

WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION (WMD): its a tell all, yet says nothing cliché relegated to the Pentagon and the news media. Only an elite few really comprehend the magnitude of the term or what actually constitutes and represents these hideous, notorious killing machines, besides the people that toss around the term WMDs, far fewer folks have actually eyeballed the destructive mechanisms, or handled them, in the process of development and production. Fewer still are the test crews that truly test the nasty triggering devices. I for one, have been in some way affiliated with all three types of WMD weapons. Two weapons have been studied and reviewed in the story "G.I. GETS TWO FOLD EDUCATION FROM PAIR OF NAVAL RESEARCH VOYAGES." That is where biological and nuclear weapons were discussed and available at this website.

The data I'm aware of is a generation old, but the last I heard 62 nations of the over 300 members of the United Nations, have signed a decree never to use WMDs in wartime. The United States has signed that document.

In 1969 the Nixon Administration halted the research, development and testing of all WMDs in the United States. While the U.S. became stagnant in this avenue, other civilized countries and rouge nations, such as Iran and North Korea, among the demented countries were free to pursue unchallenged exploration the nasty unconscionable under-world of WMDs. For $\frac{1}{2}$ a century any country other than those opposed to or signed the document were free to expound and exponentially increase the potency, effectiveness and killing voluminous power of each weapon.

Weapons of mass destruction are identified by three categories: Nuclear weapons, bombs, missiles warheads or any other delivery system included both atomic and the much more devastating hydrogen weapons. There are biological and germ warfare agents, of which there are untold millions of combinations and finally chemical ordinance. Thus the term NBC agents, or for older military service members the acronym CBR for chemical, biological and radiation weapons. These are the components of the WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION. I prefer to use the term NBC agents.

The U.S. conducted nuclear weapons tests at several locales. Each was remote, isolated, barren of inhabitants in sites around the globe. The test site at Yucca Flats, NV where above ground and later stages restricted to solely underground testing was accomplished, until the 1969 moratorium was imposed. While the armament was primary a Defense Department function, other agencies were involved, including the Atomic Energy Commission and other government entities, including PANTEX of Amarillo, which assembled nuclear weapons and shipped the complete package to U.S. military installations.

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Written spring 2016

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Other heavily used locations were in the Central Pacific region of the Marshall Islands. Where the island of Kwajalein, Eniwetok and Bikini were extensive sites of nuclear weapons tests from 1946 to the early 1960s. The newly formed Atomic Energy Commission was created from President Eisenhower's proclamation to use ATOMS FOR PEACE PROGRAM, thus expanding nuclear fuel from destructive to constructive uses. These were personified with projects as nuclear powered submarines and nuclear electric power generation plants as the discussion will prevail at Ft. Greely, Alaska and Tully, Greenland.

Nuclear weapons are as destructive in power as say a violent volcanic eruption. Both will send debris skyward to heights of 20 to 30 miles into the atmosphere. Spreading it's deadly output over hundreds of square miles. In 1981, a year after Mount St. Helens erupted in Oregon, around Yakima and Wenatchee, WA a 100 miles or more away, the road shoulder was covered with an inch coat of white dust, I think was pumice ash from Mt St. Helens was every where.

If a volcano can spread the debris the same goes for nuclear fallout. The expanding gases will travel to equal heights. The upper level winds will disperse the radio active debris in much the same way as volcanic ash. That was why on Christmas Island, I wore what I had gym sneakers and shorts as sole clothing. That position cloud covered the entire 40 square mile island and well out to sea, debris tumbled back to earth and sea. Some how this marauding cloud that should be deadly for decades had no ill effects on me, even tho the Smithsonian Institute team spent 3 nights and 4 days on the island, just 26 months after the September, 1962 atmospheric blast.

BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS: the vast expanse of these killers are as old and diverse as the earth is old. Daily new diseases pop-up. The Animal Planet TV channel has a show called "MONSTERS INSIDE ME." Disseminating often rare and sometimes untreatable ailments. Thus the billions of bacteria, germs and other living organisms can finally make humans succumb to these invaders. There is a simple antidote wash your hands and keep clean to deprive these billions of unwanted guest from causing trouble. The problem is that many of the known killers take days, weeks, months, years or even decades to fruition. Battlefield commanders can't wait that long. Wars don't usually last that duration, In the past both countries that the U.S. fought during WWII are now great friends. The war chiefs want immediate action with maximum results.

During the middle ages Bubonic Plague killed 1/3 of Europe's population. Then around 1918 there was a pandemic of flu cases killing 10s of thousands. Later it was the worldwide HIV scare and then Eboli and now as this is typed a new Zika virus is the current rampage.

One of the killers commonly known is Anthrox. It I suppose is a virus, but can be a powder form. I remember right after the 9/11 terror attack on the World Trade Center, a series of mailed envelopes were sent through the Washington D.C. central post offices. One letter as I recall was mailed to the White House. Several others to members of Congress and the news media recieved one Anthrox letter. When the mail was opened a white powder fell out. Many office staffers were treated for the sickness. None of the posion ever reached the intended targets.

However I think it took nearly 2 years to decontaminate the post office. The FBI suspect in the case was never arrested because of lack of evidence. The person has since died, closing that case. Anthrox is a natural occuring virus in the soil that the human antibodies can attack and subdue. Only when its laboratory enhanced does it become deadly. The History channel had a story of Russian Anthrox production. It stated that Russia produced over 1,000 tons of Anthrox EACH YEAR. Worst yet was Anthrox was only one of several deadly products being produced.

Among the worst disease carriers are the mosquito population. The construction of the Panama Canal was nearly halted, because of the malarial disease that hospitalized and killed so many construction workers. The U.S. Army doctor Walter Reed deemed the mosquito carried the disease and ordered spraying to reduce the population of the pest. This lowered the malarial rate and also allowed the opening of the vital Atlantic to Pacific short cut to be completed.

Of the several thousand species of mosquito, Aedes Aegypti is the most studied, because it's the most wide spread around the world. The story of my involvement with Aedes Aegypti is documented at this website in the story "G.I. GETS TWO FOLD EDUCATION FROM PAIR OF NAVAL RESEARCH VOYAGES."

As stated earlier there are untold millions more germs and bacteria ready to take center stage and bring tragedy for mankind. Thus I won't dwell on future guess work.

