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U. S. S. PHILIP (DDE 498)

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San Francisco, California

RG 326 US ATOMIC ENERGY

DIEAGG:VLM:GWA:wk

COMMISSION

Serial: 001

5 MAR 1954

Location

Records Center  
Collection

Folder

Bravo Fallout

From: Commanding Officer  
To: Commander, Task Group 7.3

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

Ref: (a) COMTAGGROUP 7.3 Disp 00004Z of March 1954  
(b) COM JTF SEVEN Disp 001225Z 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 2145H on 2 March and arrived and anchored off Rongelap Island in the lagoon at 0730H on 3 March. A F4U-7A (VP 29) aircraft, No. 2005, piloted by LCDR WELCH which previously had been dispatched from Eniwetok anchored about 100 yards off the beach of the same island shortly before the PHILIP anchored. Prior to anchoring, the PHILIP, 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 PHILIP and picked up Mr. Marion WILDS, civilian representative of the Civil Administration Unit, Marshalls Trust Territories of Pacific Islands, and Oscar Debra, 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 optimistic 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. MERTSA, 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 PSB to transport the elderly and the sick to Enjalein. 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 50 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 O1 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 FM plane Commander reported that he thought he saw some people on Eniwetok Island (Kongelap Atoll). A party, including John and Oscar DeFries, the interpreter, landed on this island at 061245L. 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 5.00 Roentgens, with a maximum reading of 5.65 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 Kongelap have been forwarded in compliance with reference (b). Approximate locations of wells are indicated in enclosure (5).

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15. The ship then proceeded to Ailingine 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 Ailingine at 1800H on 3 March and arrived at the Naval Station Kwajalein at 0800H 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 Eniwetok 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 Eniwetok 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, Eniwetok. 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 FEN FROM BONGIAP ISLAND  
ON 8 MARCH 1954

NAME	SEX	AGE
1. Loran	Male	86
2. Kanao	Male	75
3. Lalar	Female	85
4. Jalen	Male	70
5. Kona	Female	65
6. Tibaj	Male	28
7. Dekiri	Female	62
8. Jorot	Female	52
9. Betty	Female	6
10. Rink	Female	17
11. Alaira	Female	19
12. Ellin	Female	24
13. Luvotak	Female	70
14. Jabwo	Male	80
15. Antak	Male	43
16. Anjar	Female	59

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TO C.O. PHILIP LTH SER 001  
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A LIST OF MARSHALLESE CREWMEMBERS ABOARD THE USS PHILIP (DDG 498)  
FROM: BONGELAP ISLAND ON 5 MARCH 1954

	NAME	SEX	AGE
1.	Naptali	Male	49
2.	Pkriak	Male	43
3.	Bella	Male	37
4.	Haimrick	Male	36
5.	Zitikos	Male	44
6.	John	Male	31
7.	Deaj	Male	30
8.	Jia	Male	20
9.	Jarlan	Male	15
10.	Karlo	Male	12
11.	Kitmar	Male	7
12.	Sakruilas	Male	7
13.	Harry	Male	6
14.	Klio	Male	5
15.	Jeban	Male	4
16.	Iroji	Male	15
17.	Zindar	Male	2
18.	Alot	Male	2
19.	Dejen	Male	2
20.	Lakiij	Male	1
21.	Nik	Male	2
22.	Joij	Male	4
23.	Kimja	Female	39
24.	Marta	Female	33
25.	Jedra	Female	30
26.	Mwenarini	Female	29
27.	Zila	Female	27
28.	Bejak	Female	21
29.	Hina	Female	20
30.	Hitowa	Female	23
31.	Hije	Female	23
32.	Rokko	Female	12
33.	Latak	Male	60
34.	Eije	Female	4
35.	Hina	Female	2
36.	Kerje	Female	7
37.	Hetai	Female	13
38.	Jinaco	Female	15
39.	Huko	Female	15
40.	Huco	Female	15
41.	Marry	Female	9
42.	Eniki	Female	3
43.	Jorita	Female	4
44.	Enaita	Female	3
45.	Jenlik	Female	2
46.	Kiojan	Female	15
47.	Niktinos	Male	20
48.	Biliet	Male	23

