



The **ATOMIC VETERAN**

Volume 23 Issue 3 – September 2002

quarterly newsletter of

the **National Association of Atomic Veterans**

2002 Annual Convention

New Directors and Officers

The 2002 National Association of Atomic Veterans (NAAV) convention, held in Branson, Missouri in conjunction with the July 16 National Day of Atomic Remembrance (57th Anniversary of the First Nuclear Explosion in New Mexico) resulted in a new Board of Directors and Officers.

Those elected to the Board of Directors were incumbents William P. Harper, Bernard Clark, R.J. Ritter, Claude Burpee, Sr., and Terry T. Brady. Also elected were William E. (Ed) Griffis and Carlos Contreras. Contreras, citing personal reasons, resigned from the Board of Directors soon thereafter.

The new Board of Directors elected William P. (Bill) Harper, of Arizona, as the new NAAV National Commander succeeding Richard U. Conant. Terry T. Brady, of Alaska, was named new Vice-Commander, Ed Griffis, of Tennessee, is the new secretary and R.J. Ritter, of Texas, the new treasurer.

Those wishing to contact any of the directors, officers, or State or Area Commanders, or special assistants, will find names, addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses (when available) posted on the NAAV web page www.naav.com

Amended NAAV Constitution and By-Laws

The NAAV delegates assembled for the Branson convention agreed to several changes to the organization's Constitution and By-Laws.

These are the documents that regulate the business of the corporation.

The amended documents are available for downloading from the NAAV web page www.naav.com, or can be received in hard copy from the national office by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope with a request.

Speakers Educated Delegates

Three speakers addressed the NAAV Convention. Two spoke on radiological health issues and the third discussed the "Feres Doctrine" a U.S. Supreme Court decision that precludes most negligence lawsuits by service or ex-service personnel.

Lisa Ledwidge, outreach coordinator for the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research (www.ieer.org) and Pamela Meidel, of Abolition 2000 and Atomic Mirror, presented a panel discussion on the physical (biological) and psychological results of being

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The Atomic Veteran is the official publication of the **National Association of Atomic Veterans (NAAV)**, a non-profit corporation, made up of United States military veterans involved with atomic and thermonuclear testing and deployment, their families and friends. It is published four times per year as a newsletter. It is downloadable from the NAAV web site (www.naav.com) or available in mailed hard copy upon request. The current address for NAAV is P.O. Box 11517, Chandler, AZ 85248, Attention: Bill Harper, national commander. NAAV is chartered as a non-profit corporation in the State of Iowa. The U.S. Internal Revenue Service recognizes NAAV as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt corporation. All financial donations to NAAV are deductible by the donor for income tax purposes. Orville and Wanda Kelly were the co-founders of NAAV

exposed to atomic weapons and nuclear radiation. Atomic Mirror's web address is (www.earthways.org/atomicmirror).

Both indicated that radiation sickness is not completely understood, especially the results of continued low doses. Physicians and scientists have studied, and some have determined, that many ill effects, far beyond the presumptive cancers declared by the U.S. government, can be caused by ionizing radiation.

Following questions from and answers to the audience, both organizations declared their intentions of cooperating with NAAV in seeking justice for Atomic Veterans and their families.

Jeff Trueman of the Veterans Equal Rights Protection Association (VERPA) explained the origin, and some of the effects, of the "Feres Doctrine" issued by the U.S. Supreme Court following World War II. The Supreme Court ruling makes it extremely difficult for a veteran or a veteran's survivors to hold the government or individuals responsible for negligence that results in damage.

VERPA (www.verpa.net/) is sponsoring a nationwide petition and other actions, to overturn the "Feres Doctrine." Trueman explained it is not VERPA's desire to upset good military order and discipline, or reexamine events occurring in combat situations.

Rather, he stated, "It is VERPA's goal to give veterans and their survivors equal standing before the courts in matters of negligence."

NAAV has not taken an official position on this matter.

NAAV Opposes Dose Reconstruction

Delegates to the annual NAAV Convention unanimously voted to send a Resolution to the President of the United States and Congress opposing the Dose Reconstruction (DR) program that forces Atomic Veterans to prove the radiation doses received in order to perfect a claim against the government.

The Resolution supports the efforts by Rep. Patsy Mink of Hawaii to do away with DR. Rep. Mink's bill, HR 134 was not considered during the current session of Congress, and will have to be reintroduced in the next Congress.

