

National Association of Atomic Veterans



Atomic Veterans News



VOLUME 24 — ISSUE 1 — W. HARPER, ED. — QUARTERLY NEWS

SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ANTHONY PRINCIPI TO ADDRESS ANNUAL CONVENTION

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs
Washington
January 23, 2003
Mr. William A. Harper
National Commander
National Association of Atomic Veterans
9308 Navajo Place
Sun Lakes, AZ 95248
Dear Commander Harper:

Thank you for your kind invitation to address the members of the National Association of Atomic Veterans during your Convention being held July 14-16, 2003, in Houston, Texas.

I am pleased to accept and will plan to address your conference at 1:00 pm on July 15, 2003. Ms. Janis Tullis, of my staff, will be in touch to coordinate my participation. I look forward to visiting with you at that time. Enclosed as requested are the photograph and biography.

With warmest personal regards, I remain,
Sincerely

Anthony J. Principi



Anthony Principi was selected to be Secretary of Veterans Affairs by President-elect George W. Bush December 29, 2000.

As Secretary, Mr. Principi directs the federal government's second largest department, responsible for a nationwide system of health care services, benefits programs and national cemeteries for

Continued on Page 3

National Convention set for July 14, 15, 16, 2003 in Houston, Texas.

Your invited convention speakers are:

From Washington, Sec. Veterans Affairs Anthony Principi will speak on Veterans and Atomic Veterans issues. Q&A

Past National Commander Dick Conant will speak on the Medical History File and Genetically Impaired Offspring Project.

Patricia Broudy, 20-year member and expert on legislation will speak on legislative and other issues.

Tom Segel, Past National President of the Combat Correspondents Association, wounded Marine Corp. veteran with 2 tours in Vietnam will speak at dinner.

*****Make Reservations Early*** Convention Details Inside*****

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

NAAV Board Approves Funding for State Commanders

The NAAV Board of Directors recently approved funding to help State and Area Commanders with some expensive money to help cover the costs of staying in touch with its membership. The sum of \$5.00 per member will be available to help cover the cost of envelopes, stationery and stamps.

As many State Commanders, because of limited funds, are finding it difficult to stay in touch with their members, we feel this will help. For more information on how to apply for these funds contact Dir. Robert Campbell Jr. at hotdoc1@cox.net.

Help Wanted

Because of health and personnel problems, we have openings on the National Board of Directors at this time. If interested, we would like to fill this seat by convention time in July. You must have a computer as we communicate each week via the internet in making decisions between our conventions. If you are interested contact me at: NATL.HD.QTRS.

W. Harper

From the Commander:

As you read this newsletter we are starting to prepare for our annual convention this summer in Houston, Texas in July. We are honored to have as our main speaker, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony Principi from Washington, D.C. This convention could be one out best so **MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS EARLY**. I also want to thank all our members, relatives and friends of NAAV for their donations, which help cover the cost of your newsletter. **REMEMBER** get your cash drawing tickets back to headquarters **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**. You do not have to be present to win.

Our biggest concern today is lack of help on the State level. Many of our State Commanders, as we all get older, are slowing down and can no longer help as they have in the past. To those who have given so much for so long, we thank you for your loyal support.

If you have some time to help or know a member who can, please contact Director Robert Campbell Jr. at hotdoc1@cox.net

Wm. A. Harper
Natl. Commander*

† * IN REMEMBRANCE *** †**

Joseph Lines, Dallas, Or.
Jack Syner, Belen, NM.
Fred Little, Livemore, CA.
Samuel Bennett, Milford, PA
Robert Mays, Afton, OK
Donald MacCue, Carthage, NY
Leonardo Green, Sacramento, CA

DUES

If your membership has not been paid, please remit as your dues cover the cost of the newsletter to: P.O. Box 11517, Chandler, AZ 85248

“the Atomic Veteran seeks no special favor...simply justice...no amount of radiation is safe”

Americas veterans and dependents. With an annual budget of \$48 billion, VA employs some 219,000 people at hundreds of VA medical centers, clinics, benefits offices, and national cemeteries throughout the country.

