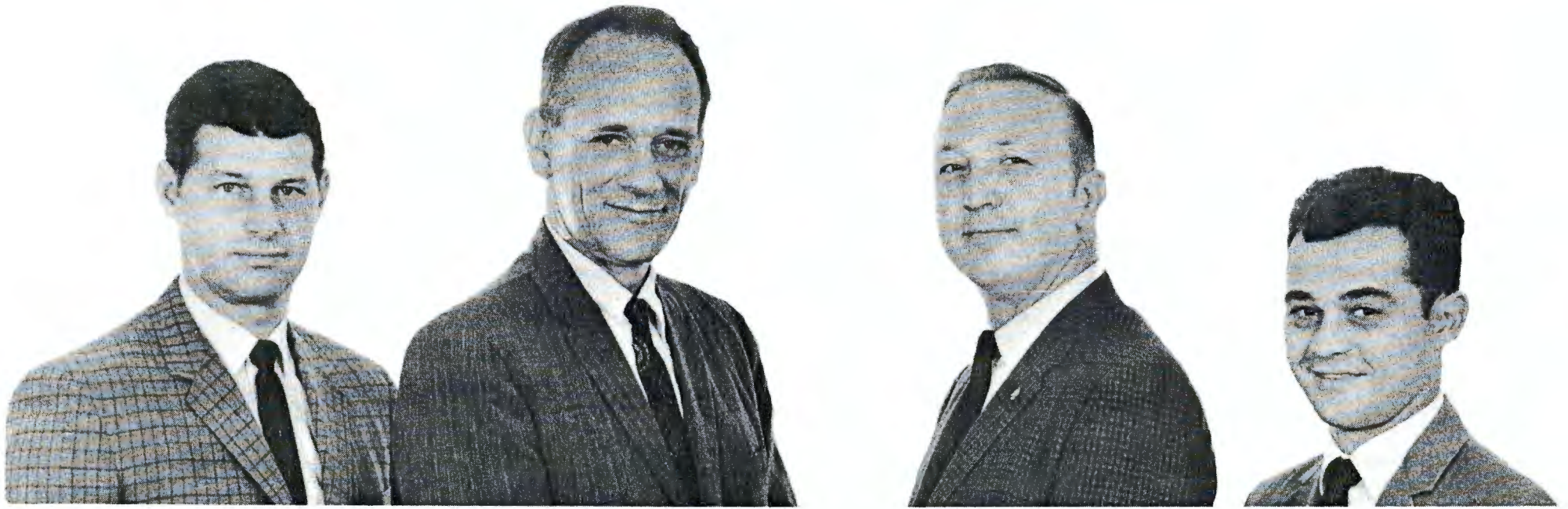


APOLLO SPACE SUIT



Made In
DOVER, DELAWARE



ILC Employees Attend Astronaut Luncheon

Four honored employees of ILC Industries, Inc. of Dover, departed Philadelphia International Airport enroute to Houston, Texas on Monday afternoon, August 11, 1969.

The men were selected to represent ILC at a luncheon saluting the Apollo 11 Astronauts, held at the Rice Hotel in Houston on August 12.

Shown left to right are: Tom Sylvester, who is the Chief Test Technician of the Research & Engineering Department.

Ralph Hahn is Production Planning Manager in the Manufacturing Department. Jim Miller is the Manufacturing CCB Coordinator for the Apollo Program Office, and Mike McNiff, also of Apollo, is a Supervisor, Master Planner & Scheduler.

These four men were selected on the basis of their outstanding contribution to the successful operation of the ILC Industries' space suit during the Apollo 11 moon landing.

