

THE STORY OF THE DISCOVERY OF ONE OF OUR NATION'S SECRET FACILITIES UNDERGROUND

476



THIS ARTICLE IS IN TWO PARTS

PART ONE: [MAN ACCIDENTALLY UNCOVERED A SECRET FACILITY THAT REVEALS OUR BIGGEST FEAR](#)

PART TWO: [THE GIGANTIC GOVERNMENT RAVEN ROCK BUNKER- EVEN TODAY NOT MUCH IS KNOWN
OF ITS INTERIOR](#)

Whether it's a dollar bill or a lost winter glove, finding something on the cold cement of a parking garage floor isn't likely to change your day all that much. Still, now and then, a seemingly worthless item can turn into something so much more—just ask Garrett Graff.

A historian and political author, Graff didn't think much of the item one of his work colleagues found on the floor of a parking garage. But upon closer inspection, he saw something on the object that piqued his journalistic curiosity. What followed was a life-changing, multi-year hunt into some of America's most deeply buried secrets...

Political writer Garrett Graff covered a lot of hot-button issues in his lifetime, from the War on Terror to the 2008 U.S. presidential election. But perhaps his *most* eye-opening research started when his friend handed him something peculiar.



Garrett Graff"

It was a government ID for someone from the intelligence community," Graff said, "and he gave it to me since I write about that subject, and he's like, 'I figure you can get this back to this guy.'" The friend, he noted, had found the ID on a parking garage floor.



CIA Identification Card ???

Right away, Graff noticed something peculiar about the ID: step-by-step driving instructions covered the back of it. So Graff, the inquisitive journalist that he was, used Google Maps to locate the direction's end destination—and the results surprised him.

The directions led him to a mountain peak just over 70 miles outside of Washington D.C. There, at a peak known as Raven Rock, the road just... ended. It led to the face of the mountain and then, nothing.



Graff recalled everything else he saw once he made the trip out there. "You can see very clearly these big concrete bunker doors," he said. "This little guard shack, chain-link fence, and then this set of concrete bunker doors beyond." What had he just found?



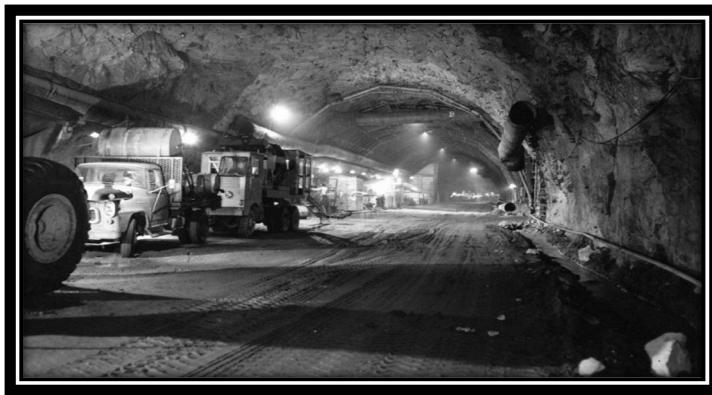
"It was a facility that I had never heard of that wasn't on any map," Graff elaborated. His inner historian and journalist freaking out, he started researching what he'd found as soon as he could.



He didn't know it when he first stumbled upon the structure, but the directions had led him to Raven Rock Mountain Complex, also known as 'Site R'. To put it more bluntly, he'd found a nuclear fallout shelter!



Graff's research turned up plenty of information on the United States government's nuclear war contingency plan—some of it comforting, some of it horrifying, and all of it fascinating. For example...



The Truman administration sanctioned construction on the bunker in 1951 once the Cold War with the Soviet Union started warming up. They used a construction team who'd carved out New York City subway tunnels to do the job. So how'd they keep it secret?

