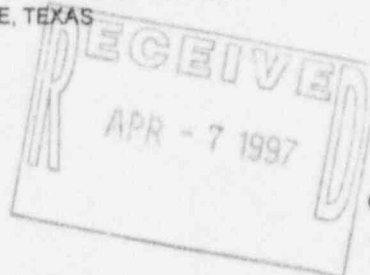




DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
HEADQUARTERS AIR FORCE MEDICAL OPERATIONS AGENCY  
BROOKS AIR FORCE BASE, TEXAS

IE07  
3032969



6 Mar 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR USNRC, REGION IV  
ATTENTION: MS. LINDA MCLEAN

FROM: HQ AFMOA/SGOR  
8901 18th St  
Brooks AFB TX 78235-5217

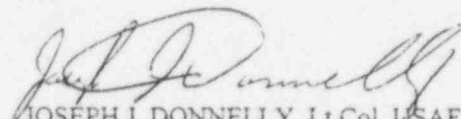
SUBJECT: Follow-on Response to USNRC Incident Report No. 31742 at McClellan AFB CA

Attached is additional information to subject incident report. We believe the investigation of this incident has yielded all the useful facts attainable and therefore submit this portion of the report as closure.

The Sr-90 sources are positively identified as internal check sources to AN/PDR-39 survey instruments. A license was issued to the US Army for possession and use of the devices and subsequently terminated. It is our belief these sources found their way to McClellan AFB upon the closure of the Sacramento Army Depot. Several activities involving radioactive material were transferred to McClellan which included all the existing equipment and personnel to support them. This is supported by the fact that during the investigation, a complete AN/PDR-39 was discovered at a Defense Logistics Agency warehouse located on McClellan AFB. The instrument did not show on DLA's inventory until 1993, the timeframe of transferring Depot activities to McClellan.

These sources are now secured pending disposition instructions from the Air Force Radioactive and Mixed Waste office.

Our point of contact for this incident is Maj Paul Feeser. He can be reached at (210) 536-3331. Telefax: (210) 536-4382. E-Mail: feeser\_p@msa01.brooks.af.mil.

  
JOSEPH J. DONNELLY, Lt Col, USAF, BSC  
Chief, USAF Radioisotope Committee Secretariat  
Office of the Surgeon General

Attachments:  
77 AMDS/SGPB Memo, 1 Apr 1997 w/Atch

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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

77 AEROSPACE MEDICINE SQUADRON (AFMC)

MCCLELLAN AIR FORCE BASE, CALIFORNIA

MEMORANDUM FOR HQ AFMOA/SGOR

8901 18th St

Brooks AFB, TX 78235-5217

01 APR 1997

FROM: 77 AMDS/SGPB

3200 Peacekeeper Way, Ste. 5

McClellan AFB, CA 95652-1030

SUBJECT: Follow-up <sup>90</sup>Sr Incident of 6 Feb 97, and Report of 21 Mar 97 Incident

1. On 6 Feb 97, a McClellan Environmental Management (EM) employee opened an unmarked container in an old EM cabinet, and found two <sup>90</sup>Sr sources whose origin was unknown. That same day the incident was reported to Bioenvironmental Engineering who then reported it to you. A written report of the incident was submitted to you on 5 March 97, but the details of the origin of the sources were still a mystery at that time. Many of those details have since been uncovered, and will be explained in this follow-up letter, and the status of commitments made in the first report will be given. Additionally, another identical check source was identified on 21 March 97, and this new episode will also be reported on here.

2. Additional information concerning the 6 Feb 97 items.

a. The items are now known to be internal check sources from an AN/PDR-39 Ion Chamber, national stock number (NSN) 6665-00-526-5336. The item manager, Franko Ercolino, works for the Army, Communications and Electronics Command (CECOM), see attached telephone list (attch 1).

b. The sources were licensed by the US Army, License No. 29-01022-12. This license was canceled in 1984, and an attempt was made by the Army to dispose of all PDR-39s. This information was given to me by Barry Silber, CECOM.

c. The activity is listed as 0.5  $\mu$ Ci in the Army Technical Bulletin which concerns the PDR-39 (US Army Technical Bulletin Manual 43 -0116).