CHEMICAL WEAPONS: the first useage of these weapons took place during World War I, when the Germans unleashed 2 gases. One was Mustard Gas. Details from the battlefield stated the allied troops in the trenches saw a yellow cloud approach the trench. Within minutes, the unprotected skin was blistered. In 2015 a pharmaceutical company produced a TV commerical stating if you had Small Pox, then the Singles Virus is already in you. The ad showed a badly blistered portion of a body. This advertisement is only a small example of what Mustard Gas would have done. With Mustard Gas all exposed skin would have been blistered, the complete exposed epidermis would be blistered. Some probably fell off the body to a depth of the dermis. Thus the soldier could have bled to death with ruptured blood vessels. Plus if the gas mask wasn't applied in time the agent would have been inhaled into the lungs, causing choking and death.

PHOSGENE GAS: it was another vicious gas agent that attacked the lungs. Unprepared troops of the WWI weren't issued gas masks at the outset of the war. When Phosgene and Mustard Gas were introduced few if any soldiers were given proper equipment to protect themselves. As such the agents of death took horrid tolls on friendly troops. The History Channel reported that in a single day of fighting, during WWI, the British alone suffered over 100,000 casualties. Entire 15,000 man divisions were annihilated, along with regiments and scores of other units.

Any of these poison gases did the same to the intended force. It reduced the fighting capacity of the afflicted units to pursue their goals. But rather fight for their lives if possible, along with wide spread hysteria, panic and uselessness set in, just to stay alive.

After the Armistice was signed on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918, Germany surrendered its chemical weapons. However the pandora's box had been opened.

During this century a crazed Japanese chemistry professor concocted up a batch of Serin Gas from a nut not widely known. With a vial and timing device, he put the death trap in a briefcase and entered a rush hour Toyko subway. Placing the chemical bomb on floor and exiting the subway at the next stop.

News casts of early 2000 century claimed over 200 dead and hundreds more injured and being taken to area hospitals for treatment. Hampered in the rescue efforts were the fact that gurneys had to be lifted up and down steps, because of limited elevators and escalators. The chemistry professor was apprehended and sent to trial.

My introduction to APC as it was called for the Army Pictorial Center 35-11 35th Ave, Long Island City, Queens New York 11106 was somewhat disheartening. This was the home of the Army's TV weekly series "THE BIG PICTURE" and every training film I had ever seen. This place the former Paramount Pictures New York studio, with the largest sound movie stage on the East Coast should be a beehive of activity. To my dismay it was devoid of activity. Seldom a day or two of filming on the main stage.

I was assigned to a unit called Field Photo. For the most part it was nearly 40 of us photographers sitting around doing nothing. Yes we had training sessions. We would go out filming the construction of the World Trade Center in lower Hanhattan. We also shot the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Manhattan or the Easter Parade and certain other ongoing activities.

Internally our projects were long term ongoing ventures. A camera crew was up in Tully, Greenland as the U.S. dismantled an ATOMS FOR PEACE nuclear power plant. That job the crew were gone 6 months at a time. They would come home, turn in travel vouchers and films. Get a new set of orders for 180 days, get fresh film and kiss the wife and kids hello and goodbye in one smooch and head back north.

The other current job was in National Parks in the Rockies filming avalanche control. Park rangers would fire either 90mm or 106mm recoilless rifle rounds into snow packs to induce the avalanches. The big jobs as training films were done by Camera Branch. They used mostly retired sergeants as proven cameramen, than train the Field Photo troops to handle the studio cameras.

The Army got the studio at the outset of WWII. Paramount wanted to consolidate operations on the West Coast, and the Army needed to train 10s of thousands of civilians to be a fighting force in a hurry, thus training films did the trick. The Germans accredited the U.S. with training films for winning the war. The Germans produced mostly propaganda movies.

Rumors started surfacing of a possible job in Alaska. Since I had never been to the 49th state, why not volunteer? Even if I had no idea of the mission, anything would be worth the chance to see something different.

Early in April, 1964 5 Star General Of The Army Douglas Mac art-hur died and the Pic Center was put on full alert. I was ignorant to the fact that the general had taken up residence in Manhattan, after President Truman fired him during the Korean War. His body would lie in repose at an armory that took up an entire city block between 5th and 6th Avenues at 65th Street. The regions dignitaries, celebrities and other VIPs by invitation only could view the open casket from 8A.M. until noon. There after it was open for the general public.

Camera Branch had set a studio Mitchell Camera with several duces (2,000 watt film lights) on a platform over looking the open coffin allowing a view of the VIP looking at the general. Field Photo was to film the the guest arriving on 5th Ave and enter the armory Other would be located on 6th Ave getting the guests departing the armory and getting into their limos.

We were issued color film, however the day of the event the sky was dreary with low cloud ceilings and fog. The supply sergeant told us in the barracks to swap the color for B&W (black & white) film.

Beside myself about 20 other Field Photo photographers were at the 5th Ave. entrance, along with about 200 press. I think New York had a dozen television stations, plus Newark, New Jersey. Also on site were wire service reporters like AP and UPI the BBC and more. Magazines and newspaper people all stood 5 deep trying to get the VIPs exiting their limousines and climbing the steps to the armory. Right away chauffeur driven limos started arriving. Often multiply vehicles at a time.

Out stepped stars of stage, screen and TV. Governors of New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and others from the Northeast. Financial barons of Wall Street, Lawyers, doctors, union bosses, U.N. delegations and the U.N. Secretary General, plus New York city officialdom as the mayor, police chief and fire marshal. Plus Vips no longer in vogue or out of office.

Well past 11 A.M. a sergeant that lived off post and took his camera home, came up to me and when he found out we had filmed in B&W instead of color, he hit the fan! B&W exiting the limos and going into the armory. Color passing the coffin then B&W as the VIPs left the armory. Hell what a mess. Back at APC our estimates of how many VIPs we saw in less than 4 hours ranged from 1,000 to 5,000. However the consensus was 2,400 to 2,500 very important people.

Less than a month later the Royal Spanish Riding Academy of Vienna commonly known as the Lippizian Horse Show was making their first worldwide tour since WWII. The academy was going to present the U.S. Army with one of their special breed of stallions, as a reward for General George Patton going behind the Russian lines at the end of WWII to save their breed of horse. Walt Disney produced a film detailing the exploits in the movie the "MIRACLE OF THE STALLIONS."

