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April 16, 1954

ACCEN # 376-78  
Box 3  
FILE # N. 113-B

Rear Admiral H. Mountbatten  
The Surgeon General  
Department of the Navy  
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Admiral Mountbatten:

The unexpected exposure to radioactive fallout on March 1, 1954 of inhabitants of two atolls in the northern Marshall Islands, to ether with members of the Joint Task Force, created an emergency medical situation. Because there was in existence a group of Navy personnel experienced in radiological matters and accustomed to working together as a team, both in the laboratory and in the field, it was possible to meet the unusual demands of this situation promptly and effectively. Through the efforts of Captain Wilbur A. Kellum and Captain Van C. Tipton, a working party under the command of Commander Eugene F. Cronkite was assembled, together with the necessary laboratory equipment, and the entire party transported by air to Kwajalein. They were accompanied by Dr. Charles L. Dunham and Dr. George V. Lekoy of this Division and Lt. Col. Louis E. Browning of the Armed Forces Special Weapons Project.

Due to the high scientific and medical competence of this team, the exposed persons have not only been successfully carried through a difficult medical experience, but a great amount of invaluable scientific data has also been acquired. While our responsibility for these people will continue indefinitely, I feel that prompt action has insured their well-being, and that no serious future complications are to be anticipated.

Rear Admiral Ralph S. Clarke, Commander of the Kwajalein Naval Station, has made available every needed facility for the care of these people and has personally acted to insure that all needed equipment and services should be available as required.

The manner in which this medical problem has been met not only is in the best Navy tradition but also has demonstrated the soundness of the

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Rear Admiral W. Levent Pugh

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concept advanced in the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery several years ago relating to the value of such a functioning unit to be available in a radiological emergency.

Sincerely yours,

John C. Alpher, M.D.  
Director  
Division of Biology and Medicine

cc: Capt. Wilbur E. Keilum  
Commanding Officer  
Naval Medical Research Institute  
Bethesda 14, Md.

cc: Chairman Strauss  
cc: K.Wichols, General Manager

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