

13 November 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR DIRECTOR

Subj: Background Interview with Walter Pincus, Washington Post

1. PAO conducted backgrounder with Walter Pincus, Washington Post, Wednesday, 13 November 1985. Story, to appear Thursday, 14 November 1985, will focus on atomic veterans who participated in Operation REDWING. The good news is that Pincus appeared to have a sincere interest in getting the facts. The bad news is that the facts could easily be misinterpreted to lead one to believe that the crew members who did the early cloud penetrations in Operation REDWING were "used as guinea pigs."
2. Pincus said he was contacted by an atomic veteran who made him aware of a sanitized report on the early cloud penetration operations which took place during Operation REDWING. Apparently, DoE recently sanitized the report prior to release on Capitol Hill.
3. Interview was limited to information already available in the public domain such as that published in DHA test history for Operation REDWING. Additionally, Pincus was interested in the history of cloud penetration operations involving crew members in aircraft. A brief description follows of pertinent points discussed during the interview:
4. This was a special project conducted under controlled circumstances. Necessary precautions were taken - crew members wore special clothing, gloves, etc; special radiation detection devices were installed in the aircraft instrument panel to provide the crew members with a running, cumulative total dose as well as rate of dose. The purpose of the cloud penetration operations was to measure the dose of radiation on the crew members.
5. The personnel in the project were authorized to receive exposures of up to 20 rem. The remaining members of the task force were only permitted 3.9 rem. The acceptable occupational exposure is five rem per year over a life time (or 4) years); the federal guidelines for a one time exposure is 25 rem (biologically a low dose). Exposure ranges for crewmembers were briefly discussed. Pincus asked about the health status of the seven crew members exposed. Informed Pincus that the Air Force has identified and contacted six of the seven crew members. Preliminary indications are that all are in good health.
6. FYI, Pincus, who authored some of the first articles on Shot SHOKY in late 70's, is most familiar with HTPR.

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