Laborer Gene Bowman—who was paid \$1.35 per hour in 1951 to bore through the granite of Raven Rock—put it this way: “They just said they were building a tunnel. Wasn’t nobody interested in what they were doing?” Once dug, however, it didn’t look like a simple tunnel.



In his interview with NPR, Graff described the Raven Rock Complex as “a free-standing city... built inside of this mountain.” Intended to be a “backup Pentagon,” Site R boasted two 34-ton blast doors capable of thwarting nuclear bomb blows.

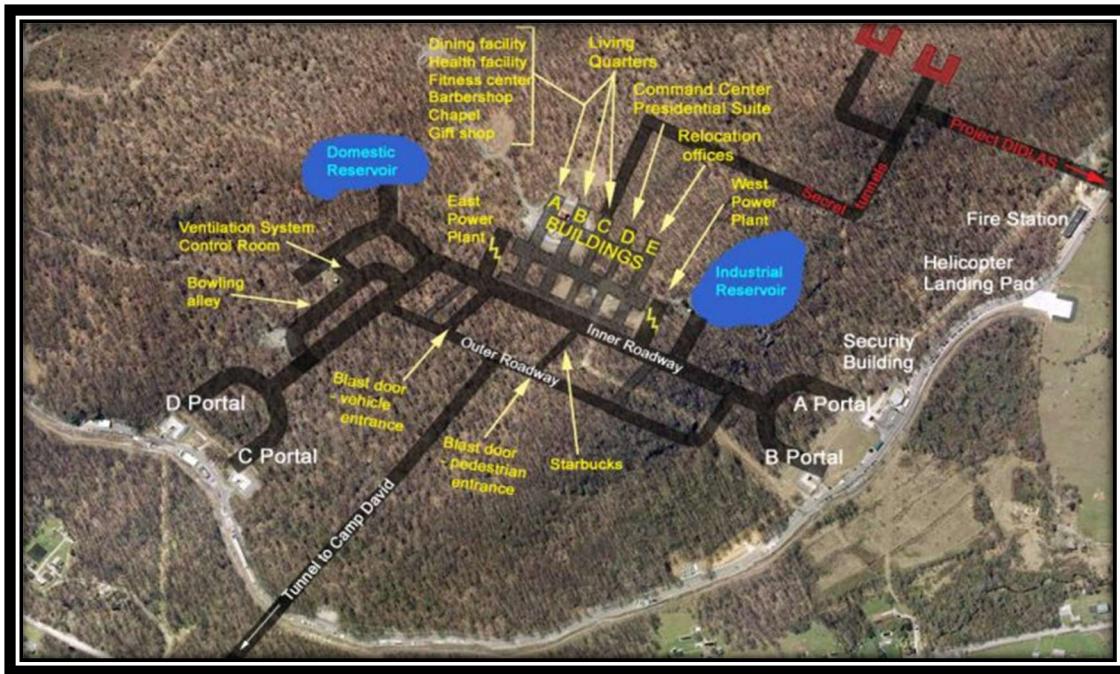


Beyond the blast doors and inside the heart of the rock, 100,000 feet of office provided all the room military officials would need to operate. Infirmaries, cafeterias, and utility areas allowed for up to 1,400 of America’s V.I.P.s to live somewhat comfortably—with a catch.

With the president, his or her cabinet, officials, and military personnel inhabiting the bunker, there was no room for spouses. This led to a famous exchange between then-Supreme Court Justice Earl Warren and another official.



Handed an ID badge for access to Raven Rock, Justice Warren realized there wasn't one for his wife. When told she wouldn't be allowed in, the justice handed back the ID and said, "you'll have room for one more important official."



But believe it or not, Raven Rock wasn't just a place for the elite and powerful to hobnob as the world around them fell apart. As Graff discovered, officials set up very specific operation plans for every federal branch—even the IRS and post office.

Yep, even in the case of nuclear destruction, the government wasn't going to let people off the tax hook so easily. The IRS had a post-bomb plan that covered how to appropriately tax damaged—rather, vaporized—property.

