

Herbert E. Grier



Herbert Earl Grier (July 3, 1911 — March 17, 1999) was an American electrical engineer. From the 1930s to 1940s, Grier co-invented a miniature stroboscope and handheld flash with Harold Edgerton and Kenneth Germeshausen. During World War II, Grier built the firing mechanism used in the Fat Man bomb. After Grier created EG&G in 1947 with Edgerton and Germeshausen, he was involved in nuclear testings including Operation Sandstone and Operation Ranger. With EG&G, Grier was the president until 1976 and served as a consultant from 1983 to 1994. Apart from electrical engineering, Grier was part of NASA safety boards between the 1970s and 1980s that assessed Skylab and the preparation of the first Space Shuttle. Grier was awarded the NASA Distinguished Service Medal in 1985 and National Medal of Science in 1989.

Herb was born on July 3, 1911 in Chicago, Illinois. At the age of eleven, Grier and his family left Chicago to live in New York City. For his post-secondary education, Grier graduated with a Bachelor of Science and Master of Science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the early 1930s.

Herb started his career as an electrical engineer for MIT from 1934 to 1947. During this time period, Grier co-invented a miniature stroboscope alongside Harold Edgerton and Kenneth Germeshausen in 1934. Years later, Grier and his colleagues created a Kodak handheld flash for newspaper photographers in 1940. While working on aerial photography for Edgerton during World War II, Grier joined the Manhattan Project and built the firing mechanism used in the Fat Man bomb.

After forming EG&G with Edgerton and Germeshausen in 1947, Grier was involved in nuclear testings between the late 1940s and early 1950s. These included Operation Sandstone, Operation Ranger and Operation Ivy. With EG&G, Grier was the company's president until 1976 and was a consultant from 1983 to 1994. Other executive roles Grier had were president of GEC Geonuclear Company from 1965 to 1983 and chairman of Reynolds Electrical & Engineering Company from 1969 to 1971. Outside of electrical engineering, Grier was selected for a

1973 NASA advisory board on safety that reviewed Skylab. He also led a 1980 safety committee that assessed the preparation of the first NASA Space Shuttle.

Herb was a recipient of the NASA Distinguished Service Medal in 1985 and the National Medal of Science in 1989. He was married and had three children. He died on March 17, 1999 in La Jolla, California.