A combat-decorated Vietnam veteran, Mr. Principi has worked on national policy issues and has held several executive-level positions in federal government throughout his career. He chaired the Federal Quality Institute in 1991 and was chairman of the Commission on Service members and Veterans Transition Assistance established by Congress in 1996.

Mr. Principi served as Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs, VA's second highest executive position, from March 17, 1989 to September 26, 1992, when he named Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs by President George Bush. He served in that position until January 1993.

From 1984 to 1988, he served as republican chief counsel and staff director of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs. He was Veterans Administration's assistant deputy administrator for congressional and public affairs from 1983 to 1984, following three years as counsel to the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Mr. Principi is a 1967 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and first saw active duty aboard the destroyer USS Joseph P. Kennedy. In Vietnam, he was assigned as Unit Commander of a River Patrol Force in the Mekong Delta and awarded a Bronze Star with Combat "V" for valor, the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry, the Navy Combat Action medal, and several campaign and Vietnamese decorations.

Mr. Principi earned his law degree from Seton Hall University in 1975 and was assigned to the Navy's Judge Advocate General Corps in San Diego, Calif., first as chief defense counsel, then as staff counsel to the commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet. In 1980, he was transferred to Washington as a legislative counsel for the Department of the Navy.

Vice Commander
&
Director of
State & Area Commanders
Robert "Doc" M. Campbell Jr. USN Ret

The NAAV Board realizes we have been derelict in not keeping a direct and continuous line of communication with all our State and Area Commanders. In the future we will try to rectify these deficiencies by appointing one Board Member as Director of State and Area Commanders.

As you know, there was a large turnover in the NAAV Board at the 2002 Convention and there was a great deal of work involved in the transition. This does not excuse our inefficiency in communicating with the most important arm of the NAAV, our State & Area Commanders. You are our first point of contact and know the needs of the veterans in your area. Above all, you have the best chance to publicize the assistance available to the Atomic Veterans from the NAAV and generate new members. Without your work in each of the states, NAAV would be nonexistent.

I have sent out letters and e-mails to all listed on the current State & Area Commanders roster. If you have not received a letter ore-mail from me and intend to continue to serve your fellow Veterans, please do so and I will bring you up to date. And if you wish to become a State or Area Commander also contact me.

Thanks to all of you that have given of your time and energy to give assistance to your fellow man to help them receive their just rights.

Robert M. Campbell Jr.
8701 Mesa Rd. Sp#70
Santee, CA 92071-3629
Phone 619-596-2234
E-mail: hotdoc1@cox.net

Shaw Pittman Suite

The Shaw Pittman Class Action Suite filed in October 2002 on allegedly covering up medical records which veterans cannot receive medical and other benefits in progressing, We will keep you to date with any new information when we receive it.

“the Atomic Veteran seeks no special favor...simply justice...no amount of radiation is safe”

Tom Segel

Convention Dinner Speaker Combat War Correspondent

Thomas D. Segel is a twice wounded, former combat correspondent who saw enemy action during the Korean War and two tours of duty in Vietnam. He retired from the Marine Corps as a Master Gunnery Sergeant after 26 years of service. His next assign-



ment was a Director of Information and adjunct faculty member of the Marine Military Academy. He then completed a new career and recently retired from service with State of Texas, where he was Director, Division of Information, Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, Rio Grande State Center. He holds the Thomas Jefferson Award for Journalistic Excellence, The Marine Corps Combat Correspondents Association Distinguished Performance Award and six Armed Forces Writers Association Distinguished Achievement Awards. Segel has authored four books, including "Men in Space" which received the honor of being placed on both the National High School and National Junior High School Library Lists. HE currently writes for several on line publications, national magazines and newspapers. His writings are distributed nationally to more than 1,300 publications by the Paragon Foundation News Service. He holds an undergraduate degree from the University of Texas Pan American and earned his masters degree at Vanderbilt University. He is a past national president of the United States Marine Corps Combat Correspondents Association. Segel resides with his wife, Pattie, in Harlingen, Texas.

