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RESEARCH AND ENGINEERING DIVISION
Special Projects Office

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LWR-SP

28 February 1949

DNA1.950224.031

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Research and Engineering Division

SUBJECT: Conference and Briefing for RW Field Test Site Survey Party

Summary

1. A meeting was held at Building #1, Army Chemical Center, on 25 February 1949 to make final plans for the RW test site survey due to leave on 1 March 1949 from Washington, D.C., by special plane. Representatives of the following agencies were present:

Research & Engineering Division, OCCmlC
Technical Command, A Cml C, Md.
Medical Division, A Cml C, Md.
Biological Division, Camp Detrick, Md.
Hq., USAF, Director of Armament
Air Proving Ground Command
Armed Forces Special Weapons Project
Atomic Energy Commission

Declassified by DNA, Chief, ISTS and DA OAS Mtg & Memo 2/7/95 with Inclosure.
Date 2/9/95

2. A set of minimum requirements were established by agreement to be used as a basis of comparison of the sites visited. The sites are to be inspected for their immediate adaptability to RW munitions development and testing, and also as to their suitability as a permanent test station for CW, BW, and RW.

3. All agencies concerned had been requested verbally to furnish names of installations which might be capable of adaptation. Due to the urgency of establishing a site, only those large, and necessarily desolate, areas presently under government control were considered. Eight possible locations were selected prior to this meeting. Topographical maps and climatological data were obtained for these areas, plus all previous test site survey reports. On the basis of this information, the meeting narrowed the field to five possible sites, all of them good enough to be inspected on the spot.

4. The meeting closed with an itinerary being made to cover these five sites. The party will depart 1 March 1949 and will return to Washington, D.C., about 10 March 1949.

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CMLWR-SP 28 February 1949
SUBJECT: Conference and Briefing for RW Field Test Site Survey Party

5. Colonel Currie will be in charge of the survey party. Lt. Colonel Campbell will act as secretary to the party and will prepare the report and recommendations of the survey to be signed by all members. Major Stone will assemble the data and reports to be taken as reference material by the party.

1 Incl:
Detailed Report of
Conference Proceedings

WILLIAM W. STONE, Jr.
Major, Cml C
Special Projects Office

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Proceedings
Conference on RW Field Test Site Survey

Personnel present:

Chemical Corps
Res & Eng Div.
Col. Marshall Stubbs
Major W.W.Stone (presiding as secretary)

Technical Command
Col. J.A. MacLaughlin
Col. W.R. Currie
Lt.Col. F.W. Ludeke
Major F.B. Mitman
Mr. L. Benjamin
Mr. G. Milly

Biological Division
Dr. O. Woolpert

Medical Division
1st Lt. D.S. Barth

AEC
Lt.Col. S.J. Efnor

AFSWP
Lt.Col. A. Hirsch

USAF
Lt.Col. W. Cowart
Lt.Col. J.T. Bull
Major U. J. Carruth

Location and Time:
Conference room, Building #1, Army Chemical Center, 1000-1245 hours, 25 February 1949.

Proceedings:
A. Colonel Stubbs opened the meeting with a statement of the objectives of the survey and a review of the urgent Chemical Corps requirement for a field test site for RW munitions. It was pointed out that there was an equally important, but perhaps less urgent, requirement for a permanent continental test site for CW, BW, and RW. This distinction was explained as being due to the fact that we must learn something about potentialities of RW in the near future, and is not intended in any quarter to mean that CW or BW is less important.

B. Lt.Col. Efnor pointed out that the AEC has had a previously expressed policy forbidding the "uncontrolled release of radioactive materials within the continental United States". The Noyes Panel, in its meeting of 10 January 1949, expressed its belief that RW field tests using contaminants did not constitute "uncontrolled release", and that, if the RW program were to be successful and completed in the required time, RW field tests must be conducted in the continental United States. The General Advisory Committee to the AEC is now considering this problem. It was Col. Efnor's belief that they would come out approving the Noyes Panel recommendation,

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but that they would probably place an upper limit on the amount of activity so used. It is possible that this level will be well below one megacurie.

C. Col. Efnor further noted that, following the acceptance by the AEC of the responsibility for medical and biological work associated with the RW program, the AEC is interested in conducting animal work in conjunction with RW munition tests of the Chemical Corps.

D. The scope of the work at the field test site was described as comprising all of the RW field test work once the area was established, as well as a major portion of the munitions development work. Field tests would include those on optimum physical and chemical form (decontaminability tests) as well as developmental tests.

E. The first objective of the meeting was to establish a set of minimum requirements which must be fulfilled for any site to be suitable. The Technical Command representatives had prepared a set of requirements which were presented and discussed. They were accepted with minor modifications. Other members of the conference inserted recommendations which, after discussion, were either omitted from, or included in, the list of requirements.

F. The requirements as adopted at this conference are listed below. The secretary has amplified some of the recommendations, but they are believed to be within the intent of the conferees:

1. The size of the target area is to be between 500 and 1000 square miles, 500 square miles to be considered the minimum acceptable size. The entire area to be essentially flat and 25% of it free from vegetation. The target area and test facilities are to be under permanent control of the Chemical Corps.

2. Within about 50 miles line of flight of the target area there should be an operational air base capable of handling and maintaining aircraft of sizes up to and including the B-36. It is desirable that all land between the air base and the target area should be under federal control. It is essential to have an auxiliary air strip at the target area capable of handling smaller aircraft. The air base should have machine shops and buildings capable of adaptation to special loading and handling facilities. Housing should be available for additional crews and handling personnel.