Us Army guys got in free to see the first half of the show and film the intermission. I was placed in the second balcony of the Madison Square Garden building. The paying customers in the 2nd balcony stated each ticket cost \$35.00. I had been on a horse maybe twice in my life for a distance of less than 200 feet. Thus in no way was I an equestrian stimulated fan. I'd rather have a household pet, than a barnyard dweller as a friend,

As the show opened at least a dozen or more mounts entered the arena. Every horse was gray, many had light gray or white spots, but all pure throughbred stallions. The entrance was splendid. Each horse left hoof hit the floor in exact same time. All the horses hoofs were in perfect harmony, none out of step. I wasn't an equestrian novice, yet within moments of the show opening, my mouth was agape; pondering how many days, weeks, months it took to marry up maximum compatibility between rider and horse. Some horses might go 95% suitable with many riders. Others it could take time for the two ESP to shine. Yet other horses had rejected riders altogether.

Then the number of saddle sores from relentless do and re-do, practice once, practice twice, practice for the 1000th time, until the act is done with stop watch precision for each mount. Then the entire group actions per maneuver. There was no swaying, no bouncing or jerky action between rider and horse. What I saw was if ESP overtook everything. The horse knew what the next step was, the next turn, the next leap and both rider and horse acted as one entity as the act progressed.

The show was atuned to perfection as much as a stately ballerina stage show, or the Rockettes at Radio City Music Hall across town. In all the dozen or more mounts were a symphony of unison action. Every act, each maneuver was done to perfect fruition. The performance left me speechless, and I knew why these paying folks in the 2nd balcony had paid \$35.00 per seat to see the show, and I concluded it was well worth every cent.

At the half time intermission, our event started. The announcer gave the who, what, where, how, why and when of the transaction in the center of the arena. As the academy rider dismounted and the American officer took the reins, the horse shied away, not being use to this strnager. The officer tried to mount, by putting one foot in the stirrup but was unable to get into the saddle. My camera was nearly out of its 30 second run time. We were told to just drop the spent camera and start filming with a 2nd camera each of us had. But since there was a lapse in action, I started to wind the camera. Without warning, all of a sudden in an unceremoniously and unbecoming of an officer, he leaped from the arena floor up into the saddle. I from a side angle was able to film about half the jump.

A day or two later, all of Field Photo was in a screening room to see the dailies or rushes as the term for 1st screening of film. The Army brass was also there. Cameraman after cameraman either totally missed the transfer or like me got a portion of the leap. Only one cameraman obtained the entire sequence of the transfer, but it was a butt shot. The rider's back was to the camera. The Army brass had a discussion of options. One was animation. I think the other was Special Affects. A re-shot was not an option.

A decade later while in Indianapolis, IN, my wife and I saw a poster proclaiming the Lippizian Horses were coming on a poster. The sign stated the dates and time. My wife was born in Texas and had a lot more astute of equestrian culture. Yet like myself would rather have a household pet, than a stable mate.

We paid \$7.00 for orchestra seats. That should have said a lot. But the show had any horse that could perform a trick or two on the stage. The show had mixed horses as mares, colts, appoloosas, paints etc. It wasn't the equestrian SHOW OF SHOWS! It was as the cliché goes "YOU GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR."

After two blotched major events my ego and self esteem was bruised and I felt mighty melancholy like nothing was going right. I felt like Bob Hope's brother "NO HOPE," Yet I was on travel orders with 6 others more superior in rank. The orders read something like travel to Ft. Greely, AK inconjunction with Deseret Test Center, Ft. Douglas, Salt Lake City, UT 84113. Project ELK HUNT I for EST 75 days. I was junior on the crew and hadn't gotten involved with any of the camera gear for the job. Not camera, lights, film, nor tripods nothing.

1st of June, 1964 the team flew out of Kennedy Airport to Seattle, where we would transfer to a Pan Am flight to Fairbanks, AK. Somewhere over Wyoming or Montana area, the senior NCO came back to my seat and whispered did I know the mission of this project? I said No! He whispered it deals with chemical weapons!! Jesus Christ all I knew was that people get killed messing with that damn stuff.

How in the hell did I volunteer to get bumped off with toxic agents? The Army always but always said NEVER VOLUNTEER!!!! Here I did just that. God if I hadn't opened my big mouth and jammed my size 11 shoe in it!!!

When realization set in I was strapped into an airline seat at 7 miles up and I wasn't going nowhere until the plane landed. I was not going to enjoy this, but I guess people can learn to survive the situation. I figured I had 6 others to look after me, so I might live.

It certainly was all going to be new. The scenery would be different. Different customs at the top of the world. Different vegetation, clothing, year round snow covered mountains and hours of day light. This was the "LAND OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN." These were among the myriad of strange encounters awaiting me.

Arriving at Fairbanks Airport around 9 P.M. the sun was about to set. In New York it would be twilight. Off in the distance were snow capped mountains. Across the runway were lots of bush planes, many with floats for water takeoff and landings. The Army bus was there to load us and other personnel. About an hour out the bus pulled into the only rest stop seen thus far. It was called North Pole, Alaska. The place had several sections. A eatery, gift shop, post office and all over Christmas and Arctic tourist items. Most went to the cafe area. I was thrown back to see pie and coffee at \$1.50. These people would make Jesse James look honest. Even in high cost New York I could get the same for 75¢. A veteran of the North said everything had to be shipped here from the lower 48.

It didn't take long to down pie and coffee. While awaiting on others to start dining, I ventured about the facility. In the middle stood a polar bear that was over 11 feet tall. At the base a sign said Jonas Bros. Denver, Colo. The place had every conceivable tourist item one could want., even tapestries. I liked a few wild life scenes. Then I saw ivory handled walrus tusk steak knives with Eskimo scrimshaw designs on the handles. I wanted them, but not this minute. I had no idea where my bed might be, much less buy steak knives.

Finally we got to Ft. Greely about midnight. The bus hadn't used nor need headlights the entire trip. It was still twilight. Us lower ranking guys were housed in the Arctic Test Center barracks. The senior NCOs were taken to the NCO quarters. This place only had 4 barracks building, but so what APC had only 1 barracks for the Pic Center people and the Europe APO (Army Post Office) personnel. Plus in the basement of the single barracks we had a fully stocked bar, which is unheard of in the military.