DONATIONS

A special thanks to H. R. P. for his generous contribution to help us in our fight for recognition and care of our members and their families. The board also wants to thank all for their donations that go toward the cost of printing your newsletter.

—
Raymond Kubacak, Keith Bernard, Merrill Booth, Greg Fuss, Wayne Malarchick, Darwin Weaver, Vincent Della Jacono, Ronald Milner, Robert Deblasi, Robert Oliver, Bob Phillips, Hans Kuhnle, Donald Davie, Perry Stanfield Jr., R. P. Scott, Lee Rennells, Solomon Queen, Herbert Gresser, Robert Jones, Bob Grimes, John Lawson, Norman Lebrun, Justin Mueller, William Duffy, C.E. Scott, Charles Holeman, John Reeder, Robert Ederle, William Vorwald, Mary Miller, Beverly Gray, Robert Reher, Louis Rizzo, Ralph Brandel, Gilbert Amdahl, Robert Belt, John Edwards, Margaret Rustad, E. R. Hejmanowski, Mary McRoberts, Robert Weibrecht, Charles Hellmann, Bill Ringgold, William Tomlinson, Joseph Tullier, George Lacouture, Barbara Haugen.



William A. Harper
National Commander
Nat. Assoc. of Atomic Veterans
Dear Mr. Harper,

Thank you for your kind words about Ramada Express and our commitment to honoring our veterans. My crew and I are dedicated to this program and are deeply touched by the encouragement and appreciation we receive from people like you.

I am delighted to hear that you've accepted our invitation to speak in our museum in May this year. Thank you

We're currently preparing for the new show, "The American Spirit" that will be brought to our museum late February. It's sure to be as good as the first! I look forward to meeting you then.

Sincerely

Susan G. Murphy
President/G.M.

"the Atomic Veteran seeks no special favor...simply justice...no amount of radiation is safe"

Treasurers Report

4-1-03

1. LIFE account CD #6346022882-19 is \$10,070.05
2. LIFE account CD #6346022874-10 is \$10,072.56
3. LIFE checking account #634003452865 is \$26,772.69
4. General operating account (Arizona) is \$7,237.62
5. Quartermaster Stores account is \$1,945.55

Note: The LIFE account received a generous donation of \$20,000 (from a nationally known celebrity who wishes to remain anonymous) in an effort to assist us in the costs of newsletter improvement. We could use assistance from others in these areas, if any of our members have contacts with potential donors who may wish to contribute to our maintenance fund.

R. J. Ritter
Treasurer

VA Reports Progress In Battling Claims Backlog

WASHINGTON - After years of battling a rising backlog of applications from veterans and survivors seeking financial benefits, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is reversing the trend.

Each month VA's compensation and pension decisions have exceeded the months intake of new claims requiring a decision about a disability's severity and connection with service. This steady decrease of claims in the pipeline since the beginning of this year reduced the backlog of ratings actions by 21 percent.

Under Secretary for Benefits Daniel L. Cooper said VA has been hiring more personnel, providing intensive training and setting production standards.

VA has completed reorganization of its benefits processing offices using specialized teams to focus on different stages of the claims decision-making process. VA expects the work flow to be more efficient.

The VA has added more than 1,500 new benefits staff over the last two years as part of the largest increase since the Vietnam War. As the new hires complete training and gain proficiency in the complex requirements of VA benefit laws they contribute to VA's record production levels, an average 66,400 claims per month over the last fiscal year.

VA also has made significant inroads in processing the claims of aged beneficiaries by shifting workload of some of the longest-pending claims to a specialty unit called the "Tiger Team" headquartered in Cleveland. The "Tiger Team" last fiscal year completed more than 15,000 claims, the majority of which were from veterans 70 and older or which

had been pending more than a year.

