

UW Physics Phoenix Arises From Its Ashes

FROM PAGE 1

whose laboratory suffered the heaviest damage, was so angered by reporting of the bombing that he damned the press as sensation-mongers and asked to be left in peace.

Another professor who suffered heavy losses, Robert Borchers, said at the time that he was seriously considering leaving the UW because of the damage done to his academic freedom.

BORCHERS HAD planned to leave anyway for a year of Guggenheim-sponsored research abroad, but he was persuaded to stay for the rebuilding and to accept a part-time position as associate dean of the Graduate School.

Reflecting upon his decision to stay, Borchers said Monday, "It looked like things were improving."

"I went to a convention in Israel (last fall) and talked to a lot of people in physics.

"They convinced me that this thing (the bombing) shouldn't be allowed to stop research programs," he said.



PROF. BORCHERS

When he decided that to leave the university after the bombing would be akin to quitting under fire, Borchers found he had little reason to regret his decision.

"**PEOPLE WORKED** very, very hard to get things going again. Nuclear Physics was one of the hardest hit departments, but we were operating again by December," he said.

"Of course things were difficult from a physical standpoint. We were working in the building while it was being repaired.

"It was noisy, and in the winter, it was cold," he recalled.

"But in general, it was a good year, much quieter than last year," he said.

"**NOW**, my responsibilities

are a little different," he said, referring to the associate deanship. "I find the work very gratifying."

"Other places offered our people the chance to use their equipment and facilities," said Webb, who took over the department chairmanship on a rotating basis from Prof. Loyal Durand this summer.

"But in most cases, people chose to stay here and rebuild."

The astronomy department, which occupies the fifth and sixth floors of the east wing of the hall, suffered heavy damage, but it too has made a strong comeback in the year that has passed.

"**EVERYBODY** cooperated and we got the building back fairly rapidly," Prof. Robert Bless said. He said all repairs would hopefully be completed by the time school started next month.

He said that for the past year, the department has been without some of the rooms on the south side of the building because of damage and the absence of heat in the winter. Several offices were converted into classrooms as part of the tightening up, he said.

Michael Molnar, a graduate student in astronomy who lost about three-fourths of the draft of his doctoral dissertation in the fire which followed the blast, was able to recover and redo most of his work and received his Ph. D.

AFTER THE bombing, Molnar "just kind of disappeared for a few weeks and came back with a new draft," Bless said.

Molnar completed his work a few months behind schedule and spent much of the past school year working at the Goddard Space Flight Center near Washington, D.C., on operation of a satellite built by UW astronomers.

According to Bless, Molnar will begin post-doctoral work at the University of Colorado this semester.

A large portion of the Physics and Pharmacy Building across Lathrop Dr. from Sterling Hall

was scheduled to be torn down even before the blast. Damage there was not included in cost estimates and laboratories and classrooms in that section of the building were never repaired.

ACCORDING TO Pharmacy School Chairman David Perlman, repairs on five labs in the surviving portion of the building are just finishing. He said leaks in pipes and cracks in walls and roofs, believed due to the blast, still are being discovered.

The reconstruction work on Sterling Hall began the day after the bombing, under the direction of Prof. Hugh Richards. The second and third floors of the six-story building will be ready for reoccupancy this week, and work on the remaining floors will be finished in a few months.

The physics department will occupy the space formerly used by the Mathematics Research Center, which has moved to the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation Building and has dropped the word "Army" from its name.

SOME OF THE physics researchers moved back into Sterling Hall shortly after the bombing — into the South side of the east wing — but it was difficult to work because the offices were unheated in the winter months.

Some of the old laboratory facilities will not be replaced, Webb said, because of advances in physics since the bombing and because some obsolete machinery is being superseded by more modern machinery.

One professor, for example, was in the process of redirecting his work at the time of the bombing.

"That doesn't mean that what he lost wasn't exceedingly valuable," Webb added.

ASKED IF the department had undergone a substantial change in its philosophy or its scholarly orientation because of the bombing, Webb answered with a firm "No."

Seldom has the old image of the Phoenix rising from its ashes seemed so appropriate.