3. Near the target area there should be full housekeeping facilities for 150 families and 150 single personnel (100 technical, 100 support, and 100 garrison and housekeeping). There should be a BOQ for visitors. Some consideration might be given to housing in a town about 50 miles from target area pending the provision of suitable facilities.

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4. An absolute minimum of 2500 square feet of special laboratory space should be available near the target area for RW work during the immediate future and much larger laboratories as the development work expands (does not satisfy BW and CW requirements). For animal work to be done by the AEC, there will be required a veterinary laboratory, a corral, and other facilities. For BW work there will eventually be required at least 10,000 square feet of special laboratories and a sizable animal colony.

5. Near the target area, there should be reasonable services and utilities available for technical and housekeeping purposes, such as: machine shops, large motor pool, 1000 KW power plant, sewage system, good water supply, radio and telephone systems (including portable field sets), grade school, refrigeration, athletic area, theater, nearby (or accessible) town, bowling alley, swimming pool, shopping facilities, post hospital, etc.

6. The climate of the general area should be such that the target area would be usable approximately 80% of the year. The ground should be traversable on feet and by jeeps and carry-alls (trafficability: snow cover, rain, soil, drainage, etc). High winds should not be prevalent (sand and dust storms as well as blowing contaminant). Area should not be too cold or too hot to prohibit field work.

7. Target area and air base should be within 100 miles of a major city capable of furnishing emergency procurement and special contracts.

8. There should be a rail head within 30 miles of both the target area and the air base. It is desirable to have a spur into camp area at test site.

9. The target area should be adaptable to a high degree of physical security, excluding access to cattlemen, sheepherders, itinerants, etc. Access should be by few guarded entrances. Contaminated areas should be posted or fenced and frequently inspected.

10. There should be a fair-sized labor market within 50 to 100 miles of the target area.

11. Water-shed, sub-surface water flow, and waste disposal areas should be such that health safety (radiological) can be ensured on a long-term basis. It is preferable that target area be a flat basin with no external drainage, such as a dry salt flat.

12. Spread of radioactive materials by grazing domestic animals and wild life should be considered. Domestic animals must be excluded from contaminated areas.

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13. Special loading, handling, instrumentation, and decontamination facilities must be established at both the target area and the air base. A hot laboratory to do special agent synthesis should be located near target area.

14. The condition and availability of the target area, housing, laboratories, air base, etc., must be such that field testing of RW munitions can begin at the target area by July 1949.

G. Consideration was given next to the personnel comprising the survey party. It was felt that someone responsible in the Chemical Corps for health safety should be included; thus, it was decided to send 1st Lt. Barth. Lt. Col. Cowart, USAF, stated that he wished someone from the Air Proving Ground Command to go and give advice concerning feasibility from the air operations point of view. The rest of the party remained as previously recommended. The nine individuals finally taking the trip are as follows:

Chemical Corps
- Col. Currie, Technical Command (in charge of survey party)
- Dr. Woolpert, Biological Division
- Lt. Col. Campbell, Res & Eng Div., (secretary of survey party)
- 1st Lt. Barth, Medical Division
- Mr. Milly, Technical Command

AFSWP
- Lt. Col. Hirsch, Office of the Technical Director

U.S. Air Force
- Lt. Col. Cowart, Directorate of Armament
- ~~Captain Schaaf, 3203 Chemical Test Squadron, PGG~~

U.S. Atomic Energy Commission
- Lt.Col. Elnor, Division of Military Application

H. Colonel Currie, Technical Command, will be in charge of the survey party. Lt. Col. Campbell, Research and Engineering Division, will be the secretary of the group and will have prepared the report and recommendations of the survey party by the end of the week following the completion of the survey. All members of the party will sign the report and recommendations, and will be permitted to give dissenting opinions if they so desire.

I. The meeting next reviewed the list of potential test sites, as given in the Research and Engineering Division letter on the subject to AFSWP, dated 14 February 1949, with a view to eliminating those places so obviously unsuitable as not to be worthy of inspection. The following locations were eliminated for the reasons indicated:

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1. Casper, Wyoming - The USAF bombing range southwest of Casper is on the watershed of the Mississippi River and of a major reservoir, and is undesirable from a health physics aspect. The land is not sufficiently level. High winds are very frequent throughout the area. No existing buildings or facilities are near the target. Private land lies between the air base and target area. Snow cover exists for four to five months of the year, severely limiting winter operations.

2. Williams Air Force Base, Arizona - This large test area is located adjacent to, and on the Arizona side of, the Mexican border. The area is on the watershed of the Gila River, which is undesirable. The area is fairly flat, but is covered with low brush and mesquite which probably would have to be cleared. There are many adjacent farms, and the area is not subject to adequate physical security, being next to Mexico. Also the location might cause some sort of international situation.

J. The conferees next made up a tentative itinerary to use as a basis of planning. The group will depart Washington, D.C., on 1 March 1949. They will spend one day surveying the White Sands and Guadalupe areas and the air base facilities at Walker and Holloman Air Force Bases. Next, they will spend one day surveying the bombing range of Indian Springs Air Force Base, Nevada. Next, the party will spend about two days at the Naval Ordnance Test Station at Inyokern, California. Lastly, the party will spend two or three days at Dugway Proving Ground and the nearby Wendover and Hill Air Force Bases. The party plans to return to Washington, D.C., on 10 March 1949.

K. Major Stone, Research and Engineering Division, will collect as much pertinent information as possible to be taken on the trip, and will write up the results of this meeting for the same purpose.

The meeting was adjourned at 1245 hours.

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