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Book details Atlas Missile development

Two local authors reveal some secrets for interesting read

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One is exhibited at the Smithsonian museum in Washington, D.C. Others blew up mid-flight. Some hit their targets, others strayed from the mark.

Hundreds more in various configurations await future missions at air force bases and launch pads throughout the world.



ISBN 1-894959-18-3

America's first Intercontinental Ballistic Missile, Atlas, "paved the way for modern satellites and communications and weapons systems," writes Chuck Walker in his new book "Atlas: The Ultimate Weapon."

Contributing author and Norman resident Frank X. Marshall, a participating engineer on the early Atlas project, said without numerous individuals' pioneering efforts, space exploration, geophysical surveys and other modern advances the Atlas missile would not have been possible.

"There was no precedent for anything we were working on, even for anything related to its propulsion system," Marshall said. "So everything that went into the missile had to be designed, from scratch."

Walker's book takes the reader onto the missile's design floor and later, its control room and testing facility, tracing the evolution of the "Ultimate Weapon."

The book is intended to make previously classified military documents public and to relay the lessons and experiences of the engineering, fabrication and management teams of Atlas. It contains first-hand accounts, making it a varied and interesting read.

The 302-page book's objective is to capture a snapshot of the players and societal framework surrounding one of America's finest endeavors.

The book's detailed diagrams help the reader gain a greater understanding of the hopes, dreams and ideas Atlas represented from the 1950s to the present.

"Atlas: The Ultimate Weapon," published by Apogee press, \$29.95. Available at Borders Books in Norman and online, www.apogeebooks.com.

