

SECRET
SECURITY INFORMATION
OFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO : Dean Meyer, Group Leader, H-1
FROM : Chas. D. Blackwell, Monitoring Section, H-1
SUBJECT: SECTIONING TARGET AT TA-33
SYMBOL: H-1-M-11

DATE: March 14, 1952

Area D?
Bone Yard?

RESTRICTED DATA

A target, containing 4.2 curies of Polonium, was fired at TA-33 on March 3, 1952, which gave a reading of approximately 5% efficiency. This could have been caused by faulty counters or from a low pressure shot. W-3 personnel felt that the target should be cut open so that component parts could be examined and that by this method the cause for the low efficiency could be determined. Normally, work of this type would be done in a dry box, but in this particular case, the target was too large to fit in a dry box, so permission was requested from H-1 to cut the target out in the open at "Hotpoint" in the TA-33 area. After thorough discussions between W-3 personnel, Monitoring Section personnel, and the H-1 Group Office, permission was given to go ahead with the cutting, provided extreme caution was used in the operation.

On March 5, 1952, the cutting began at "Hotpoint". The target was checked before cutting and an alpha count of 2000 c/m was recorded. All personnel in the immediate area wore full protective clothing, including either Scott Air Paks or Chemox masks. Standby personnel stationed approximately 100 yds. away wore protective clothing and respirators in case the target split and the wind suddenly changed. Paul Barbo and John Dougherty of W-3 operated the slit saw. Saw blades were changed three times and each time the saw was stopped for a change of blade the target was checked. The readings remained the same at 2000 c/m throughout the cutting operation. When a crack of 1/2 inch in depth had been cut, the target was removed to a pit 6 feet deep so the target could be split apart with HE. Paul Brower handled the explosives in the absence of Robert Stickles. The first blast made an opening of approximately 1/4". This area was again packed with HE and the target came apart. Before blasting, it was generally believed that more slit saw work would have to be done, but as the Po would be in a smaller assembly, it could be done in a dry box in Bldg. 3. The second blasting was very successful and the Po recovered from a section of the target intact without any leaks.

Both H-1 and W-3 personnel exercised every precaution possible in the operation, and it is believed that even if the source had been a "leaker", personnel would have remained free from contamination except, possibly, a small amount on gloves and coveralls.

Chas. D. Blackwell
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6-22-79

Incoming logs
80-8-B
CDB/eg
cc: File

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