

CASTLE 18

Statement A
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Paul Bern
for M. O'NEALS 11/12/84

48735

November 6, 1980

Robert H. Miller, Ph. D
General Electric Company
7800 Marble Ave. N.E. - Suite No. 5
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87110

Dear Bob,

I have reviewed The General Electric Company TEMPO report: "CASTLE - A report of DOD participation". Although this is a review of reports prepared in 1954, it is comprehensive in its presentation. Like all "Monday Morning Quarterbacks", the report tends to emphasize problems and mistakes rather than accomplishments. I disagree with many interpretations of radiological safety problems highlighted in the report and the general tone of the report that the operation was a mess. Unfortunately, at the time, I stated that CASTLE was a nightmare of radiological safety operations. Now, some 25 years later I have seen many nightmares in initial operations and now have the conclusion that CASTLE was a challenge and that we did a good job in protecting 17,000 personnel.

For all of the problems we encountered, the best decision that was made during the CASTLE-BRAVO operation was to move the Task Force back to Enewetak before initiating recovery operations. By this action, the Task Force waited for the area to cool off. When the Task Force returned to Bikini, our helicopter aerial surveys indicated low to moderate hazard throughout the atoll.

As a certified health physicist who was in charge of the radiologically contaminated area at Bikini atoll during operation CASTLE, I have no recollection of individuals receiving hazardous dosages of radiation. As an industrial hygienist and environmental scientist, I do recollect many health and safety hazards of the ocean environment, i.e. lung cancer from cigarette smoking, skin cancer from excessive sunlight, lagoon swimming hazards, coral infections, open sea small boat operations.

Based on my 30 years of experience with toxic chemicals and radiological hazards, I do not consider the radiological exposures at CASTLE to be any worse than the normal occupational hazards of duty with the Department of Defense. I deplore the exaggerated and subtle distortion of the hazards of radioactive contamination and I caution the writers of this report to eliminate such controversial terms as: grave danger, in spite of these precautions, failure of the command, significant. Many of the reports rendered were uncoordinated and unevaluated to the point that misleading assumptions can be made.

In the test business we had a saying that "a person did not understand radiological fallout until he had walked in it" and this philosophy still applies some 25 years later. We respect the hazard but we do not fear it.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Servis". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "J" and a horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

John Servis
Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret)