage of the G.I. bill of rights to return to school. Turnover in employment was very high. The placement of disabled veterans in positions at which they could succeed also became a matter of special concern.

The situation was eased somewhat by the institution of a Depot-wide training program to implement the Navy Department's Work Improvement Program. On-the-job instruction was carried on throughout the Depot. Among the subjects offered to supervisors were: Organization and Management; Rules, Regulations, Policies, and Procedures; Problems in Handling People; Supervisory Safety; Job Methods; Efficiency Rating System; The Supervisor as Instructor; Typing; Shorthand; Naval Correspondence; Storekeeping; Stenciling; Preservation; Fireman Training; Policy Training; and Driver Training.

The Medical Department likewise played a role in the rapid demobilization. From September of 1945, through July of 1946, the dispensary, in addition to routine duties, examined all personnel who were separated from the service in the immediate vicinity. At this time NSD Clearfield was designated a Separation Center and continued as such until July, 1946. Some 200 men per month were processed and discharged.

The necessity to dispose of vast quantities of excess materiel immediately followed the end of the war. To some extent the Navy Department had anticipated this problem, when it established the Material Redistribution and Disposal Administration in April, 1944. NSD Clearfield, as a major holding activity, became part of that program. In the month of January, 1946, alone, approximately

\$10 million in government materiel held by Clearfield had been declared surplus to appropriate disposal agencies. February, March, and April likewise found a tremendous increase in surplus activity. By April, 1946, approximately \$25 million in materiel had been declared surplus, and by October of the same year, materials occupying more than a million square feet of storage space — approximately 5,000 carloads valued at \$95 million — had been declared surplus to the needs of the Navy.

During the same period the War Assets Administration was organized nationally to handle surplus government property. That agency initiated at Clearfield a "Site Sale Operations" in July, 1946. At that time Clearfield had a total available surplus inventory of about \$30 million, with approximately \$23 million additional in bureau excesses available for surplus declaration. (As noted above \$25 million had been declared surplus by April, 1946, and \$95 million by October, 1946.) Nearly all of this was processed during the next 3 months. Salvage from declassified equipment, mainly ordnance, resulted in the accumulation and shipment of approximately 20 carloads of sorted scrap metal per month. Lumber salvage was developed to a high degree, and every usable piece of wood was cleaned and reused in making boxes, crates, and dunnage. Between September, 1945, and October, 1946, 2,644,000 board feet of lumber was salvaged and reused.

The period from the latter part of 1946 to July of 1950, when the Korean situation caused a temporary upswing in activity, was characterized by a gradual stabilization and conversion to peacetime operations. The following excerpt from the Command History gives a vivid account of this stabilization period:

Material being returned from other naval activities began to arrive in better condition. Missions and functions were more clearly defined, enabling Depot personnel to more adequately plan the performance of assigned functions. Management systems and procedures began to crystallize into definite programs with objective achievement guided by a considerably more scientific approach. The Depot organization underwent gradual changes which resulted in the consolidation of like functions and the elimination of duplicate operations. Electric accounting machines took over much of the paperwork previously performed by manual methods. Labor turnover and absenteeism declined to normal levels. As a result, better trained personnel were able to improve production in both quality and quantity. Operating methods and procedures became generally well established and were subject to continual review as new and more efficient procedures were developed.<sup>17</sup>

Workload during the peacetime stabilization period showed a consistent decline, with corresponding reductions in personnel. Civilian personnel dropped from 4,479 at the end of 1946 to 2,664 at the end of 1950. During the same period military personnel declined from 296 to 130. During 1950, materiel receipts dropped to 40,009 tons, and materiel issues were 46,628 tons.

<sup>17</sup> Command History, 20.