And where would people get money to pay taxes in an apocalyptic society? Uncle Sam had a plan for that, too: officials stashed away publicly scorned \$2 bills in another bomb shelter to redistribute as currency.



They would set up refugee camps, the Department of Agriculture would divvy up rations, and the post office was charged with finding out who died in the blast.

At the time of the Cold War, a nuclear attack felt so imminent that Raven Rock had been fully manned and operated 24 hours per day—up until 1992

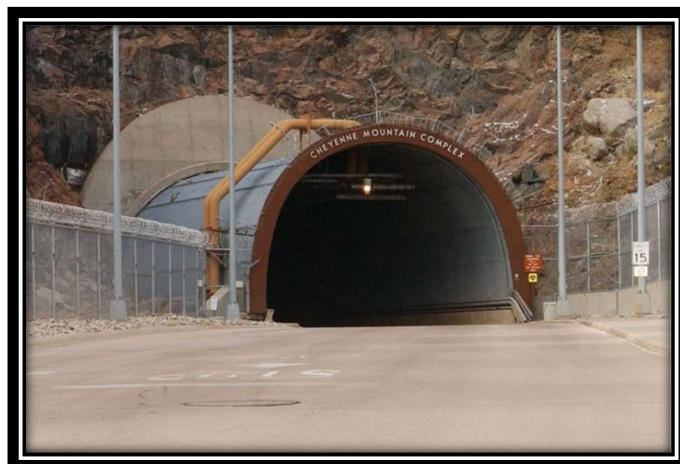
Operations were picked up and modernized once more after the September 11 attacks in 2001.
[They again run 24/7](#)

Though the ID card Graff received listed directions to only one secret bunker, his research uncovered half a dozen or so other doomsday shelters (like one beneath the Greenbrier Resort in West Virginia here), each more or less the same in function and design.



Greenbrier Hotel & Resort

[In Cheyenne Mountain near Colorado Springs](#) lie another hidden doomsday bunker. Like Raven Rock, this complex was built in the 1950s and served as “the command post responsible for defending both Canada and the U.S. from air attacks,” Graff said.



*North American Aerospace Defense Command
NORAD*

Cheyenne Mountain had reservoirs of water and fuel, doctor's offices, gyms, and even a Subway sandwich joint. So in the event of a nuclear attack, whoever was working the cash register at the time earned a spot among the surviving elite.

As far as Graff could tell, the bunkers provided a disturbing answer. [“The civilian population will be left to itself for weeks or months at a time,”](#) he said, “and a small number of senior government officials will be spirited out to these bunkers.”

[In other words, the government’s plot to rebuild post-nuclear war America didn’t include the people.](#) Preserving artifacts and the system of government took precedence, but in a time of chaos, what else could be done?

Graff dove deeper into his findings in a book he titled *Raven Rock: The Story of the U.S. Government's Secret Plan to Save Itself — While the Rest of Us Die*. To think, his journey into some of the country's biggest secrets started with just a lost ID badge!

PART TWO

THE GIGANTIC GOVERNMENT RAVEN ROCK BUNKER – WHAT'S INSIDE?

EVEN TODAY NOT MUCH IS KNOWN OF ITS INTERIOR



The first step in the project involved the federal government seizing 280 acres of land. The initial phase of construction cost around \$35 million (\$350 million today, adjusted for inflation)

THE COLD WAR ERA



Raven Rock. Imagery Google Maps



MAY 1, 2019

Americans have been concerned about surviving a nuclear war since the first atomic bombs were dropped on Japan.

This fear worsened during the Cold War, and various bomb shelters were set up in cities. Some citizens even bought their private fallout shelters. However, the most extensive survival measures in the United States were undertaken by the government itself.

