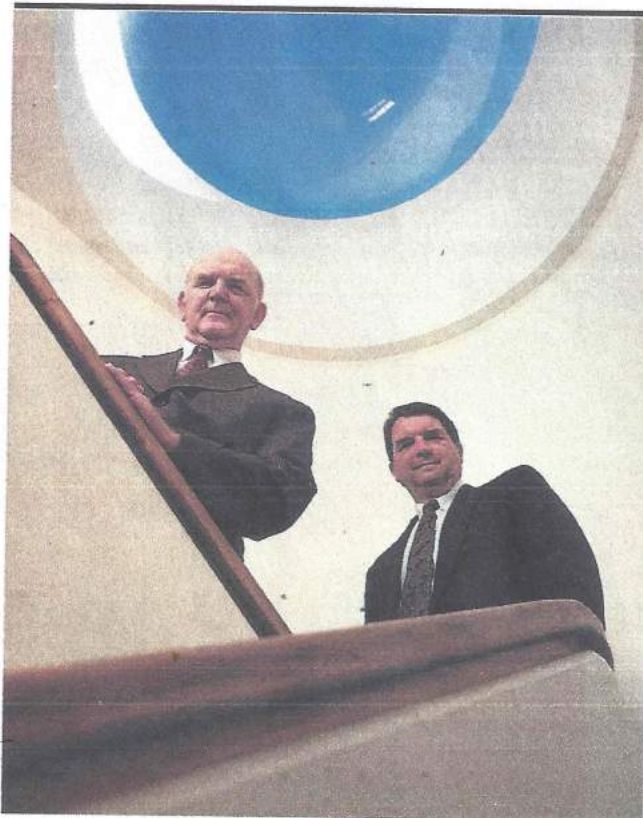


It worked for Stonewall Jackson, and served Uncle Sam in many hot wars and a cold war. Mason & Hangar now helps protect the New York subway system against sabotage.

# A proud record

By Phyllis Berman



Mason & Hangar Chairman John Custer and Chief Executive Richard Loghry. **"If you had called us five years ago, there is no way we'd have seen you."**

Some components of a nuclear bomb. **After building many of the components in the U.S. nuclear arsenal, Mason & Hangar must now dismantle what it created.**



"IF YOU HAD CALLED us five years ago we would have run for cover. There is no way we'd have seen you," says John Custer, the courtly 65-year-old chairman of Lexington, Ky.'s Mason & Hangar. Not that Custer had anything to hide, but when you're the prime contractor for U.S. nuclear weapons, you'd rather peacenik protesters and other pests didn't know about you.

Things have changed. Privately owned Mason & Hangar still derives 90% of its \$450 million in revenues from military-related skills but uses them more for dismantling weapons than for enhancing them. It claims to be the only company in the world qualified to demilitarize three different weapons systems—conventional, nuclear and chemical. In Ukraine, for example, the company is dismantling missile silos placed on the soil by the Soviets. First it strips electronic cables from the launch mechanisms and then cuts up the metal for scrap. It also has a private contract to scrap small-scale munitions facilities.

Mason & Hangar has commercial customers now, too. Richard Nathan, formerly a scientist at Battelle Institute in Ohio, and now the man in charge of strategic planning at Mason & Hangar, explains: "We design high-consequence activities."

How's that again? *High-consequence activities*? It's another way of saying that if you don't know what you are doing, the damned thing will explode. If somebody's going to handle plutonium, you want to make sure that it's a company, like Mason & Hangar, that understands the potential consequences of every move.

Chief Executive Richard Loghry says his job is to find new ways to exploit "this core competency." Part of this competency lies in the field of security: It takes more than a few uniformed guys with leashed police dogs and a chain-link fence to protect nuclear weapons facilities. Nathan has created a separate division to peddle Mason & Hangar's experience in developing sophisticated security systems. The division today supervises security at Anheuser-Busch's brewery in Williamsburg, Va. For the New York Transit Authority it did a "threat and vulnerability assessment" of the subways, which are such an obvious

target for terrorists and nuts. The company's equipment helps protect Saudi oilfields and refineries against terrorists.

Mason & Hangar has developed high-technology sensors that can be installed along fences, under the ground or even in water. Its expertise in developing robotic software, originally to pack and load high explosives into weapons, is now used by Nissan and Toyota to test engines for defects. General Electric and Kaiser Aluminum are other clients.

Mason & Hangar still does lots of tough work for Uncle Sam. At its largest facility, in Pantex, Tex., 17 miles northeast of Amarillo, it installs plutonium "pits," the fissionable center of nuclear bombs. It also makes the chemical components that go into the hollow sphere around the pits; these implode when detonated, setting off the chain reaction that ignites the bomb's firepower. An old hand at making ammunition, land mines and warheads, Mason & Hangar still operates four of the U.S. Army's munitions facilities.

While Richard Loghry expects the company to lose up to one-third of its current revenue base in current and future military cutbacks, he points out that it's survived worse cutbacks. Established in 1827, it's the oldest continuously operated construction and engineering firm in the U.S. Before the Civil War, it built the tracks and tunnels for the Chesapeake and Ohio railroad. During the Civil War, the firm's founder, Claiborne Rice Mason, built bridges for Confederate cavalry hero Stonewall Jackson. In World War I, Mason & Hangar built explosive-powder plants, airfields and port terminals. Between the two world wars, it helped build Manhattan's George Washington Bridge, engineered and built the Grand Coulee Dam and the Lincoln and Brooklyn-Battery tunnels. In World War II it built four ordnance plants to manufacture explosives.

Mason & Hangar is owned by Custer, Loghry and management. Says Custer: "I take pride in what we have done. We've helped minimize conflict in the world by creating and maintaining our nuclear deterrent." But times change, and it's time to get on with building for peace again. ■

We hope Vice President Al Gore knows more about affairs of state than about his friends' business ventures.

# The Veep's pal

By Dyan Machan



Shawn G. Henry

Molten Metal's William Haney III  
**Friends in high places never hurt.**

LAST APRIL in an Earth Day speech Vice President Albert Gore Jr. gave a glowing endorsement to Molten Metal Technology, Inc. This Waltham, Mass.-based company has technology to process waste into metals, ceramics and industrial gases. "A shining example of American ingenuity," Gore called the company, whose chief executive just happens to be his crony and fundraiser, William Haney III, 33.

The Veep should be more careful with his endorsements. Haney's claims are often bigger than his results.

Molten Metal's process involves throwing toxic or radioactive waste into a cauldron of iron or nickel heated to a lavalike temperature. Once the compounds break down, chemical

agents are added to re-form the brew into usable metal, ceramics and gases. All very "earth friendly."

But this is more of a public relations exercise than an economically viable technology. The process is too expensive to be of much use under present conditions, but you wouldn't know that from listening to Gore. Or from reading Molten Metal's press releases.

In a May release Molten announced that Rollins Environmental Services had signed an agreement to install eight Molten Metal systems over the next ten years.

Not quite. "At current price levels, we can't do it," says Nicholas Pappas,