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USS PHILIP (DDE 498)
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125307

DDE498:VLM:GWA:wk
H2-1
Serial: 001

5 Mar 1954

From: Commanding Officer
 To: Commander, Task Group 7.3

Subj: Evacuation of Rongelap and Ailinginae Atolls on 3 March 1954;
 report of

Ref: (a) COMTASKGROUP 7.3 Disp 020848Z of March 1954
 (b) COM JTF SEVEN Disp 021225Z of March 1954

Encl: (1) Passenger lists of evacuees from Rongelap and Ailinginae Atoll
 (2) Radiological statistics reported by monitor teams, Rongelap and Ailinginae Atolls
 (3) Location of water cisterns, Rongelap Island

1. In compliance with reference (a), the PHILIP got underway from Bikini at 2145M on 2 March and arrived and anchored off Rongelap Island in the lagoon at 0730M on 3 March. A PBM-5A (VP-29) aircraft, No. 2085, piloted by LCDR WELCH which previously had been dispatched from Kwajalein anchored about 100 yards off the beach of the same island shortly before the PHILIP anchored. Prior to anchoring, the PBM, in good radio communication with the PHILIP, made a thorough reconnaissance flight around the atoll. Also on departure the previous evening, the Commanding Officer of the PC 1546 offered much valuable navigational and general information which was of great help to the PHILIP.

2. The beach party including the Commanding Officer, Executive Officer, Radiological Safety Officer and a three man monitoring team proceeded from the PHILIP in a motor whale-boat to the PBM and picked up Mr. Marion WILDS, civilian representative of the Civil Administration Unit, Marshalls Trust Territories of Pacific Islands, and Oscar DeBrum, Marshallese interpreter. The beach was such as to allow an easy close-in landing without danger to the boat.

3. The party was met at the beach by John, the Magistrate of Rongelap. Monitoring of the island commenced immediately. On the basis of initial readings it appeared obvious that evacuation was definitely in order. The Commanding Officer, U.S.S. PHILIP presented Mr. Wilds with the general picture based on monitoring information, and on being informed that Commander Joint Task Force SEVEN had stated that the actual evacuation should be requested by trust territory officials, Mr. Wilds was very emphatic regarding the need for evacuation. Through the interpreter

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it was explained that it was to the best interests of the Rongelap people to leave the atoll and that the PHILIP was there for that purpose. Mr. Wilds was present during all the conversation with John the Magistrate and was of much assistance as also was LCDR V. L. MURTHA, Executive Officer of the PHILIP whose Majuro Island Government background proved very helpful in convincing the Marshallese that they should leave.

4. The information that the people would leave Rongelap was passed very quickly. Each person was asked to bring a small handbag as the only baggage since the monitors readings indicated a high dosage on sleeping mats, palm baskets, and other personal belongings. It is considered very important that once the accepted leader is established and identified that all requests be made through him without exception. This procedure expedited the entire operation.

5. It was decided to utilize the PBM to transport the elderly and the sick to Kwajalein. John designated sixteen (16) persons and this party was embarked in the aircraft in about an hour and a half after the party first landed. These passengers are listed in Enclosure (1) which is forwarded herewith.

6. Fortunately, the Marshallese were not reluctant to leave the island. The magistrate explained that the people had been sick and he obviously deduced that all of the people would soon be provided the necessary medical care. John was apprehensive about the safety of his boat, a 30 foot sloop. The sloop was towed by the ship's whale boat to a better lee. Two anchors were dropped and the boat appeared to be in good holding ground.

7. The forty eight (48) remaining Marshallese were transported via two ship's whale boats to the PHILIP. Names of evacuees are listed in enclosure (1).

8. De-contamination of the Marshallese commenced immediately upon embarkation. Routes had been previously established and the de-contamination teams on station ready to guide the passengers to the de-contamination center (after crew's washroom). Clothing was placed in two G.I. cans aft and after a thorough shower clean clothes were readily available at the exit. The crew donated sufficient white and dungaree trousers, dungaree and "T" shirts without which the de-contamination could not have been as effective.

