

DM
12-1-87

REQUEST FOR RECORDS DISPOSITION AUTHORITY

(See Instructions on reverse)

LEAVE BLANK

JOB NO.

NI-374-88-48

DATE RECEIVED

7/18/89

NOTIFICATION TO AGENCY

In accordance with the provisions of 44 U.S.C. 3303a the disposal request, including amendments, is approved except for items that may be marked "disposition not approved" or "withdrawn" in column 10. If no records are proposed for disposal, the signature of the Archivist is not required.

TO: GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE, WASHINGTON, DC 20408

1. FROM (Agency or establishment)

Department of Defense

2. MAJOR SUBDIVISION

Armed Forces Special Weapons Project

3. MINOR SUBDIVISION

4. NAME OF PERSON WITH WHOM TO CONFER

William G. Seibert

5. TELEPHONE EXT.

7-693-7216
8-273-7216

DATE

8/7/89

ARCHIVIST OF THE UNITED STATES

6. CERTIFICATE OF AGENCY REPRESENTATIVE

I hereby certify that I am authorized to act for this agency in matters pertaining to the disposal of the agency's records; that the records proposed for disposal in this Request of _____ page(s) are not now needed for the business of this agency or will not be needed after the retention periods specified; and that written concurrence from the General Accounting Office, if required under the provisions of Title 8 of the GAO Manual for Guidance of Federal Agencies, is attached.

A. GAO concurrence: is attached; or is unnecessary.

B. DATE

13 Jul 89

C. SIGNATURE OF AGENCY REPRESENTATIVE

Pauline E. Korpanty

D. TITLE

DNA Records Management Officer

7. ITEM NO.

8. DESCRIPTION OF ITEM
(With Inclusive Dates or Retention Periods)

9. GRS OR SUPERSEDED JOB CITATION

10. ACTION TAKEN (NARS USE ONLY)

Located at the National Personnel Records Center (Military) St. Louis, Missouri, are Army organizational records generally dating from the late 1940's through the 1960's. These records are now being reviewed for the purpose of determining their ultimate disposition. The submission of this SF 115 is a part of this effort.

This schedule covers only those records located in NPRC created by the Armed Forces Special Weapons Project. Consequently, it is not applicable to current records.

Unless otherwise noted, the disposition numbers cited correspond to those in AR 340-18.

COPIES TO: DNA, NCF, NNA, NNT, NIA

1 item

Items in this Schedule

1. General Correspondence

1. General Correspondence, ca. 1952-57, 4 cu. ft.

EAR 345-220-18D

Classified and unclassified letters, memorandums, reports, and other correspondence relating to the functions and activities of the Kansas City Area Office, later designated the Mid-West Engineering and Construction Office (MWECO), of the Armed Forces Special Weapons Project (AFSWP). The records are arranged variously by War Department Decimal Filing System, by AFSWP site, by construction program code name, and also by agency to/from which correspondence was sent.

In general these files document, in considerable detail, the AFSWP construction program, i.e., building the ordnance assembly and storage sites that would accommodate the United States' nuclear arsenal. Finance and accounting files (121.2) include revised design directives and specifications for utilities, sewage, communications, security, and fire prevention systems at AFSWP ordnance storage sites. Conference files (337) record interservice and interagency meetings relating to AFSWP construction. Participants included representatives of AFSWP's Washington Headquarters and the field offices in Kansas City and at Sandia Base; the Office of the Chief of Engineers; the Department of the Navy Ordnance Bureau and Bureau of Yards and Docks; the Atomic Energy Commission; the primary civilian contractor, Black and Veatch Consulting Engineers, etc. Files titled Observations and Reports (600.91) contain trip reports pertaining to visits to the various sites to inspect and report on progress of the construction underway, address problems, and confer with representatives of the organizations involved at each location, such as the local Air Force Base Commander, Strategic Air Command (SAC), Air Defense Command (ARADCOM), and Corps of Engineers Division officials.

The largest segment of correspondence is filed at the 600 level of the Decimal Filing System. It includes extensive documentation of construction and/or installation of buildings, plant and equipment at the several AFSWP sites across the nation and overseas. Topics covered range widely and include the following: installation of silica gel ovens; ventilating systems in weapons storage warehouses and test site igloos; design of blast protection doors for weapons storage igloos; desirability of using spark-proof hoists in hazardous assembly and storage areas; design modification of both "contaminated and sanitary" waste water valves in laboratory rooms of certain buildings; etc. Material related to the environmental impact of AFSWP construction on the surrounding locality, appears with some frequency. Information on water sources and sewage facilities at AFSWP sites is found at 600.15 and 671. Letters addressing inadequate sewage treatment at Bossier Base, Louisiana (Site Dog), reveal that a secondary waste treatment facility was not installed because the bayou into which Base sewage was discharged was "unoccupied and undeveloped" and therefore did not warrant the additional expense. Tests and analyses of soils and ground water conditions; drainage studies; data on soil erosion, seeding and sodding; gasoline and oil fueling, distributing, and storage systems; and similar subjects are also dealt with. Other files evidence concern about the proximity of sites to nearby

population centers and the possible contamination of adjacent areas that could result due to radioactive fallout from a nuclear explosion at an AFSWP site.

The military's attitude toward public awareness of AFSWP activities is reflected in an interesting letter from MWECO to the Division Engineer, North Atlantic Division Office, Corps of Engineers, outlining security instructions to be followed during construction of the storage site at Seneca Ordnance Depot, New York. Among the principal security objectives set forth were the goals of concealing "the ultimate purpose of the project" from the public and diffusing speculation among local interests as to the actual usage of the structures being built, by providing generalized, vague, and ultimately misleading press releases.

Other correspondence mirrors the long-running, hotly contested bureaucratic battles for control over the development of atomic power: on one level between the responsible civilian agency (AEC) and the Military Establishment; on another, between the military services themselves, especially Air Force attempts to gain complete control over AFSWP and the Navy's efforts to resist it. From the outset, in 1947, the AEC vigorously opposed transferring custody of atomic weapons to AFSWP because they believed AFSWP "lacked technical competence for the handling and maintenance" of these weapons. (See Rearden, p. 112.) In this same vein, a letter from the Kansas City Area Engineer to the Chief, AFSWP questions the adequacy of the training to be provided the military officers who would supervise maintenance and operation of the plant and equipment at AFSWP sites, then under construction. He compares it, unfavorably, with the training provided to civilian personnel tasked with similar responsibilities in comparable large industrial installations. Civilian plant managers received general training for at least two years prior to a six to eight year training assignment at a particular facility, before being given full responsibility. Frequently rotated military officers tasked with similarly weighty responsibility at AFSWP sites, would receive only a fraction of the training and experience afforded their counterparts in civilian industry. The writer concludes by expressing fear that the mission of AFSWP sites could be "seriously interrupted at any time either through sabotage, neglect, or incompetence" if first rate supervision of maintenance and operations is not provided. Correspondence between the Corps of Engineers and the "using service," anticipating completion of construction at various AFSWP sites, reflects uncertainty as to whether the real estate involved was to be transferred to the commanding officers of the Air Force Bases adjacent to which the sites were located, or to the commanding officers of the AFSWP sites themselves. This material would appear to document the struggle for control of AFSWP that was taking place between the Air Force and the other services.

Permanent. Offer to NARA immediately upon approval of this schedule.