



Department of Energy

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BNL med. file

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REPORT OF FALL 1990 MEDICAL TRIP

I. BACKGROUND

I served as the DOE Field Representative on the BNL Fall medical mission. The Fall trip is typically a "light" mission in terms of personnel and activity since it is conducted as a follow-up to the major mission in the Spring, and focuses on patients missed earlier or on those with existing medical problems.

II. DATES

- A. Mejatto - September 6-10
- B. Utrik - September 11-16
- C. Majuro - September 17-24
- D. Ebeye - September 25-28

III. ACTIVITIES AND OBSERVATIONS

A. Kwajalein

There is a new commander at Kwajalein, Colonel John MacNeill, who assumed command on August 8, 1990. I had an opportunity to meet and brief him on our program and its relationship with other activities such as USAKA, 177 Health Plan, etc. This was important for him to know since he was particularly confused about DOE and the 177 H.P. in view of the fact that Dr. Carner of the 177 program was on island under our sponsorship. (Dr. Carner had apparently irked him by making billeting demands). Not only did Colonel MacNeill express an interest in visiting with us at Bikini in the future, but he asked our help in ascertaining from our Enewetak assets if an unidentified submarine had surfaced at Enewetak the previous week as had been reported.

I did have a chance to look at progress on our new whole body counting trailer being outfitted at Kwajalein. H&N has done an outstanding job with the design and layout. John

Harry Brown's Files, NV
BNL Medical (9)

Brown and I talked about the need for a two-person "waiting" bench for installation inside the unit.

B. Mejatto

We departed Kwajalein on September 6, 1990, on board the DOE vessel, the G.W. Pierce. Joining us were eight guests who requested sea passage to their islands. They included the Mayor of Mejatto, two Councilmen, several of their family members, and the Mayor of Utrik. Our assistance was much appreciated by the local governments since boat service to their communities is sporadic and unreliable. We reached Mejatto Island after a seven hour journey.

We began the visit with a community meeting in the early evening, attended by thirty people. The main purpose was to describe the plan of work and schedule for the mission. BNL also initiated the process for the selection and appointment of a community ombudsman to the medical program, as part of its quality assurance improvement plan. Mrs. Muio Tarinjet was selected by the Rongelap people.

The weather, although rainy at times, remained reasonably good but the lagoon waters were marginal at best during the four-day visit. At Mejatto we saw twenty-eight follow-up patients, completed one exam, and made four referrals to the 177 Health Plan. We also took fourteen x-rays. It was extremely helpful to have a 177 physician with us since coordination and referral decisions were not only effective but immediate. The visit was marred however by the sudden illness of one of our three physicians. We lost a day backtracking to Kwajalein to have the doctor treated. There we remained overnight before proceeding to Utrik.

C. Utrik

We arrived at Utrik twenty-four hours behind schedule. This time, and the loss of one physician's services were made up at Utrik by working one hour later each evening and doing the customary home visits to the confined ashore, on Sunday afternoon. Joining us on the passage to Utrik was Mayor Masao Attari. (Upon the urgent request of the Utrik Senator in Majuro, we had agreed to assist the community with Mr. Attari's passage).

Our town meeting at Utrik was held the second day after arrival because of a communications breakdown within the community. About forty people attended the meeting. Edilina Matthew was chosen as the medical ombudsman. Former mayor, Harris Kel, asked several pointed questions concerning the feeding of the people. We agreed that

fasting patients should be fed promptly after their blood draws. We weren't sympathetic with his desire to see that all future community gifts be given in the form of food. We referred him to other sources for such specialized assistance.

It rained frequently and heavily while we were at Utrik but the weather did not impede the mission. BNL saw fifty-five follow-up patients and referred ten persons to the 177 H.P. We were gratified to have played an instrumental part in diagnosing and arranging for the life-saving air evacuation of a gravely ill, ten year old child. (The child was successfully treated at Majuro hospital, we later learned).

As at Mejatto, the Utrik people were pleased with our community gifts of instant coffee, surplus paints, mosquito nets, folding cots, rain ponchos, and donated clothing. The islanders also donated Marshallese food to the team in exchange for some of our excess gasoline.