The sun jolted me awake at 1:20. Man I had only layed down less than 75 minutes ago. 1:20 A.M. not an orange fireball on the horizon, but bright yellow sun shone on my eyes. My only recourse was to pull the blanket over my head and doze off to a respectable wake up call about 5:30 A.M., not 1:20 A.M. I envisioned strange fantasies up North. Well I was seeing one!

In the morning it took until about 8:30 to round up every one. All our circadium-rhythm or jet lag we were all tired. Some NCO sort of remembered the place we needed to be was at the back of the post. All 7 of us followed the lead. Sure enough. By the Tanana River a sign outside a warehouse said G-5.

At an office inside the warehouse sat an overweight 2nd Lieutenant. Someone showed the officer a set of our orders. After confirming that those on the orders were who we said we were. The Lieutenant made several phone calls. The main one was to the motor pool requesting a vehicle for all of us. I was told to alway keep a copy of the orders in my wallet. That way in an emergency you alway got one copy.

The lieutenant gave the crew direction to the work site. He said going out the gate, make a right turn. In Delta Junction, take the only right turn at the only intersection in the village. Then go 40 miles until you come to the first bridge. Immediately before crossing the bridge over the Gerstle River, there is a dirt road on the right. Go back there some 4 miles until you see a concrete block building. Ask further inside the cinder block building.

The motor pool provided us with an International Harvester 9 passenger carryall. From the outset the driver couldn't keep the truck in a straight line. At the M.P. gate we saw a $\frac{1}{2}$ dozen bison grazing on grass by the sign saying Fort Greely. In the entire 40 miles from Delta Junction to the Gerstle River Bridge we only passed maybe 5 vehicles coming towards us and probably 2 passed from behind us. because we were hardly able to keep the truck on the road.

At the cement block building the NCO went in to ask the cook where we needed to go. He came out pointing to two tire tracks in the brush. He said go that way for about a mile. At the end of the line was a motley assortment of tents and what ever. There was a water tower at least 4 large GP tents a couple squad tents, a wooden building on skids and a small travel trailer. The senior NCO went into the small travel trailer. Guys started coming out of the tents to gulk at us new arrivals. The guys were wearing green and yellow knee boots and white coveralls. I couldn't tell if they were prison work detail, military, civilians (DAC) Dept. of the Army Civilian employee) or an employment agency work crew. Nobody had any rank name tag or other insignia to identify themselves, just a bunch of men.

The NCO came out of the travel trailer to say we were way early. So back to garrison if the truck makes it and move the camera gear to the warehouse.

Back to garrison and main post to move the camera gear to the G-5 warehouse and see about getting the steering fixed. In the motor pool, a grease monkey took a screwdriver or something and tinkered with a steering mechanism and quit.

In the barrack I discovered the bunk I was in belonged to someone else. A couple of guys said that person was in Anchorage helping with earthquake relief from the 8 plus Richter Scale April earthquake. Continuing they told me the state and federal relief funds were paying \$75.00 a day to work. Thus this guy was getting his regular probably \$120.00 a month Army pay, plus \$75.00 a day. When he returned I'd have to move.

Everyone mentioned about the June 21st baseball game to celebrate the longest daylight time of the year. Ft. Greely has a baseball game\$ that starts at midnight, without any lights. I was asked if I intended to see the game. I didn't know.

Then somebody mentioned the post had a nuclear reactor to supply electric. They claimed come Christmas they cranked up the nuclear plant and supply Eielson AFB, Ft. Wainwright and all of Fairbanks with extra power for the decoration. Community relation I guess?

Speaking of winter the guys were saying about ice fog, where you can't see anything. Several chimmed in that their friends were just going between barracks and got lost and disoriented and froze to death in the parking lot.

Discussing the snow capped mountains almost in unison I was told the tallest was Mt. Hayes at over 13,000 feet. Another was Mt. Hess. I don't remember the third tall mountain peak.

By now I saw where people park their car or trucks there is an electric outlet to plug in the battery in the winter. This allows the battery to keep warm and start the vehicle . Others had a heat blanket for the motor.

I was told besides the Arctic Test Center which tests everything the soldier uses is first tested here in winter conditions. It includes clothing, motor oils, weapons, not just rifles, but tanks and missiles and more. Along with testing the items at the Tropic Test center in the Panama Canal Zone.

I was told Special Services had gold pans to rent and try your luck. But the nearby streams weren't gold bearing material.

I was told in winter the main job of the M.P.s were to chase bears out of the family living quarters. It seems Ft. Greely has lots of bear population. That brought up buffalo. I was told as long as you stay in the jeep the bison won't attack. But if you get out to chase them or pet them your life is then in your own hands.

Over the next week or so the photo team thinned out. By fact or fictitious reason nearly all found an excuse to escape Alaska and get back to the Big Apple. Eventually it was down to just 2 of us. The other was a staff sergeant that hailed from Pittsburgh and wanted to re-enlist in Alaska. I got a lesson in Army protocol and ways. If the sergeant re-upped in New York, the Army would pay him 7½ cents a mile to travel from New York to his hometown or about 400 miles equals about \$30.00. Where as if he re-up in Alaska and roughly 3,000 miles he could collect about \$225.00. But the Army brass got wind of the prank and called him back to New York. Still the airfare was close to the bonus.

With him gone the motor pool wasn't about to let one person drive a 9 passenger truck by himself. By now I knew the Dugway work crew had a 40 passenger bus taking them to and from work, and it was parked between the guest house and the ATC barracks. Only 200 feet away. I could hop the bus, go with the medics, weather team or as last resort hop a ride with the chow truck going to Gerstle River.

About 2 weeks into the venture another group from APC showed up. They were Photo Instrumentation. A special small group of specialized cameras. The leader was named Morris. I can't remember if that was the first or last name. He was a GS-13 and out ranked the test director Major Harry H. Ledbetter.

The Photo Instrumentation crew brought hi speed cameras. They had both Hi-Cam and Fairchild models. My normal camera speed was 24 frames a second, and a 100 foot spool of film ran for 2 minutes and 47 seconds. The hi-speed cameras were set to run at 5,000 frames a second using up a 100 foot roll of film in less than 5 seconds. On the grid was a tower. I helped mount the cameras at various heights on the tower and one of my own, with an electric motor to film the explosions. Morris job was to delay the explosion a split second to allow the cameras to run, without missing any action. That meant running out of film before the blast or start running after the blast. I wanted no part in loading the hi-speed camera. Any jam and there were a few camera jams. It took the sergeant 6 hours to clear the mess. That included scraping off all the acetate and film emulsion from the pressure plate and optics. Then the camera could be loaded for the next trial.