VA has seen the total number of claims drop from a peak of more than 600,000 to today's 463,000, which includes 343,000 claims awaiting decisions for compensation and pension. Another 97,000 cases of all types are pending on appeal.

Principi has set a goal to have no more than 250,000 disability rating claims of all types pending. This figure reflects a normal inventory that allows time to schedule medical exams and accumulate evidence. The goal recognizes that veterans are allowed up to 60 days to respond to requests for any needed information.

Atomic Medal Update

Over the past 9 months I have been working with Arizona Sen. John McCain to try and get an Atomic Veterans Medal. I have met twice with Sen. McCain. This week (March 15) I received a letter from Sen. McCain's office and a letter from the Dept. of Defense. Our request has been turned down. We were told any award should have been recommended at the time the test was held.

Also as the letter quotes "There is a substantial legal precedence in the area that concludes that the appropriate compensation of this type of activity should only result in personal compensation for exposure and not a military award in general".

My comment to this can not be printed. The fight for recognition in this area for our members is not over. Just another bump in the road that we have been traveling for over 50 years. When Sen. McCain returns to Arizona I will be meeting with him again.

"the Atomic Veteran seeks no special favor...simply justice...no amount of radiation is safe"

CONVENTION

Holiday Inn - Hobby Airport - 8611 Airport Blvd - Houston, TX. 77061 - 713-947-0000

Rate: **\$72.00 per night** (20 rooms on hold for Sunday night - 07-13-03 / 50 rooms on hold for 07-14-03 & 07-14-03 members planning to attend must make individual reservations (by phone) prior to June 15, 2003)

AGENDA

- Sunday July 13, 2003early arrival check-ins (fly-ins) who can get best fares for weekend flights.
Monday July 14, 2003check in, registration 15:00 to 18:00 - Lobby, Social Time
Tuesday July 15, 200308:00 to 09:30 - lobby registration / 08:00 to 09:30 Directors meeting
10:00 to 12:00 General meeting - break for lunch
13:30 to 15:30 General meeting - Guest speaker: Sec. Anthony Principi - break before dinner
18:30 dinner (theater style) Guest speaker to be Tom Segel
Wednesday July 16, 2003 .08:00 to 09:30 Workshop (hosted by Tom Segel) to promote NAAV via advertising.
09:30 to 10:00 Atomic Veterans Day of Remembrance meeting
Check out time to be no later than 12:00 noon

- Notes:
1. The meeting room will be set up for 100 attendees...at no fee charge (as per the following...)
 2. If we can provide 100 paid guest room nights we are not charged for the meeting room...(a paid guest room night is one room for one night...)
 3. If we can only provide 75 paid guest room nights, we will be charged a room rental fee of \$400.00/day.
 4. If we can only provide 50 paid guest room nights, we will be charged a room rental fee of \$800.00/day. It is important that we ask our membership to register at the Holiday Inn as their first choice.
 5. The meeting room will have a head table (for 10 people) and a podium & microphone. The fee for the podium & microphone will be \$25.00/day.
 6. The dinner menu will be served by the hotel (in the meeting room) at an estimated cost of \$25.00 per person...(the menu to be selected at the convention.)

Recommendations:

Urge all who plan to attend to pre-register for the dinner (at \$30.00 per person) and to reserve their room at the Holiday Inn as early as possible.

So as to keep up with the activities...I would ask that all pre-registrations be mailed to my attention...for set up in the Convention Data Base.

R. J. Ritter, Treasurer
11214 Sageland, Houston, TX 77089

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ATOMIC VETERANS
2003 Convention Cash Drawing**
1st Prize \$500.00 2nd Prize \$300.00 3rd Prize \$200.00
Tickets \$5.00 each 6 Tickets for \$25.00

Name _____ Info _____

Drawing will be held the evening of the banquet. You need not be present to win. Tickets MUST be received at Headquarters, P.O. Box 11517, Chandler, AZ 85248 no later than July 1. Write your date of birth or car license for drawing information. Mention drawing on check. (Drawing helps cover your convention expenses)

