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DETACHMENT 6
27024D EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE DISPOSAL Squadron [redacted]
United States Air Force
Griffiss Air Force Base, New York

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: ROLED

13 June 1960

SUBJECT: Report of Special Weapons Incident [redacted], Bomarc Site, McGuire AFB, New Jersey

TO: 2702 EOD Sq
Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio

1. At 1600 hours, 7 June 1960, Detachment 6, 27024 Explosive Ordnance Disposal Squadron received, from Major H.B. McClanahan, notification of a Broken Arrow incident at the Bomarc Site located near McGuire AFB, New Jersey. The Detachment was air-borne at 1650 hours and arrived at McGuire AFB, New Jersey at 1830 hours. A truck and bus from the 46th AD Missile Squadron was waiting and it took approximately ten minutes to off-load and depart McGuire AFB. The Detachment arrived at the incident site at approximately 1900 hours.

2. Detachment personnel were immediately briefed by Major Cuddington, Captain Murry and 1A Pearsson as to the current situation. The following information was received:

a. At approximately 1515 hours, two (2) explosions occurred in Shelter 2-4. When the emergency personnel arrived at the shelter the missile was burning and no attempt could be made to bring the fire under control. However, water hoses were placed through the doors before the emergency personnel evacuated the area. All except emergency personnel were then evacuated from the missile site. At approximately 1545 hours the fire fighting personnel were able to return to the shelter and contain the fire. The missile site had no alpha monitoring equipment available and the Army EOD unit from Fort Dix was called. They performed an alpha, beta and gamma survey of the outside area around the shelter with negative results.

b. A gentle wind (3 to 6 knots) was coming from the northeast and was blowing the smoke off-base. The smoke passed over just one (1) shelter, number 2-3. This shelter was not contaminated.

c. Arrangements were completed for transportation, quarters (at McGuire AFB) and security passes.

3. The following is a detailed account of surveys conducted and the decontamination procedures:

a. At approximately 1915 hours, 7 June 1960, the personnel of Detachment 6 entered the area wearing full protective clothing and Scott Air Packs. The nose section of the missile was still smoldering and a water hose braced by the door was directed on the nose section.

[redacted]

EXCLUDED FROM GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION

[redacted]

There was approximately one inch of water covering the entire floor and water was flowing under the front door, from the street into a drainage ditch. The entire area inside the shelter and outside was monitored. The only indicated reading was 250 counts per minute directly under the warhead. No other reading could be found because of the wet conditions. The PAC-1S and HSR-27 were used for monitoring. [redacted] DNA (6)(3) warhead had been engulfed in the fire and was exposed to super heating. The explosive burned and the pit melted and dropped to the floor. The pit residue was mixed with a large amount of ash. All explosive material burned and no melted explosive could be found. Pictures were taken and monitoring completed at 2230 hours. The water hose that was flowing into the shelter was turned on and arrangements made with the fire department to keep the outside area wet during the night.

b. The detachment personnel returned to [redacted] at 0645 hours, 8 June 1960. The water running into the shelter was turned off and the area was allowed to dry out. Air Samplers were set up down wind from the accident site. Ordinarily a prevailing wind must blow through the area because the wind prevailing at the time of the accident came from the same quarter all during our stay. Air samples were taken again at 1500 hours on 8 June 1960. A verbal report from the [redacted] Explosive Ordnance Disposal Squadron indicated the highest reading found on the filter paper was 1.59 MPH. At 1800 hours an alpha survey was made of the ramp outside of the shelter (see attachment 1). The highest reading found was 160,000 counts per minute. It became quite evident that all contamination found outside the shelter was washed there by the fire fighters and the water used to keep the area wet. Officers from the Public Health Service made a survey of 66 square miles of off base area and found no traces of contamination. When the inside area of the shelter dried out a complete survey was made. At one point near the warhead a reading of over 2,000,000 counts per minute was found. Other readings ranged from 100 CPM to 50,000 CPM. The entire shelter was monitored and all contamination was limited to an area around and forward of the warhead. The area around the warhead was roped off and the area was kept wet down the rest of the day and night. Accident investigation personnel accompanied by EOD personnel entered the building to make a preliminary survey in an effort to determine the cause of the explosion. Personnel were kept to a minimum and were only allowed in the shelter for a short period of time. Water was allowed to spray on contaminated areas all night. Work terminated for the day at 1800 hours.

c. On 9 June 1960, the area was again allowed to dry and the entire area was again monitored. The results were approximately the same as recorded on 8 June 1960. At 1900 hours work was started to remove the warhead from the missile. The warhead was unbelted and removed with no difficulty. The X-unit cover was removed and the tritium bottle exposed. The tritium bottle was intact and appeared to be in good condition. Approximately twelve (12) inches of the line remained attached to the bottle, the remainder had been burned off. The line was crimped and the