The Photo Instrumentation crew was there about a week. My mind is foggy of exact events, but one soldier stayed behind to tend the cameras. In the meanwhile I was taking the work bus to the Gerstle River site. It was always said the G.I. fatigues uniform was a good all around set of clothing. Thus I figured I wouldn't need special gear to film the events. Some one on the bus told Bruce Black the Civilian Test Supervisor. He in turn called the Dugway boss Ken Sly.

Ken called me aside to have one hell of a POW WOW. He said VX is a persistence nerve agent. It will KILL up to 7 years after being dispersed. He said VX is a indiscriminate killer. It don't know friend from foe, all it does is KILL. You want to go out into the HOT GRID with combat boots. You WILL DIE. He stated the VX will seep into the pores of the rubber heels and leather soles and work its way through the molecules around the pores and finally come in contact with your socks. It won't happen tomorrow, not next week. It may take a month, but VX will perform its only task of killing anything living that comes in contact with the agent.

Adding, he said when it in contact with the bottom of your feet your entire body will go BERSERK. YOU WILL SUCCUMB WITHIN 60 SECONDS. It will send every nerve in your body into total uncontrolled activity. Your arms and legs will contort and frail in absolute discourse. You will think you are in an agitator washing machine going every which way at the same time. Your fingers will twitch making fists and hitting yourself. Your legs will kick and violently go into spasms. Since the brain is the heart of the nervous system it will cease operating first. Your heart valves may all open at once and not close. In any event you will have a massive coronary.

Under VX your body will go ballistic. No nerve nor muscle nerves control will be at your option. Your head will twist uncontrollable, shaking both yes and no instantaneously. While the head itself shakes left and right. without recourse. The eyes will rotate within the sockets. without your knowledge. The eyelids will flutter. The ears may twist aimlessly. The finger will dig into any cavity. Poking a finger into eyes. nose. ears and mouth. You will swallow and bit your tongue continuously.

Your limbs will have no authority over themselves. They will with abandonment frail in torment. The wrists and elbows will be in action unstoppable. They will hit, punch and bruise your body at will. The hands will indicate both palms up and palms down, making fists to punch yourself. The fingers as already mentioned do whatever they want. The elbows will pound themselves into torture .

Your legs won't support your weight. You won't be able to crawl, squarm or any movement, but kick yourself in agony and pandemonium shaking violently and your toes will bend both forward and backward at will. The trauma will be everywhere and tumultuous.

Besides Ken added, we try to keep a safe working place, while working with toxic agents. Occassionally accidents do happen. That is why we have medics at every trial If you demand to die, we'll send you back to New York. By now I felt like I took a dummy pill to stay stupid.

He continued everyone has atropine but it only controls the involuntary muscles. You need to be hospitalized with antidotes to control the voluntary muscles in the body.

With this inducement and dissertation of what to look forward to, I still had no idea how nasty the VX really was. I knew now it had only one mission and that was to KILL. Just how bad it was left up to the lab team. However with this desire to live it was off to the equipment tent. In short order I had a pair of large green and yellow knee boots and white coveralls, along with white socks, T-shirt and drawers.

The gas mask was the older model M-11. The newer M-17s had been issued to all branches of service several years earlier. After the ass chewing I just received I wasn't about to ask a stupid question like why the older mask. That came about a month later. The answer was easy. The M-11 had a simple screw-in and unscrew filter. The newer M-17 took a trained technician several hours to change out just one mask.

I was beginning to realize I was working with professionals not beginners. The people that print the gas mask manual that states at the signal of gas, you have 9 seconds to mask! These professional provided that data. The Dugway crew were at the forefront of technology. These men can mask in 2 seconds. However for the beginners the manual writers had to slow down the process, thus coming up with an somewhat believable count of 9 seconds. All these masks had the nape of the neck strap ripped out as useless, They had other short cuts that didn't infringe on integrity of the mask when worn properly.

The gas mask hood was something I had never seen before. It was the lightest item by weight. It was large covering the entire head and about 6 inches below my shoulders. The hood had three holes in the hood. Two were for the mask eye lenses and the third hole fit over the connection to screw in the filter. Ken fit the hood over the eye lens holes first. Then he attached the hood over the filter hole, where upon we screwed in a activated charcoal filter onto the mask. I saw the hood had various big snaps where it fastened to the chest about 6 inches below my shoulders of the protective suit.

We left the rest of the suit until the mask was fitted. Ken told me to just make the mask snug, not tight. Saying a tight mask will cut off circulation. That can leave you dizzy and you might have you doing something stupid. So pulling the adjustable straps on the mask, I pulled it snug to my face.

He continued, by saying if the mask fits properly you will forget you are wearing the gas mask. The same for a man wearing pants. He knows right off the bat if the belt is in the right belt loop hole. When its worn right his pants won't fall down, nor bind and leave red marks around the belly and be uncomfortable. The same goes for a woman's bra. If she has the wrong clasp hook, the bra can hurt, be uncomfortable, hurt and redden the chest. If its too loose it won't fit right and probably sag, look bad and undoubtedly feel worse.

After pulling the straps until they were snug, it was over to the wooden hut on skids, that was the tear gas chamber. I could smell the CN tear gas before setting foot inside the hut. Deseret Test Center and Dugway used the mild form of tear gas CN for coughing/nausea. The more potent CS I never heard what it stood for, but I guess coughing/sneezing? The only place I saw CS canisters were on police riot gear and in newsreels of riots.

I reckon I had minor leaks with the tear gas getting into the mask. However slight tugs on the straps sealed that problem. Soon I could just put the mask on my forehead and with a few nods and swings of my head a few times the mask fell perfectly into a perfect fit. From then on, even tho I was in a life and death situation, I rarely visited the CN chamber more than once a week. My mask felt great.

The rest of the protection was a shirt and pant with elbow length gloves. Everything was oversized to provide extra protection. The shirt was long as were the pants. So that one size fit all. If I remember right, the bottom of the pants had draw-strings to secure a tight fit over the boots.