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ATOMIC VETERANS
2003 Convention Cash Drawing**
1st Prize \$500.00 2nd Prize \$300.00 3rd Prize \$200.00
Tickets \$5.00 each 6 Tickets for \$25.00

Name _____ Info _____

Drawing will be held the evening of the banquet. You need not be present to win. Tickets MUST be received at Headquarters, P.O. Box 11517, Chandler, AZ 85248 no later than July 1. Write your date of birth or car license for drawing information. Mention drawing on check. (Drawing helps cover your convention expenses)

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ATOMIC VETERANS
2003 Convention Cash Drawing**
1st Prize \$500.00 2nd Prize \$300.00 3rd Prize \$200.00
Tickets \$5.00 each 6 Tickets for \$25.00

Name _____ Info _____

Drawing will be held the evening of the banquet. You need not be present to win. Tickets MUST be received at Headquarters, P.O. Box 11517, Chandler, AZ 85248 no later than July 1. Write your date of birth or car license for drawing information. Mention drawing on check. (Drawing helps cover your convention expenses)

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ATOMIC VETERANS
2003 Convention Cash Drawing**
1st Prize \$500.00 2nd Prize \$300.00 3rd Prize \$200.00
Tickets \$5.00 each 6 Tickets for \$25.00

Name _____ Info _____

Drawing will be held the evening of the banquet. You need not be present to win. Tickets MUST be received at Headquarters, P.O. Box 11517, Chandler, AZ 85248 no later than July 1. Write your date of birth or car license for drawing information. Mention drawing on check. (Drawing helps cover your convention expenses)

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ATOMIC VETERANS
2003 Convention Cash Drawing**
1st Prize \$500.00 2nd Prize \$300.00 3rd Prize \$200.00
Tickets \$5.00 each 6 Tickets for \$25.00

Name _____ Info _____

Drawing will be held the evening of the banquet. You need not be present to win. Tickets MUST be received at Headquarters, P.O. Box 11517, Chandler, AZ 85248 no later than July 1. Write your date of birth or car license for drawing information. Mention drawing on check. (Drawing helps cover your convention expenses)

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ATOMIC VETERANS
2003 Convention Cash Drawing**
1st Prize \$500.00 2nd Prize \$300.00 3rd Prize \$200.00
Tickets \$5.00 each 6 Tickets for \$25.00

Name _____ Info _____

Drawing will be held the evening of the banquet. You need not be present to win. Tickets MUST be received at Headquarters, P.O. Box 11517, Chandler, AZ 85248 no later than July 1. Write your date of birth or car license for drawing information. Mention drawing on check. (Drawing helps cover your convention expenses)



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Wigwam

Dear Sir:

In 1955, I was 18 years old and aboard the USS Fort Marion. We were off the Marshall Islands, at the Enewetak Atolls. We were not told why we were there, but we soon found out...all 360 of us on the USS Fort Marion and the rest of the task force.

The whole task force of Group 7.3 was in a circle with our sterns facing the center with a radius of 5 miles from the blast center. There was approximately 30 ships but I am not sure. We found out that we were taking part in and underwater atomic test in which the detonation was to be only 600 feet. We were not asked if we wanted to be there but we were there, all 360 plus!

After the detonation of the atomic weapon, the ships were knocked about as we were and the water was churning up the skeletons of different fish and other things for about 7 miles past our ships. Over half of the fleet needed repairs including my own, USS Fort Marion.

I have not seen anything about "Operation Wigwam" in your bulletin or maybe I have just missed it. If you have written something about this operation, I would like to know how to get a copy of it. I would like to know the following:

Has there been anything confirmed or stated about any atmospheric free air radiation particles inhaled or ingested into the human body from these underwater blasts?

Is there a list of the men who took part in any of the underwater testing and in particular, Operation Wigwam? I would like to contact them or have them contact me.

The single question remains...Why is our Government, who promised to take care of us, is now denying us when we gave of ourselves without question?