50 cent

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**FORMER SITE OF ILC DOVER
MAKERS OF THE APOLLO MOONSUIT**

In 1947 the International Latex Corporation established a specialty products division and chose this site for its location. The company rose to prominence as a supplier of aerospace and aerospace equipment began in 1952 when it was contracted to produce high altitude pressure helmets for the military. By the late 1950s the plant was producing pressure suits and developing prototype helmets for the space program. In 1964 the company was contracted to supply space suits for NASA's Apollo Lunar Project. On this site, the men and women of ILC designed, developed and manufactured the suits that protected the brave pioneers who traveled to the Moon. Prior to each flight, astronauts would visit this site to be fitted in their custom sized suits. Among them was Neil Armstrong, who traveled here shortly before becoming the first man to walk on the Moon on July 20, 1969. After more than a quarter century of technological innovation and excellence, the Dover plant was closed in 1975 when ILC consolidated its operations at their Frederica location. The building was leased for many years as a warehouse. Following extensive renovations and improvements, this historic structure was reopened in September 2002 as the Campus Community High School.
Delaware Public Archives - 2004 KC-86



Delaware State News/Amy Roscoe

Michelle Stein, manager of the space suit program at International Latex Corp., speaks about ILC's contribution to the moon landing at the unveiling of a historical marker commemorating the company Tuesday.

Space suit maker honored

By Cathianne Werner-Porterfield
Delaware State News

DOVER — It was what retired International Latex Corp. president Homer D. "Sonny" Reihm referred to Tuesday morning as a "remember day."

That's one of those events in history that can tie nearly any two people together simply by asking this question of them, "where were you when ..."

And for a group of present and former ILC employees, community members and state and city officials gathered in front of ILC's old Pear Street location Tuesday, that question was obvious — "where were you when man set foot on the moon?"

To celebrate the 35th anniversary of astronauts Neil Armstrong's and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin's historical moon walks

on July 20, 1969, a state historical marker denoting ILC's contribution to the space race was placed at the old ILC facility, which now houses Campus Community High School.

It was only seven years before that "giant leap" that ILC was subcontracted by NASA to begin work in the development of the Apollo space suit, said Russell McCabe, outreach service coordinator for Delaware Public Archives.

By 1966, the Dover soft-goods engineers received word that they were to be the "sole contractors" for the manufacturing of the space suit, making that "memory moment" possible.

"This is a lot of fun for me." Mr. McCabe said, reminiscing about where he was when the Eagle landed. "To be a 13-year-



The space suit used in the 1969 moon landing was on display during Tuesday's ceremony at ILC's former location, now the home of Campus Community School.

See Marker — Page 10

Marker

Continued From Page 1

old boy laying on the living room floor ... For you guys, that actually did this, it's all the more impressive."

Calling the unveiling of the marker one of the highlights of his career, Mr. McCabe offered a personal anecdote about how ILC's Dover operation and the contract to manufacture the space suits impacted his life.

Mr. McCabe said his wife Michelle's father moved to Dover to work at ILC in the mid-1960s and took up residence just two doors down from the McCabe family.

Had that never occurred, Mr. McCabe said, he and his wife would not be celebrating their own 20th wedding anniversary on the 35th anniversary of the moonwalk.

Sen. John C. Still III, R-Dover, who assisted ILC in getting the marker approved, described the spacesuit contribution as, "a living machine that enabled our astronauts to live outside this planet."

Dover Mayor Stephen R. Speed admitted he was only 5 years old on the momentous occasion of the lunar walk, and fell asleep long before the televised moment.

"It's still the greatest accomplishment that humankind has ever achieved," Mr. Speed said. "I tried to stay awake, but I don't recall making it. Without your effort, the U.S. and humankind would not be able to make what

Neil Armstrong called that 'giant leap.'"

Michelle Stein, program manager for spacesuit assemblies for ILC, said while she had yet to be born in 1969, her pride in what ILC accomplished and continues to accomplish, is not diminished.

"Every astronaut knows ILC Dover, what it provides for them, and they are thankful," Ms. Stein said. "Astronauts depend on you, and know you are the reason they can go up there and are safe."

If Dr. Stephanie Wright, CEO of the Delaware Aerospace Education Foundation, gets her way, the unveiling of historic markers at the site won't be limited to one.

Dr. Wright said her organization has a special working relationship with ILC and the company will often send employees and artifacts to assist the foundation in educating Delaware's children about space and space travel.

She thinks the historic value of ILC's contribution warrants not only a state historical marker, but a marker noting national historic significance as well. She has promised to begin the campaigning necessary to make that a reality.

