

ETHYL CORPORATION

100 PARK AVENUE BUILDING AT 41st STREET

NEW YORK 17, N. Y.

June 19, 1959

Dr. K. V. Kitzmiller
The Kettering Laboratory
Eden and Bethesda Avenues
Cincinnati 19, Ohio

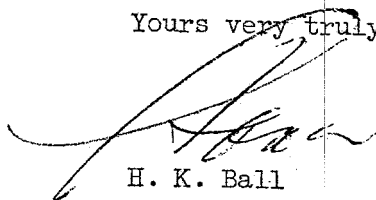
Dear Karl:

Subject: U. S. Army Tank Cleaning
Incident in Japan

As a matter of interest, we are attaching copy of an Ethyletter from Mr. Sweeney dated June 12, 1959 on the tank cleaning incident in Japan which happened on U. S. Army property.

If, by chance, you can obtain additional information through your Washington contacts, we would certainly appreciate having a copy of the report which Mr. Sweeney was able to read.

Yours very truly,



H. K. Ball

HKB:vb
Attachment

CC: Mr. J. J. Frey
Mr. A. J. Baldwin

KE 0017344

Ethyletter
Subject: U. S. Army - OQMG
To: A. J. Baldwin
From: W. W. Sweeney, Jr.

June 12, 1959

You will recall that some time ago our Mr. Nixon reported a tank cleaning accident in Japan on U. S. Army property. At the time I could get no information on it in Washington, D. C.

On June 10, 1959 Major J. L. Swanson, QMG, USA, Petro Div. OQMG, Washington, D. C. showed me a copy of a report of investigation of the accident in question. I read the report and will give pertinent details below. Distribution of the report is restricted to military agencies.

The Army General Depot at Yokohama, Japan let a contract to a Japanese contractor to clean some number of tanks located at their Koshiba Terminal. The contractor was advised that the tanks all contained leaded gasoline and that the precautions contained in Section B, API Manual must be followed. The precautions and other pertinent safety rules were translated into Japanese and a school was held for the contractor and his employees and each employee was given a copy of the translated material and a supply given the contractor. The Safety Inspector for U. S. Government was an unnamed civilian but he was on the job.

The first tanks cleaned were the usual small ones and although the Safety Inspector had a hard time enforcing the regulations, especially the wearing of the AL hosemask equipment. They had no reported lead poison cases. About the middle of August, 1958 they began work on tank #6. This is one of the largest tanks in the world, built by the Japanese for their Navy about 1940. It is 203,000 bbl. capacity, 128' diameter by 95' height, steel sides and concrete bottom and constructed underground with one 4' manhead and a smaller vent opening. About August 20, 1958 men who had been engaged in cleaning this tank began to come down with TEL poisoning which was diagnosed at U. S. and Japanese hospitals. On August 23, 1958 to Sept. 5, approximately 8 men died, 7 in hospitals and one at home. They put some 30 altogether in the hospital.

The Safety Inspector told the investigating officer that when the men were on the bottom shoveling sludge into 55 gal. drums to be pulled up through 4' head, every time he started to go in, the word got passed, and men he suspected of working with their masks off, put them on when he was inside. Some of the crew admitted working with masks off in spite of instructions to the contrary, stating that the tank did not smell as bad as some of the others.

It was recommended in the report that in the future all contracts issued in Japan carry a stipulation that the contractor employ a full-time experienced safety engineer when a leaded gasoline tank was cleaned. Major Swanson stated that he felt sure this recommendation would be approved.

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The report was signed by the senior investigating officer, a Major Grant. The workmen were all Japanese and I cannot recall their names but I believe the contractor's name was Iketani.

The above information is reasonably accurate since I could not copy from the report and had to prepare from memory. The report was made available to all interested Army and Medical agencies of the U. S. Government. I feel sure that our Medical Director could obtain complete information from the Surgeon General, U. S. Army, Washington, D. C.

W. W. Sweeney, Jr.

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