I read with interest what you print and appreciate all that you are doing for us. Enclosed is my small check to help with some of your costs.

Sincerely

Merrill R. Booth, Jr.
540 Brookmeade
Gretna, LA 70056

Redwing

Gentlemen;

I am a member of NAAV and have been for several years. I have never written to the NAAV before and I'm not sure whether or not I have directed this query properly. I was an airborne radio operator and flew in B-50 and B-36 bombers while assigned to the 4928th Test Squadron of the 4925th Test Group (Atomic), based at Kirtland AFB, New Mexico. I spent several months on TDY at Indian Springs AFB, Nevada before, during and after OPERATION TEAPOT in 1955. I went to Eniwetok Atoll, Marshal Islands in July 1955 and flew out there in C-47 aircraft during the build-up prior to and during OPERATION REDWING and then was assigned to the High Altitude Test Directorate at Holloman AFB, New Mexico August 1956.

During the Tests at the Nevada Test Sites, we flew in the B-50 most of the tests (code name ROUND-UP). I operated a low frequency radio homing set that we had borrowed from an Air/Sea Rescue outfit. The goal was to find a maximum length of cable that could be used and have the antenna perform as a directional low frequency antenna transmitting a morse coded signal for the F-84 sampler aircraft of the 4926th Sampler Squadron to home on while traveling through the cloud and taking samples at altitudes and directions assigned by 2 or 3 scientists on board our plane. During a countdown we would fly a racetrack oval pattern timed so that we would be in a position that enabled us to view the shot from almost directly above. We had black lenses goggles that you could look directly at the sun very comfortably with but at detonation the unbelievably intense white light made it seem as if you had no protection at all. We would track the cloud for several hours after the blast taking samples along the way and on one such flight, we had an explosive decompression (sudden loss of cabin pressure) while flying through the cloud. When we landed at Indian Springs, we were directed to park on the run-up

"the Atomic Veteran seeks no special favor...simply justice...no amount of radiation is safe"

pad at the end of the runway and they came out in those science-fiction type clothes, hood & boots, taking us, one at a time, off the plane with a fork-lift which had a platform on the tines to step onto and used that to position us, again one at a time, so that we could step into the back of a pick-up truck, and be whisked away with emergency lights flashing as they took us to the personnel de-contamination center where we stripped, threw everything in a pass through with a shower in each one and plenty of TIDE soap to scrub with. In between rooms (and showers) we would be probed with a robotic arm moving a measurement probe along all body parts with very meticulous measurements in the hair areas, pubic, underarm and head. If you were too hot, you went back through the shower you had just came from. All instructions were through a speaker system.

During one of these de-contamination encounters, I was met at the exit by a couple of security police and escorted to a security office where I was grilled for several hours because, according to them, there was no picture badge, no 30 day film badge and no mission film badge among the all of the things that I had removed and thrown into the trash can at the entrance area. I was charged with several security violations and was to be court martialed until about a week had passed and someone who worked at the de-contamination center found all three missing items. What a relief that was!

I was based on Eniwetok before, during and after Operation Redwing. I flew on unpressurized C-47 aircraft during my year our there and spent a lot of time on Bikini.

I could go on about my experiences out there but I'll get down to my question. Has there ever been any research into possibly damaging a person's nervous system, causing one to be very shaky.

I hope that someone in our association can enlighten me on this matter and it would be great if there is something about it.

Cordially,
Ray Primm

Camp Desert Rock

Dear Commander,

I was impressed with your Quarterly Newsletter Volume 23.

My Experience was at Camp Desert Rock, Nevada - I believe in May 1953 - we were in trenches a little more than 1 mile from the point of device explosion. No badges - just had the geiger counter and broom to brush dust off when we assembled to board to return to camp. We walked forward from our trench all over the area to see the results of the blast - burning vehicles etc.

I was impressed with the comments in your article - "A war wound will heal but radiation sickness is forever - slowly destroys the body mechanisms etc." How true - I started having digestive trouble 2-3 years (age 24) after the A-Test - slowly got worse - heart disease at age 62 - prostrate trouble - earache - etc.

