

**Several years ago, 2006, in Nevada there was a public dialogue in the
Local newspaper, Reno Gazette-Journal, (RGJ)
about the impression to use on a new State of Nevada quarter.**

Below is an Op-Ed letter was written by Bill Quick, of Reno, maybe one of the last remaining workers on the American atomic bomb program during World War II. Bill wrote to the Reno Gazette-Journal in defense of a letter by Don West's letter to the Editor, March 16th, 2006. The Reno Gazette-Journal refused to print Bill's letter, (*we guess because it was not politically correct*). *Our generation of patriots who supported "Live Free or die" are leaving us.*

Letter to the Editor: Reno Gazette-Journal, March 30, 2006, Bill Quick

The Atomic Bomb kept us free—not the Pony Express.

Letters by Theta Cerveri, Reno; Rita Sipaila, Reno; Susan Lynch, Dayton —dated March 22, 24th ridiculed Don West's letter, March 16, for saying an Atomic Blast should have been put on the new State Quarter. They think that Horses, Pony Express, and Indian artifacts are more important and better symbols of Nevada when in fact they could be symbols of many states.

Nothing could symbolize Nevada better than an Atomic Bomb Blast and nothing we did was more important to keep this country free. How misinformed these and many others are. They would erase Nevada's history if they could.

I worked on the Atomic Proving Grounds in the Southern Nevada Desert. We lived at Camp Desert Rock. It was 1951 and the camp was still in its infancy. Some of us lived in tents with dirt floors. It was late fall and very cold at night. We dressed in three pairs of pants and shirts, wore large sweatshirts and jackets to keep warm so we could get a few hours' sleep at night. It was too cold to shower at the camp and if we were lucky we could go into Vegas one night a week to shower and change clothes and feel human again.

No matter how bad the conditions were, we knew we had a job to do that was more important than our comfort and safety. Many times we felt the searing heat and Winding light of the flash and were showered with radioactive dust.

Because of Atomic Bomb Testing here in Nevada, the Soviet Union was held at bay and all those unappreciative people out there are free today because of that!

If you think otherwise, just imagine that we never tested atomic bombs after 1950. Where do you think our place in world history would be? In those days we as a people had a great national spirit. We were more determined and united and so much more patriotic. We were not always looking for ways to tear down this country. We Stood United for the Common Good. Most of you didn't live in those days so you can't possibly know how important it was to stay ahead of the Soviet Union. The U.S.S.R. had only one ambition and that was World Domination, in fact, Nikita S. Khrushchev said, "We will bury you", Nov. 17, 1956. The state of Nevada and its sacrifices kept that from happening.

We should have a special day of thanks to the State of Nevada and celebrate our Atomic Heritage. So many people seem to be ashamed that we tested Atomic Bombs. But had they lived during the '40s and '50s they would see things differently.

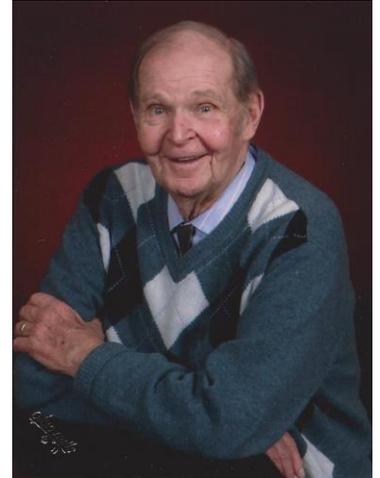
I have always thought that Nevada License plates should have a Mushroom Cloud with the words "The Atomic State".

Susan Lynch spoke of her Freedom and Independence. I would like to remind her that she only has those things because of our Atomic Bomb Testing and a united determination to beat the Soviet Union.

In those days we didn't have to look far to know that our National Security was more important than Horses, Indian artifacts or the Pony Express.

