

A dramatic — and controversial — display of one type of shelter and, beside it, an equally dramatic display of the promising “Brilliant Pebbles” technique of destroying attack missiles, the core of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) concept, combined recently in Pennsylvania to give the doubtful public an idea of what homeland defense is capable of if allowed to develop: American survival — even peace.

Homeland Defense on Tour

Jane Orient, M.D. and Stephen Alley

... “Neat!” said the children visiting the civil defense display at the Allentown Fair [Pennsylvania] August 28 through September 3, 1990.

None of them found the exhibit to be “scary.” That comment was made by adults only.

The steel shelter display was designed and built by the Oregon Institute of Science and Medicine for the state of Pennsylvania, the second state to receive a mobile display shelter from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The shelter is very much like the equipment used by the Iraqis during the Iran-Iraq War to protect personnel from chemical warfare as well as artillery fire. . . .

In addition to chemical and biological protection, the shelter, when properly buried, provides 200 psi-blast protection and a radiation protection factor of 10,000, which would permit occupants to survive at ground zero of a one-megaton nuclear airburst or one-half mile from a ground-

burst (see the *Journal of Civil Defense*, December 1988).

In Allentown, PA, 655,000 fairgoers had the first opportunity in history to see, side by side, state-of-the-art strategic defense and civil defense hardware. A “Brilliant Pebble” made its public debut next to the blast door of the shelter display. The video *One Incoming* was shown, and SDI was explained by High Frontier representatives Colonel Warren Everett, General Milnor Roberts, and retired aerospace engineer George Baughman. Congressman Don Ritter of Pennsylvania, a member of the Scientific and Engineering Advisory Board of the Coalition for the Strategic Defense Initiative, visited the displays.

A large proportion of viewers said they had never heard of a “brilliant pebble.” Some thought it might be a laser. After learning of the capability of these kinetic-energy devices, many asked, “How many of these do we have?” and were astonished by

the answer, “Zero.”

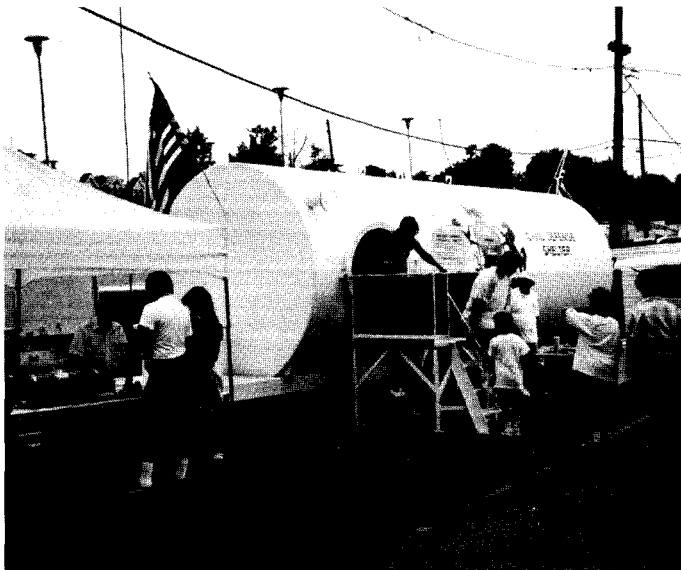
Many fairgoers were also surprised to learn that the number of U.S. civil defense shelters is not much larger than the number of brilliant pebbles.

“Where do we have these in Allentown?” they asked. . . .

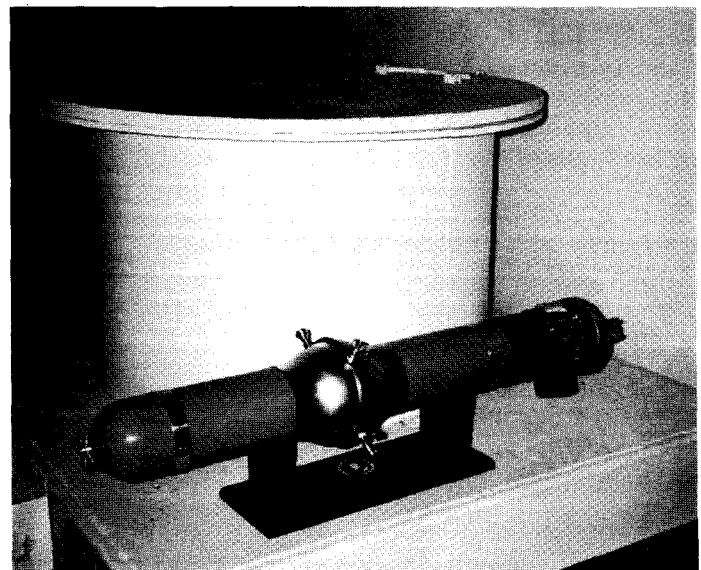
In contrast to the children, adults did not have a uniformly positive response. Some were argumentative. . . .

Some refused to accept even a flyer describing the shelter technology. But there was no way for people to refuse to look at the shelter without first noticing that it was there. . . .

Thousands of people — most of whom had never been in a bomb shelter before — toured the shelter display and had an opportunity to ask questions. Thousands more received civil defense brochures from our volunteers. And many tens of thousands saw that homeland defense technology is not made out of paper. . . . □



Col. Warren S. Everett demonstrates brilliant pebble model at left in front of High Frontier tent, while on right people exit from steel shelter display.



A “Brilliant Pebble.” The shelter entryway in the background is 36 inches in diameter.