

N. E. Bradbury, Director

April 8, 1955

T. L. Shipman, M. D., Health Division Leader

RAD-SAFE OPERATIONS IN THE PACIFIC

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General Order No. 1 for the forthcoming Pacific tests has been issued; this Order, signed by Armand Kelly as the Acting Deputy for Administration, appoints William R. Kennedy, Jr., of H-6, as Acting Commander of Task Unit 7, the Rad-Safe Group.

Before we get too deeply involved, I feel that I should get your opinion on the extent to which H-Division personnel should participate in this work. This should not be construed as unwillingness on our part to participate, but I do not wish to get people deeply involved without your knowledge and approval. For your information, I should perhaps recapitulate our past experience in this work.

As you will remember, H-Division really ran the rad-safe show at Operations Ranger and Buster-Jangle, while at Greenhouse it was under military administration with a sizable assist from H-Division. After Buster-Jangle, it became obvious that it would be well-nigh impossible to staff a rad-safe organization for future tests with civilians, and there seemed to be a reluctance on the part of the military to have military personnel work under civilian supervision, consequently the rad-safe group at Tumbler-Snapper was staffed and supervised by the military, the supervisors having been previously indoctrinated under our supervision at Buster-Jangle. As plans matured for Operation Ivy, Major John Servis was named as the Deputy Commander of the Rad-Safe Task Unit under Commander Russell Maynard. John Servis had served at Desert Rock during Buster-Jangle, and some months prior to Ivy he established himself at Los Alamos, where he remained until he left for the Pacific. Major Servis returned to Los Alamos, sharing an office in H-6 during the entire period between Ivy and Castle, where he was the Commander of Task Unit 7. John Servis frequently expressed the feeling that his work at Operation Castle would have been impossible had he not spent all those months at Los Alamos where he was in constant touch with J-Division and H-Division personnel.

Three members of H-Division, Tom White, Bill Kennedy and the late Pat Schiavone, were sent to Eniwetok at the beginning of Operation Castle with the understanding that they would serve in an advisory capacity and help Major Servis get started. As things turned out after the first shot, they were swept into positions of considerable responsibility within the rad-safe organization. In this case there was no question of who was working for whom. The months of association and the friendship for John Servis developed into a perfectly harmonious working organization and no toes got stepped on. Before the end of Operation Castle, Kennedy and Schiavone were relieved by Leo Chelius and Bob Barker, also of H-Division.

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It had been hoped that Major Servis could be kept available for Operation Redwing, but it now appears that he is to be transferred to Germany in the near future and it has been proposed that he is to be replaced by a Major Jacks. About the only things we know about this man are that a) he has had some theoretical training in radiological physics, and b) he has never participated in a test operation before.

I believe that we can take considerable credit for giving Major Servis the training and experience which permitted him to do the very creditable job he did at Operation Castle. The other ingredient, of course, was the experience he gained at Operations Buster-Jangle and Ivy. Now it would appear that we are expected to start all over again and indoctrinate not only a new man but one who lacks any previous test experience. We are willing to try but it appears to me that our job is now even more difficult than it was before. I confess to being somewhat reluctant to ask these boys again to go to the Pacific nominally as advisors but with the realization that they actually will wind up as members of the Rad-Safe Unit subordinate to an officer who knows far less about it than they do. Furthermore, the major effort of the Nuclear Test Section of H-6 for the past ten months has been concerned with the prediction of fall-out. This work appears to be sufficiently valuable to continue, and this will leave less opportunity for the training of Major Jacks and certainly no opportunity for actual participation in the operations of Task Unit 7.

I am bound to say that the military mind has been consistently unrealistic as far as the rad-safe work is concerned. In spite of urgent requests from Major Servis, they have neither followed a rational program of training young officers at one test to take more responsible jobs at the next, nor have they made available for operational rad-safe work officers who had already been indoctrinated.

I am afraid that we must point out the fact that the large number of unnecessary overexposures at Operation Teapot has resulted, at least in part, from an inadequate number of experienced men in the rad-safe organization. During Operation Buster-Jangle we in the Rad-Safe Unit made ourselves very unpopular with a number of people because we felt that it was part of our responsibility to prevent overexposures if possible. It would almost appear that the present Rad-Safe Unit in Nevada has been reduced to little more than recording the exposures which have been received. This does not imply criticism of Col. Collison and his staff; they are doing about the best they can with the men who were assigned to them. I repeat that the military has persistently refused to realize the importance of previous experience for all of the officers who have responsible positions in the rad-safe group.

We will, in all probability, fulfill our responsibility to LASL by providing whatever personnel Al Graves may request as advisors, as well as actual monitors for LASL projects. I do feel, however, that I should ask your

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advice, and Al's, as to the extent to which we should continue to hold the hands of a succession of inexperienced rad-safe officers appointed by the military. We are more than willing to help and advise; we have available individuals with experience going all the way back to Trinity. We have every intention of keeping ourselves informed of what goes on at future tests. We do wonder from time to time whether we should continue the somewhat thankless job of involving ourselves in something which, nominally at least, is not our responsibility. This is probably a matter which should be discussed around a table after Al Graves and Tom White get back from Nevada.

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cc: A. Graves
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