Visiting the Nuclear Test Site at Enewetak Atoll

October, 2000
Enewetak
Discovered by Spanish in 1522

Marshall Islands Claimed by Germans in 1885

Japan Gained Control After WW I
Brutal Battle Waged, February, 1944

- 339 marines killed
- 2,677 Japanese soldiers killed
- 64 Japanese captured alive
- 8000 foot airstrip built by Americans
Two Nuclear Tests at Bikini, 1946

- Crossroads able, an air drop
- Crossroads baker, underwater
Crossroads Able
Crossroads Baker
Operation Sandstone Planned for 1948

- Decision made to select Enewetak for this operation

- President Truman authorizes the move of Enewetak people from Enewetak to Ujelang
December, 1947

- 142 people moved to Ujelang, about 120 miles distant.

- One village built on Ujelang for two tribes of Enewetak.

- US aid began then, continues today.
Forty-three Atmospheric Tests From 1948 Through 1958

- Tests held on a number of smaller islands in the atoll, but none on the principal islands of Enewetak and Medrin.
Map of Atoll showing test locations through 1956
MIKE Experiment Exceptional (1952)

- Located on the small island of Elugelab
- Device was 20 feet tall, 6.5 feet in diameter
- Weight was 62 tons
- Building contained 620 tons of material
- MIKE was first true thermonuclear explosion
- MIKE was 500 times bigger than Hiroshima
Ivy Mike, 10 Megatons
At H+30 min, Cloud was 60 Miles in Diam.

Stem was 20 Miles in Diam.
Mike Crater, 6000 Feet Diameter
1956 Saw a Big Series of Tests

The First Test was named LaCrosse
Seminole, early fireball
Seminole Test, 18 Kilotons
I was present here in 1956, 1958, Several times in the -60’s and 70’s

- The Island cleanup began in 1978
- I was present with Col. Roger Ray in 1979—21 years after our being together in 1958
  We vowed to meet here again in another 21 years—in 2000!
  I made it, regrettably, he did not.
Atoll Cleanup Begins 1978

- 1000 troops in the field.
- 200,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil removed and transported to Runit island.
- Mixed with a cement slurry, pumped into cactus crater.
- Capped with 18” concrete dome.
Enewetak, Home Island
Our Old Research Lab
Seminole Crater in 1987
Seminole Crater in 2000
Fused Sand From Seminole Test
Runit, LaCrosse and Cactus Craters in 1958
Runit, Cactus and LaCrosse
Craters in 1987
Cactus Crater Filled With Debris, Capped 1980
Villages Built on Enewetak and Medrin

- House types selected by each of the original families.
- Many picked two story houses.
- Houses included water collection system, electric wiring, etc.
Village Housing Is First Class
Many Chose Two Story Homes
This is our Boat Used for Atoll Travel
Our Boat Crew
Runit Island, With Dome Showing
Approaching The Dome Is Torturous
Looking North From Dome
Looking at LaCrosse Crater
Lectures Are Easy Here
There Is Much To Point Out!
But Audience Tends To Wander
Runit Bunker
Approaching Medrin Island
Approaching Village Center
Village Center Is Quiet!
Council Chamber for Aroji
Medrin Chapel
Chapel’s Bronze Plaque
• The bell in this church tower was presented to the people of ENEWETAK with gratitude and admiration

• From the cleanup and rehabilitation force on behalf of the people of AMERICA April 1980
We Rang The Bell, Loud and Long, Just For Old Times Sake!
Pigs Arrive On Cue
Medrin School Building Is in Pretty Good Condition
All Buildings Were Double Roofed
Mediterranean Air Strip
Bijire Island Has High Rise
Bijire Bunker

Needs People for Scale
Aomon Beach and Debris
Engebi Island and Bunker
142 People Relocated in 1947
About 350 Returned in 1980

About 1900 Have Descended From the Original Population
Island Now Has 900 People

- About One Third Are in Elementary School
- Atoll Exports Older Teenagers
- There is Virtually No Work on the Atoll. None is Needed
- Exception: A UN Agriculture Station Employing ~14 People
Circumstances Fairly Easy to Understand

• Medical care is pretty good

• Food ships arrive regularly

• Families get $2000 for each baby

• As we all know, children are wonderfully entertaining
Church Of Christ Building Is Largest on Island
Aroji Hall on Enewetak
Northeastern End of Runway
Road Kill Accepted

(It is a piece of Coconut Meat)
Ocean-flushing Pigpen
Colorful Chickens Abound
School Is In Old Cleanup Dorm Building
School—Enewetak’s Only Industry
Dock and Dry Dock Are Quiet!
Repair Shop Closed in 1980
Our Old Chapel
Jumping Ropes Are Always Vines
Sand Sharks Are Plentiful
Enewetak International Departure Lounge
Air Marshall Islands,
A Sometimes Thing
A Last Look At Enewetak Island
Medrin Island, Our Long-time Home Away From Home
Tewa, Last Test in 1958 on Bikini, Caused Radioactive Cloud Fallout on Enewetak! Contamination on Enewetak Island Itself Came From a Bikini Test!!
The People of Enewetak Were Not Irradiated—The Testers Were!

But There Were Survivors
It Rarely Gets Better Than This!