The Raven Rock Mountain Complex (RRMC), sometimes referred to as Site R, was built in the early 1950s as a last resort to save the United States government in the event of large-scale nuclear, chemical, or other devastating attacks. Although its location, near Blue Ridge Summit in Pennsylvania, is public, little is known about the interior of the facility.

What are the capabilities of this mysterious facility, and how likely is it that it could still be used today?

PURPOSE AND CONSTRUCTION

The Raven Rock complex is sometimes nicknamed the “[Underground Pentagon](#).” This name succinctly summarizes the facility’s purpose: if the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, were ever destroyed, the Department of Defense would attempt to regroup at the RRMC. In essence, Battle Staff and high-ranking officials in the U.S. government would head to Raven Rock as soon as an attack was confirmed.

As for the “underground” part, the RRMC was created between 1951 and 1953 by blasting into the side of a greenstone mountain. The mountain, in addition to a fortified bunker, would protect from nuclear blasts.

To see more about this and other Government secret bunkers and their uses please copy and paste the following link into your browser:

<https://www.warhistoryonline.com/instant-articles/raven-rock-the-u-s-governments.html>



The 25-ton blast door in the Cheyenne Mountain nuclear bunker is the main entrance to another blast door (background) beyond which the side tunnel branches into access tunnels to the main chambers. [NORAD, Cheyenne Mountain, Colorado](#).

The first step in the project involved the federal government seizing 280 acres of land. The initial phase of construction cost around \$35 million (\$350 million today, adjusted for inflation).

Although there were only three underground buildings by 1953, the base continued expanding for decades after. In 1955 the Office of the Secretary of Defense felt confident enough in the facility to approve the automatic activation of Raven Rock’s Alternate Joint Communication Center upon notice of a nuclear attack.

In 1956 a joint War Room Annex was created to be run by the Air Force, and further improvements to communications technology continued through the 1970s. *One of the key upgrades made in 1963 was strengthening the bunker to withstand up to 140 psi in the event of a nuclear blast. A local paper reported in 1990 that funds had been allocated to improve the facility's air conditioning system.*

MODERN FACILITY AND USE

As the Cold War began to wind down, so did Raven Rock. Although it never fully stopped operating, its funding was severely reduced. However, in the 21st century, the facility was suddenly called back into action.

On September 11th, 2001, Raven Rock saw its first official use for its intended purpose. When the Pentagon was hit by a plane, high-ranking officials from the Department of Defense had to be evacuated, including Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz and Secretary of the Army Thomas White.

Some sources claim that the Secret Service realized on 9/11 that high-ranking United States officials, including the President and Vice President, could be in danger. They decided that the best course of action was to make sure that these high-ranking officials were not all in the same place, and so Vice President Dick Cheney was taken to Raven Rock for his safety.



Aerial view of the Pentagon Building located in Arlington, Virginia showing emergency crews responding to the destruction caused when a high-jacked commercial jetliner crashed into the southwest corner of the building, during the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

However, other sources say this is not the case, and instead only high-ranking officials from the Department of Defense went to Raven Rock, while Cheney was taken to another undisclosed location.

Raven Rock was figuratively taken out of mothballs after the attack and is now fully modernized and maintained. *In 2018 it had an annual budget of 45 million dollars.*

It is known that the facility contains multiple power plants, multiple water reservoirs, an uninterrupted power supply, independent water sources, a helipad, and a fire department, in

addition to the rooms. It is essentially a small city. Once its blast doors close, over 3,000 U.S. government officials could survive there for weeks, if not months.