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and filled with liquid aluminum and recrimped. Prior and subsequent to crimping operations, monitoring was accomplished using the T290A. All readings were negative. The lower portion of the tritium bottle was covered with a sticky substance. While it appeared that this substance came from the thermal battery, smears were taken as a precaution. The remains of the warhead, tritium bottles and all residue from the floor were placed in plastic bags, placed in a sealed container, again wrapped in plastic bags and again placed in sealed cans. The outside of the cans were checked and found free of all contamination. One container with the warhead, one container with the tritium bottle and six containers full of contaminated residue were turned over to Captain John Macdesy, Jr., Nuclear Supply Officer. The entire contaminated area inside and outside of the shelter was washed down with fire hoses. Care was taken to assure that no additional area would be contaminated during the washing process. Work was terminated at 0030 hours, 10 June 1960.

4. At 0900 hours, 10 June 1960, the entire area was checked and monitored. During the fire, tar had melted and spread in a thin layer on sections of the floor. Several sections of the floor containing tar showed readings of over 2,000,000 counts per minute. Sections of the floor that were clean had zero counts per minute. The center of the road in the outside area had also raised to 2,000,000 counts per minute (attachment 2). The entire area was again washed down and allowed to dry. The area was again monitored and while there was some drop in readings, the center of the road was still over allowable limits. After the area was completely dry the inside contaminated area was painted with a very thick layer of paint. Spray guns were used inside the building. The outside area was also painted and brooms were used to spread the paint. A total of 110 gallons of paint were used. After the paint had dried enough to walk on it, readings were taken again. Areas that had previously shown 2,000,000 counts per minute now read zero. All areas that indicated high counts were effectively covered and indicated zero readings. A very few places on the fringe [illegible] readings of 50 to 500 counts which presented no hazard. [illegible] terminated at 2030 hours 10 June 1960. Detachment 6 personnel [illegible] AFB at 2200 hours and arrived at Griffiss AFB at [illegible] June 1960.

4. Of [illegible] the destination of the contaminated water that was washed from the shelter. Upon tracing the flow, it was found that the water flowed a couple hundred feet beyond the fenced in area (a total distance of approximately 500 feet) and was absorbed by the sandy soil. A dam was constructed to insure that the water was contained in this small area. The water did not leave the military reservation nor did it endanger the water supply. However, arrangements have been made for regular inspection of the water supply.

5. Upon return to Griffiss AFB, blood samples were taken at once. Urine series was started on 11 June and completed on 12 June. The samples were turned over to Dr. Carter, Director of Preventive Medicine at the Griffiss AFB hospital.

6. No casualties were sustained by this organization.

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~~ATOMIC ENERGY ACT 1954~~

7. The only problem encountered, aside from the contamination, was the unexpected delay in completing the work due to delay in arrival of some members of the [illegible]. Since this was the first incident of this type [illegible] of the Accident Investigation Board, [illegible] had an opportunity to view the area.

8. The following number of personnel and [illegible] were obtained from the Bomarc Site.

a. Personnel

(1) EOD - [illegible]

(2) Firemen - [illegible]

(3) Maintenance Airmen - [illegible]

(4) Disaster Control - [illegible]

b. Equipment

(1) Fire truck - 1

(2) Trucks/jeep - 2

(3) Tug - 1

9. Attached as Inclosures are photographs of the missile and components.

CD'd. { ~~a. Attachment Nr 1 - Survey Results - [illegible] June 1960.~~
~~b. Attachment Nr 2 - Survey Results - [illegible] June 1960.~~

c. Attachment Nr 3 - Exterior of Building.
d. Attachment Nr 4 - View Aft to Forward.
e. Attachment Nr 5 - View Forward to Aft (E-Unit).
f. Attachment Nr 6 - View Forward to Aft (Note: Burned Out), Area and Exposed Lead Fingers).
g.

Attach 7-13 Deleted DNA (b)(3)

g. Attachment Nr 7 - View of E-Unit.
h. Attachment Nr 8 - View of Burned Out Warhead.
i. Attachment Nr 9 - View of Warhead.
j. Attachment Nr 10 - View of Warhead (Note Exposed Bottom Section of Tritium Bottle).
k. Attachment Nr 11 - View of Burned Out Section of Warhead.
l. Attachment Nr 12 - View of Warhead with Cover Removed (Note: Tritium Bottle).
m. Attachment Nr 13 - Tritium Bottle.
n. Attachment Nr 14 - Hand Receipt for Warhead and Residue. (not Rec'd)

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