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Headquarters Task Force Grapple,
Air Ministry,
Whitehall Gdns.,
London S.W. 1

17th July, 1958

Radiological Safety Precautions at Christmas Island

1. The question of instituting blood counts for Service personnel posted to Christmas Island has recently been under consideration by the Task Force and [redacted]. Under present arrangements certain locations at the Base where contamination is a possibility have entry and exit thereto rigidly controlled and those who work in these areas have blood examinations. For the series of tests planned to start next August balloon supported firings will be conducted for the first time at Christmas Island. This introduces a new factor in that rehabilitation of the area contaminated after a balloon firing will be necessary and this work will be done by some 250 R.E. and R.A.F. personnel.

2. In order to determine the correct policy regarding blood counts a meeting was held at [redacted] on 15th July, 1958 with representation as follows:-



- [redacted]
- [redacted]
- Task Force Grapple
- Task Force Grapple
- R.A.F. Hospital Halton [redacted]
- Air Ministry (MA 5)
- [redacted] Bomber Command (Staff of FMO)
- Admiralty (Med Directorate Gen Staff)
- War Office (Medical Directorate Staff)

3. The conclusions reached at this meeting were as follows:-

(a) All medical opinion present agreed single blood counts to be of negligible scientific value.

(b) [redacted] partly anticipating new statutory regulations under the Factories Act (not yet approved) believe that blood counts should be given to all at Christmas Island as a medico-legal safeguard, both to satisfy public opinion and as a "moral" obligation. R.A.F. medical representation at the meeting did not believe blood counts to be a medico-legal safeguard and, as they are scientifically worthless done under Service conditions, considered it "immoral" to do them.

/(c).....

Under Secretary of State,
Air Ministry (D.G.M.S.)
Tavistock Sq., W.C.1

Copies to:-

Secretary of the Admiralty,
Admiralty, (M.D.G.)
London S.W.1

Ministry of Supply (D.A.S.S.)
St Giles Ct., W.C.2

Secretary of State,
War Office, (M.D.)
Whitehall S.W. 1



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(c) After some discussion the meeting concluded that we should institute one blood examination for each of those required to work in the new controlled area.

(d) The meeting agreed that it would be impracticable and valueless to institute blood counts for the remaining personnel at Christmas Island (some 4,500) but that the Services should be invited to determine whether future replacements in all three Services should be subjected to blood examinations prior to posting to Christmas Island.

4. R.A.F. Balloon Unit and Royal Engineer personnel requiring blood counts (para 3 (c)) will total approximately 250 and in view of programme timing blood counts must be completed before 22nd August, 1958. Since no facilities exist at present at Christmas Island for this type of test suitable apparatus and laboratory assistance will be required. It is possible that [redacted] will be able to assist. Will Air Ministry (D.G.M.S.) please now initiate the necessary action for these examinations?

5. Will Air Ministry (D.G.M.S.) please initiate action with the Admiralty and War Office to determine an agreed and acceptable policy with regard to the blood counting of future Service replacement personnel posted to Christmas Island prior to departure from U.K., bearing in mind the likelihood of the statutory requirement referred to at para 3 (b). For planning purposes, population figures are as follows:-

Royal Air Force	-	2475
Army	-	1800
Royal Navy	-	<u>225</u>
Total	-	<u>4500</u>

[redacted]

[redacted]

Air Vice-Marshal,
Commander,
Task Force Grapple

[redacted]