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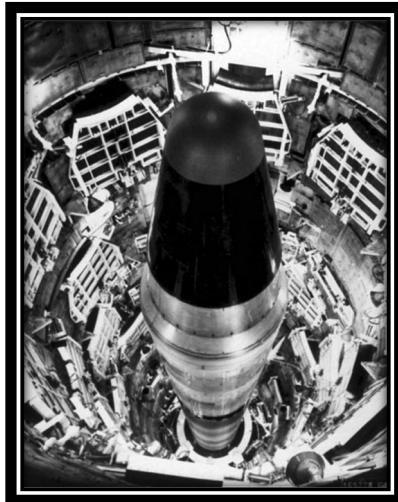
Vice President Cheney watching the initial 9/11 attack

CRITICISMS

In 2017 Garrett Graff, a journalist, and author of *Raven Rock: The Story of the U.S. Government's Secret Plan to Save Itself – While the Rest of Us Die*, remarked that “Raven Rock is the place where the nuclear war in the United States would begin.”

Indeed, a lot of the criticisms and conspiracies around the Raven Rock facility are fundamentally about the plans to continue the United States government after a hypothetical Armageddon. There is only room for a select group of people in the bunker, so if it was ever really needed most U.S. citizens would be left on their own.

In addition, there is a question about what the real purpose of military leadership would be if the entire country was destroyed. Presumably, a retaliatory nuclear strike would be launched from Raven Rock.



The Titan II Intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) carried a 9 Mt W53 warhead, one of the most powerful nuclear weapons fielded by the United States during the Cold War.

However, as Graff points out, it is also the location from which the government would launch a nuclear strike if the U.S. struck first. In this hypothetical scenario, the United States government would essentially put the entire population at risk while protecting themselves.

Those who defend Raven Rock point out that, in the event of such a disaster, somebody would have to try to reconstruct the United States.

Government agencies would be necessary to organize people, try to identify who survived, and provide emergency services. Hence, it makes sense to prioritize protecting the Department of Defense, FEMA, the President, and other key individuals.

COULD IT BE USED AND WOULD IT BE NEEDED TODAY?

Unsurprisingly, Raven Rock has attracted speculation and conspiracy theories over the years. The RRMC's proximity to Camp David, where United States presidents often vacation, has led many people to speculate that there may be some underground tunnel connecting the two, although this is unproven.

Some people also believe that there is a tunnel connecting the facility to the Pentagon in Virginia. Regardless, the proximity would be useful if the President needed to be evacuated to the facility.

However, Raven Rock is not the only facility that serves this purpose. The United States Continuity of Operations Plan (sometimes called the Continuity of Government Plan) includes several other locations. For example, Mount Weather in northeastern Virginia would serve as a base of operations for the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Although some people might argue they are relics of the Cold War, *all these facilities are still operational and could serve their original purpose if required.*

JUSTIFYING KEEPING RAVEN ROCK OPEN???

WHEN WAS RAVEN ROCK LAST USED?

Raven Rock has only seen emergency use one time in its history, when Vice President Dick Cheney was evacuated there on September 11th, 2001. The bunker may seem anachronistic in an era of asymmetric warfare, but it is still fully staffed and operational... a white elephant relic of the Cold War.

THE FACILITY PLANS TO REMAIN OPERATIONAL!

Raven Rock was figuratively taken out of mothballs after the attack and is now fully modernized and maintained. *In 2018 it had an annual budget of 45 million dollars.*

ADDITIONAL COSTS PROGRAMMED FOR 2022

SOURCE:

<https://www.defensedaily.com/contract-awards/contract-award-west-penn-power-company-firstenergy-greensburg-pennsylvania-10337242/>

Contract Award: West Penn Power

May 13, 2022

West Penn Power Company/FirstEnergy, Greensburg, Pennsylvania, was awarded a firm-fixed-price multi-year contract (47PA0418D0033) for \$10,337,242 to provide the electricity distribution and supply services to the Raven Rock Mountain Complex. The contract will include a five-year, 10-month base period with one four-year option period, which if exercised, will bring the total estimated value to \$17,425,636. Work will be performed at the Raven Rock Mountain Complex in Fairfield, Pennsylvania.

The expected completion date is Feb. 16, 2028. If the option is exercised, the expected completion date is Feb. 16, 2032. Washington Headquarters Services, Arlington, Virginia, is the contracting activity.