NAAV and obviously Rep. Mink contend that DR is not a scientific or fair method of measuring individual radiation doses. In the first place, most personnel exposed to radiation were not provided individual dosimeters or film badges to record the radiation they were externally receiving. Also, such badges would not indicate the internal radiation resulting from breathing dust or contaminated dirt, or swallowing contaminated water,

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common occurrences for those exposed to nuclear fallout. Also, it has been shown that radiation measuring devices were never standardized, thus a reading from one area, or during a different time frame, would be different.

WE ARE NOT ALONE. When viewing the NAAV web page www.naav.com click the "Other Sites" button to go to the many organizations supporting Atomic Veterans, or that provide information on Nuclear Development, Testing, Use, and Medical Claims.

Yet despite the obvious inconsistencies, compounded by fire losses at government archives, and mysterious reappearances of some dose records reported missing or burned, the government still puts the burden of proving exposure on the sick veteran, who has neither the experience nor means to determine how much exposure he or she received.

Readers can review the Resolution on the NAAV website (www.naav.com) or receive a hard copy from National Headquarters by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope and a request for a copy to NAAV headquarters.

Recognition for Trinity Veterans

Thomas A. Downlearn and Clyde E. Wynat, both participants in the July 16, 1945 Trinity Shot, the first atomic explosion, held in the New Mexico desert, were honored at the 2002 NAAV Convention.

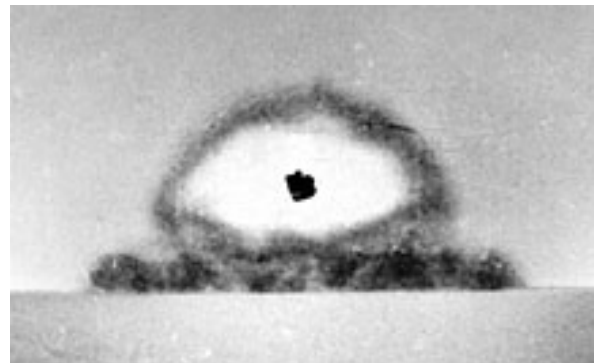
Both were military enlisted men (Downlearn was in the U.S. Marine Corps, and Wynat in the U.S. Army) assigned to the Manhattan Project that

developed the atomic bomb under utmost secrecy.

Both attended the convention held at Branson, Missouri, July 15 –17, and were unanimously named "NAAV Special Advisors for the Trinity Site" and later presented with a special NAAV Certificate.

Wynat circulated an original letter, signed by Manhattan Project Director Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer, commending him for his performance with the Chemistry and Metallurgy Division.

Downlearn discussed his impressions as the first bomb went off just before dawn, and his duties soon thereafter on the security detail preparing the first tactical weapons for shipment from California to Tinian Island aboard the later ill-fated U.S. Navy cruiser U.S.S Indianapolis.



AP/World Wide Photo of the First Atomic Bomb Explosion, Trinity Site, New Mexico, July 16, 1945

Have you Recorded Your Atomic Story?

The Internet Web Site for the Atomic Veterans History Project located at www.aracnet.com/~pdxavets is seeking first hand accounts from atomic veterans or their survivors. Individual stories, organized by event, are published as a matter of historical significance. Go to the Atomic Veterans History Project site and record your story, or that of a family member.

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Editor's Note: Preparing, printing and mailing hard copies of the NAAV Newsletter are expensive and time consuming. This is becoming a greater burden as postage fees increase. In order to make your NAAV more effective the Board of Directors is encouraging more members and friends to communicate electronically. This includes receiving and responding to the newsletter. Each newsletter will be posted on the NAAV website (www.naav.com), making it available for reading and downloading. For those unable, or unwilling to access the Internet site, we ask that they contact NAAV headquarters, indicating they still wish to continue receiving the newsletter by mail. Beginning with the first newsletter of 2003, those currently subscribing as NAAV members who do not indicate in writing that they wish to continue receiving the newsletter by mail will be dropped from the mailing list, and it will be assumed they are getting their newsletter from the Internet. Readers who do not have a personal computer generally have a family member who does. Also, most local libraries are willing to access web sites for customers.

