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20th October, 19

A-RC III

2046

30-10-54

STATEMENT BY [REDACTED]

OF 8 MORRISON CRESCENT, DONCASTER, VIC. 3108

TELEPHONE NUMBER: (03) 848 2663

Service Number: [REDACTED]

Date of Birth: [REDACTED]

1. I joined the Air Force initially in June 1943. I was put on the reserve in September 1945 and rejoined in September 1950 to February 1975.
2. Prior to the Monte Bello test 1952 code name Hurricane, I was a signaller with a rank of a warrant officer.
3. We flew from Amberley to Broome on 21st September, 1952 and according to my log book there were local flights in the Broome area on 24th and 26th and operation background sortie on 26th September and another local flight on 29th September, background sortie on 2nd October, and Operation Hurricane on 3rd and 5th October, 1952. To the best of my recollection the last two flights were for the purpose of locating the atomic cloud.
4. They were of $8\frac{1}{2}$ and $10\frac{1}{2}$ hours duration.
5. We flew a Lincoln bomber no. 51. ~~one Lincoln was a non-pressurised aircraft through which air would flow freely and one would use oxygen when flying over 10,000.~~

6. The aircraft was fitted with collection canisters under the wings and also there was a small white box which had a meter on it and which we were told was there for the purpose of measuring radiation.

7. Prior to those flights we were given absolutely no instructions about not eating whilst in flight, no instructions as to the dangers of radiation and we were not issued with any protective clothing nor were we issued with any film badges or dosimeters.

8. ~~I cannot recall if oxygen was being used in those flights, but in any event we were certainly not told to use oxygen at all times.~~

9. It is fair to say that we didn't really know what was going on. The whole thing was 'hush hush' and we really were not given a serious briefing about what we were all about.

10. My job on those two flights was to be the radio operator and meter monitorer and in my task of monitoring that meter I was assisted by a second wireless operator who was also performing that task.

11. ~~At no time during those two flights did I notice the needle flicker on the meter.~~

12. Prior to the flight I recall being told how to operate the meter, I was told how to switch it on and take readings but, as I indicated earlier, no readings were recorded.

13. I don't know where the aircraft flew.

14. We returned to Broome after the first flight. When we returned from the first flight I do recall the

canisters being removed but I do not recall that those who removed the canisters had any protective clothing on them. I was not told as to whether the canisters contained any radioactive matter.

15. After the second flight, the same thing happened - the canisters were removed by people not wearing protective clothing and again I was not told, nor do I know as to whether the canisters contained any radioactive matter.

16. I don't know who took the canisters off but they were not air force personnel.

17. To the best of my recollection we were not given any screening process and we were not tested for radioactivity following those two flights.

18. Then we went back to Amberley.

19. ~~In relation to Totem, we left Amberley in Lincoln 47.~~
~~We left Amberley on 26th September, 1953.~~

20. There were a number of local flights in the Woomera area finding wind.

21. On 15th ^{October} November, 1953 involved in Operation Totem I and we left at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 12 local time and flew for 7 hours 45 minutes.

22. On that occasion there was a bigger black box fitted inside the plane and again it was my job and the other wireless operator's job to monitor that box. We were told to monitor the readings, jot them down and to issue a code message when we first got the reading.

23. I don't recall, but I am sure there must have been canisters fitted under the wings.

24. Again, we were given no protective clothing, no meter badges and no dosimeters.

25. Again no instructions, nothing about risks of radiation etc., no instructions as to eating or not eating during the flight.

26. ~~Some time after take-off the meter went right off the gauge. The pilot apparently saw a cloud of red dust, followed the cloud all the way to Oodnadatta.~~
The meter stayed right up to the extreme of the gauge. ~~We then flew back but the needle wouldn't ease off, and stayed right up to the extreme until the flight was finished and it stayed right up to the maximum reading to the end of the flight.~~

27. During that flight and during the time when we were flying the cloud we ate our in-flight rations.

28. To the best of my recollection during that period when the meter was at its extreme position we were not using oxygen. I don't think we were high enough to have the need for the oxygen and we were not told to use the oxygen because of the presence of the cloud and, as I said earlier, the Lincoln is a plane which takes in air very readily.

29. We landed and proceeded to descend in the normal fashion and on the way to the crew room we were met by fellows who appeared to be scientists. They started checking us with geiger counters and the geiger counters were going off like machine guns.

30. They seemed very surprised at the high readings. They told us not to put our hands near our mouth, and I thought that was ridiculous because there we were flying before and eating, and now we were told to behave in some artificial and contrived manner. We were sent to an area where there were showers. To the best of my recollection that area was not specially set up - it was simply a showering area. We took off our flying gear

and the clothing that we used during the flight and the clothing was taken away. We never saw it again. Then we had showers. I had about two showers and they kept checking us with the geiger counters and after two showers they seemed satisfied with my state of radio-activity, but some other members of the crew had more than two showers.

31. I don't recall if our underwear was taken away from us or not.

32. I heard that the next day the ground staff refused to work on the aircraft and then they were issued with film badges, and then they worked on the aircraft. It is possible that the aircraft might have been hosed down the next day, but I don't know. On 27th October we flew in the same aircraft, ~~that is no. 47, in relation to Operation Totem II and it was a flight of three hours 10 minutes duration.~~

33. I do not recall what happened on that occasion, but I think that on this occasion we were issued with film badges.

34. I do not recall what happened to the canisters following Totem I or Totem II.

35. Totem I crew were, to the best of my recollection, [redacted] who was the aircraft captain, the navigator was [redacted] second pilot [redacted] and the other wireless operator was [redacted]

36. We flew back to Amberley in aircraft 54. Towards the end of November 1953 after coming back to Amberley I went on leave, went to Melbourne, got a telegram to report to Laverton for a blood test. I thought it was a joke but service police came to my house in Melbourne and then I went to Laverton for a blood test. I was never told what the blood test revealed.

37. To this day I don't know what the results of that test were.

38. Around 1970 I had a growth on my lower lip. I had to go to a Collins Street, Melbourne speciallist to have it removed.

39. I then left the air force in 1974.

40. On 21st November, 1953 I flew again in aircraft 47 for two days and the two flights were of seven hours duration each so if the aircraft was hot, I spent another 14 hours in it. On 24th January, 1954 I flew in aircraft 47 for one hour 15 minutes.

41. I returned to Amberley in August 1954 after doing an officer's course and then I noticed a group of Lincolns standing in an isolated area at Amberley with black crosses painted on them.

42. I asked someone why they were there and I was told they were the aircraft involved in the Woomera tests and I was told they were radioactive.
