

From: [REDACTED]

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

SSP/4/12/28.

GRA/104/6/Org

2nd July, 1958

My Dear [REDACTED]

We discussed two aspects of health physics yesterday and I think it appropriate to record our views.

Film Badges

Should film badges be issued to those serving at Christmas Island? It has not been thought necessary to issue film badges to date. Since radio-activity and contamination at the Island may occur only in certain areas the policy has been to define these areas and control entry and exit thereto, admitting only personnel both service and civilian (A.W.R.E.) whose duty necessitates their working in these areas. These personnel have been given appropriate medical examinations (blood count) and are provided with film badges.

The remainder of the Island is not subject to contamination or radio-activity. However, as a wise insurance policy, counts are taken in all areas to ensure that backgrounds remain within limits. In lay language the count could be regarded as a communal film badge.

As we are now, for the first time, about to undertake balloon supported firings at Christmas Island, health physics for all at the Island comes under fresh examination in view of the possible differences between this type of firing and the high altitude air burst from the general radio-activity and contamination aspect. First thoughts suggest issue of film badges to all personnel. Further examination, however, indicates the wisdom of this policy to be questionable to say the least. If all personnel are to be issued with film badges, natives, both female and children, civilian merchant navy men in merchant ships and those in a similar category at the Island will have to be included. The administrative task (which of course must be met if essential) is considerable bearing in mind that the badge has to be issued, a record kept and the badge rechecked subsequent to examination for contamination after the holder has left the Island. Issue of badges at this stage may well provoke anxiety. What right have we to subject native populations and civilians to the possibility of contamination which, however remote, the issue of a badge to individuals would suggest is a likely possibility? Why should our present system of controlled areas not be extended to cover the requirements of balloon supported firings? Would this be adequate and safe?

First consideration of a film badge issue was provoked by the lego-medical aspect of disability claims. A case is now about to start and there may be some difficulty in disproving such claims. We discussed all this at some length at our meeting yesterday and our conclusion was that it would not be necessary for a general issue of film badges for Grapple Z, and that the present system of controlled areas would be safe and should continue. The Task Force will take the necessary steps to ensure that such areas are clearly

../marked....

[REDACTED]
A.W.R.E.,
Aldermaston,
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marked in appropriate languages, controlled and defined in orders and that such orders are frequently repeated. Finally, all personnel who may have to enter these controlled areas are to be examined and issued with a personal film badge.

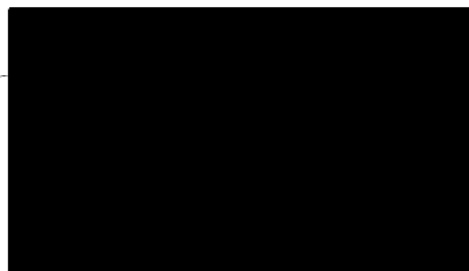
Blood Counts

At the moment the vast majority of service personnel at Christmas Island are not medically examined (blood counts) either prior to or after serving on the Island. However, contamination levels have been calculated on the assumption that all serving at the Island could be regarded as occupational workers and this category of personnel at Aldermaston have medical tests (blood count). Those at the Island, other than A.W.R.E., however, do not.

We discussed this matter at length and were of the opinion that measures should be put into effect at the earliest opportunity to ensure that all service personnel going to Christmas Island from now on were subject to medical examination (blood count). We also thought that medical test facilities should be set up at the Island immediately so that all personnel could be examined prior to the first Grapple Z firing. I have today put these two points verbally to [redacted] and [redacted] of the H & R Medical Branch, Air Ministry. They are not in favour of instituting a universal medical examination (blood count) and consider that our present system of controlled areas is adequate. They do believe, however, that it would be a wise precaution to institute a medical examination (blood count) for those Army and other personnel who are required to take part in rehabilitation work after balloon firings at the southeast end.

I would be grateful if you would confirm or otherwise the points I have made above as far as our meeting yesterday was concerned. I will then write to the H & R department asking them to confirm their advice on the medical examination (blood count) aspect for service personnel, and ask them to provide facilities for examination of those we propose to employ on rehabilitation. If the War Office and Admiralty accept the R.A.F. view, and I will put it to them, then I think we will be clear to go ahead.

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