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Date: June 9, 1994

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-III-94-43

This preliminary notification constitutes EARLY notice of events of POSSIBLE safety or public interest significance. The information is as initially received without verification or evaluation, and is basically all that is known by the Region III staff on this date.

<u>Facility</u>	<u>Licensee Emergency Classification</u>
Department of the Army	General Emergency
Rock Island, Illinois	Site Area Emergency
	Alert
License No. BML-12-00722-06	Unusual Event
	X Not Applicable

Subject: CONTAMINATED WEAPONS SIGHT FOUND IN SCRAP YARD

On June 8, 1994, the licensee reported that an illuminated sighting device for a weapon had been found in a scrap yard in Fayetteville, North Carolina, which is located near Ft. Bragg, a U. S. Army base.

The scrap dealer found the device on May 26, 1994, in an automobile being stripped prior to compaction as scrap metal. It was labeled "Property of the U. S. Government" but other identifying information was obliterated. On May 30, 1994, he turned it over to a soldier who was at the scrap yard looking for an auto part. The soldier turned it over to personnel at Ft. Bragg the following day.

The device, which is designed to contain tritium (hydrogen-3), was found to have low levels of tritium contamination on its surface. According to the licensee, the levels were up to 48,000 disintegrations per minute per 100 square centimeters. Because of the contamination, Ft. Bragg personnel surveyed the soldier's car, finding very low levels of contamination in the car. Bioassay tests are also being performed to determine if there was any tritium uptake by the soldier.

The Army is making plans to visit the scrap yard on June 9, 1994, and perform appropriate surveys there.

Region III (Chicago) has informed Region II (Atlanta) and the State of North Carolina of the incident. The State will respond to the event. The two regions will monitor the Army's activities. The obliteration of the identifying markings on the device may make it difficult to determine its origin. There are several military units in the vicinity of the scrap yard. Region III also notified NMSS who will coordinate with the EPA.

The licensee notified the NRC Operations Center of this incident at 11:16 a.m. on June 8, 1994. This information is current as of 9:00 a.m. on June 9, 1993.

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