

CLEARANCE REQUEST FOR PUBLIC RELEASE OF DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE INFORMATION

(See Instructions on back.)

(This form is to be used in requesting review and clearance of DoD information proposed for public release in accordance with DoDD 5230.09.)

TO: (See Note) Chief, Defense Office of Prepublication and Security Review, 1155 Defense Pentagon, Washington, DC 20301-1155

Note: Regular mail address shown above. For drop-off/next day delivery, use:
Room 2A534, 1155 Defense Pentagon, Washington, DC 20301-1155

1. DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION

a. TYPE Oral History	b. TITLE PELLY, Claude - 06141963
c. PAGE COUNT 4	d. SUBJECT AREA British Nuclear Program

2. AUTHOR/SPEAKER

a. NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial) Pelly, Claude	b. RANK	c. TITLE
d. OFFICE	e. AGENCY	

3. PRESENTATION/PUBLICATION DATA (Date, Place, Event)

June 14, 1963, Oral History Interview

REVIEWED BY DOD

13

DEFENSE OFFICE OF PREPUBLICATION AND OFFICE OF SECURITY REVIEW

NO CLASSIFIED INFORMATION FOUND

Jun 21, 2017

4. POINT OF CONTACT

a. NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial) Carpenter, Ryan	b. TELEPHONE NO. (Include Area Code) 703-697-3306
--	--

5. PRIOR COORDINATION

a. NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial)	b. OFFICE/AGENCY	c. TELEPHONE NO. (Include Area Code)

6. REMARKS

7. RECOMMENDATION OF SUBMITTING OFFICE/AGENCY

a. THE ATTACHED MATERIAL HAS DEPARTMENT/OFFICE/AGENCY APPROVAL FOR PUBLIC RELEASE (qualifications, if any, are indicated in Remarks section) AND CLEARANCE FOR OPEN PUBLICATION IS RECOMMENDED UNDER PROVISIONS OF DODD 5230.09. I AM A GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE (civilian or military), AND NOT A CONTRACTOR, AUTHORIZED TO MAKE THIS RECOMMENDATION FOR RELEASE ON BEHALF OF:

Dr. Erin Mahan, OSD Chief Historian

b. CLEARANCE IS REQUESTED BY 20170601 (YYYYMMDD).

c. NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial) Carpenter, Ryan	d. TITLE Historian
e. OFFICE OSD Historical	f. AGENCY WHS

g. SIGNATURE CARPENTER.RYAN.PAUL.139779370 9	h. DATE SIGNED (YYYYMMDD) 20170511
--	---------------------------------------

Digitally signed by CARPENTER.RYAN.PAUL.1397793709
DN: c=US, o=U.S. Government, ou=DoD, ou=PKI, ou=WHS,
cn=CARPENTER.RYAN.PAUL.1397793709
Date: 2017.05.11 09:32:59 -04'00'

Interview with NO CLASSIFIED INFORMATION FOUND

Air Chief Marshal Sir Claude Pelly Jun 21, 2017

by Alfred Goldberg

June 14, 1963

Q. When did the RAF start thinking in terms of a nuclear deterrent force?

A. It is quite difficult to answer. The RAF started thinking about nuclear weapons as soon as the first bomb was dropped on Japan. Here was a new weapon that had to be taken account of. At the time, of course, there hadn't evolved any such thing as the deterrent theory. The first really official explanation of the deterrent theory came in the White Paper of 1955. It put it clearly at the central strategy of the country.

Q. When did the RAF start applying pressure for the development and production of nuclear weapons?

A. I don't think that it ever did apply anything in the sense of public pressure. The whole thing was handled at the highest Cabinet level and was, of course, highly classified. Talking about the early years, the RAF attitude was really what can we get in the way of weapons, what is available? How far the studies that were made were actually translated into numbers of weapons, I don't know.

Q. What were the first aircraft designed with nuclear weapons in mind?

A. Not long after the war the Air Ministry stated requirements for V-bombers. The requirement was implemented by four different designs. There were two intermediate ones -- the Short and the Valiant first. These planes were designed to carry the type of bomb we expected to get. There was no provision for the Canberra

to carry atomic weapons. Later on, it was modified to be able to carry nuclear weapons.

Q. Did the Army and Navy seek to find a nuclear role for themselves in the years 1945-52?

A. I think not in the deterrent sense. They were both looking around for guided weapons and antiaircraft weapons. For example the Army wanted ground to ground weapons that could take a nuclear warhead. The Army and Navy were not pushing into the deterrent field; they were drafting requirements for tactical nuclear weapons. The Army went for the Blue Water missile which was later cancelled by the Government.

Q. Did the other services balk at the size and cost of the V-bomber force?

A. I think that there was the usual kind of competition for defence money. I don't think that the other services opposed the V-bomber force. They simply said that too much money was going into it and that we needed other things too. By that time the country was pretty firm on making the deterrent forces the pillar of our strategy. I think that the other services argued their own cases for the resources they wanted. The duty of the Defence Committee, of course, was to arrive at the best allocation of resources among the services.

Q. Was there a large gap between the development of the first atomic device and its testing at Monte Bello?

A. No, I don't think so. The first Monte Bello test was made as soon as the first device was ready. There was no gap.

- Q. What role did the RAF have in the decision to develop the bomb?
- A. The Chiefs of Staff must have been consulted on the decision, and this would have included the Chief of the Air Staff. I don't know what role he played, but I can't conceive that the Chiefs of Staff were not consulted by the Cabinet. They were invited to attend many of the Defence Committee meetings. I suppose that the RAF influenced the design in the sense that the bomb was a weapon that had to be carried by aircraft and they wanted it to meet practical operational requirements.
- Q. Did the explosion of an atomic device by the Russians in 1949 affect RAF strategic and technical thinking?
- A. I suppose it had an effect in the sense that it made the whole business a good deal more urgent than it was before. I think that it brought undoubtedly a greater sense of urgency to anybody who had anything to do with the thing. The Cabinet must have taken a sharper look at the situation.
- Q. Were major decisions on bomb-carrying vehicles --aircraft, rockets, etc.-- delayed pending the development of the bomb?
- A. I don't think that any major decisions were delayed. Quite a few modifications were introduced into aircraft and that caused delay. Major decisions were not delayed. It was basically a matter of catching up with the various design changes that caused delay.
- Q. Was there any assistance from the United States in the development of the bomb?
- A. No, I don't think so.

Q. Did the American offer of test facilities in 1952 contain security restrictions that were unacceptable to the British Government?

A. I really don't know what happened at the time. I would guess it was probably because of restrictions of some kind or other.

Q. Was there any opposition within the RAF to the proportion of resources allocated to Bomber Command?

A. Not in the direct sense. The other commands were pushing their own cases pretty hard. Coastal Command was in bad shape -- the Cinderella of the commands. Fighter wanted its needs met and the oversea commands came in with their requirements. I don't think that within the RAF anyone was saying that Bomber Command had too big a share of the resources. The others just didn't use the argument that Bomber Command had too much.