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IN REPLY
REFER TO: B-15164

23 December 1952

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DD   64836

Brig. Gen. K. E. Fields
Director, Division of Military Application
Atomic Energy Commission
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Ken:

I would appreciate your assistance in the establishment of a requirement for a permanent organization to assist the Commission in obtaining samples of clouds at atomic tests.

During 1951 and 1952 a total of three series of nuclear tests involving five operations were conducted at the Nevada Proving Grounds. There is currently planned a test series of two operations at NPG in the Spring of 1953, with a probability of another test series in the Fall of 1953. For all of these NPG test operations the Special Weapons Center under Brig. Gen. Mills has furnished or will furnish all of the air support which is required.

Current practice is for the test organization to make specific requests to SWC for the air support required for each operation as it occurs, and it is understood that SWC has the problem of acquiring the required airplanes and personnel on a one-test basis, with no provision for a "carry-over" of aircraft or personnel from one test operation to another.

The purpose of this letter is to propose that an organization or facility which provides for a permanent capability for all continental tests, and, if desirable, for all tests, be established at SWC. We believe this can be justified because

(a) The air operations at NPG are becoming increasingly involved, so much so that it appears imperative to us that the air operations officer should have considerable previous experience in such tests.

(b) Considerable effort has gone into developing techniques, equipment and operation plans for cloud sampling. These operations can be hazardous, and pilots with experience in such test work assure more reliable samples and data with less radiation exposure.

(c) The high-speed jet type aircraft are modified somewhat for the sampling operations, and there is no reason these same aircraft should not be used repeatedly.

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CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED
PER DOE REVIEW JAN 1973

~~SECRET~~

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(d) It appears that although the test periods involve between six and eight months of each year at the proving ground, the pre-test practice operations and post-test development work on techniques can occupy the remaining time. It seems logical, therefore, that personnel assigned to this mission can be occupied on a full-time basis.

(e) The training and knowledge that would exist in a permanent organization of the type proposed would be of very great assistance in the formation of an Air Task Group for overseas operations.

(f) J-Division has been requested to study the feasibility of making a test of a single important device at the Nevada Proving Ground at almost any time that such a device could be produced. Although cloud sampling is now a major bottle-neck, it would not interfere with such a capability if there were a permanent group at the NPG trained and equipped for such work.

If you concur in this proposal, I should like to request that a letter be forwarded to the MLC stating this requirement and requesting the DOD to appropriately amend the mission of the NPG at the earliest possible time.

Sincerely,

Original signed by
ALVIN C. GRAVES

ALVIN C. GRAVES
Test Director

ACG:vw
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