Staff writer Cathianne Werner-Porterfield can be reached at 741-8247 or catwerner@newszap.com.



The News Journal/SCOTT NATHAN

ILC employee Craig Scheir and his family look at an Apollo-era spacesuit Tuesday at an exhibit at Campus Community High School in Dover, formerly the ILC plant where the suits were made. From left are Jake, 6; his mother Cheryl and Hayley, 4.

Spacesuit site marked by state

ILC Dover plant made gear for moon-walking Apollo astronauts

By **PATRICK JACKSON**
Dover Bureau reporter

When Neil Armstrong took "one small step for man," Homer Reihm's heart took a giant leap into his throat.

As the Apollo Program manager for ILC Dover, Reihm spent the night of July 20, 1969, worrying about whether the custom-made spacesuits Armstrong and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin were wearing would work as they bounced about Tranquility Base.

"We knew we had designed them well and we thought they would work, but there were a lot of unknowns," he said Tuesday as the state commemorated man's first steps on the moon by unveiling a plaque outside ILC's old factory in Dover. "There were two of us in Mission Control and I don't think either one of us relaxed until they crawled back into the Lunar Module. That craft was used to take the astronauts from the command ship orbiting the moon down to the surface.

Reihm, who retired in 2001, eventually became ILC's president.

The company also made accessories

that went into space, such as the pouches that held the gloves and visors astronauts wore on the lunar surface. As with everything else crammed into tight spaces in the landing craft, they had to be built to exacting tolerances. David Stack worked on that part of the Apollo program.

"At the time, it was a job. We had to be precise and do it right, but it was a job," Stack said.

The company later consolidated its operations in Frederica, where it still makes spacesuits for shuttle crews. The building that made the suits that protected the first men on the moon has become the Campus Community High School.

Reihm said the changes were the driving force behind asking the state to put a marker at the building.

"It's changed a lot," he said. "Some of the building is gone. Fifty years from now, people might forget what we did here."

A large bronze plaque at the entrance to the school's parking lot now will remind people of the Fear Street plant's contribution to the space race.

"We usually place plaques at sites of interest to Delaware history, but this site

is important to world history," said Russ McCabe, who runs the state's historical marker program. "They designed these suits with slide rules and abacuses. Now Duke is giving students PDAs. Imagine what it would have been like if they'd had that kind of technology."

In the decades since the moon landings, the space program has slipped on the national priority lists, although President Bush earlier this year called for a return to the moon as a base for a Mars expedition.

Reihm said he supports a manned Mars mission, but questioned whether the political will exists for such an undertaking.

"I think people have always liked the space program because they like pioneers and heroes, and astronauts are bona fide heroes," he said. "I'd like to see us go to Mars. The technologies we would have to develop to do that would be a benefit to everyone. But I don't think the politicians would be willing to spend the unlimited amounts of money we had for Apollo anymore."

Reach Patrick Jackson at 678-4274 or pjackson@delawareonline.com.

DOVER POST



This now empty warehouse, once used to make space suits for the astronauts, will be transformed into a high school

Echoes of '69 moon landing linger at Dover warehouse

By Joanna Wilson
Assistant editor

"One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind"

Thirty-two years ago on Friday, American astronaut Neil Armstrong spoke those historic words when he took his first steps on the moon.

On a recent warm summer day in Dover, Delaware, seven people passed through a sagging chainlink gate into a dark, creaky, leaky old warehouse on Pear Street. There, in the months and weeks before the Apollo program put Armstrong on the moon, the men and women of ILC Dover had created the spacesuit that would keep him safe.

David Slack, a 32-year ILC veteran who worked in reliability during Apollo, recalled how a co-worker was photographed shaking hands with Armstrong in front of that very gate. The astronaut was in Dover for his final spacesuit fitting, just two weeks before going to the moon.

The others nodded, knowingly Sid Williams, then an ILC draftsman, now in configurations management with 30 years in

the company; Richard McGahey, who's been in quality and reliability 35 years; and newly retired Sara Mae Wilson, a former secretary who worked her way up to executive assistant to the company president in her 50 years with ILC.

Listening intently were Bill Ayrey, supervisor of ILC's product assurance test laboratory and the company's historian; Cindy Yencer of R&R Commercial Realty, the company handling the sale of the building; and one curious reporter.

High school will be located there

All were prompted to visit the warehouse by the recent announcement that it has been sold to be renovated into a high school for Dover's Campus Community School. They came to see what remained of its storied past before its future takes shape.

Yencer opened the glass doors and, speaking in hushed voices, the group stepped into a vast empty warehouse space that echoed with footsteps.

Lit only by a faint bluish light filtering down from above, it looked more like a set for "The X-Files" than a place where 1,000 workers once bustled. A creaking sound, wind whistling through cracks, and the squeaking of who-knows-what amplified the effect.

"It's very creepy in here," said Yencer with a shiver.

But the group began remembering where the former front offices had been, their dropped ceilings long gone. Someone pointed out the old walls of the cafeteria and the former shipping and receiving doors, now blocked up.

"They sure gutted this place," said Slack with a low whistle.

"It's just a warehouse," said Wilson.

Were they disappointed?

"No, not really. The memories are still alive," said Williams.

Just then, Slack got his bearings and strode off in the direction of the stairway to the second floor. The stairs were there, all but buried beneath an avalanche of torn insulation and ruined ceiling tiles from burst pipes overhead.

The group considered turning back.

But Slack bounded up the stairs, climbing over the debris with Ayrey and the reporter on his heels, both clutching cameras hopefully. All paused at seeing only pitch blackness beyond the door at the top of the stairs.

"Is the floor sound? Is the floor there?" Ayrey wondered.

Slack vanished into the dark, calling out to say he'd found doorways and offices, while Williams, "the prepared one," ran to get a flashlight from his car.

Williams' flashlight revealed a windowless maze of hallways and empty offices, with water-stained acoustic ceilings, 60s wood-grained paneling in various shades from whitewash to walnut, and crumbling linoleum tile floors.

When the Apollo program ended in the mid-1970s, and the company downsized to a handful of employees who moved to ILC's present location in Frederica, they removed everything, leaving it much as it now looks.

"It was all GFE government furnished equipment. It had to be stripped [and returned]," McGahey recalled.

A time capsule

But to him and the other longtime ILC staffers, the space was like a time capsule. Passing by each small office, they began naming names. Slack found his old office. Then came the drafting room where Williams had worked, with charts on the astronauts' vital signs still on the walls.

The past seemed to echo most strongly, however, in the astronaut's fitting room. The control panel platform from which engineers oversaw spacesuit testing still stood in the corner.

A fire extinguisher, tagged with the last inspection date of Dec. 9, 1974, confirmed the place had been forgotten for nearly 30 years.

Outside, the group lingered on the steps in the shadow of the rusty water tower, trash swirling around the old courtyard inside the fence.

"Upstairs was neat because of the activity with all the astronauts," said Ayrey, who emerged with a few items he'd collected for ILC's museum.

Looking up at the faded blue siding, Williams said he

remembers most "the dedication of a lot of people and a lot of hours."

"This place ran 24 hours a day, seven days a week for eight years. President Kennedy said we were going to put a man on the moon by the end of the decade. That was the go button for this place," he said.

And, they all agreed, secrecy on an X-Files level was the rule.

"They would fire you for climbing over the fence," said Williams, recalling one employee who met that very fate. The guard shack was normally occupied, and check-in was mandatory.

"The community had no idea [what we were doing]," said McGahey, recalling how they tested spacesuit mobility by having a suit subject kick a football and run around in a field once located across the street.

"Imagine what the neighbors and passerby thought," he added with a chuckle.

"Suit hardware was classified," said Slack, noting spacesuits left the plant under tight security and were accompanied by a trusted employee to Florida.

When Apollo ended, so did the security measures. Newspaper headlines in 1975, just six years after Armstrong's historic moonwalk, read "Spacesuit company has yard sale," and an extra outer suit sold for \$100.

