

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

July 30, 1999

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** G. W. Cunningham, Technical Director

**FROM:** T. Dwyer and H. Waugh, Pantex Site Representatives

**SUBJECT:** Pantex Plant Activity Report for Week Ending July 30, 1999

**DNFSB Activity Summary:** H. Waugh was on site all week. T. Dwyer was on site Monday-Wednesday. W. Andrews, C. Martin, A. Matteucci, and W. White were on site Tuesday-Thursday reviewing electrical testing and lightning issues.

**Electrical Testing of Nuclear Explosives:** This week Board staff reviewed electrical testing procedures at Pantex to evaluate whether test procedures for various programs meet the nuclear explosive safety rule that requires electrical testing be kept to a minimum. DOE, M&H, SNL, LLNL, and LANL briefed the staff on the electrical testing for the W62, W87, and W76 programs. Although W62 testing was significantly reduced from what was presented during the recent attempt to revalidate the W62 NESS, there still appeared to be detonator continuity or resistance tests for this program (and for the W87 program) that may not be essential. In addition, DOE personnel continue to perform acceptance tests on nuclear explosives that are redundant with tests performed by M&H during assembly.<sup>[II.B.2.b]</sup>

**Lightning Issues:** M&H has withdrawn the lightning JCO that was submitted to AAO last Wednesday. The control scheme will be re-examined, and the JCO redrafted for resubmission. AAO personnel have indicated that, after further consideration of the original proposal, they will not approve a control scheme that includes moving full-up weapons during lightning warnings. The lone exception that is under consideration is movement of W87 units with [confirmed] unarmed MSADs. Under this control scheme, AAO believes accommodation with NESS can be reached; this scheme is also in much closer alignment with the SNL letter of June 29<sup>th</sup>.<sup>[II.B.2.b]</sup>

**W56 Dismantlement Program:** Following a successful primary/secondary separation last Thursday, this Tuesday, M&H successfully achieved separation of a 2<sup>nd</sup> unit -- the original W56 unit that had been initiated February 19<sup>th</sup> but could not be unscrewed. Using the porta-power hydraulic ram, movement was initially observed at ~4100 psi (equates to ~3500 ft-lb), and the primary-to-secondary joint released at ~ 6000 psi (equates to ~5100 ft-lb), then unscrewed smoothly. This unit had been selected as the 1<sup>st</sup> unit at start-up because it was projected (by unit history review) as likely to be one of the most difficult of the entire dismantlement program. M&H intends to separate 1 more primary-to-secondary joint, then begin cell operations.<sup>[II.B.2.a]</sup>

**AL-R8 Sealed Insert (SI):** This week M&H has successfully repackaged 11 more pits [24 cumulative] into AL-R8 SIs in building 12-64. Facility shutdown for upgrade construction has been pushed back slightly, to August 18<sup>th</sup>. Meanwhile, preparations to bring an AL-R8 SI line up in Building 12-99 have been proceeding feverishly. Latest M&H projections are that they may be able to achieve startup of this 2<sup>nd</sup> line by August 16<sup>th</sup>.<sup>[II.B.2.b]</sup>