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Brig. Gen. Bates Burnell
 Commander
 U. S. Army Safeguard Systems Command
 P.O. Box 1500
 Huntsville, Alabama 35807

955 18 1973

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Dear Bates:

MARSHALL ISLANDS RESEARCH VESSEL

The Atomic Energy Commission has a continuing responsibility for several scientific efforts in the Marshall Islands. Included are the program for biomedical surveillance of several groups of Marshallese, the operation of the Eniwetok Marine Biological Laboratory, radiological surveys of Eniwetok and Bikini, and other support to the rehabilitation efforts at those atolls. For some years, the Commission has been fortunate in having available the very fine cooperation and support of the Kwajalein Missile Range in pursuit of its Marshall Islands efforts. With few exceptions, however, our programs have been dependant upon the Trust Territory field trip vessels for inter-atoll transportation and thus have been subject to the frustrations and excessive costs resulting from random and unreliable scheduling.

To enhance the effectiveness of our scientific efforts and provide them a better level of support, I have been directed to undertake preliminary planning for the acquisition, outfitting, maintenance, and operation of a vessel to be dedicated to AEC program needs. Our current consideration contemplates an LCU-type vessel with modular fitting-out for each of its several tasks by means of a family of semi-trailers in a variety of laboratory configurations.

Members of my staff have had informal exploratory discussions with the Commander and staff of KMR and with appropriate representation of the support contractor, Global Associates. These discussions have produced a number of helpful suggestions and a tentative indication that some feasible arrangement can be developed for the berthing and maintenance and assistance with the operation of a Kwajalein-based LCU. However, I assure you that to date no commitments have been asked or given.

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Brig. Gen. Bates Burnell

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In our preliminary discussions, it has become apparent that the hull-type of choice would be the 1466 class, in order that the AEC vessel might enjoy the economies and other clear advantages of the maintenance and operating experience which Global Associates has already developed around the KMR fleet of four similar vessels. This, in turn, suggests that since the 1466 is an Army designation, a preferred course of action might be to request that KMR be authorized to acquire from Army assets, maintain, and operate an additional LCU under scheduling control of the AEC.

Our present commitments envision approximately 30 operational weeks per year for the Marshall Islands Research Vessel. Informally, we understand that KMR might find attractive the prospect of utilizing this vessel for range support (perhaps to assist with the scheduling of maintenance for its own fleet) during the AEC's "off season". Such an arrangement would seem clearly reasonable, and would be spelled out in a memorandum of understanding covering the proposed support.

By this letter, I request your concurrence in principle to permit my representatives to explore further with the Commander, KMR, and his staff the details of our tentative proposal and to develop a preliminary budget estimate. Should you require further information upon which to base your reply, please call upon me.

Very truly yours,

Mahlon E. Gates
Manager

Mahlon E. Gates
Manager

cc: Commander, KMR, Kwajalein,
N. I.

bcc: SAFSCOM, Attn: SSC-R, Col.
W. Walker, Huntsville, Ala.
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