Thank You Nevada! Bill Quick, Atomic Veteran, Reno, Nevada

Proud to have been part of Bikini, Enewetak, Camp Desert Rock, Yucca Flats and henchman's Flats. We kept this country free. God Bless America, the great state of Nevada and our brave patriotic troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.





(United States Mint image.)

Nevada State Quarter

The first commemorative quarter-dollar coin released in 2006 honors Nevada, and is the 36th coin in the United States Mint's [50 State Quarters® Program](#). Nevada, nicknamed "The Silver State," was admitted into the Union on October 31, 1864, becoming our Nation's 36th state. Nevada's quarter depicts a trio of wild mustangs, the sun rising behind snow-capped mountains, bordered by sagebrush and a banner that reads "The Silver State." The coin also bears the inscriptions "Nevada" and "1864".

Nevada became a territory in 1861, several years after a Mormon Battalion in the Mexican War discovered gold and silver in the area of Virginia City. This discovery would later be referred to as one of the greatest mineral discoveries, famously known as the Comstock Lode.

Nevada is home to more than 50 percent of the Nation's wild horses. The wild horses dominate the Great Basin in the vast deserts and the more than 150 mountain ranges. The first mention of wild horses was discovered in several journals dating to the 1820s.

Quarter Specifications

Release Date: January 31, 2006

Reverse (tails) Side: The Silver State

Engraver: Don Everhart

Standard Weight: 5.670g

Standard Diameter: 24.26mm (0.955 in)

Thickness: 1.75 mm

Edge Detail: Reeded

Composition: Cupro-Nickel Clad

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Bill Quick Biography: A Rolling Stone gathers no moss.

I saw an ad in the Los Angeles newspaper. MEN NEEDED FOR SOUTH PACIFIC ISLANDS. I had an interview with the company doing the hiring. They were hiring men for concrete work and they had to have 5 years' experience. I think I was 20 years old at the time. The interviewer said I didn't look old enough to have had 5 years' experience. I said, "You are right but if you need men with 5 years' experience — they must need helpers". He said, "they sure do, would you like to go as a helper"? I said I would. The necessary papers were filled out and I was told it might take up to 8 weeks to get my temp. Papers, (P Clearance).

I had the job but now I had to find a temp job to pay my rent at the boarding house until my P Clearance came through. I didn't know my way around this big city so when I finished my interview with the company that would send me over to the Marshall Islands I had to find a job that I could get to. Right across the street from the company that hired me was a big sign that said US Steel — Vernon Plant. I went to their hiring hall and after a lot of fast talk, they hired me to saw blocks from 2 x 4's. They needed thousands of blocks 18 inches long. The blocks were used to pile the finished product on what they were building; frames for the new Henry J automobile. They piled the Henry J frame up on flat cars, maybe 10 high. I did this for 7 weeks until I got my call to go to the Marshall Islands as a laborer. I went with a group of other new hires, first to Hawaii then to the Marshall Islands. My Q clearance came a few weeks later. They flew us in C-54 Cargo Planes. This was the fall of 1950. The contracts were for 12 months. It paid \$1.20 an hour and we worked 54 hours a week. Our room and board were furnished by the company — Holmes and Narver Engineers Inc. On some of the islands we lived in 4 man tents, while on other islands we lived in 8 man metal Army barracks. The food was the best I ever ate. We ate 3 meals a day at 8 man tables; I never dreamed meals could be so good. — Steaks, roast, turkey, chicken, ham — you name it and we got it. There always was 2 kinds of meat or roasts at every meal to choose from. There always was 2 kinds of desserts, every beverage you could think of, but, liquor only on Saturday night. They had to feed us that way in order to keep the men over there in such isolation. Some of the islands we were on were so narrow that it was impossible to get away from the roar of the ocean and if you didn't get used to it, it would drive some men crazy that they would have to go back to the mainland. A third of the men would quit before filling out their contract.

I spent 8 months at the Eniwetok Atoll, building all kinds of buildings to test the A-Bombs on. They had a saying that was on signs all over the atolls to remind you that what you were doing was top secret. "What you do here, what you see here when you leave here let it stay here?"

I started on the job driving V I P's to various locations on the main island. From there I was transferred to a heavy equipment job as an oiler. I had to keep a crane oiled and always ready to go. The crane operator was a nice guy who's last name was Swift. My last name being Quick was quite a coincidence and was talked about all over the atoll. "Quick and Swift", haha.

The crane I worked on was moved many times to different islands in this Eniwetok atoll. I soon learned to run the crane as good as Mr. Swift did. Several months later when his Q clearance didn't come through he was sent back to another island to work on not top secret jobs. This left me with the crane and its operation. Time went fast and we were ready for the BIG ONE—the world's first H-Bomb test. The Atomic Scientists were moved to the island along with the world's first H-Bomb.

They had built a small gauge rail track to move the H-Bomb (which was on a carriage) from the ship to the tower. However, the rail track that was originally built when the tower was built didn't match properly with the track that was later built to move the bomb from the ship. The Scientists didn't want to bump the H-Bomb. The bomb (in the carriage) had to be picked up with a crane and moved from one track to the other. The heavy equipment Supervisor told me to bring my crane (ALIMA PAYMASTER with a 35-foot boom) up to where the tracks were supposed to be (the tracks were the same size, but a different gauge). One of the Atomic VIP's saw

me and said: "get that punk kid off that machine and put an experienced operator on it". The heavy equipment supervisor, my boss, said, "He may be a punk kid to you but he can operate that crane much smoother than anyone else on this island". I picked the bomb (in its cradle" up just a few inches above the tracks and slowly moved it to the other part of the track and very gently sat it down. Now the bomb was able to be moved the rest of the way on the track to the tower.

I had a lot of spare time because the job I was on was almost complete so I was assigned to ensure the Scientists had whatever they needed. I had no trouble operating the elevator to go up and down the 200-foot tower. I had to make sure that all the personnel got up and down the tower. They could build a Hydrogen Bomb but couldn't operate the elevator. Several days later while up in the tower with the crew arming the bomb one of the scientists dropped a bolt (intentionally, I think) and looked at me and said, "Excuse me young man, would you pick up the machine part I just dropped". I picked it up and handed it to him. He looked at me and said, "Thank you, now you can tell your children and grandchildren that you helped arm the world's first Hydrogen bomb". All went well and a couple of days before the detonation we all vacated the island.

The world's first Hydrogen Bomb was detonated on the 8th of May, 1951. We were put on various ships the night before the detonation and watched it explode. We were about 20 miles from Ground O.

A few of us didn't have glasses to look at the explosion so we had to turn our backs to the explosion, sit on the deck of the ship, put our hands over our eyes and head in our lap with our eyes closed and listen for the countdown, all the way down from H-30 minutes to H-30 seconds and the down to 10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1. We were warned not to open our eyes and not to take off the glasses until the ALL CLEAR was sounded. Those of us without glasses, when the bomb went off, our heads seemed to light up like a light bulb and amazingly I could see every bone in my hands, it reminded me of when they took an x-ray.

There was nothing left of the thousands of tons of concrete and steel that had been the tower. After the detonation of the H-Bomb a lot of us were given a choice of going home without a penalty or stay for the remainder of the 12-month contract, home sure looked better so a week later I was on my way back to LA.

I came across Bill Quick while researching some local articles concerning Nevada's nuclear history for our US Nuclear Energy Foundation. Our mission of grassroots education about nuclear technology continues to experience that politics and media still demonize nuclear politically irrespective of the facts, safety and advancements which support the science and engineering.

Understanding our mission Mr. Quick was happy to join our efforts. We are in the process of working on some documentation of his Atomic Veteran work and hope to get some to the Atomic Heritage Foundation:
<http://www.atomicheritage.org/> .

Gary J Duarte, Director
US Nuclear Energy Foundation