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9. Women and children were billeted in the torpedo room and the men provided temporary shelter under a canvas tarpaulin rigged on the 01 level between the stacks. Cots were available as seats in both locations. The after officer's head and washroom, a short distance from the torpedo room was designated for use by the women and children. The men had the use of the after crew's head and washroom. The separation of the Marshallese was mandatory due to the limited space available in the torpedo room. A continuous 24 hour sentry watch, all petty officers, was set at both locations to insure privacy and to assist in any requests made by the Marshallese.

10. All children were provided milk shortly after de-contamination. The Marshallese went through the regular mess line for meals and had the same ration as the crew. The meat course was the least popular. The majority of the party asked for more soup, bread and vegetables. Hot soup was most in demand. Ice cream was the natural favorite of all the children.

11. The contaminated clothing was washed in the ship's laundry with a strong soap solution, dried, pressed and returned within four hours after the party embarked.

12. Sleeping accommodations, although crowded, were considered adequate. Twelve (12) cots and two (2) stretchers were set up in the torpedo room and the remaining deck space covered with kapok life jackets. The men slept on the fantail under the deck awning. Life jackets proved to be comfortable pallets and are excellent insulation against warm or damp decks. With the above arrangements each person had a sleeping space.

13. The PBM plane Commander reported that he thought he saw some people on Eniaetok Island (Rongelap Atoll). A party, including John and Oscar DeBrum, the interpreter, landed on this island at 031245M. A thorough search was made but no Marshallese were located. The Magistrate insured the search party that he was certain that there were no persons there since a boat was not nearby. Monitor team readings indicated an average of 3.02 Roentgens, with a maximum reading of 3.65 Roentgens. Monitor team statistics are included in enclosure (2). It was lucky that this island was not inhabited.

14. Six (6) samples of water taken from wells on Rongelap have been forwarded in compliance with reference (b). Approximate locations of wells are indicated in enclosure (3).

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15. The ship then proceeded to Ailinginae Atoll. The Magistrate believed it possible that a party was on Enibuk Island. A party was landed, conducted a thorough search but found no one. The ship remained in the vicinity of Enibuk while the two whale boats proceeded to Sifo Island. A sloop was sighted anchored in the lagoon off Sifo Island. The party landed and John the Magistrate once again explained the need for leaving Rongelap. Eighteen (18) Marshallese were transported from this island. Both this group, and John, assured the party that there were no Marshallese on any of the other islands and the evacuation was considered completed. The sloop was anchored off the island in a good lee. The same procedures for handling the 18 evacuees from Sifo were followed as described in the preceding paragraphs.

16. The PHILIP departed from Ailinginae at 1800M on 3 March and arrived at the Naval Station Kwajalein at 0830M on 4 March. The Marshallese were disembarked during the morning of 4 March and removed to the Naval Dispensary. On arrival, the PHILIP was visited by Commander, Naval Station, Kwajalein, and representatives of Commander Joint Task Force SEVEN.

17. In spite of the willingness of the people to leave their homes there was understandable concern over the safety of the two sloops left behind at Rongelap and Sifo. These boats are a community asset for hauling copra and returning the basic food staples, medicines and clothing during the period that Trust Territory field trip ships are not available. There was a considerable amount of copra in a drying shed on Eniaetok and a smaller amount on Sifo. It was most disheartening to the Magistrate to leave the copra behind since he himself had prepared the copra on Eniaetok last week. All livestock, including about one hundred chickens and ten pigs were abandoned on Rongelap. Two dogs were also left on the island. Since the people were not given an estimate of the duration of their evacuation, the concern over the above items will no doubt increase as the absence from their homes grows longer.

18. It is recommended that aircraft periodically check the condition of the two sloops at Rongelap and Sifo. It is further recommended that some consideration be given to the transfer of livestock, copra and personal belongings on Rongelap, Sifo, Eniaetok. There is a possibility that these animals could be of much value for scientific research.

19. The Marshallese were excellent passengers, most cooperative, never demanding and exemplary in conduct. It was a distinct pleasure for the crew of the PHILIP to have been afforded the opportunity to assist these quiet people in the evacuation.

