



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
REGION I
475 ALLENDALE ROAD
KING OF PRUSSIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19406-1415

March 27, 2001

Docket No. 030-34751

License No. 31-02892-06

John J. Donnellan, Jr.
Director
NY Harbor Healthcare System
Brooklyn Campus
800 Poly Place

Brooklyn, NY 11209

SUBJECT: INSPECTION 030-34751/2000-001, NY HARBOR HEALTHCARE SYSTEM, ST.
ALBANS EXTENDED CARE CENTER, QUEENS, NEW YORK

Dear Mr. Donnellan:

From October 11, 2000 to February 28, 2001, Todd J. Jackson of this office conducted a safety inspection at the St. Albans Extended Care Center, Queens, New York of activities authorized by the above listed NRC license. The inspection was an examination of your licensed activities as they relate to radiation safety and to compliance with the Commission's regulations and the license conditions. The inspection consisted of observations by the inspector, interviews with personnel, and a selected examination of representative records. The findings of the inspection were discussed with representatives of your organization at the time of each inspection visit and at the conclusion of the inspection. The enclosed report presents the results of this inspection.

Within the scope of this inspection, no violations were identified.

In accordance with 10 CFR 2.790, a copy of this letter will be placed in the NRC Public Document Room and will be accessible from the NRC Web site at <http://www.nrc.gov/NRC/ADAMS/index.html>. No reply to this letter is required.

Your cooperation with us is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Original signed by Ronald R. Bellamy

Ronald R. Bellamy, Chief
Decommissioning and Laboratory Branch
Division of Nuclear Materials Safety

Enclosure:
Inspection Report No. 03034751/2000001

cc:
Esfandiar Sarfaraz, Ph.D., Radiation Safety Officer

J. Donnellan
NY Harbor Healthcare System

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James Mallen, Chief, Engineering
E. Lynn McGuire, M.D., Director, National Health Physics Program (115HP/NLR)
State of New York

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U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
REGION I

INSPECTION REPORT

Inspection No. 03034751/2000001
Docket No. 03034751
License No. 31-02892-06
Licensee: V.A. Medical Center in Brooklyn
Address: 800 Poly Place
Brooklyn, NY 11209
Locations Inspected: St. Albans Extended Care Center
179th Street and Linden Boulevard
Queens, New York
Inspection Dates: October 11, 2000 - February 28, 2001

Inspector:	<i>Original Signed by Todd J. Jackson</i>	<i>March 27, 2001</i>
	_____ Todd J. Jackson, CHP Health Physicist	_____ date
Approved By:	<i>Original signed by Ronald R. Bellamy</i>	<i>March 27, 2001</i>
	_____ Ronald R. Bellamy, Chief Decommissioning and Laboratory Branch Division of Nuclear Materials Safety	_____ date

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

V.A. Medical Center in Brooklyn

NRC Inspection Report No. 03034751/2000001

The St. Albans Extended Care Center, located in Queens, NY, is owned and operated by the Brooklyn Medical Center of the Department of Veterans Affairs' New York Harbor Health Care System. The facility was formerly owned and operated as a hospital by the U.S. Navy, and a spill of ^{90}Sr occurred in the Navy hospital in the 1960s. The Navy decontaminated the affected rooms, and the Atomic Energy Commission terminated the Navy's radioactive materials license in December 1973. In the early 1990s the facility was reexamined as part of a review of formerly licensed facilities by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and found to still be contaminated. The Navy surveyed the facility and sealed the contaminated areas. Decontamination and decommissioning (D&D) work began in September 2000. The NRC conducted four inspections of the D&D work between October 11, 2000 and February 28, 2001. Work was observed to be performed safely and in compliance with NRC regulations. No violations were identified.

The licensee has conducted a final radiological survey, but not yet submitted the report. The NRC conducted a confirmatory radiological survey and has not yet completed laboratory analysis of samples. The NRC will consider terminating the facility license for D&D activities after these reports are received, data reviewed, and any discrepancies or questions are satisfactorily resolved.

REPORT DETAILS

Background

The St. Albans Extended Care Center (ECC), owned and operated by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center in Brooklyn, incorporates 15 buildings on 55 acres located at 179th Street and Linden Boulevard in Queens, NY. During the 1960s the facility was owned and operated as a hospital by the US Navy, and it was during that period that a spill of radioactive material occurred. The affected area of the St. Albans ECC consists of the former nuclear medicine laboratory and associated rooms in the basement of one building, identified as Building 90. A Decommissioning Plan was developed for the VA by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (the Corps). The Corps is responsible for performing the decommissioning under the Formerly Utilized Defense Sites program. The licensee's objective for the decommissioning project, as stated in the decommissioning plan, is to decontaminate and remediate the affected areas of Building 90 sufficiently to enable unrestricted use, while ensuring exposures to occupational workers and the public during the decommissioning are maintained as low as reasonably achievable.

In August 1998, the NRC issued a license to the VA for decontamination and decommissioning of the St. Albans facility. During 1999 the Corps conducted a characterization survey of the affected areas and developed a decommissioning plan. The survey confirmed the presence of ⁹⁰Sr contamination and traces of ³H contamination in portions of the facility, and was used as the basis for development of the Decommissioning Plan. In December 1999 the Corps proposed derived concentration guideline levels (DCGLs) to be used as radiological cleanup criteria for decommissioning and NRC termination of the license. Revised DCGLs were incorporated into Revision 1 to the license covering St. Albans, dated October 10, 2000.

Decommissioning work began in September 2000. NRC inspections were conducted on October 11 and 30, 2000, November 28, 2000, and on February 26-28, 2001.

