

# Books

## NO PLACE TO HIDE

by David Bradley

Little, Brown & Co., Boston 182 pp. \$2

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DR. DAVID BRADLEY kept a journal during his service with the Radiological Safety Section at the Able and Baker atomic bomb tests. *No Place to Hide* is the result—the impressions and experiences of a typical member of the Radiological Safety Section (RADSAF) during this period.

I was forced to leave Bikini approximately a month after the Baker Day explosion. Dr. Bradley, being a member of the armed forces group, was enabled to stay on for a longer period, and had a far more varied experience than those of us who returned earlier. He gives a graphic account of our psychological problems—the difficulties we had in adjusting ourselves, and in getting the working fleet, and other participants in these epoch-making experiments, to believe that radioactive dangers were real.

Early in the test, the fleet's attitude was that nothing unusual occurred as a consequence of the bomb's explosion. This attitude continued even after Able Day, because of the rapid disappearance of the radioactive effects in the air test. After Baker Day the same reaction occurred at first. But when the most vigorous efforts to decontaminate the ships failed—as described so vividly by Dr. Bradley—there was a tendency for the Navy personnel to go overboard in the opposite direction. If anything, Bradley tones down the psychological oscillation in RADSAF and in the fleet, before, during, and after these tests.

After Baker Day the contamination of the fleet by the radioactive rain from the well-known mushroom-head cloud caused fantastic effects on practically all the target vessels. For some time, the importance of these effects was overlooked. But when the contamination of the "Live" Fleet started to occur, and we began to realize that even the vessels that had not been in the radioactive rain were becoming potential radioactive hazards, the full magnitude of this danger revealed itself to us. These problems which were so new and unforeseen brought on a whole new set of psychological effects. Bradley records several instances of



these, and the methods used to protect the working fleet against them.

I was one of a small group (four in all) responsible for the safety of the drinking water on the Live Fleet. We had great trouble in getting people to believe that clean, tasteless water may still be extremely poisonous—and that no known chemical treatment would make it any less so. Fortunately for us, the evaporators used by the Navy to manufacture drinking water happened to be effective in eliminating radioactive contamination.

Dr. Bradley's experiences were somewhat different from mine, in that he was an air monitor, while I served with the Lagoon Patrol in the comparatively plebeian duty of inspecting the target fleet. He had the very exciting job of flying over the target fleet, directly after the bomb burst, in the first inhabited aircraft—to determine the hazards for us on the surface. When safety was reasonably assured, we were to enter the target area.

Dr. Bradley's book is well written and should be informative to anyone even remotely interested in the subject. The book contains an appendix entitled "A Layman's Guide to the Dangers of Radioactivity," describing the physiological effects of radiation. I recommend that this portion of the book—at least—be familiar to everyone living in our day and age.

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