

CONFIDENTIAL
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March 25, 1952

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Division of Military Application
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DRAFT STAFF PAPER ON TROOP PARTICIPATION IN OPERATION TUMBLER-SNAPPER

SYMBOL: BMD:JCB

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The Division of Biology and Medicine recognizes that it is not its function to set standards for the military nor to impede the operations of the Department of Defense. However, the test and the Continental Proving Ground are the responsibility of the Commission both in fact and in the public mind.

The Division of Biology and Medicine recommends against permitting troops to be closer to ground zero than the seven miles used in the Desert Rock operation for the following reasons:

1. The Continental Proving Ground is of great value to the program of the Atomic Energy Commission and has been accepted by the public as safe.
2. Accidents occurring at the time and place of an atomic explosion are magnified by the press out of all proportion to their importance, and any injury or death during the operation might well have serious adverse effects.
3. The explosion is experimental in type and its yield cannot be predicted with accuracy.

While there is very little likelihood that the fallout of fission products would be a hazard under the operating circumstances of the tests, there is uncertainty of the factors controlling blast effects. Also, although the record of the Air Force in the accuracy of the drops has been outstandingly good, precision of the detonation point cannot be guaranteed.

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