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Derived from: TCG-WPMU-3-12413/2013
Date classified: 07/19/2016

Put this with summaries dated later
i.e. RS 1651/079 3/2/71
RS 3415/48065 5/25/66
SUMMARY OF AIR FORCE NUCLEAR ACCIDENTS (Thru Palomares 1966)

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Rough
Draft

(U) SUMMARY OF AIR FORCE NUCLEAR ACCIDENTS

RS 1544/11106

(S-RD) (Gp-1) There have been numerous BROKEN ARROWS which resulted in loss or destruction of radioactive material. From each of these events we learn something that contributes to nuclear safety. Occasionally, it is worthwhile to reflect back and see where we have been. We certainly hope that a BROKEN ARROW will not occur but if it does the past should give us a guide to the future and how to better cope with it.

this listing not complete PH.

DATE	SYSTEM	REMARKS
1950	B-36, [redacted] DOE (b)(3)	Aircraft malfunctioned and icing conditions resulted in deliberate jettison of weapon. Crew bailed out of aircraft.
✓ ABQ 1950	B-29, [redacted] DOE (b)(3)	Aircraft departed during darkness and crashed into mountains 5 miles from end of runway. Weapon broke open upon impact. HE was scattered and burned. Detonators were installed and a training capsule was aboard the aircraft.
1950	B-50, [redacted] DOE (b)(3)	Aircraft was on a routine mission flying at 7,000 feet on a clear day. Aircraft nosed down and flew into ground. Weapon HE detonated upon impact. No capsule was aboard.
✓ 1950	B-29, [redacted] DOE (b)(3)	Aircraft lost engine on takeoff and attempted to swing around for emergency landing but crashed near base trailer court and burned. Fire was fought for 12-15 minutes before weapon detonated. Several individuals were killed. No capsule was aboard.
1952	B-50, [redacted] DOE (b)(3)	Personnel error resulted in operation of release mechanism. Weapon was inadvertently released. No detonation occurred.
✓ Man 1956	B-36, [redacted] DOE (b)(3) <i>Corvair AFB</i>	Normal operating and preflight checks were being made. The manual U-2 locking pin was removed and four minutes later the weapon fell through closed bomb bay doors. Weapon did not burn or detonate; six detonators were smashed. Faulty pneumatic system wiring insulation and safety switch caused release.
1956	B-47, [redacted] DOE (b)(3)	Aircraft crashed into storage bunker containing [redacted] weapons. The aircraft penetrated the bunker, impacted on one weapon and pushed it into two other weapons. Weapons were severely damaged, but did not burn or detonate.
1957	B-36, [redacted] DOE (b)(3)	Aircraft was on downwind leg of landing pattern when weapon was released. The weapon primary detonated on impact but the secondary, though damaged, remained intact. Weapon release was caused by crew member grasping exposed release cable. <i>KAFB</i>
✓ 1957	B-47, [redacted] DOE (b)(3)	Aircraft carrying a [redacted] DOE (b)(3) weapon and a [redacted] DOE (b)(3) capsule in carrying case crashed and burned on takeoff. The weapon burned for 4 hours and two low order HE detonations occurred. [redacted] DOE (b)(3) The weapon pit melted, settled and resolidified in weapon case. Weapon case had a radiation count of 5 MR per hour. The capsule in the M-102 case remained intact but was slightly damaged by heat. DOE (b)(3)
✓ 1958	B-47, [redacted] DOE (b)(3)	Aircraft was involved in a mid-air collision with F-86 aircraft. A [redacted] DOE (b)(3) weapon was jettisoned. No fire or detonation occurred.
1958	B-47, [redacted] DOE (b)(3)	Landing gear collapsed during aircraft ground movement. This caused aircraft to break apart and burn. The [redacted] DOE (b)(3) weapon burned; capsule in IFI melted. No detonation occurred.
✓ 1958	B-47, [redacted] DOE (b)(3)	[redacted] DOE (b)(3) was inadvertently released during flight when crew member grabbed exposed release cable bell crank in bomb bay. HE detonated on impact. Damage occurred to civilian property. <i>S.C.</i>

(b) (3) 42USC
E2168 (a) (3) (C)
(FRD)

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DOE (b)(3)

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ATOMIC ENERGY ACT 1954

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(b) (3) 14208C
S2168 (A)(3) (C)
(PRD)

~~SECRET~~

(b) (3) 14208C
S2168 (A)(3) (C)
(PRD)

