**Harold Cofer and the COLEX process, part 4 — Changes to support operations**

During the time Harold was pulling together the spare parts for the Alloy Development Program (separation of lithium 6) equipment, John Strohecker moved from Building 9766 to the main administration building, Building 9704-2. This was but one of many changes being made to reorganize for the new emerging mission of providing the nation's need for lithium 6 to enhance the yield of the hydrogen bombs being planned.

The Cold War was heating up with Russia's nuclear testing and that of the United States. Nuclear tests were being scheduled regularly and Y-12 was fully engaged in each one. So, the expansion of production capability primarily in Building 9212 was happening at the same time the ADP (COLEX or column exchange) was being implemented primarily in Buildings 9201-4 (Alpha 4) and 9201-5 (Alpha 5). These processes came on line in early 1955.

Laboratory research had been conducted, primarily in Building 9202 (OREX or organic exchange, ELEX or electrical exchange and COLEX) and at Oak Ridge National Laboratory (OREX). Pilot activity had been conducted in Buildings 9202 and 9201-2 (Alpha 2) for all the processes.

The ELEX process had been placed in operation in Building 9204-4 and produced its first product in August, 1953. Even with the large scale production plant, the output was not nearly high enough to meet the ever increasing demand.

With all that activity ongoing and new processes coming online organizational changes were to be expected. Harold Cofer gives us some insight into some of the more significant organizational changes from his perspective.

He recalls that Bill Ebert was moved from Chemical to Maintenance Division Superintendent, a position he would retain for a long number of years. I personally recall his strong leadership role in the Maintenance Division in the 1970's when I was once located in Building 9734. His office was located in the front of the building near the main entrance and mine was at the rear of the hallway right next to the coffee pot.

Many is the time I recall him stopping by and sitting with his fresh cup of coffee in my small office and asking me what was going on in his division. You see, I was the "Maintenance Auditor" and it was my job to visit each Work Control Center every week and to conduct at least three audits of maintenance jobs in each General Foreman's area.

This audit was to confirm that the Maintenance Planners and Estimators were correctly applying the A. T. Kearney estimating standards for maintenance work to each job and that the supervisors were properly assigning workers and finally that the workers were performing the proper scope of work. The Maintenance Division's computerized maintenance management system was among the very first such systems ever implemented in industry.

The automated work management system had been brought into Y-12 early in the ealry1960s. Bill Ebert decided to send Walt Williams to school on the A.T. Kearney system of standard estimating. Later Bill Ebert authorized the purchase of a computer to collect data needed to support the automated work management system. It was this kind of forward thinking that had become normal for Y-12 by then.

According to Harold, it was at this same time that Dave Jennings, long time maintenance department manager, was moved from Chemical to Maintenance. Carl Newman was moved from Electrical to Process Maintenance. F. K. Booth was the Maintenance General Foreman in Alpha 4. Q. F. Mullins was the Maintenance General Foreman in Alpha 5. Charlie Gault was the day shift foreman in Alpha 5 and Harold was the day shift foreman in Alpha 4.

George Evans was the department head of Alpha 4 and Alpha 5. W. K. Whitson was the Division Superintendent over the entire ADP (Alloy Development Program) organization. Neal Dow was one of the

department heads for the Chemical organization in Alpha 4. Harold worked closely with Neal as he provided the maintenance support to Neal's operation.

Harold recounted that both COLEX processes in Alpha 4 and Alpha 5 required substantial amounts of cooling water and for the processes to operate the supply had to be constantly available. There were many pumps located just south of both buildings. Nick Tronolone was the key person any time either of the operations lost cooling water.

Harold said, "I always kidded Nick about holding the speed record going from inside Alpha 4 or Alpha 5 to the cooling tower areas. He always wore high top galoshes, especially in Alpha 5 since there was still a lot of water on the floors in the column areas. Any time we lost a pump, Nick and I would sprint to the cooling tower area to check the problem and restore power, if that was what was needed."

Next we will learn from Harold about many of the toughest maintenance problems he faced during his support of the ADP operations.