Riding the work bus to the test site gave credence and my acceptance to the project. I was no longer an interloper they met with resentment, animosity and ill will toward. Those that only occasionally showed up. Asking to get some photo shots and recede back to the main post. NO SIR I went to work with the crew. I came home with the Dog-Patch crew. I ate with them. I had a bunk in the bunk tent. They sort of accepted me as a crew member and volunteered if I needed pictorial coverage. Yet I was from the East side of the Hudson River. They came from the West side of the Continential Divide, and a wide spance stood between cultures.

Beside Chemical Munition Men, I heard a myriad of terms crew at the forefront of knowledge as research and development team they had coined their own set of vocabulary. The first axiom was SNOOT FULL. It referred to incorrectly wearing the gas mask allowing the gaseous poison to enter the mask or a malfunction of the mask itself.

The second term was GET BIT. That term derived by not wearing the protective suit correctly or a flaw in the suit allowing the poison agent as VX to get inside the protection.

Another foreign terminology was the word burster. instead of explosive device. For the land mines filled with VX NERVE AGENT the team of Ross and Martin used two Bursters. per mine.

The bursters were probably low yeild explosive. compared to high explosive like C-4 and RDX which detonates at 27.000 feet a second. This is used for shearing. ripping. tearing needs. Some some C-4 around the truck of a tree and blow the tree from it's roots. Or fell a bridge span. Less explosive are TNT and dynamite. which explode at 12.000 and 8.000 feet a second respectively. Ammonia/nitrate detonates at nearly that speed. They are used in mining and quarry work where heaving. shoving. lifting or pushing action is preferred.

The explosive bursters were probably a military grade explosive that is very stable and long lasting such as COMPOSITION B or C. that can be stored for decades. and probably detonates at 4.000 to 5.000 feet a second. COMP B and C are used in bombs. artillery shells. sea mines. mortars and other ordance. It's power is enough to rupture. fracture the round sending shrapnel flying to cause more injury and mayham to the battlefield.

Later in Vietnam, my MACV Army Photo Team flew from Saigon to the Nuy Sap quarry in An Gaing Province in the delta. We flew aboard an Air America (CIA) plane filled with 640 pounds of 40% ammonia/nitrate. The pilot told me lucky there were no blasting caps aboard. He also said if CHARLIE Viet Cong shot at the plane, it wouldn't explode. At the quarry just before lunch the alert was given and 93 pounds of 40% ammonia/nitrate lifted and dislodged and heaved 100 tons of granite to be crushed for road construction.

I knew the term Bomb squad and EOD before coming here. However CHEMICAL MUNITIONS MEN seemed strange. Yet it should be known, there were less than half the CHEMICAL MUNITION MEN as there were Americans that walked on the moon.

After being fitted with a full rubber suit, it was back to wait and see what transpired. I could speak of Wall Street watching from the spectators platform as stocks and entire companies exchanged ownership on the New York Stock Exchange. I also visited the then functioning American Stock Exchange. I've been to the world renowned TIMES SQUARE so often I quit counting. By June, 1964, I had seen about 15 Broadway shows. Including THE SOUND OF MUSIC, A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM and FUNNY GIRL. But I couldn't talk guns, ammo nor hunting knowledge.

Conversely the DPG team spoke of if Federal ammo was better than Remington's. They talked of how many grains of powder to put in certain ammo reloads. They discussed mule deer or mountain goat hunting and which rifle was best for each animal. Along with many things disassociated with me from the East. Again I could speak of Valley Forge, Washington's Crossing, Independence Hall or Betsy Ross's Home etc, but not outdoors mens activities.

Back at the Arctic Test Center Barracks, I don't remember how many times I changed bunks. For the most part I didn't care I mostly lived at the work site.

Rumors were constantly flying about the work site. If someone didn't have anything to do, he'd start a rumor true or false. What difference did it make, if it caused conversation. One such rumor was that the project had 10,000 gallons of 190 proof grain alcohol, with every drop drinkable! Finally someone brought in a 5 gallon can of the hootch. Any body with a sealable container grabbed some booze. I can assure you it make stiff screw-drivers, so stout they would GROW HAIR ON A BALD TIRE!!

Speaking of rumors flying. My orders stated I could get NON-CREW MEMBER flight status. Somehow I hitch-hiked a ride to the airfield. about a mile from the main post. It was a small tight knit team of maintenance, crew chiefs and pilots. Since I had soloed since Nov. 1958, I could hanger fly (shoot the breeze) with aviators jargon. Their small operation had a H-21 banana helo. With two bush planes. Both DeHaviland models. The Beaver at 450HP was a 4 place plane along with the larger Otter at 650HP. and able to carry eight people or cargo of about 1.360 pounds.

I was told daily they had a flight to Ft. Wainwright and back. Each way took an hour. Thus two flights a month and I could collect an extra \$55.00 a month. In those days \$55.00 was about 2/5 of my entire pay check. While at the airfield I heard that Delta Junction had the largest herd of American Bison in the United States, with about 1,200 head.

Talking of pay, I have no idea how I got paid for most of the 13 years I TRAVELLED THE WORLD SHOOTING MOVIES. The military has a short form the home base finance office can prepare and the traveller can tuck in their wallet or purse. It states your monthly pay amount and since it's a DD Form (Department Of Defense) the form is appreciable at any military installation. You can collect the accural funds to that date. I think each form could be used 3 or 4 times. I believe I only used the form maybe 3 times during my 20 years in the Army.

It became clear that the rumors I heard were not false. That Deseret Test Center had responsibility for all chemical, biological and nuclear testing. not only in the U.S.. but North America. Well I had serious doubts about the atomic testing. but the rest was coming to fruition.

DTC's primary test facility was Dugway Proving Grounds on the West side of Utah close to the Nevada state line. Nearly all of the U.S. arsenal of chemical weapons were probably stored there. Some other locations were kept. but the only one I heard of made absolutely no sense at all. That was Johnson Island (J.I.) some 800 miles South of Hawaii. While in Hawaii I heard a flight a week took off from Hickham to J.I.. and I would have liked to have gone.

The problem with J.I. is that chemical weapons aren't secure on the island. Any country with a flotilla could easily raid the island and grab chemical weapons without much resistance. Thus I couldn't believe the U.S. would store chemical weapons at such a location. Even with fighter aircraft, which I never saw at Hickham, it would take nearly an hour to arrive at the island. A Naval ship would be over night, if not a 2 day trip. Therefore Alaska was a good alternate to Dugway. The vegetation was quite different. DPG was mostly scrub brush. Here in Alaska the foilage was Aspin and pine trees. Of course we had tundra, muskeg and permafrost.

