

My response to the NIOSH dose reconstruction paper about the IAAP/BAECP and what it means to people who worked there and who now have radiation caused diseases.

At the first reading of the NIOSH response, it appears that the writers have put a lot of time and effort into the document. Thank you for that effort. I wish that more records of the plant's history were made and that they could be found for study.

I see that all of the findings shown in the NIOSH report are based upon known and publicly announced problems. The report mentions the Depleted Uranium from several hundred open-air blasts at the Test Fire sites. It also reports some information from the Landauer Film badges worn by X-Ray technicians (plant wide) and selected persons in the AEC plant starting in about 1962. Some Landauer information came from the few film badges used as area dose recorders for that period. The 200+ Physical Security people and the command officers like myself were not issued any film badges but were around the weapons and materials all the many off shift hours that the workers were absent (nights and weekends).

My comments about film badge follows.

A person working around radioactive sources or materials wears a film badge. The film badge records the dose received by the badge and its wearer. Ideally the higher the risk, the more frequently that badge is checked. Risk is determined by historical data or in our case, found data in the hard way. While the exact details are not brought out in our case, it appears that the plant did not use film badges until about 1962. Our plant did not increase the number of badges or frequency of change until later in that decade. Therefore, no one can say if we were radiated or not base on evidence of film badges.

The problem with data retrieved years later from film badges hung in building areas is that if a larger radioactive event happened instantaneously while people were in the area, the film badge will record that event with all the data for that month. Years later, the data reviewed would show that the employee would appear to have only received a small dose that month where in fact the employee was severely damaged.

Each employee entering these areas should have been wearing film dose rate badges. The frequency of change should have determined by the readings over several years or by documented lack of readings and not empirically decided that they were not needed. This seems to me either a severe business omission or a criminal act.

In closing, I consider that the dose reconstruction report for the Burlington Atomic Energy Plant is flawed as it is based upon a few skimpy records that were found and forced upon the government. No evidence that radiation was not there have been found or reported.

Plainly put: We were expendable and it is not right.