Message from New National Commander Bill Harper

My name is William Harper and this year at our National Convention I had the honor to be elected your new National Commander. I am a 6-year Navy veteran, 1945-1951, wounded in Korea, and participated in operation Crossroads in 1946 in the Marshall Islands aboard the USS Shangri La CV 38. Prior to being elected Commander I served 6 years on the board and 3 years as Membership Director. I am a Life Member.

The new National Headquarters will be located in Arizona.

Last year our National Commander Dick Conant along with Dale Howard were overloaded with both regular and email with requests for information and about problems the member was having. Most of these answers could have been answered by your local service officer or at your V.A. Hospital, or your state or regional commander. This is their job. I am not a Service Officer. All mail received at the Post Office and by email will be answered but please keep it brief and to the point.

Remember, when filing a claim for "Radiation Exposure Presumptive

Cancer" claims should specify 3.309 for presumptive, 3.311 for other radiogenics or other conditions. If you are 70 or older, request your claim be put on a Fast Track. If any of our board members can help in anyway, please contact them. We are here to help. Director Ed Griffis (e-mail atomicvet38305@charter.net) has agreed to interface with those seeking information.

Message from Retiring National Commander Richard U. Conant

I wish to express my appreciation to the members of the past Board of Directors who were always available to respond & assist. We had hurdles & hoops to jump, we managed to do so, and NAAV is in better shape because of these efforts.

Special recognition is in order for the efforts of Glen Dale Howard and wife, Charlotte and my wife, Phyllis. They gave me the opportunity, and assistance at times, to spend the full time effort it took to accomplish activities as National Commander. All spent many, many hours on the Membership Database & Bookkeeping - No one but GOD actually knows how many.

Recognition of the efforts of Bernie Clark as Treasurer and R.J. Ritter with the "Store." Bill Harper gained NAAV many new members, and some old

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came back. Special recognition goes to Claude Burpee in his Donation of the "Tall Ship Model" for the convention raffle and diligent sales effort. Terry Brady created much activity on Special Projects, particularly in getting speakers for the national convention held in Branson, Missouri July 15-17.

I also want to thank Robert Campbell, of Maine, a dedicated Atomic Veteran, for his efforts in getting the U.S. Senate and President G.W. Bush to recognize July 16 as a National Day of Atomic Remembrance.

It is important that NAAV lead the effort to keep this day to remember the sacrifices of Atomic Veterans and their families in the defense of the United States.

Also, the day is dedicated to remembering the horrors that can come

from nuclear war, and offer prayers that these weapons will never again be used in anger.

A unified effort by all gave advanced results. These efforts have succeeded in claims being awarded to many as well as getting many into the VA treatment program.

I have confidence in the Current Board & the Officers they elected.

Finally, thanks to ALL who assisted, made suggestions and other efforts for the "Cause." Good Luck to ALL. I am not totally leaving as I am taking over the Custodianship of the Medical History Data Base plus a couple other projects, on my own, concerning veterans & survivor activities.

This issue of the NAAV newsletter, with a new masthead, has been shortened to 8 pages, in order to get out information concerning the July 2002 national convention. Future issues will return to 12 pages.

NAAV Now in Branson Veterans Memorial Museum

The Branson, Missouri Veterans Memorial now has a display of materials donated by the National Association of Atomic Veterans. A photograph of an atomic explosion at Bikini in 1946, signed by many delegates to the 2002 NAAV Convention, NAAV logos and other materials will be permanently shown at the museum.

Ray Cracraft, an Atomic Veteran and member of NAAV, and Vice-Chairman of the Branson Veterans Task Force was helpful in organizing the permanent display.

The NAAV Gives Thanks to the Following Recent Financial Donors

Bill Ringold – VA
Richard Briggs – WA
LTC (ret.) Charles Lewis – AL
Michael Ferrell – MS
Franklin Starkey – WY
Boley H. Caldwell III – TX
Beverly A. Gray – CO
Anthony DeBenedictis – CA
Thomas Murrill – MA
Warren Scott – CA
Leo Birkholz – MI
Robert Berninger – NJ

Note: The death, from cancer, of donor Boley H. Caldwell III, former NAAV National Commander, Operation Crossroads and Medal Data

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Coordinator, and former keeper of the NAAV Medical Database, was reported to national headquarters at press time.

TAPS

The following NAAV Members have been reported to have recently died. May they Rest in Peace, with Thanks from a Grateful Nation.

