

RG 374 DEFENCE NUCLEAR
AGENCY

Location WNRC

Access No. 61A1524 Box 14

Folder NATIVES 1956

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HEADQUARTERS
JOINT TASK FORCE SEVEN
APO 187 (HOW) c/o PM
San Francisco, Calif.

10 April 1954

SUBJECT: Medical Conference at Kwajalein

TO: Commander
Joint Task Force Seven
APO 187 (HOW), c/o Postmaster
San Francisco, California

1. Conferences were held at Kwajalein on 5 and 6 April 1954 at which Col Clinton S. Maupin, MC, USA, Staff Surgeon, JTF 7; Col Karl H. Houghton, MC, USAF, Surgeon, TG 7.4; CDR Eugene P. Cronkite, MC, USN, Project 4.1; CDR William J. Hall, MC, USN, Surgeon, NavStaKwaj; Lt Col Louis E. Browning, MC, USA, Surgeon, AFSWP; Lt Col G. M. McDonnell, MC, USA, Walter Reed Army Hospital and other members of Project 4.1 participated.

2. The condition, progress, treatment, management, and disposition of all patients having symptoms and physical findings due to radiation were discussed in detail.

a. Rongelap natives.

The condition of these patients is good at this time. The upper respiratory epidemic has been mild and has shown no synergistic action with the radiation symptoms toward an overall deleterious effect. The epidemic has responded to simple outpatient type of coryza treatment. There is a slight increase in white blood cell and platelet counts which indicates that maximum effect of radiation damage has been seen and that regeneration is taking place. Most of the skin lesions are subsiding and few new cases are being seen. The most recent skin manifestations have been on the feet and in general have been more severe than the other types. Involvement is on the dorsum of the feet (none having been observed on the soles) consisting of blister formation and swelling. Following rupture of the blisters desquamation takes place with some depigmentation. Most of these lesions heal promptly with conservative therapy. In general all areas of skin involvement result in depigmentation and a parchment-like appearance of the skin. It was felt that these patients were progressing

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satisfactorily and no changes in treatment or management were recommended. Considering the progress of these patients so far, it is the opinion of the group that observation for treatment of radiation effects and investigation from a scientific standpoint can be discontinued in about three to four weeks barring unforeseen complications. In view of the fact that this group received a dose of radiation which was marginal from a standpoint of severe morbidity, justification cannot be made for exposure to significant additional radiation. Therefore, based on the concept that the recovery period should correspond in time to the permissible dose for accumulation, it is recommended that these patients not be exposed to radiation except for essential diagnostic or therapeutic radiation for a period of eight years. Following completion of this study it is felt that follow-up examinations of the patients should be made at approximately six month intervals to observe the course of the skin lesions, epilation, and general physical condition. It is recommended that medical responsibility for the natives subsequent to the departure of the Task Force be determined so that medical records may be supplied them and recommendation for follow-up may be made.

b. Utirik Natives. REF

These patients received a light dose of radiation on the order of 10 roentgens. They developed no systemic symptoms nor evidence of burns. The investigation of this group was completed on 29 March and they were released to the custody of ComNavStakwaj who moved them to Ebeye for convenience of administration on 30 March 1954. Survey of the island for radioactivity at the completion of the test will govern the time of return. If the levels in water, food and external gamma radiation are acceptable, no contraindication for their return will exist. If on return to Utirik there still exists contamination of an acceptable degree in the low milliroentgen per hour range, it is recommended that these natives be observed during the time that periodic examinations are made of the Rongelap natives.

c. Americans from Rongerik and the 3 Navy M-boat operators.

This group of patients received a radiation dose of from forty to one hundred roentgens. Their condition is excellent at this time. At no time have there been any subjective symptoms. The findings physically have consisted of reduction in the number of white blood cells and platelets of a mild to moderate degree and recently two cases have developed skin manifestations indicative of radiation burns of a superficial nature. No definitive treatment has been indicated so far nor is any recommended. It is felt that observation and investigation will be completed on 15 April 1954 by Project 4.1 barring unforeseen

complications. In view of the dose received, further exposure to radiation cannot be justified. Based on the concept that the recovery period should correspond in time with the permissible dose for accumulation; it is recommended that these patients not be exposed to radiation except for essential diagnostic or therapeutic radiation for a period of six years. It is further recommended that they be returned to the U.S. and sent to a medical center for a complete and detailed medical workup prior to return to duty. For consistency and uniformity, it is felt that all patients regardless of service should go to the same medical facility and that the Walter Reed Army Medical Center is the agency best suited to perform the examinations. Detailed clinical records will be available to be forwarded to the medical center.

d. Americans from the Bairoko and Philip.