Another Major Ledbetter story that was later confirmed to me. by him, was that Elk Hunt, I was his first test job and he figured he had to micro-manage the entire show. That left him with only 4 hours of sleep out of 72 hours or 3 days. He looked bedraggled and rigormortis was his shadow. Maybe that was why he declared a Saturday a Training Day, and shut the site down for a day, so he could sleep?

A bus went to Fairbanks with the DPG crew, myself, some medics and anyone from the meteorology team. At some intersection in Fairbanks the bus ran out of fuel. If you can vision 40 guys behind the bus, pushing it 2 city blocks and holding up traffic while the bus was pushed through intersections and stop lights etc, until the bus was pushed up to a diesel fuel pump at a gas station. Well that a fact.

After getting the Army bus fueled up and parked in some central location. I was off to see the town or at least 4 to 5 hours worth of sightseeing. I saw events straight out of the mid 1800's, and I couldn't believe it was happening in this day and age mid 1964. I doubt if they were Eskimo, or if I ever layed eyes on a real Eskimo. They were most likely Alaskan Indians of some tribe.

As many public establishment have visable sign proclaiming "WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO REFUSE SERVICE TO ANYONE." I hadn't expected to see wanton beligerent defacing of a human race as I saw not only in Fairbanks, but years later in Anchorage as well. Virtually every bar, saloon or gin mill refused service to the native Americans. They, the bar keep came after the indians with verbal attacks and brooms to chase them away from the site. Some were waving greenback indicating they could pay to no avail. Some other bar patron told me all they want is FIRE WATER. I was informed the Federal and State government provided assistance for the indian families to support themselves, but the drunks would let the family starve to death, so the drunk can have booze. It still seemed revolting.

Of course the command post (CP) required electric power and in the morning or late evenings some heat was needed. In one corner of the CP were two at least 60KW generators. Each running about 12 hours, or until the fuel was exhausted. Then switch to the other generator. Herman Nelson petroleum fueled heaters provided warmth to the tented areas. I think there were a pair of heaters. The shower area may have had a dedicated heater by itself. The other two were centerally located between tents, with hoses supply heat to several tents. Of course the Dugway crew with native talent wired up the generators and heater system. On the 4th of July we had several inches of snow requiring heat much of the day.

In the meantime the assembly of tents that seemed random and in disaray were in fact methology thought out. A precisely layed out set of events, for minimum disruption to take place. The truck could back up loaded with contaminated passengers. The decon people would disrobe the men. Then straight into the shower and onto the supply tent for clean clothes and protective clothing.

For each trial the metelogist team launched a weather balloon and using a thiatolite tracked the altitude, wind speed and direction at various heights as the balloon ascended. At the same time the chemical munition team of Ross and Martin, along with myself with minimum protective gear since the grid was COLD, but protection from possible leaking land mine, or premature detonation during the arming of the mines. I filmed the action.

If I can remember back a 1/2 century, I think on the 21st of June, 1964 That was a full 3 weeks since the 7 man photo team arrived, the first trial of Elk Hunt I took place, the weather conditions were favorable. I filmed the Chemical Munition men arming the mines. I watched as Ross and Martin set each mine down. They unscrewed the caps over where the bursters would go. The large one went into the side of the mine. The small burster slid into the top center of the mine. Then the caps were rescrewed into place. On the top a fuse or blasting cap was used to detonate the mine.

Either Major Ledbetter or Bruce Black threw the switch detoning the VX filled land mines. At the sound of the explosion, the DPG crew and myself suited up to go back out onto the now HOT GRID. Some but not all of Dog-Patch team wore white booties over the green and yellow boots, to collect samples of the VX for the lab.

While each man helped another to get suited up; I think the pants had draw strings, for two reasons. One the pants were one size and short men would trip over the leggings. The second was to keep out any VX from getting up inside the leg. They also helped with the hood snaps. Especially the snaps on the person's back. Then finally the gloves.

Out at the grid the crew spread out covering the entire area. They walked to the other end of the grid, collecting what VX chemical they came in contact with. My first sighting of the nerve agent-it was a teaspoon size globular of a ro'se hue like clear mucus or aloe vera or even clear snot on the leaves of plants within the grid. I thought to myself no wonder this yuck can kill for 7 years. I was later told for test purposes a pink tint was added to identify the VX AGENT.

Even tho we looked like an ET alien or something, we were all alive. For the next half dozen years any arctic fox or hare, buffalo, bear, moose or other critter like a bird that brushed up against the VX would not live to get off the grid!

However the suit was heavy and didn't allow for any breathing of the protective rubber garment, either in or out. That however was the intent, not to allow even a molecule of poison to enter the protective barrier preventing any VX to enter anywhere. At the same time the suit collected pools of sweat. That made the garments miserable to wear. An individual went beyond a bad case of B.O., all the way to GAPO (Gorilla Arm Pit Oder.) This occurred when the temperatures were in the mid 70s.

I remember coming off the HOT GRID, one decon man stood on each side of the person coming off the truck. In unison the two aides unsnapped the hood and took the mask off. That was deposited in a plastic bag inside a metal drum. Then each glove was removed and they went into the contaminated barrel.

Since the rubber suit was bulky, the two decon men unsnapped the front of the shirt. Then sliding their hands down the collar between the suit and coverall, until they could grab a handful of rubber shirt and pulling backward, disrobed the top half of the suit. It went into the plastic bag.

Getting the rubber pants down to the knees. one could sit on a unprotected bench. There the decon team took off the white cloth booties. untied the laces at the bottom of the pants and pulled off the pants. green and yellow boots. now the socks. coveralls. T-shirt and draws. A few steps away were the showers with Dial soap.

Maybe it was Ken Sly's inflection and/or articulation, plus my ears were wide open listening to his speech, that allowed me to absorb everything he was saying. That allowed my successful baptism into the world of toxic agent testing. I survived a death defying experience without any ill effects. I had followed the Dugway's crew lead and did what they did, or were doing.

Other terms tossed about frequently were tundra, muskeg and permafrost. Around Ft. Greely and the C.P. area the ground was firm. Yet not far a field I put my foot down it sank about 6 inches into a soft mushy, marshy growth and a puddle of water with mosquitoes came at me. I don't know to this day if the soft ground was tundra or muskeg. All I know was I killed one mosquito and a hundred relatives came to the funeral! Mosquitos thrive in Alaska's 40 below zero winter weather. Down in the muskeg or tundra, with an inch or two of snow acting as a blanket the mosquitoes flourish and multiply rapidly.