Boley Caldwell III – TX
Robert E. Altmeyer – LA
Fred W. Gast – FL
Harold Robert Harvey – CA
Clifford G. Helmes – NC
Allen L. Hofreiter – CA
Elmer Jones – IN

NAAV Medical Data Base

The NAAV Medical Data Base, the “scorecard” for medical histories of individual atomic veterans and their progeny, will now be maintained by:

Richard Conant
2424 Venetian Way SW
Albuquerque, NM 87105
Phone 1-505-855-3703
Fax 1-505-877-2119
e-mail rucon1@juno.com

Conant, the retiring NAAV National Commander, is assuming the duty from Robert Campbell (of Maine) who in turn took over from Boley Caldwell III (of Texas). The database is a confidential history of the physical condition of atomic veterans, used to record illnesses faced by veterans and possible genetic damage passed on to offspring.

All atomic veterans are urged to complete and submit information directly to Conant. The Questionnaire can be downloaded from www.naav.com.

Radiation Data Questioned

Robert Campbell, of Maine, a long time NAAV member and president of the Atomic Veterans Radiation Research Institute, Inc. has, based on more than 24 years of study, seriously questioned the integrity of the Nuclear Test Personnel Review (NTPR) program.

In a June 30, 2002 letter to Robert L. Brittigan, Sr., Esq. SES, General Counsel to the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA), Campbell, outlined several areas where responsible government officials have withheld radiation data from veterans and other interested parties.

The address for the Atomic Veteran Radiation Research Institute, Inc. is P.O. Box 444, Yarmouth, Maine, 04096.

“Tall Ship” Raffle Winner



Nan Clark (left) won the raffle for the “Tall Ship” model built and donated to NAAV by Claude Burpee shown at the right. Bernie Clark (center) says the family can now sail around Eastern Oklahoma. Burpee is recognized as a master model ship builder.

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NAAV MEMBERSHIP ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The National Association of Atomic Veterans recognizes that civilians as well as military personnel were exposed to harmful nuclear material radiation. Accordingly, NAAV has opened membership to all civilians involved in nuclear programs, as well as their families. We welcome those who wish to support our organization so as to strengthen our ability to speak with one voice for those who are or were only one voice in the political wilderness of our great country.

National Association of Atomic Veterans

Membership Application

1. Name _____ Spouse _____ Date _____
2. Address _____ Zip _____
3. Telephone number () _____ Date of Birth _____
4. Branch of service _____ Dates _____ Service# _____ SSN _____
5. Ship, Marine Army divisions units, Air Force squadrons, etc . _____
6. Place and conditions under which you were exposed to radiation _____
7. Illnesses that may have been caused by your exposure to radiation _____
8. Illnesses and birth defects of children and grandchildren, if any _____
9. Claims filed with VA?__ When? _____ If denied, explain why and send copy of VA's denial letter _____
10. Reasons for filing claims _____
11. If atomic veteran related to you is deceased; please send copy of death certificate with Date of death _____ Cause of Death _____
Illnesses that preceded death _____
12. Name, address and telephone number of person who filled out this form if different from above: _____
13. I give NAAV permission to publish any of the above information
Signature _____ Date _____
14. NAAV may also publish my name, address and telephone number

Signature _____ Date _____

Annual Dues \$20.00 - Life Memberships \$200.00, payable in quarterly installments of \$25.00 or more. Do not send cash. Make check or money order payable to NAAV and send to:

National Association of Atomic Veterans
P.O. Box 11517
Chandler, AZ 85248

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I wish to continue receiving the Atomic Veteran newsletter by U.S. Mail at the following address	Place Stamp Here
_____	The U.S. Post Office will not deliver unstamped mail

Clip this Notice and Mail to:

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Chandler, AZ 85248

Please Remember!!

Beginning with the first newsletter of 2003, those currently subscribing as NAAV members, who do not indicate in writing that they wish to continue receiving the newsletter by mail, will be dropped from the mailing list, and it will be assumed they are getting their newsletter from the Internet at www.naav.com

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PATRONIZE THE NAAV ON-LINE STORE www.naav.com Click the "On-Line Store" button for a catalogue of items for sale. Or write R.J. Ritter, manager, NAAV Quartermaster Store, 11214 Sageland, Houston, TX 77089. Profit from items sold through the store helps support the National Association of Atomic Veterans.

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