DNA

Approximately 38 cases of radiation burns have developed among the personnel of these two ships. Film badges indicate that whole body radiation received was less than 10R. No subjective systemic symptoms have been noted. All patients are in good condition and the burns are healing causing no discomfort and requiring no treatment. These cases are being documented by history, photography, and biopsy. It is not indicated for them to undergo extensive investigation by Project 4.1. No other follow-up is recommended. Notation will be made in their medical records of the amount of radiation received, and the write-ups of their case histories will also be incorporated therein. It is recommended that CTG 7.3 make the clinical records and documentation available to Project 4.1 to be included in the overall report of radiation injuries to Task Force Personnel.

Clinton S. Maupin
CLINTON S. MAUPIN
Colonel, (MC) USA
Staff Surgeon

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Franklin D. Roosevelt

PRESS RELEASE

FOR RELEASE:
1700, 29 April 1954
Hawaiian Time and Date

Major General P. W. Clarkson, Commander of Joint Task Force SEVEN which has been conducting tests at the Eniwetok Proving Ground announced today that 31 enlisted men of the Army, Navy and Air Force who were exposed to moderate amounts of radiation during the H-bomb experiments at Eniwetok on March 1 have been returned to Tripler General Hospital, Honolulu, T. H., for medical processing prior to reassignment. Despite the fact there is nothing apparently wrong with the men, they are being given complete medical examinations prior to return to full military duty.

Although none of the group has experienced any symptoms of radiation illness, they have been under close observation ever since their exposure last month.

The 236 native residents of the islands near by the Pacific Proving Ground area are remaining on Kwajalein for further observation until they can be returned to their homes after the tests. No permanent harm to any of them is expected as a result of their exposure.

The group includes three Navy men. However, none of these men were members of the crew of the tanker PATAPSCO which recently arrived at Pearl Harbor after receiving a very slight amount of fallout after one of the tests.

The servicemen who arrived at Tripler Hospital today and their home addresses are as follows:

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ARMY PERSONNEL

- FFC Brooklyn, N.Y. ✓
- GFL Pittsburg, Pa. ✓
- FFC Long Beach, N.J. ✓

NAVY PERSONNEL

EM2 ✓

SN ✓

FN ✓

AIR FORCE PERSONNEL

S/Sgt

Buffalo, Mo. ✓

A/1C

Galesburg, Ill. ✓

A/1C

Compton, Calif. ✓

A/1C

Concord, N.H. ✓

A/1C

Nokomis, Ill. ✓

A/2C

Elyria, Ohio ✓

A/1C

Chicago, Ill. ✓

A/1C

Newport, Tenn. ✓

S/Sgt

Midwest City, Okla. ✓

A/3C

Des Moines, Iowa ✓

A/1C

Brownwood, Texas ✓

A/1C

Jr., Williamstown, N.J. ✓

WOJG

Westfield, Mass. ✓

A/1C

Philadelphia, Pa. ✓

A/1C

Kansas City, Mo. ✓

A/2C

Wilburton, Okla. ✓

S/Sgt

Lawrence, Mass. ✓

M/Sgt

Warren, Minn. ✓

A/1C

Pickens, S.C. ✓

A/2C

Indianapolis, Ind. ✓

T/Sgt

New York, N.Y. ✓

DATA

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AIR FORCE PERSONNEL (Cont'd)

| | | |
|-------|-------------------|---|
| A/1C | Berkley, Mich. | ✓ |
| S/Sgt | Dallas, Texas | ✓ |
| A/3C | Somersworth, N.H. | ✓ |
| S/Sgt | Saginaw, Mich. | ✓ |

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