DOE hosted two Sandia laboratory-sponsored personnel who were at Utrik to evaluate the island's photovoltaic system for DOE/SAN. We greatly benefitted from their presence because they assisted us in troubleshooting some of the balky electronic equipment aboard ship. Mr. Frank Schalles was extremely helpful: he jury-rigged repairs to the Omega navigation system, fathometer, and our hand-held radios. The GW Pierce crew was very thankful for the help.

D. Majuro

As usual, Majuro was hectic from the standpoint of production, activities, meetings, and professional contacts. Untypically, because of the limited objectives and size of the mission, the ship was not taxed by overcrowding. Fifty-one follow-ups were completed and eight persons referred to the 177 program. In addition, our doctors saw several RepMar cases. Indeed, our gastroenterologist helped RepMar by teaching and conducting procedures for the local doctors on the use of their new endoscope (which no one there knew how to operate).

We had several distinguished visitors for lunch and a tour of the boat and medical facilities. They included the recently appointed U.S. Ambassador, Mr. William Bodde, and his wife, Ingrid; U.S. Charge and Mrs. Norman Olsen; Peter Oliver, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Abacca Anjain, Ministry of the Interior; Judge Herb Soll, Chairman of the Nuclear Claims Tribunal; Dr. Steven Simon, Director of the Marshall Islands Radiological Survey; and Kinja Andrike, Secretary of the Ministry of Health Services. Drs. Carner and Solomon of

the 177 Health Plan and U.S. members of Dr. Simon's team also toured the vessel and facilities.

In Majuro, I met and conducted business with a variety of agencies. They included the 177 Health Plan, Nuclear Claims Tribunal, Chief Secretary's Office, Editor of the M.I. Journal, The M.I. Radiological Survey, the Rongelap Local Government Office, and the Ministry of Health Services.

I was gratified by the refreshing and productive lines of communication and cooperation that we established on this trip with our 'sister program', the 177 Health Plan. It was especially pleasing to note that the BNL and 177 medical professionals have agreed upon techniques and means for coordination and information-sharing. A major problem was overcome by BNL staff reformatting its computer-based medical discs to make them usable for the 177 and NTC medical teams. I also had a chance to reach agreement with the 177 administration on the renewal of our existing Memorandum of Understanding.

Dr. Adams and I had a lengthy opportunity to brief Ambassador Bodde on our programs in the Marshall Islands. He already seemed well informed about and interested in our work, especially at Bikini, which he would like to visit. Since Mr. Bodde left Majuro a day after touring the ship, I provided a full briefing on a number of current issues, including the Enewetak problems, to his Deputy, Norman Olsen.

Judge Soll visited the ship and seemed impressed with our work. He and Dr. Adams spent considerable time discussing issues of common interest.

Dr. Steve Simon, the Director of the RepMar's Radiological Survey brought most of his team to the ship for a tour and discussion. He hopes to go with us to Rongelap in November as the M.I. Representative on the trip. He indicated that he might wish to do sampling in conjunction with the LLNL group. I suggested that he write to Harry Brown about his proposal.

Pete Oliver and I discussed the Enewetak program. He said he had sufficient funds to carry Captain John Enloe to December of this year and to pay related bills. He stated emphatically that he could not pay the salaries of the Wetak II crew. He also was aware of the Enewetak program refunding problems, and like many others in Majuro, he had heard about Balikan Jackson's difficulties. That matter, by the way, is under investigation by the national police.

I attempted to secure a copy of a Rongelap Council resolution concerning DOE which was reportedly passed in August. I was unsuccessful despite my diplomatic efforts to do so through two separate sources. The Rongelap Local Government office in Majuro was neither enthused about nor responsive to my request. Mr. Fitzpatrick referred me to the copy that he said had been sent to Secretary Watkins. Authorities from the national government met with similar failure. Indeed, some highly placed individuals in Majuro question whether the resolution had ever been formally passed and inscribed by the Council. An American, Tim Fitzpatrick, seems to be the present administrator of the Rongelap Council's Majuro office.

I did find the new M.I. Secretary of Health Services, Mr. Kinja Andrike, very affable and anxious to work closely with us. He pledged his support and cooperation to us and showed genuine interest in our activity. Mr. Andrike, a former work associate of mine, informed me that our proposed DOE-RMI agreement is with the Minister of Health Services for review. He expects it to be signed and returned to us shortly.