DATE	SYSTEM	REMARKS
✓ 1958	B-47/ DOE (b)(3)	Due a faulty ATO bottle, aircraft caught fire during takeoff and crashed from an altitude of 1,500'. Upon aircraft impact the HE in the primary of the DOE (b)(3) detonated and created a crater 35' in diameter and 6' deep. The weapon secondary was found buried under 2' of earth in the crater.
✓ 1958	DOE b(3) B-47/ DOE (b)(3)	During pilot's acceptance check, ATO bottles inadvertently discharged and aircraft caught fire. Firefighting efforts began quickly but were abandoned when fire engulfed the bomb bay. A minor explosion of undetermined origin was observed while aircraft and weapon burned.
1959	DOE (b)(3) F-100	Three fuel tanks were inadvertently jettisoned from a parked aircraft. The aircraft burned and DOE (b)(3) was damaged by fire. No detonation occurred.
✓ 1959	C-124 DOE (b)(3)	Aircraft with three DOE (b)(3) weapons aboard crashed on takeoff when engines 3 and 4 failed. Aircraft burned and one weapon was destroyed by fire. The other two weapons were salvaged. No detonation occurred.
✓ 1959	B-52/ DOE (b)(3)	A mid-air collision of a B-52 and KC-135 aircraft resulted in both aircraft being destroyed. The two DOE (b)(3) weapons broke apart upon impact, and were exposed to a light fire but did not detonate.
1960	BOMARC/ DOE (b)(3)	Missile helium tank exploded and fuel burned. Missile and warhead were destroyed by fire, but no detonation occurred. Radiation was confined to missile launch area.
1961	B-52/ DOE (b)(3)	Aircraft crashed following rupture of wing tank. The two DOE (b)(3) weapons separated from the aircraft during breakup at altitude. One weapon parachute deployed and weapon received little damage. The other weapon broke apart upon impact. No detonation occurred. <i>Goldboro - N.C.</i>
1961	B-52/ DOE (b)(3)	Aircraft crashed due to fuel starvation. The two DOE (b)(3) weapons broke apart upon impact. There was no fire or detonation. <i>Yuba City</i>
1964	B-52/ DOE (b)(3)	Aircraft encountered severe turbulence, lost vertical stabilizer and crashed. Minor weapon breakup occurred. The two weapons were exposed to minor fire; however, there was no detonation. <i>Cumberland Md.</i>
1964	LGM-30B/ DOE (b)(3)	Minuteman with Mk 11 RV DOE (b)(3) was in an alert configuration. A short circuit resulted in the firing of one retrorocket. RV was torn from missile by overpressure from the fired retrorocket. RV fell to the floor of the silo; however, no fire or explosion resulted. RV and warhead were damaged beyond use. <i>Cumberland Md.</i>
1964	B-58/ DOE (b)(3)	During taxi operations for Coco alert, main landing gear collapsed when it struck an obstacle. The resulting fire destroyed the aircraft. DOE (b)(3) DOE (b)(3) The HE burned, however, there was no explosion. Radioactive contamination presented no problem.
1965	C-124/Gas Reservoirs, Neutron Generators DOE (b)(3)	An inadvertent disconnect of a refueling hose resulted in a C-124 being engulfed in flames. Cargo included reservoirs, neutron generators, and one weapon. DOE (b)(3) DC b(3) No significant health hazard resulted since the tritium readily dispersed in the atmosphere.
1966	B-52/Mk 28	A B-52 and KC-135 aircraft collided during mid-air refueling. Four weapons in the MHU-20/C Clip-In were torn loose from forward bomb bay. Upper-left weapon deployed the 16' parachute and was recovered relatively intact. Upper and lower right weapons had an HE detonation on impact and scattered Pu over approximately 600 acres. Squashes, parachutes, and other components were recovered. The lower left weapon fell parachute-retarded into the Mediterranean Sea about 8 miles east of the collision point. US Navy recovered this weapon intact from 2850 feet below the surface.

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ATOMIC ENERGY ACT 1954

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This is answer to question in the report meeting where he was trying to answer criticism over the horrendous number of 'Nuclear Incidents'. - This seems to be no more than an anomaly in the AF procedure of classifying all unsatisfactory reports on manual handling errors & everything

FEB 28 1968

To: (b)(6) 1000

Original Signed By

From: (b)(6) - 1544

Re: Incidents and Unsatisfactory Reports - October, November, December, 1967

To	Org	Code
	1541	
	1542	
	1544	
	1545	
	1546	
	1548	

- 1 - Action
- 2 - Information
- 3 - See Me
- File
- Destroy

There were 305 reports during the stated period. Of these, only three were of sufficient importance to be rated as incidents by FC/DASA. They were:

1. An Honest John/W31 warhead section was dropped a short distance. The warhead itself was undamaged, and was placed back in service after perfunctory checks, i.e., visual examination, T304C, etc.
2. Ten Terrier missiles with W45 warheads were wetted due to a personnel error which activated the sprinkler system in a magazine. The warheads were undamaged.
3. Like number 2, except there were nine missiles.

None of the 305 UR's and incidents could be classified as degrading nuclear safety.

The reporting system requires that the safety people be notified in cases which may involve weapon safety, and I'm pleased that it has not failed. Incidentally, a large percentage of the reports are written against test and handling equipment.

I found another ^{quirk} quick in the system that is interesting. The Air Force doesn't use the UR. They only report mishaps as Dull Swords, Bent Spears, and Broken Arrows. This may account for the large number that Carl Walske is concerned about. Subsequently, FC reclassifies them as UR's.

PFJ:1544:gl

Copy to:

(b)(6) 1540, 1544