ESW,JR/gg

MEDCR-CH

20 June 1958

SUBJECT: Overexposure to Ionizing Radiation

THRU: Commanding General
Second United States Army
Fort George G. Meade, Maryland
ATTN: Surgeon

TO: Commanding Officer
Fort Campbell, Kentucky
ATTN: Surgeon

1. DA Message DTG 191500Z June (copy inclosed) indicates that Donald Mackay and Jack Arbaugh of your command received doses of ionizing radiation of 280 rems each during the period 18 May - 14 June 1958.

2. A dose of 280 rem is far in excess of the 1.2 rem allowable in a four week period. It is the opinion of this office that if a fairly large population were exposed to this dose over a four week period, ten percent would experience radiation sickness. What delayed effects could be expected can only be guessed. Radiation has become an almost indispensable medical and scientific tool. When improperly used it can be fatal.

3. It is assumed that the source of radiation involved was Cobalt 60 from the Source Set M3. Calculations made on this basis show that if the source strength was 100 millicuries and held one foot from the film badge it would take 187 hours to accumulate 280 rem - more time than normal duty hours. If the source was handled with the tongs provided, such an exposure would be impossible. Information from the Lexington Signal Depot indicates that the film was "local" exposed which can mean that the film badge was not properly utilized.

4. It is requested that the causes of these overexposures be investigated and information regarding the results be forwarded to The Surgeon General, Department of the Army, Washington 25, D. C., ATTENTION: MEDCR-CH. Should technical assistance be required, personnel from the U. S. Army Environmental Health Laboratory are available upon request.

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overexposure

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5. If it is found that the individuals did in fact experience whole body exposure to the radiation, or part of it, it is recommended that they be relieved of duties handling radioactive material in accordance with paragraph 5a(3), TB MED 254.

FOR THE SURGEON GENERAL:

1 Incl
Copy Msg
DTG 191500Z

ARTHUR P. LONG
Colonel, MC
Chief, Preventive Medicine Division

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