

February 21, 1997

License No. 29-01022-14

Docket No. 030-29741

Steven A. Horne, Chief  
Safety Office  
Department of the Army  
U.S. Army Communications-Electronics Command  
ATTN: AMSEL-SF  
Fort Monmouth, New Jersey 07703-5024

SUBJECT: Activities at Fort Irwin, Barstow, California

Dear Mr. Horne:

Based on the telephone conversation between John Kinneman and Betsy Ullrich of the NRC and Joseph Santarsiero of your staff on February 20, 1997, we understand that you are aware of the NRC Region IV inspection at Fort Irwin, Barstow, California of activities involving material authorized by NRC licenses issued to the U.S. Army. Based on the observations during the inspection, it appears that demilitarization of items authorized by the above license, containing thorium as an optical coating, was performed by persons who were not authorized or trained to use licensed materials. We are also aware that other items that contained radioactive material authorized by License No. 12-00722-06 issued to ACALA were demilitarized. Representatives of our Region III office will discuss this matter with representatives of that command. Mr. Santarsiero informed us that members of his staff have already visited Fort Irwin to investigate the circumstances which allowed this to occur and to provide training to persons involved in this activity.

From the telephone conversation, we understand that the Department of the Army will, by March 7, 1997, provide this office with a plan for assessing the exposure of workers involved in the demilitarization of items containing licensed material and the extent of any radiological hazards at Fort Irwin resulting from these demilitarization activities. The plan will state the lead Army command(s) or other group(s) who will perform the assessment, and will name the Department of the Army point-of-contact for this assessment.

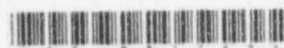
We further understand that, by April 25, 1997, the Department of the Army will provide to the NRC Region I office the results of the assessment, including the determination of any doses from licensed materials received by persons performing demilitarization. The assessment will also describe the corrective and preventive actions taken at Fort Irwin to prevent unauthorized use of licensed materials in the future.

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If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact John D. Kinneman of my staff at (610) 337-5252. We appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Original Signed By:  
Charles W. Hehl

Charles W. Hehl, Director  
Division of Nuclear Materials Safety

Docket # 030-29741  
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cc:  
J. Santarsiero, Radiation Safety Officer

John Manfre, Health Physics Manager  
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U.S. Army Materiel Command  
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