### KOREAN PERIOD

The commencement of hostilities in Korea in 1950 resulted in an immediate increase in the workload of the Depot. Incoming traffic jumped from 40,000 tons in 1950, to 86,327 tons in 1951, and 166,352 tons in 1952. Shipments increased from 46,628 tons in 1950, to 58,960 tons in 1951, and 45,037 tons in 1952. Civilian personnel increased from 2,578 in June of 1950, to 3,263 in June, 1951. This figure remained fairly constant until December, 1952, when a gradual decline reduced personnel to 2,547 by December, 1953. It is interesting to note that military personnel increased by only 46 during the same period. The well-trained civilian force was able to handle the 400 per cent increase in receipts with only a 25 per cent increase in personnel.<sup>18</sup>

The Korean crisis posed a serious problem since the base had to cope with a drastically increased workload and a limited number of available personnel. Whereas during World War II Clearfield accomplished its tremendous workload primarily by hiring more people, strict personnel ceilings during the Korean incident required that a more scientific approach be taken. The increased emphasis on efficiency placed on the various management programs at this time pointed the way to areas where large savings were possible.

Such programs as the "Paperwork Management Program" and the "Management Survey Program" resulted in an estimated savings in excess of \$100,000 annually. Improved methods of management geared to a scientific approach enabled the Depot to handle the heavy workload of the Korean period with remarkable safety and without substantial additional personnel. In 1952, the Depot received the Award of Merit of the National Safety Council for 2.7 million man-hours of operation without a single disabling accident. Other safety awards included the Secretary of the Navy Motor Vehicle Safety Award, and the Secretary of the Navy Award for Achievement in Industrial Safety.

### POST-KOREAN PERIOD

After the end of the Korean conflict in 1953, the Depot experienced reductions in workload, operating funds, and personnel ceilings, with consequent streamlining and consolidation. Supervisory positions were progressively eliminated. Emphasis was placed on the use of management studies, survey programs, quality control, production control, mechanization of paperwork, work measurement, and other management tools in order to continue to perform the Depot's assigned mission under a condition of retrenchment. All NSD operations were gradually phased out with the exception of disposal operations.

<sup>18</sup> It is sometimes charged that defense installations are overstaffed and their employees underworked. Such enterprises as NSD Clearfield were required to be prepared for any emergency and sometimes maintained a larger permanent staff than that required for a particular day's operations.



(NSD Clearfield also handled disposal operations for such neighboring installations as Hill AFB.) Thousands of tons of surplus naval and other supplies — World War II spares that had outlived their usefulness and scrapped and condemned equipment — were disposed of as surplus. For example during the calendar year of 1959, a total of \$103,409,000 (cost to government) worth of equipment was sold as surplus at a return of \$6,740,630.<sup>19</sup> Some \$56 million of this surplus was Navy equipment. In addition 38,000 tons of scrap iron and 4,400 tons of nonferrous metals were sold during the same period.

As more and more equipment and supplies were phased out from the Depot, more and more storage space became vacant and available for use. In general the Depot administration leased its available storage space to commercial enterprises. The following excerpts from the Command History illustrate these contracts:

1 March 1957 Westinghouse Electric Corporation leased 240,000 gross square feet of storage space which was amended 1 March 1958 to a total of 160,000 gross square feet. This space is used for the storage of household appliances for distribution to wholesale dealers.

1 July 1957 California Packing Corporation leased 120,000 gross square feet of space which was amended on July 1, 1958 to 240,000 gross square feet for the storage of canned food products.

1 July 1958 the Ogden Detachment, Western Mobil Depot Activity (Air Force) was allocated 20,000 square feet of space for operation of an electronic repair and maintenance facility.

1 August 1958 the Ground Engineering Installation Agency (Air Force) was allocated 32,000 gross square feet of space for use as an electronics engineering facility and office space.

On 5 May 1958, 10.77 acres of excess land formerly used as the prisoner of war compound were sold to private parties through the offices of the General Services Administration.<sup>20</sup>

The General Services Administration of the federal government was also an important early tenant at the Depot, being allocated 25,300 gross square feet of storage space for storage of material under the Federal Supply System.

#### THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

Though the base began a significant cutdown of its operations in 1959, the beginning of a permanent "dry dock" was signaled in April of 1960, when the Navy Department ordered NSD to place itself on a "partial maintenance basis." During the next two years the base contracted more and more of its upkeep, progressively reduced its personnel, and transferred many of its financial and stock

<sup>19</sup> At first glance this 6 per cent return on the dollar may seem to represent poor management on the part of the Disposal Office; but it must be remembered that the majority of military equipment is built for one purpose only, and usually its market value is not more than the worth of the material it is made of.

<sup>20</sup> Command History, 31-32.

accounting functions to the Oakland Naval Supply Center in California. Deactivation was scheduled for July, 1964. When it became clear that a speedup in the disestablishment of the Depot would encourage the use of the facilities by missiles contractors and other firms, the facilities were transferred to General Services Administration on June 30, 1962.

The Navy action at Clearfield was attributed to "rising costs in men and materials, along with evolutionary changes in weapons," and was part of a general Navy economy program.<sup>21</sup> A similar supply depot at Spokane, Washington, was closed and sold to private industry in the fall of 1959, and another in Hastings, Nebraska, was closed in the spring of 1960. The physical plant of the Clearfield Depot, at the time of the Navy order, was valued at \$28,798,000, and its huge warehouses contained an inventory valued at \$430 million.<sup>22</sup>

The impact of this retrenchment and deactivation on the economy of the Ogden area has been counteracted in large part by the contemporaneous expansion of Hill AFB and the missiles industry, and by the increasing number of industrial and governmental enterprises which have moved to NSD to take advantage of the storage space which deactivation has made available for rent. Since 1959, new tenants have included: Advanced Cybernetics Incorporated, Happy Homes Incorporated, Thiokol Chemical Corporation, Sperry Utah Company, Hercules Powder Company, Western Affiliated Engineering, Snarr Advertising Company, and the United States Geological Survey. Beginning in 1961, the Depot has also been used as a Civil Defense Mobilization Depot. The largest renters at the time of the deactivation order were Westinghouse Corporation and California Packing Corporation. Though most of the agencies and companies have used NSD facilities for storage, some (e.g., Hercules Powder Company and Sperry Utah Company) have manufactured subassemblies for the Minuteman and Sergeant Missiles at the Depot. In 1961, the various private companies and government agencies paid approximately \$1 million for the use of NSD facilities. As long as storage space was available, the in-transit-storage privilege attracted national companies whose markets were widespread and whose own intermountain facilities were not sufficient to care for their immediate needs.

The Navy Department directive of May, 1961, announcing deactivation of the Depot indicated that 3 activities might be continued. These were the sale of surplus property from government installations in Utah and neighboring states; the distribution of hydrographic charts for the Pacific area; and the maintenance and repair of industrial machines and equipment — all of which employed approximately 350 persons. Early in 1962, however, the Defense Surplus

<sup>21</sup> *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 6, 1960, August 16, 1961.

<sup>22</sup> *Deseret News* (Salt Lake City), October 12, 1961.

