

TRIP REPORT

Twenty-third Year Annual Medical Survey to Utirik, Rongelap and Bikini

Aboard the R. V. Liktanur - March-April 1977

The medical team consisted of: from the U.S., 6 physicians, one Ph.D., and 5 technicians; from the Trust Territory one practitioner (Dr. Iaman) and 4 technicians; and one Marshallese man from Ebeye.

During the period 8 March to 3 April, about 850 people were examined (some 350 babies and children and 500 adults). Triage was done by a technician and local assistants. Medical histories were recorded by two T.T. personnel; children were examined by a pediatrician and one T.T. assistant; adults by 5 physicians; and hematology tests were carried out by 3 technicians.

A special thyroid survey was done by two physicians. Whole body counts were done in the lead lined counter aboard the LCU on a number of people at Utirik, Rongelap and Bikini. In addition urine samples on all three islands were collected for biochemical analyses.

Examinations at Majuro were carried out in our medical trailer by the hospital and partly in the hospital from 8-13 March. A thyroid survey was done by house to house canvass by rented car. Examinations at Ebeye were carried out on the 2 medical trailers outside the hospital from 14-18 March.

Survey in the Outer Islands

The surveys at Utirik, Rongelap and Bikini were carried out as scheduled leaving Kwajalein 18 March. The crew of the Liktanur was most cooperative and pleasant and went out of their way to be helpful (see copy of attached letter). Without lengthening the voyage the skipper on several occasions steered a course in the lee of atolls in order to make the travel less rough, helping make the long, tedious voyage more enjoyable. Many large,

multi-colored game fish were caught in transit, particularly near the atoll passes.

The only mishap was the shearing off of one of the ship's props at Rongerik. We were picking up a few Rongelap people with some salvaged materials at that atoll en route to Rongelap. The loss of the prop apparently occurred while beached when the weather suddenly became stormy with squalls. The speed of the LCU was slightly reduced thereafter.

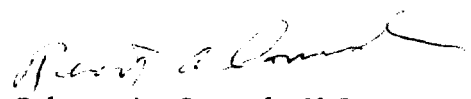
Since it is impossible to beach the LCU at Utirik with a dry ramp, it is suggested some thought be given to providing a floating-type dock to help get back and forth. Perhaps a styrofoam or empty gas drum float with planks? The rubber raft is awkward, has unsure footing and is wet, making it particularly difficult for older people coming aboard for whole body counts. The raft is rarely ashore when one wants to get to the ship or vice versa. Consideration might be given to extending the ramp 6-8 feet. Such an extension, particularly at Bikini, would help ensure a dry ramp.

It is understood that the present crowded sleeping quarters will be improved with the new trailer. It is recommended that an air vent be put in the toilet. A desk or place to write would be helpful, but I don't know where it could be situated.

The meals were wholesome and tasty. The cook did an excellent job. If I had any complaint it would be that there was too much food. With all the fish caught we might have had more fish served.

The Conex used for our equipment may need replacing.

In conclusion I might say that this was one of the smoothest operating surveys I can recall.


Robert A. Conard, M.D.
Party Chief