Project Status

As of March 1, 2001, bulk decontamination and decommissioning (D&D) work to remove contamination had made significant progress. Some ⁹⁰Sr contamination remained in a buried pipe, with the Corps planning to obtain samples and surveys of the pipe interior for characterization. Contaminated equipment and materials had been removed from affected areas within the facility. The Corps had conducted a final radiological survey and is preparing a report of that survey. From February 26-28, 2001, the NRC conducted a confirmatory survey of the remediated facilities. The results of the NRC survey will be evaluated and compared with the licensee's final survey report prepared by the Corps. This NRC evaluation will be reported separately. When all survey differences are reconciled and the remediated conditions in the affected areas at the St. Albans ECC are determined to be acceptable to the NRC, the radioactive materials license may be terminated.

I. Facilities and Equipment

a. Inspection Scope

The inspector reviewed the facilities and equipment available to support D&D.

b. Observations and Findings

Lighting was sufficient for the conduct of D&D work. The licensee had established monitored ventilation airflow paths for the D&D work. Some domestic water lines remained pressurized, although the drain and sewer lines had been isolated. A domestic water line was breached during demolition work, which caused about 100 gallons of water to spill. The water was collected in drums by the licensee and analyzed prior to disposal by evaporation. Subsequent additional precautions by the contractor were effective in preventing any additional spills.

c. Conclusions

Facilities and equipment were adequate and effective to support safe conduct of D&D work. The configuration of the affected portions of buildings at St. Albans enabled the licensee to efficiently control access to the facilities.

II. Material Control and Transfer

a. Inspection Scope

The inspector reviewed the actions taken to control contamination and radioactive materials during D&D work.

b. Observations and Findings

The licensee established contamination control barriers in the work area, constructed of plastic sheeting to separate work areas. These barriers were initially established during the removal of asbestos containing materials and were left in place during the removal of radiologically contaminated materials. A control point was established for entrance and exit from the work area, with procedures implemented for personnel to remove protective clothing and to frisk prior to exiting.

Contaminated materials were packaged into 55 gallon waste drums and moved into building 90 for temporary storage. Controls were established to prevent external contamination of the waste drums and plastic sheeting was put on the floor under the drums to further control potential spread of contamination.

Access to all contaminated areas undergoing D&D was controlled by locked doors, with keys restricted to authorized personnel.

c. Conclusions

Contamination and access controls implemented by the licensee were adequate and effective.

III. Radiation Protection

a. Inspection Scope

The inspector reviewed the radiation protection program to monitor work areas and individuals during the D&D work.

b. Observations and Findings

Decommissioning work at St. Albans included removal of contaminated equipment, furniture, wall and floor coverings, drain piping, and soil from around the floor drains. The inspector observed routine radiological monitoring being performed during the decommissioning work. Surveys included area smears, general area air samplers in work areas, individual breathing zone lapel air samplers for each worker, and an air sampler monitoring the basement ventilation exhaust. All measurement results reviewed by the inspector were less than the applicable limits of 10 CFR 20.

The licensee's contractor was using appropriate instruments for measurements, and routinely performed source checks on instruments. The inspector checked selected calculations and found them to be correct. The inspector observed workers donning and removing protective clothing, and using respirators, lapel air samplers, and frisking as they exited the radiological control area.

c. Conclusions

The inspector determined that adequate radiological controls were implemented for D&D work at the St. Albans ECC. All measurements reviewed indicated concentrations of ⁹⁰Sr less than the limits of 10 CFR 20 for protection of workers and the public. Licensee personnel were knowledgeable of radiation protection principles and were observed to be using protective clothing, equipment and instruments properly.

IV. Radioactive Waste Management

a. Inspection Scope

The inspector reviewed the licensee's handling of radioactive waste generated by the decontamination and decommissioning (D&D) work.

b. Observations and Findings

During D&D work at the site, 312 55-gal drums of waste were produced. Most of the waste (308 drums) was shipped for disposal during January 2001. The area where the 312 drums had been staged and stored prior to shipment was surveyed by the NRC and no residual contamination detected. Four remaining drums, containing portions of the floor drain piping from the former nuclear medicine lab, had concentrations of ⁹⁰Sr in the piping sufficient to require disposal in a different licensed burial facility. These drums were stored at the site during the February 26-28 inspection period, awaiting arrangements to be transported to a burial site.

The inspector reviewed the waste shipping manifests and identified no concerns with the documents. The licensee indicated that the burial site had found the shipment to be acceptable upon receipt.

c. Conclusions

Most radioactive waste had been shipped from the site. A small quantity of waste remained, pending arrangements as required for disposal at a location different from the

waste already shipped. No violations of regulatory requirements or concerns were identified by the inspector.

V. Posting and Labeling

a. Inspection Scope

The inspector observed the posting and labeling of the work areas.

b. Observations and Findings

Posting and labeling was generally in accordance with applicable regulations.

c. Conclusions

No violations were identified

VI. Exit Meeting

The inspector discussed inspection observations and conclusions with the licensee and contractor representatives at the conclusion of each visit.

PARTIAL LIST OF PERSONS CONTACTED

James Mallen, Chief, Engineering, Brooklyn VA
Ernest Monteleone, Engineering Supervisor, St. Albans ECC VA
Mark Kucera, Site Engineer, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Luz Spann-Labato, Project Manager, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Hans Honerlah, Health Physicist, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Marc Bianco, Safety Engineer, Stone & Webster
Curtis Hales, Health Physics Technician, Cabrerra Services