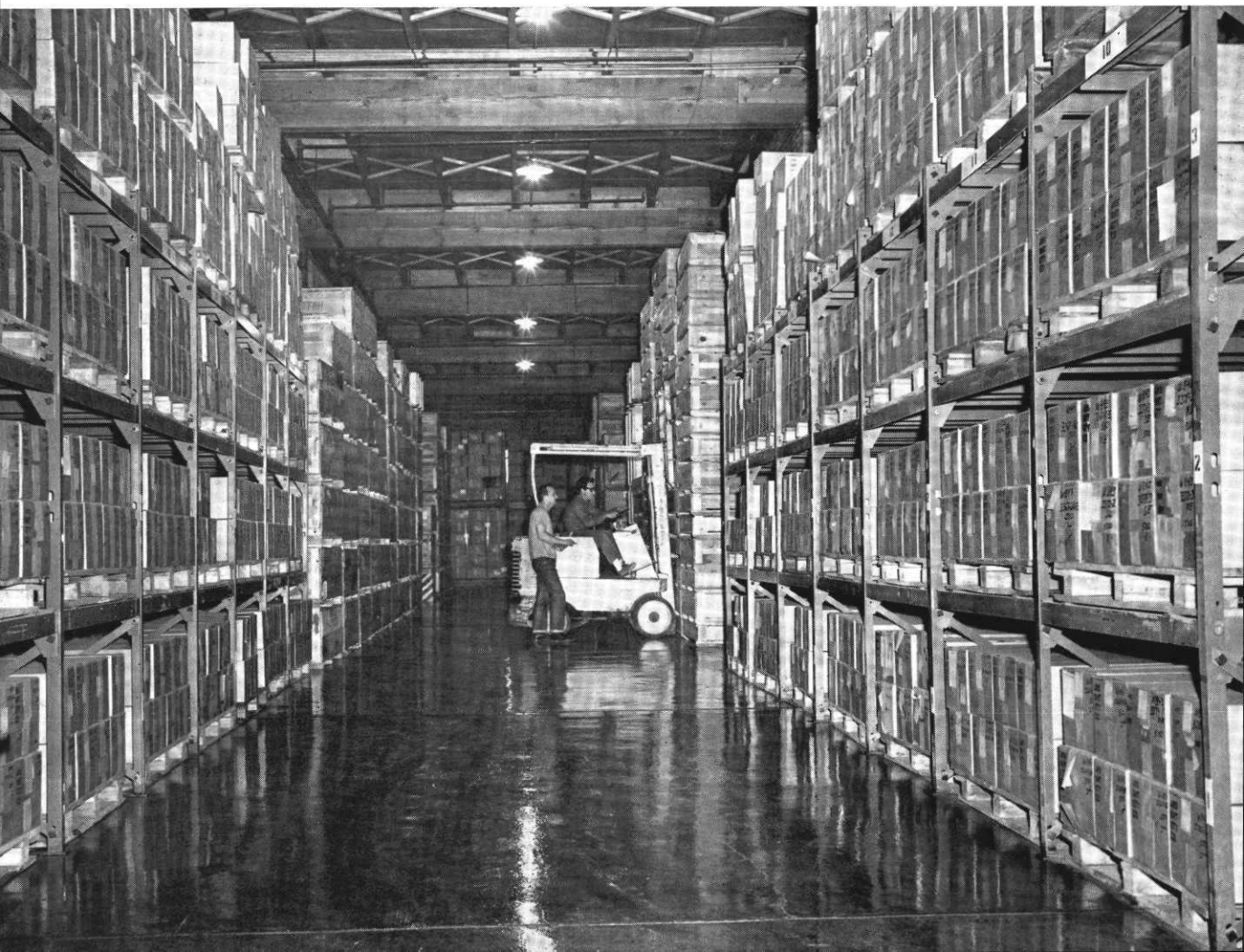
Sales Office was transferred to the Utah General Depot; and the Industrial Equipment Reserve program was reassigned to Utah's Tooele Army Depot.<sup>23</sup> The Navy's Hydrographic Chart Distribution Office is expected to remain at Clearfield.

The General Services Administration (GSA), which is charged with administering the physical property, has indicated that approximately half the land area of the Depot would be declared surplus and sold, probably in February, 1963.<sup>24</sup> At the date of this writing (1962), the chambers of commerce of Salt Lake and Davis counties are spearheading a drive to acquire this portion as a unit and lease the industrial facilities to private concerns or to create a great warehouse center for the distribution of goods to the Western States. The profitability of such an arrangement hinges partly on favorable state taxing policies.\* The housing is expected to be retained for use by personnel at Hill AFB. The half retained by GSA may well be used in creating a major supply center

<sup>23</sup> *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 30, 1962.