I met specifically with Giff Johnson, editor of the local newspaper, to find out why his detailed story and photos on our mission last Spring had never appeared in print. He apologized for the delay and promised to conclude the story later in the week. He sent a reporter to update the information and, true to his word, an accurate story appeared in the September 28 issue of the paper.

Incidentally, an article appeared in the September 21 edition of the paper which reported that the US Senate was concerned about the propriety of Roger Ray's services and alleged influence on DOE policy while in retirement. I checked on local reaction to the article and was told the matter was a "non-issue" with the US Embassy and RepMar Government. It did not seem to have caused any stir of excitement in the Marshall Islands other than from our current critics there.

Drs. Adams and McConnell completed their involvement with the mission at Majuro. Dr. Terzouli was left in charge of the remainder of the mission. The ship sailed on schedule for Kwajalein and Ebeye.

E. Ebeye

The Ebeye portion of the mission was surprisingly slow in that only twenty-seven persons were seen. Another six people were referred to the 177 program (one of whom may end

up as a DOE referral to Honolulu if rejected by the 177 H.P.).

The weather was generally poor at Ebeye. Waves and winds were higher than any I have ever seen there. Nevertheless, we were able to complete the examinations and patient work by September 27, a day ahead of schedule.

We were able to familiarize ourselves with the staff and operations of the new, Ebeye Community Health Center. It is headed by a Cook Islander physician named Roro Daniel, assisted by the former chief of the Ebeye Hospital, Dr. Serrano. We were asked and then gave the Center viral antibiotics for the treatment of sick children and other medicines. I also explored with them the idea of acquiring space within the complex for BNL lab tech Helmer Emos in exchange for our expensive-to-maintain lab trailer. They seem interested in the swap and it will be explored further by Emos and John Brown.

I did make it a point to visit with the dynamic mayor of Ebeye, Mr. Alvin Jacklick. We talked about a range of subjects: DOE missions, work/facilities at Ebeye, local support to the CHC, and the trailer/space swap which he endorses. I invited him to visit and tour the ship. He was interested in seeing it but was unable to do so because of the impending visit of the U.S. ambassador.

Early Tuesday morning, September 25, Colonel John MacNeill, Commander, USAKA, made good on his promise to visit the G.W. Pierce and to see our medical facilities. We were pleased he joined us for breakfast and a detailed tour of the vessel.

A reporter from the base newspaper, Stephanie Phillips visited the ship at Ebeye. She subsequently wrote two nice stories on the vessel and the DOE program for the HOURGLASS.

Overall I felt the mission was very successful despite weather problems and a sick doctor. As customary, the captain and crew of the GW Pierce did an outstanding job in conveying, feeding, and assisting the team. Our contractor, Holmes and Narver, provided more than enough help to ensure the mission was well supplied and supported. Indeed, one of their team members, cross-trained in EMT work, was particularly valuable and helpful. All in all, a job well done.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. It would be politically sensitive and important for DOE to extend an invitation to Ambassador and Mrs. Bodde to visit our field program at Bikini, perhaps in conjunction with the LLNL mission in November. He seems keenly interested in our work and expressed a particular wish to visit Bikini. A similar invitation should be extended to Colonel MacNeill at Kwajalein.

B. It would be very appropriate to send a letter of appreciation to Sandia lab, specifically to Frank Schalles for helping us repair the ship's equipment on the mission. I will draft such a letter for your signature.

C. Since the outer island communities have a continuous need for gasoline to meet a variety of needs, and we are always pestered by individuals for our excess stock at the end of our visits, I would suggest that we buy and donate one drum of gasoline to each outer island per trip, as part of our community gifting, and leave the thorny problem of distribution to the Mayors/Council, etc. Provided, of course, that it can be safely and economically achieved.

D. By copy of this report, I ask that the contractor examine/inspect the following for possible repair, etc.: the pipes, pump, and leaks at the lab trailer's water supply system on Ebeye. (The repairs can be modest if it appears we will "abandon" the trailer for Ebeye CHC's use). The x-ray man reported leaking through the roof of the x-ray van. Others said the door moldings and sills on the exam trailers are "soft" and perhaps rotting.

Original Signed by
William D. Jackson

William D. Jackson
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OP-275:WDJ

cc:
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