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A LIST OF MARSHALLESE EVACUATED VIA PBM FROM RONGELAP ISLAND
ON 3 MARCH 1954

NAME	SEX	AGE
1. Loman	Male	66
2. Kanena	Male	75
3. Luiar	Female	83
4. Jelen	Male	70
5. Koma	Female	63
6. Tibaj	Male	28
7. Bekiri	Female	62
8. Jenet	Female	52
9. Betty	Female	6
10. Rinok	Female	17
11. Almira	Female	19
12. Ellin	Female	24
13. Luwetak	Female	78
14. Jabwe	Male	30
15. Antak	Male	48
16. Anjar	Female	59

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A LIST OF MARSHALLESE EMBARKED ABOARD THE USS PHILIP (DDE 498)
FROM RONGELAP ISLAND ON 3 MARCH 1954

	NAME	SEX	AGE
1.	Naptali	Male	49
2.	Fkuiak	Male	43
3.	Bella	Male	37
4.	Hainrick	Male	36
5.	Zitikos	Male	44
6.	John	Male	31
7.	Beaj	Male	30
8.	Jia	Male	20
9.	Jerkan	Male	15
10.	Nario	Male	12
11.	Kitnar	Male	7
12.	Sakraias	Male	7
13.	Herry	Male	6
14.	Elio	Male	5
15.	Jeban	Male	4
16.	Iroji	Male	13
17.	Zinier	Male	2
18.	Alet	Male	2
19.	Dejen	Male	2
20.	Lakij	Male	1
21.	Dik	Male	2
22.	Joj	Male	4
23.	Kiuaja	Female	59
24.	Marta	Female	53
25.	Jedra	Female	50
26.	Mwenarihi	Female	38
27.	Zila	Female	37
28.	Nejak	Female	31
29.	Mina	Female	30
30.	Mitswa	Female	28
31.	Muje	Female	26
32.	Rekko	Female	12
33.	Zatak	Male	60
34.	Zije	Female	4
35.	Mina	Female	2
36.	Nerje	Female	7
37.	Hetsi	Female	18
38.	Jimaco	Female	15
39.	Hruko	Female	15
40.	Mweo	Female	13
41.	Marry	Female	9
42.	Naiki	Female	3
43.	Jonita	Female	4
44.	Ermita	Female	3
45.	Jemlik	Female	2
46.	Kiojan	Female	15
47.	Niktimos	Male	20
48.	Biliet	Male	33

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A LIST OF MARSHALLESE EMBARKED ABOARD THE USS PHILIP (DDE 498)
FROM SIFO ISLAND ON 3 MARCH 1954

NAME	SEX	AGE
1. Jojea	Male	35
2. Baul	Male	2
3. Jaken	Male	42
4. Kotea	Male	4
5. Janoor	Male	57
6. Torty	Female	55
7. Apea	Female	13
8. Jonbok	Female	10
9. Jabkeon	Female	1
10. Kaban	Female	19
11. Bolking	Female	2
12. Biliem	Female	12
13. Nameko	Female	16
14. John	Female	2
15. Kety	Female	16
16. Lija	Female	37
17. Amon	Female	25
18. Kajim	Female	35

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RAD SAFE REPORT

(Evacuation and Decontamination of Marshallese Natives)

I. Data:

	READINGS (in MR/HR):			Inhabited	Time of Readings
	Ave.	Max.			
AILINGINAE RONGELAP ATOLL					
: Island					
: Rongelap	1473	1900	Yes	031045M	
: Eniaetok	3035	3650	No	031245M	
AILINGINAE ENIBUK ATOLL					
: Enibuk	445	550	No	031545M	
: Sifo	412	480	Yes	031715M	
Totals	4	- - - - -	2	- - - - -	

II. DECONTAMINATION: (PERSONNEL)

1. Decontamination readings are as follows:

Average Readings

	Before	After
: ISLAND	Decontamination	Decontamination
: Rongelap	60 MR/HR	25 MR/HR
: Sifo	40 MR/HR	15 MR/HR

NOTE #1. Clothing was slightly contaminated even after decontaminating procedures were employed due to its rough surface and prolonged exposure to radiation. However, maximum readings of less than 50 MR/HR did not warrant discarding women's clothing due to the short time it was to be worn.

NOTE #2. Decontamination upon leaving the ship: 20-22 MR/HR.