"Apollo had ended and all this stuff was just junk," said McGahey.

But ILC survived and so did the warehouse.

Harry Zutz, a member of the Capitol Investment Group, which bought the building in 1978 and recently sold it to CCS, added a few facts and dates.

It was built about 1948 by the International Latex Corporation, ILC's parent company, and according to Ayrey's records, was used in the 1950s by their Metals Division to make military high altitude pressure helmets before the spacesuit program came along in the mid-60s.

When the investment group bought it after ILC moved out, Zutz recalls they ripped out "unbelievably elegant apartments built

Historical marker dedicated to spacesuit maker ILC



PUT A MAN ON THE MOON: Approximately 60 people gathered for the dedication, many of them former ILC employees or their relatives. Pictured are Michele McCabe, daughter of the late Mike McNiff, an ILC supervisor, master planner and scheduler during the Apollo mission; James R. Miller, manufacturing CCB coordinator for the Apollo program office; and Coulter McCabe, 14, grandson of McNiff. When asked what they did at ILC, Miller replied, "we put a couple men on the moon and brought them back."



SNAPSHOT MOMENT: David Slack, project engineer for static contract end items; Tom Pribanic, manager of configuration of space suit; Bill Ayrey, ILC historian; John McMullen, systems engineer; Dick McGahey, manager of quality and reliability engineering; and Richard C. Pulling, engineer, enjoy posing with history. At the dedication, Mayor Stephen R. Speed remarked that it was "no small coincidence that at the same site that helped men reach the moon now stands Campus Community School which helps our students reach for the stars." Craig Shreckengast, CCS administrator, conducted a tour of the school as former employees reminisced about what used to be there. Many of them gave the best parts of their lives to ILC and the pride each person still had for the job they did was immense. A group of former employees still gathers for lunch regularly to share memories.



DESIGNED THE BOOT: Richard C. Pulling, former ILC Dover engineer, holds one of the boots he designed and a glove on a cast mold. His name is on the patent for the boot. He said that a mold was made of each astronaut's hands and the gloves were custom made to fit them.



SPACESUIT WORKERS IDENTIFIED: The Post received a couple of calls recently regarding the photo of the women working on Neil Armstrong's spacesuit that accompanied the story about the dedication of a historic marker at ILC's former Pear Street, Dover location. Eleanor Foraker, who retired after more than 40 years with ILC Dover, had both missing names. The women pictured are, left to right: Retrofit Department manufacturing employees Velma Breeding, Grace Custis, Louise Minner, Ann Boatman and Delma Austin, and far right, quality inspector Madeline Ivory. Photo courtesy of ILC Dover.



ILC DOVER HISTORIC MARKER: On July 20, the 35th anniversary of the moon landing, a historical marker was unveiled at Campus Community School in Dover, formerly the site of International Latex Corporation, later ILC Dover, where the space suits for the mission were made. Pictured are Nelson Wyatt, the longest active current ILC employee; Homer "Sonny" Reihm, former president, ILC Dover; and Sen. John C. Still, R-Dover, marker sponsor. Photos by Betsy Gustafson.

Ride The Bus At Night



With DART's **NEW** GoLink Night Service, call at least one day in advance and you can reserve a trip to and from any regular bus stop in Dover.

That means getting to school, the mall, the movies, out to dinner, grocery shopping, or visiting friends is now just a phone call away.

And to make your bus ride a little cheaper, purchase any of 6 discounted DARTCards, which are now conveniently on sale at the ACME in North Dover Center on Rt. 13.

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The Downstate

A sampler of Delaware State News ads, news and features

SHOPPER

Dover space suit maker honored

By Cathianne Werner-Porterfield
Delaware State News

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Delaware State News/Amy Roscoe

As Dover Mayor Steve Speed looks on, Homer D. "Sonny" Reihm, retired president of International Latex Corporation, right, unveils a new historical marker where the company first developed space suits. The event commemorated the 35th anniversary of American astronauts walking on the moon.

contracted by NASA to begin work in the development of the Apollo space suit, said Russell McCabe,

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