DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, US ARMY COMMUNICATIONS-ELECTRONICS COMMAND
AND FORT MONMOUTH
FORT MONMOUTH, NEW JERSEY 07703-5000

March 5, 1997

Directorate of Safety Risk Management

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Region I
475 Allendale Road
King of Prussia, Pennsylvania 18406-1415

ATTN: Mr. Charles W. Hehl
Director
Division of Nuclear Materials Safety

Dear Mr. Hehl:

This refers to your letter dated February 21, 1997, subject: Activities at Fort Irwin, Barstow, California.

We have been designated by the U.S. Army Materiel Command (AMC) as the lead point of contact (POC) in assessing the potential exposure of employees and extent of associated radiological hazards at both Fort Irwin and the Defense Reutilization and Marketing Office (DRMO), Barstow, CA.

We intend to have the three DRMO employees involved in the demilitarization of items containing licensed radioactive material evaluated for potential exposure to Thorium-232 and tritium, the radionuclides of concern involved in this incident. The employees are Messrs.

Tritium bioassays (urine) were performed on these individuals by the Marine Corps Logistics Base, Barstow, CA, on January 21, 1997. Analysis of the results revealed no tritium uptake above background levels. To substantiate these results, and to account for the potential exposure to thorium, we have made arrangements for whole body/lung counting and tritium bioassays of these individuals to be performed at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) during the week of March 10, 1997.

A radiation wipe test survey of the DRMO demilitarization area was performed on January 16, 1997 and revealed no removable contamination above background levels (Lower Limit of Detection (LLD) for alpha radiation (Thorium 232) is 4.29 disintegrations per minute (dpm)); the LLD for tritium is 13 dpm.
Corrective and preventive actions will be developed and coordinated with AMC and all involved commands, to include the U.S. Army Aviation and Troop Command; the U.S. Army Missile Command; the U.S. Army Tank-automotive and Armaments Command; the U.S. Army Armament and Chemical Acquisition and Logistics Activity; Headquarters, Defense Logistics Agency; the U.S. Army Forces Command; as well as CECOM.

Our POC is Mr. Steven A. Horne, Director of Safety Risk Management, Voice on COMM (908) 427-3112, ext. 6401; Facsimile on COMM (908) 542-7161 or COMM (908) 532-6403.

Patrick T. Thornton
Colonel, GS
Chief of Staff

Copies Furnished:

Headquarters, Department of the Army, Army Safety Office, ATTN: DACS-SF, 200 Army Pentagon, Washington, DC 20310-0200

Commander, U.S Army Materiel Command, ATTN: AMCSF-P, 5001 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22333-0001

Headquarters, Defense Logistics Agency, ATTN: CAAEH, 8725 John J. Kingman Road, Suite 2639, Fort Belvoir, VA 22060-6221

Commander, U.S. Army Aviation and Troop Command, ATTN: AMSAT-R-X, 4300 Goodfellow Boulevard, St. Louis, MO 63120-1798

Commander, U.S. Army Missile Command, ATTN: AMSMI-SF, Redstone Arsenal, AL 35898-5130

Commander, U.S. Army Tank-automotive and Armaments Command, ATTN: AMSTA-CS-CZ, Warren, MI 48397-5000

Director, U.S. Army Armament and Chemical Acquisition and Logistics Activity, ATTN: AMSTA-AC-SF, Rock Island, IL 61299-7630