Around the C.P. area there was the DPG clown Billy Green. I think I heard at Dugway he either GOT BIT or GOT A SNOOT FULL, but he survived and recovered. Here on the grid he was all business without any shenanigans. One day in the mail he received a package. Opening the carton out fell a black kotex symbolizing, with hubby gone for months, the wife was in mourning.

With the first HOT TRIAL secured, the decon team under Johnson had used for some of that 10,000 gallons of 190 proof booze, decontaminating the work clothes. This was in addition to the lab crew requirement for some brew also. Within a day or so the decon team had all the test site's clothes ready for the second trial.

Beside the perfect record on the now HOT GRID the projects had some miss happenings. The medical team ambulance, the driver filled up at the gas pump, but accidentally pumped diesel into the gas powered truck. The team headed out minutes before the DPG crew. At the Gerstle River cut off the ambulance was laying on the side. The diesel hit the engine and it stalled, cutting the power steering and the meat-wagon layed on its side. The Dugway crew emptied the bus and righted the ambulance. Smelling the leaking diesel from the gas tank we had troubles.

The bus drove the crew to the work site. Then a small team with tow ropes hauled the stricken ambulance back to the C.P. Someone made a siphon hose and drained the entire gas tank. That diesel would go into the generators or Herman Nelson heaters. Somehow they washed out the carburetor and found some gas for the gas tank, and got the ambulance running by early afternoon. Without the ambulance no trial could be conducted. Man that was West of the Continental Divide ingenuity talking, not East of the Hudson River!!!

With all systems go, Ross, Martin and myself again suited up to go arm the mines. By the time I linked up with the chemical munition men, they already had the mines and busters. We drove as far as the barricade that separated the cold from hot side of the zone. Repeating the events of the first trial, this time I realized before the wiring was complete Ross or Martin used a voltmeter to check line continuity. Only then connected the C.P. wire to the fuse or blasting cap wires.

I remember in my filming the two inserting bursters. They used a M-17 and M-26 burster. However I can't remember if those bursters were for mines or some other munition. It has to be said, for test purposes special tripping devices were used. In combat a pressure release trigger would be employed—Where a enemy troop weight of his foot pressing on the trigger would detonate the mine.

While filming the project's lab crew testing the grid samples, I asked how nasty is this stuff? the answer I got was less than stellar. Infact it was totally disingenuous if not saying these guys LIE LIKE A RUG. I got the feeling they asked their superior the same questions, and just spit out the same lie to me! I couldn't believe the kind of vanacular tongue twisting crap they dispensed. I was told verbatim " A SINGLE DROP CAN KILL 17 INFANTS AND INFIRMED." Damn the Army ain't made up of babies, sick nor elderly folks. It has healthy vibrant teenagers and young 20's troops, full of vim, vigor and in top physical shape; not tots in the cradle or bed ridden folks.

What a dispirit, what nonsense, what mung? I had to deduce, improvise to just guess one drop of VX might kill 4 or 5 healthy troops, not 17 sick or BOB HOPE'S BROTHERS NO HOPE!!!

I couldn't believe the harmony, the brotherhood, the camaraderie, honesty of the Dog-Patch crew. In the change tent at any time I could find billfolds, loose change, watches or other valueables laying about. There weren't any SLICKY BOYS here. These are thieves so quick they'd steal a radio and leave the music playing!

Nearly 45 days of trials went on about one a day or every other day. Then Major Ledbetter called a meeting with the laundry/decon, lab, and several others to see if two tests a day was feasible? I'm sure there were hard times, but the DPG crew asserted extra effort and the job was accomplished.

By roughly the 12th of August, the trials were finished. The protective suits were boxed up and ready for storage. The tents were in the process of being struck. Reservations for the long awaited plane ride back to Salt Lake City . after 90. 100 or more days were in the hands of the transportation people. I had gotten enough aerial time for at least 2 months flight pay. plus numerous missed meals that also counted.

In the waning hours of the project, a car drove up to the C.P. and a guy in civilian clothes got out and went into Major Ledbetter's office. A few minutes later a panic meeting was undertaken. I wasn't invited, yet I was the focal point of the congregation that was so unceremoniously gathered.. I couldn't phantom any reason to answer for my actions.

After the abbreviated meeting. I believe it was again Ken Sly called me aside with the startling revelation that this guy was the project's film director. Hell none of the original 7 man photo team informed me of this tidbit of vital news. From all appearances not even Major Ledbetter was privileged to this information.

Ken told me that all the time we were up here this asshole was vacating for 6 weeks on Nantucket Island. All the time I had been up here I never heard Major Ledbetter, Bruce Black nor Ken Sly ever cuss, but I was informed that they let loose on this Johnny Come Late so called movie director. I was informed this screw-off hound wanted the entire crew to spend an additional 2 weeks here, just to suit his wants.

He was told hell NO not with any Dugway Proving Ground nor Deseret Test Center manpower. He could have only 3 days with just me--the only project cameraman. This jerk had me do things the DPG gang would never do. One thing he wanted and had me in full rubber suit climb on the fender and hood of a truck. During that shoot I got so hot in the suit, I had a dose of heat stroke, ending filming for that day.

Other attendees of the meeting added other details to me, of what took place. The man there favored my side and challenged the director with "It's your job to be here to direct the film." Why hadn't you seen the film Foulke sent back? Why so late getting here? The project was on-going before you headed out on vacation. Etc and so on the group let this interloper have it with both rifles and pistols, plus a belt whipping. From all I got from the guys in the meeting, I was glad I rode the bus and lived and worked the the team. Man-it seems they supported me all the way in my absents.

From running scared of toxic agents, by the time I had boarded the plane to fly home on the 19th of August, I figured I had ventured out on to the HOT GRID about 50 times For the best or depending on one's outlook. I felt comfortable in a toxic environment. From trepidation and apprehension of a HOT GRID. I had graduated to the rare enthusiastic willing participant.. In some way I and Major Ledbetter would be in association for 5 more projects and half a decade.

I was glad nobody had GOTTEN BIT or SNOOT FULL--fore the affect of atropine can be ghastly. Awaking from a sound sleep. I felt like my mouth was stuffed with cotton. While dowsing my throat with fluids. I might die.