3. Status of prior commitment to prevent further such incidents.

a. Training for EM employees who have a potential to come in contact with radioactive materials has been scheduled for 10 Apr 97.



b. The article for the base newspaper, or environmental newsletter, is being written, and is due to be completed on 11 Apr 97.

4. In addition, there are issues surrounding the PDR-39 found by DDMC.

a. On 21 Mar 97, a PDR-39, was found to be in a warehouse occupied by Defense Distribution Depot McClellan (DDMC). DDMC, a sub-organization of Defense Logistics Agency (DLA), is a non-Air Force tenant at McClellan. All information such as NSN, and activity is the same as for the 6 Feb 97 items.

b. The check source was still in the instrument, and no personnel were exposed. The dose rate on contact with the instrument was indistinguishable from background.

c. The face of the instrument is stenciled with the words "SIGNAL CORPS U.S. ARMY RADIAC SET AN/PDR-39", and bears the remains of what looks like a defaced radiation warning label. A calibration sticker on the side of the case gives calibration dates from December 1972 to October 79. A large round decal on one side of the case is printed with the words "USAF DISASTER RESPONSE FORCE".

d. Presumably an individual defaced the radiation warning sticker to avoid the complications of radioactive waste disposal, passing the instrument to an unknowledgeable handler. An alert DDMC employee double checked the instrument after hearing about the <sup>90</sup>Sr incident of 6 February.

e. The bottom of the instrument is stenciled with "60 \_ \_ W" painted in large red letters, which could link it to the 60th Air Mobility Wing at Travis AFB (the \_ \_ designates defaced and unrecognizable letters). All personnel at Travis contacted thus far, have been unable to provide useful information regarding the instrument's history.

f. The item appears to have arrived at McClellan in 1993-1994, when a great deal of material was received from the Sacramento Army Depot as it closed. DDMC personnel tell me their records do not allow them to tell where the instrument came from, and the Equipment Management Office says they have no record of who may have possessed this device.

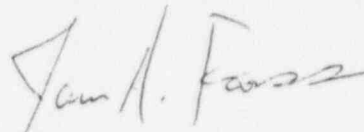
g. While the history of the instrument is not certain, the information available allows the following reasonable conjecture

- (1) It was purchased by the US Army prior to 1972
- (2) The Army issued it to the Air Force, perhaps Travis AFB
- (3) From 1979 to 1993 it was in storage at Sacramento Army Depot
- (4) It was transferred by DDMC when the Army Depot was closing in 1993

5. Future considerations: As we raise awareness, empty buildings, close operations, and as McClellan closes, more small sources may be discovered. McClellan has an aggressive and thorough radiation program, so we can be sure that if radioactive materials from historical mishandling are found, they will be handled properly and personnel will not be subjected to undue risk. ✓

6. Summary: The two sources discovered on 6 Feb are now known to come from Army licensed radiac sets, but there is no way to tell who left them in an unmarked locker at McClellan. On 21 Mar 97, an intact PDR-39, the same model which the 6 Feb sources came from, was found by DDMC in one of their warehouses; again it was licensed by the Army, but there is no way to know with certainty who gave it to DDMC. No personnel have been subjected to significant health risks. ✓

7. Please direct any comments or questions regarding this matter to Mr. Patrick Pierce or myself at DSN 633-0311 ext. 358 or 347, respectively. Mr. Pierce and myself can be reached via e-mail at piercepa@med77.mcclellan.af.mil and rossji@med77.mcclellan.af.mil.



JAMES A. ROSS, Capt, USAF, BSC  
SM-ALC Radiation Safety Officer

Attachment  
POC list

## POC List

<u>Name</u>	<u>organization</u>	<u>phone (DSN)</u>
Barry Silber	(Army) CECOM RSO	987-3112
Franko Ercolino	(Army) CECOM	992-1784
Hugo Bianchi	(Army) CECOM	987-3112 x 6444
Jim Reese	DLA	462-2047
Katie Stawser	DDMC	633-1501