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A LIST OF MARSHALLESE MISARMED ABOARD THE USS PHILIP (DDG 498)  
FROM BIKO ISLAND ON 8 MARCH 1954

	NAME	SEX	AGE
1.	Sojan	Male	35
2.	Bani	Male	2
3.	Sakon	Male	42
4.	Koten	Male	4
5.	Janoor	Male	37
6.	Torty	Female	55
7.	Apen	Female	13
8.	Sonbok	Female	10
9.	Jakoon	Female	1
10.	Kaban	Female	19
11.	Boliking	Female	2
12.	Bilien	Female	12
13.	Kanako	Female	16
14.	John	Female	2
15.	Kety	Female	16
16.	Laja	Female	37
17.	Anon	Female	25
18.	Kajin	Female	35

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RAD DATA REPORT

(Evacuation and Decontamination of Marshallese Natives)

L. Data

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	Island	Readings (in mR/hr)		Inhabited	Time of Readings
		Ave.	Max.		
BONGELAP ATOLL	Bongelap	1475	2900	Yes	081045H
	Eniaetok	5055	5050	No	081245H
	Enibuk	445	530	No	081545H
AILEGIDMAR ATOLL	Life	412	400	Yes	081715H
	Totals	4	---	2	---

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## II. DECONTAMINATION: (PERSONNEL)

1. Decontamination readings are as follows:

## Average Readings

ISLAND	Before Decontamination	After Decontamination
Bongelap	60 mR/hr	25 mR/hr
Life	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 60 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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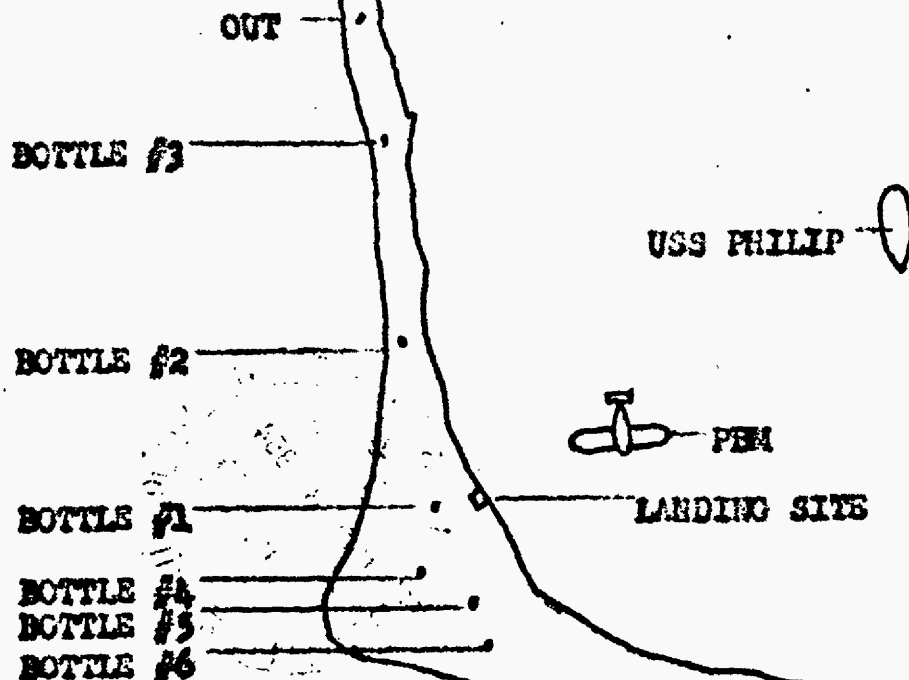
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LOCATION OF WELLS SAMPLED 3 MARCH 1954, RONGELAP ISLAND.

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