<sup>24</sup> *Deseret News*, September 21, October 12, 1961.

\* Ed. note: By action of the 1963 Utah Legislature, a favorable taxing procedure, popularly known as the "freeport" legislation, has made it all the more likely that Clearfield will serve as a distribution center for the Western States. The Shumacher Surgical Supply Company, of Oakland, California, gave the highest bid of more than \$5 million for that portion of the Clearfield Naval Supply Depot that has been offered for sale.



for all government agencies in the Western States, Alaska, Hawaii, and the South Pacific.<sup>25</sup> Owing to the low humidity of the Clearfield area, the operating cost of the dehumidification units in the 19, specially constructed, large, storage warehouses runs around \$600 per year for each building. At the present price of materials and supplies, it would cost about \$1 million to duplicate these facilities elsewhere, and if the Navy were to transport the units elsewhere to an existing Navy facility, the operation cost could run as high as \$6,000 per year per building. In addition, as the private tenants have found, the 35 other storage warehouses at NSD provide adequate, ordinary low humidity storage if they are heated for winter use.

Because of the gradualness of the "phase out," Depot employees have been able to prepare themselves for the end of operations, and morale has remained surprisingly high. In this operation the personnel deactivated have no "legal" right to positions of equivalent grade and job description at other installations, but many have found desirable employment at nearby Hill Air Force Base and Utah Army Depot, and at the expanding Tooele Army Depot.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> *Salt Lake Tribune*, September 30, 1961.

<sup>26</sup> In Civil Service language, where there is deactivation of this type, employees do not have "bumping" rights; i.e., the right, by virtue of longevity of service, to take positions of other employees at other installations who have less service.



▲ The Navy Oceanographic Distribution Office is expected to remain at Clearfield after the Depot is completely "phased out."

◀ Records storage area for the Oceanographic Distribution Office.

Ironically enough, the Clearfield Naval Supply Depot is closing an era in the same manner it began. The forces of expediency and necessity that gave birth to the Depot are presiding at its burial. The austerity forced upon the Navy by new concepts of warfare and the new threat of vulnerability in the age of missiles have limited the base's usefulness and effectiveness. Whether the same forces may eventually cause the Depot's resurrection remains to be seen. The future of the Depot lies in the hands of GSA. It is probable that the storage facilities offered by the abandoned Depot may attract desirable private industry and provide increased employment. Whatever happens to its present functions, as long as the physical plant exists, Clearfield Naval Supply Depot will remain a potential key supply center for industry and for government in the event of a national emergency.



# UTAH HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

SPRING, 1963 • VOLUME 31 • NUMBER 2



SPRING, 1963

VOLUME 31

NUMBER 2

# UTAH

## HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

### C O N T E N T S

ABRAHAM LINCOLN AS SEEN BY THE MORMONS  
BY GEORGE U. HUBBARD ..... 91

ANCHORS AWEIGH IN UTAH:  
THE U.S. NAVAL SUPPLY DEPOT AT CLEARFIELD,  
1942-1962  
BY LEONARD J. ARRINGTON AND ARCHER L. DURHAM ..... 109

THE BUCHANAN SPOILS SYSTEM AND THE UTAH  
EXPEDITION: CAREERS OF W. M. F. MAGRAW AND  
JOHN M. HOCKADAY  
BY WILLIAM P. MACKINNON ..... 127

SENATOR REED SMOOT AND THE  
MEXICAN REVOLUTIONS  
BY A. F. CARDON ..... 151

REVIEWS AND PUBLICATIONS ..... 164

NEWS AND COMMENTS ..... 173

## The Cover

*Painting by George M. Ottinger (1833-1917), one of the  
primitive painters of Utah.*

L.D.S. CHURCH INFORMATION SERVICE

EDITOR .....Everett L. Cooley

ASSOCIATE EDITOR .....Margery W. Ward

ART EDITOR .....Roy J. Olsen