

Green Run

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The **"Green Run"** was a secret U.S. Government release of radioactive fission products on December 2–3, 1949, at the Hanford Site plutonium production facility, located in Eastern Washington. Radioisotopes released at that time were supposed to be detected by U.S. Air Force reconnaissance. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests to the U.S. Government have revealed some of the details of the experiment.^[1] Sources cite 5,500 to 12,000 curies (200 to 440 TBq) of iodine-131 released,^{[1][2][3]} and an even greater amount of xenon-133. The radiation was distributed over populated areas, and caused the cessation of intentional radioactive releases at Hanford until 1962 when more experiments commenced.^[3]

There are some indications contained in the documents released by the FOIA requests that many other tests were conducted in the 1940s prior to the Green Run, although the Green Run was a particularly large test. Evidence suggests that filters to remove the iodine were disabled during the Green Run.^{[3][4]}

The project gets its name from the processing of uranium at Hanford. Due to the higher radioactivity involved, batch processing waited 83 to 101 days to allow the radioactive isotopes to decay. For the Green Run test, a batch was run with only a 16-day cooling period. The unfiltered exhaust from the production facility was therefore much more radioactive than during a normal batch.

Oral history

Leland Fox says that his father was in the military and was bivouacked on the banks of the Wenatchee River during the Green Run:

...and people with radiation suits walked around and moved the little colored flags as the radiation was detected. The cooking was done outdoors and they slept near the beach. The Officers did not stay long except to give orders and drive away. Almost everyone that my father knew was there has died of cancer. My father had chronic lymphocytic leukemia and died from the complications of lung cancer. The Feds said that the leukemia can not be caused by iodine-131 but his doctor said that it most probably was.

Health Physicist Carl C. Gamertsfelder, Ph.D. described his recollections as to the reasons for the Green Run by attributing it to the intentions of the Air Force to be able to track Soviet releases.

Herb Parker called me to request that I, and the groups that I supervised, cooperate with the Air Force in the conduct of an experiment which became known as the Green Run... And we didn't recommend, we wouldn't have recommended, that they operate it. We told them that. They wanted to run anyway, and they did run."^[5]

See also

- Atomic testing
- Nuclear fallout
- Unethical human experimentation in the United States

References

1. The Release of Radioactive Materials from Hanford: 1944-1972 (<http://web.archive.org/web/20100812054326/http://www.doh.wa.gov/hanford/publications/history/release.html#Green>)
2. Miller, Richard L (1991). *Under the Cloud: The Decades of Nuclear Testing*. The Woodlands, Texas: Two Sixty Press. p. 71. ISBN 0-02-921620-6. (See Google Books (<https://books.google.com/books?id=adI-6jRDipgC&lpg=PA69&vq=slotin&pg=PA71#v=onepage&q=Hanford%20ton&f=false>))
3. Goliszek, Andrew (2003). *In The Name of Science*. New York: St. Martin's Press. ISBN 978-0-312-30356-3. pp. 130-131.
4. "New documents reveal story behind green run". WISE News Communique. October 30, 1992.
5. Oral History of Health Physicist Carl C. Gamertsfelder, Ph.D. (<http://web.archive.org/web/20100602064041/http://www.hss.doe.gov/HealthSafety/ohre//roadmap/histories/0467/0467c.html#GreenRun>), DOE/EH-0467, HUMAN RADIATION STUDIES: REMEMBERING THE EARLY YEARS. Conducted January 19, 1995, United States Department of Energy, Office of Human Radiation Experiments, September 1995.

Retrieved from "https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Green_Run&oldid=746896349"

Categories: 1949 in the environment | 1949 in Washington (state) | Human subject research in the United States | Nuclear history of the United States | History of Washington (state) | Radiation accidents and incidents | United States Atomic Energy Commission

-
- This page was last modified on 30 October 2016, at 06:25.
 - Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.