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For use with Documents with Protective Markings up to and including
[Redacted]

STATEMENT by [REDACTED]
of 54 Drayton Street, Laidley. Phone (075) 65-1580.

RC-38

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My date of birth is the [REDACTED]

10-10-54

I joined the R.A.A.F. in 1949 and was discharged on 10.10.56. My service number was [REDACTED]

In 1952 I was stationed at Amberley in 3AD Engine Repair Section. My rank was Corporal Engine Fitter.

During my time at Amberley I knew [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. They were both at Amberley and in 3AD. Although I was in the same section as them I did not work in the same area.

I recall that in late 1952 (I think that's when it was) we were working in ERS stripping bay when a [REDACTED] came down and asked for volunteers to go to the decontamination centre. At that time there was [REDACTED] the Sergeant, myself as the Corporal, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] who were both LAC's working in that area.

As a result all 4 of us went to work in the decontamination centre.

[REDACTED] told us that we would be working stripping and cleaning contaminated aircraft. By this I mean that the planes were radioactive.

On commencement we were not given any special gear but just used our normal R.A.A.F. issue working clothes. During the time I spent there these clothes were never replaced but merely washed in an ordinary Lighburn Washing Machine. After each wash a Geiger Counter was put over the clothes to make sure they were clean.

When we went to work there the decontamination centre consisted of a large besser block shed with a clean area and a working

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area. There was also another room on the side which had a Claytons Steam Cleaner in it which was used for cleaning the plane parts. This building was surrounded by a tall chain wire fence with 3 strands of barb wire on top. This was a restricted area where we were the only persons allowed in.

Outside the compound there were 4 Lincoln Bombers parked on the edge of the tarmac leading to ARS. These were the planes which we worked on. If I recall correctly these planes sat there for about 6 months and were not touched. All we had to do was to start them and run them and check them with a Geiger Counter.

The first thing we took off them was anything that took in air, like radiators, generators and anything that was air cooled. We attempted to clean them and a lot of them could not be cleaned and were eventually dumped.

As the items were taken off the planes they were taken into the working area. That is the centre in the compound where they were steamed, scrubbed and washed.

We did not strip the planes entirely but only removed those parts that I have just mentioned. I believe that these planes were further cleaned after I left.

Anything that could not be properly decontaminated was sealed in a small steel drums and also 44 gallon drums which were sealed. The tops were sealed by welding. I recall that the first drums we had we put in the bombboys of a servicable Lincoln and they were flown out to sea and dropped.

At the end of each day after working on these parts we would go from the area known as the "hot area" where we would remove our

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clothing and then shower. After showering we would have the Geiger Counter put over us and if we were not clean we would shower again until you were clean and had the okay to go to the clean section.

One other thing we were issued with was dosimeters and a film badge which were both used for monitoring the radioactivity. These badges were removed each afternoon and handed to the Hygiene man who was named [REDACTED]. We never received any information back on these items and I don't know where they went to.

When we were cleaning these parts we were constantly soaked in water and steam from the plane parts.

Just one point; all the water that came off these parts went on to the concrete and was then collected in a central collection point. The water was then evaporated and whatever residue was left was put into canisters for dumping. I do not know how this was evaporated as it was not done for some time after I started and when they had begun to do it I was in hospital through an accident which I had.

Once each month the four of us were required to go to the Ipswich Hospital for a test to see if we were carrying any radioactivity in our blood.

Prior to commencing work in the centre we were not given any lectures on warnings on the dangers of Radiation. It was just simply a matter of being asked to go and work there and we volunteered to go and do it.

I did have some idea that there was a bit of danger in working

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with radiation but I did not know enough about it to realise the full danger. We were advised that the parts were radioactive but not realising the full danger agreed to clean them.

I do recall that while we worked there were only ever the 4 of us who were allowed in the hot and clean section and [REDACTED] was allowed in the clean section. I remember that [REDACTED] used to lock it each afternoon after we left and he used to have to open it each morning.

I have not seen [REDACTED] since the early 50's and I am not aware of his state of health, other than I am aware that he died. And I have seen [REDACTED] only once. That was about 4 months ago and I am aware he is suffering severe health problems.