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ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

COMPLETION OF OPERATION IVY -- LETTER FROM GENERAL CLARKSON

Note by the Secretary

The attached letter from General Clarkson, Commander of Joint Task Force 132, is circulated for the information of the Commission.

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ROY B. SNAPP  
Secretary

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HEADQUARTERS JOINT TASK FORCE 132  
Office of the Commander  
APO 187 (HOW) c/o Postmaster  
San Francisco, California

20 November 1952

Mr. Gordon Dean, Chairman  
Atomic Energy Commission  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Dean:

The forward area operations of Joint Task Force 132 have been completed, and I expect to leave Eniwetok today. Upon my departure, a dispatch will be sent to you in which I relinquish authority as AEC representative at Eniwetok.

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The operations were most successful in every respect, and I cannot praise too highly the support given me by the AEC representatives and the Departments of the Army, Navy, and Air Force in accomplishing the mission. There were many adjustments to be made and complications to be solved, some at the very last minute. These usually involved the complex operations of the Scientific Group, the Navy and the Air Force. Through the cooperation and friendly feeling among the Task Group Commanders, Mr. Burriss of LASL, Colonel Burritt of the Army, Admiral Wilkins of the Navy, General Glantzberg of the Air Force, and the Scientific Director, Dr. Graves, we were able to solve our difficulties and come out in the end all good friends singing each other's praises.

As soon as we can reproduce some color pictures, I will send you a preliminary pictorial booklet which will give you some first-hand impressions of KING Shot, along the lines of the MIKE booklet.

Our personnel casualties for the operation were one F-84 fighter pilot who did not make his airborne refueling contact, for reasons which are still being investigated.

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He almost made his alternate landing field, Eniwetok Airstrip, but went into the ocean just about at the Atoll reef. I heard his last words on the radio which were: "I am bailing out". However, no parachute appeared, and the pilot and airplane were lost. We lost one sailor through drowning. Another sailor who was swimming with a snorkel and swim mask was overrun by an LCM. He was badly cut up and died later of injuries in Tripler General Hospital...

Materiel-wise, in addition to the F-84G mentioned above, we lost one RB-50 aircraft on the Eniwetok Airstrip. It had landed, come to a full stop, and had turned around and was taxiing back up the strip when an explosion of undetermined origin occurred in the bomb bay. All crewmen escaped but the aircraft burned and was complete loss.

With respect to CASTLE, at an earlier conference in the forward area, attended by General Fields and Mr. Boyer, the scope was considerably increased over that which I had used for early planning purposes. Now, as a result of further conference in the forward area with General Fields and others from the AEC, the scope is still further increased to include five (5) detonations, three (3) of which will be thermonuclear in nature and in the megaton yield region.

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My paper to the Joint Chiefs of Staff dated 4 August 1952 indicated that as a result of experience gained in IVY, the service requirements for CASTLE might have to be revised upward. The paper, as approved by the JCS for planning purposes, indicates that the JCS expect a revised estimate on an austere basis. Now with two (2) additional thermonuclear tests added, which were not considered when the paper for the JCS was prepared, I believe there can be no downward revision in requirements. I believe, however, we can hold service requirements to approximately the same as they were for IVY.

This has been an interesting as well as fascinating operation for me. It has required the best efforts on the part of all concerned, and I am glad to report that the spirit and cooperation were all that could be expected. In frequent instances, the personnel and units performed in an outstanding manner, well beyond the normal call to duty.

I expect to return to Washington early in December and will call on you at that time.

Sincerely,

/s/

P. W. CLARKSON  
Major General, USA  
Commander