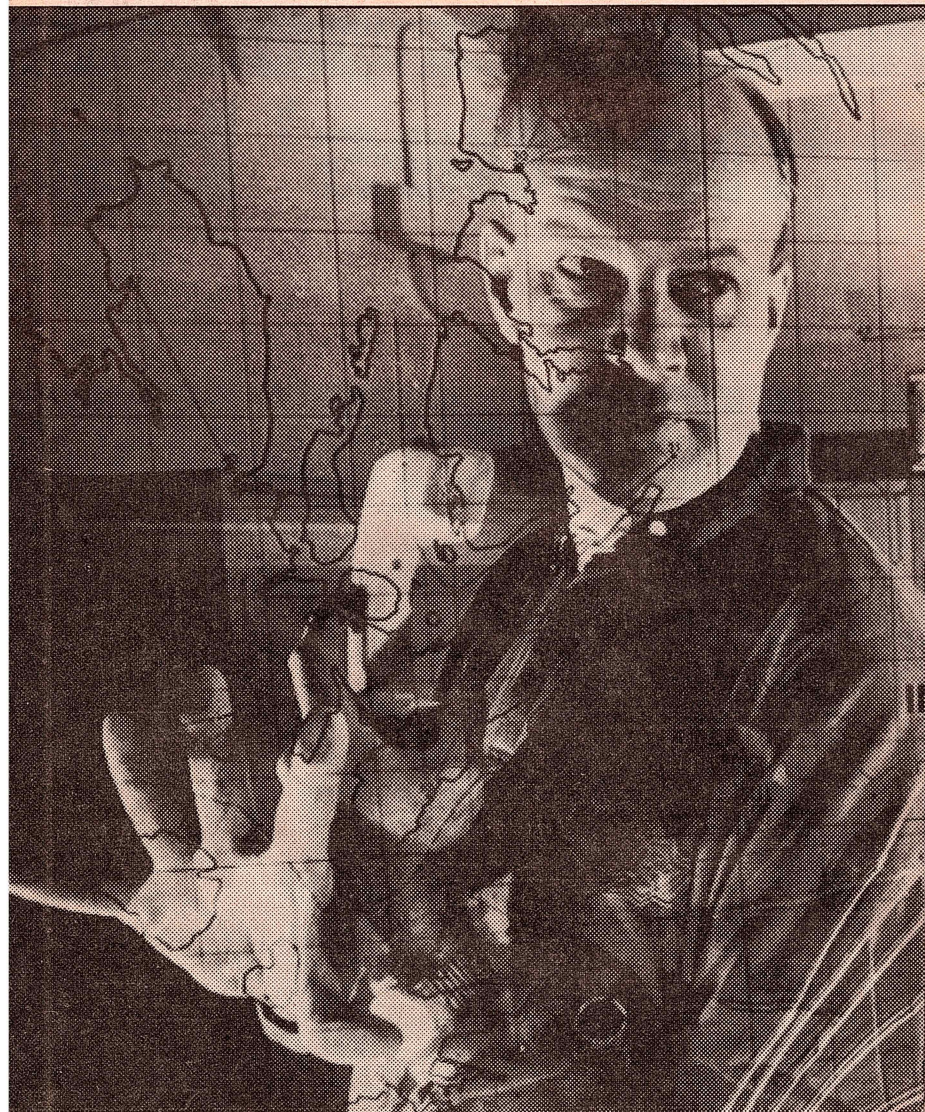


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HOME NEWS



h! what a lovely war . . . The fallout plotting chart, left in the control room when the

# Scots nuclear bunker an open secret

Relic of cold war reaps rich tripper fallout. Erlend Clouston reports

**T**O A SPY plane, the building six miles south of St Andrews must have looked like any other pantiled 16th century cottage. Agents on the ground might have suspected something fishy about the over-regular stonework, but few would have been tempted to sneak up the potholed 400-yard track. Yesterday, however, anyone prepared to pay £3.75 (£2.75 concessions) received graphic confirmation that there was always more to north-east Fife than golf courses and fishing villages. Hidden 100 feet beneath the cottage was a 40,000 square foot concrete box designed to hold the 400 civil servants and politicians who would keep Scotland running in the event of thermo-nuclear attack.

Comforted by piped music and refreshments dispensed along the corridor from the 36-seat emergency chapel, the first customers of a structure billed as "Scotland's Secret Bunker" peered respectfully at the 2,800-line switchboard and the red telephone set with its "attack" and "cancel" switches.

Built originally as an RAF early warning station, the megabasement was stood down from active service last year and bought by a consortium headed by Lord Clifden.

"They spent £5 million on it just before the end, for which we are incredibly grateful," beamed his lordship as visitors filed into two subterranean cinemas offering either newsreel of the first US Air Force atom tests or a collection of BBC TV third world war alerts.

A chart in the control room was a reminder that there was a serious side to nuclear cover. Left over from an exercise in April, it traces in bright coloured crayon the radiating drift from missiles hitting Rosyth, Inverness, mysteriously, Oban. Optically, no fallout appears to reach St Andrews.

If the worst came to the personnel staffing the bunker would have been resigning toughing it out underground for up to eight weeks. Irrational of the holocaust probably raging overhead, clearly expected plenty of The control room is filled with desks labelled reassurance Dept of Health, Dept of Transport, Treasury, etc.

There is a glass wall between them and the VIP suite (bed, Michael Foot duffel coat, royal portrait) so the Secretary of State for Scotland could keep an eye on the rather chilling Nuclear Burst Tote scorecard and grey wall safe marked Nuclear Code Keys.

The teleprinter marked Early Warning looked turbidly like the one that for the football results in Scotland. "That's nothing," John Harris, research his and colleague of Lord Clifden said. "You should see some emergency equipment; straight out of world war two."

Everything is encased in foot thick concrete and shielded by a shock-proof brane. "You could kiss goodnight if there was a direct hit, they had gone for RAF choppers (10 miles away) it would have stood a chance," said Mr Harris.

The Fife centre was one of three. The second has been demolished and the third turned into a rave club. The official bolt hole is believed to be "somewhere in Perthshire".