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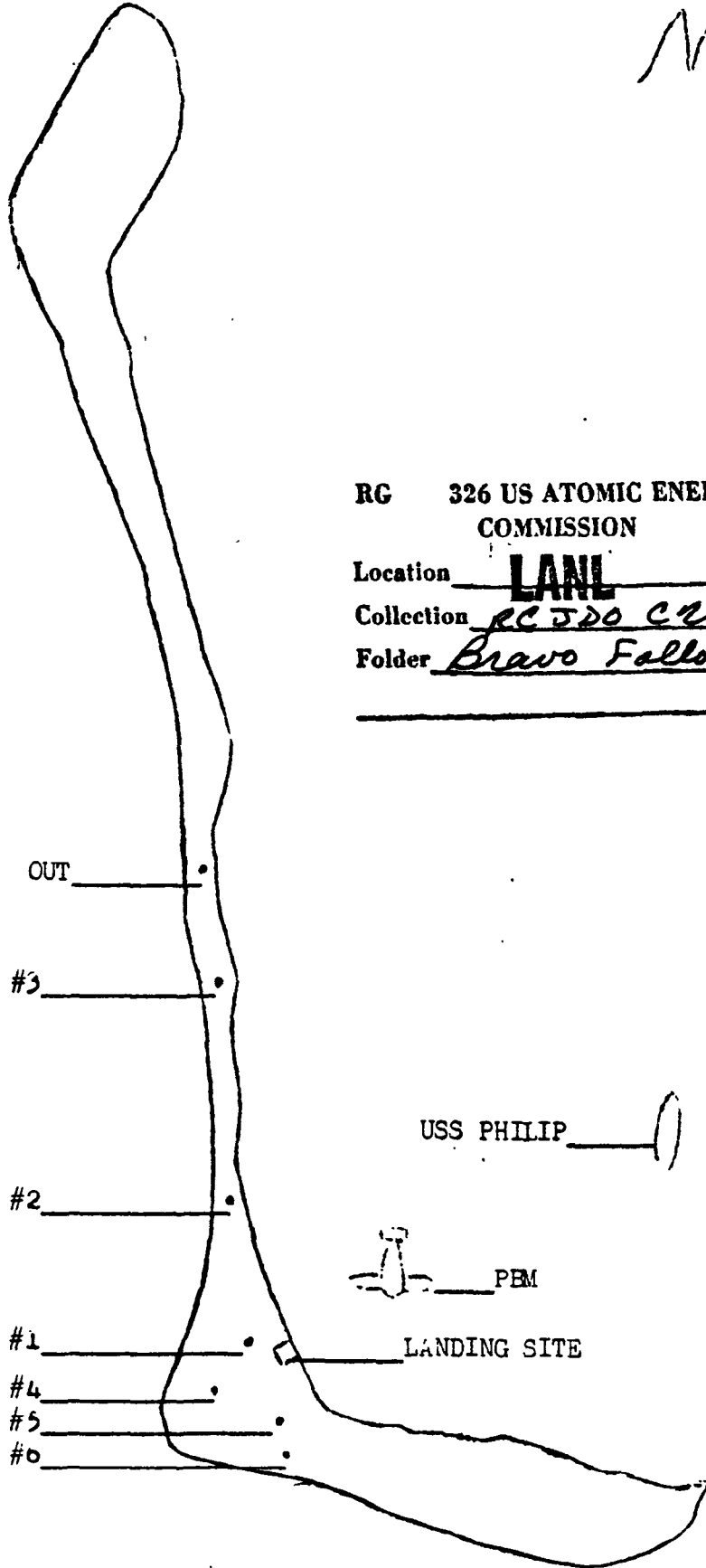
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Enclosure (2)

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LOCATION OF WELLS SAMPLED 3 MARCH 1954, RONJELAP ISLAND.

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OUT _____ ●
BOTTLE #3 _____ ●
BOTTLE #2 _____ ●
BOTTLE #1 _____ ●
BOTTLE #4 _____ ●
BOTTLE #5 _____ ●
BOTTLE #0 _____ ●

USS PHILIP _____ ○

PEM _____

LANDING SITE _____

Enclosure (3)

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