Now at age 70 I realize it could have been worse. I can identify with the comment page 4 from Robert Bates - "I wasn't asked if I wanted to be a human guinea pig. I wasn't told that I was part of an experiment until thirty years later." Of all the classes you attend in the Army - I don't recall anything about telling us about Atomic testing and what we were going to encounter.

R. H. Richardson
Moberly, Mo

About Time

This is a quote from a letter sent to one of our members by Barbara Watkins (medical center director) "Please accept my apology for any inconvenience you may have encountered regarding the Ionizing Radiation Registry (IRR) Exam Program. I regret that our compensation and pension exam staff was not as knowledgeable as should be regarding this program. When you applied on 12/3/02 we did not have an IRR exam clinic. We now have such a clinic and those who request this examination in the future will be scheduled. All C&P staff have been provided with additional training on this program utilizing VHA handbook 1301.1, ionizing radiation registry program procedures.

ED NOTE: There is no excuse for this.

"the Atomic Veteran seeks no special favor...simply justice...no amount of radiation is safe"

THE VICTIM RETURNS

Upshot – Knothole

This day, December 12, 2002, which was just about a month or maybe a bit longer shy of being 50 years to the day that I first passed through the gate into the Nevada Atomic Testing Site, as it was known then in January 1953, for participating in the test series “Upshot-Knothole”.

We had boarded the bus about 7:00am at the Betchel Nevada Building at North Las Vegas, Nevada and headed North on US 95 to the test site on the way we passed the Indian Springs Air Force Base. Indian Springs is also where the remote control pilots for the Predator type of planes are being trained at, but we were not lucky enough and did not see one being flown.

We proceeded toward the gated entrance, GATE 100, and to receive or temporary badges that we would wear while on the test site. Across from this area is where the old Camp Desert Rock was located, there is nothing left of Camp Desert Rock that I could see there anymore. The tour guide said some of the tents that were used for the troops at Camp Desert Rock were brought into the Camp Mercury area and placed there as exhibits, but we never seen any sign of those kind of wooden floor and side tents in the Camp Mercury area.

We stopped short of the main gate and entered the visitor’s badge issuing building, there we again had to show photo identification and sign for and receive the temporary badges that we were to wear while on the tour of the area.

We then were driven to the entrance gate where an armed guard boarded the bus and checked us again, then driven to the Mercury cafeteria, where we could have some coffee while the tour guide checked on last minute closings of the various selections of the area. It was interesting going to the cafeteria to see the names of the streets on the signs. A few that were seen were: Trinity, Buster, Jangle, Knothole, and Ranger.

By passing Frenchman’s Flat we proceeded to the Area 5 Low Level Radioactive Waste Management Site and a representative boarded

the bus and briefed us on the site and we then visited a waste pit that is being filled with low level radioactive waste.

The pit is dug to a prescribed depth, the containers stacked to a prescribed level size and weight of the containers this is four feet below the area floor of the desert, the pit is then covered to height of desert floor and covered then by an additional four feet so that it is covered by eight feet dirt.

Along the path we traveled we seen various things left over from the testing. One interesting place was the location of the old News Nob, a place where the various new media personnel were stationed to film and report on test, it has a sign now that designates it as a historical site. Some of the other things we seen on the trip were, old enclosures for pigs that were used in certain tests and containers that pigs were placed in, various boiler plate tubes, remains of rail road tracks that various rail road cars were on, various remains of shelters that were tested, a bank vault that was used, ground anchors for the cables that were on the towers that bombs were exploded on, remains of some of the concrete structures where testing instruments were located that were about 1,000 feet from the base of the towers, a couple of the houses that were used in some of the tests, and many other items.

I have never seen any of the 150 automobiles from my series Upshot-Knothole in the 1953 that had been donated by some of the auto makers, my unit would locate them in different locations and with doors and or windows open or closed.

We seen from a distance the above ground portion of a large underground building that is composed of many rooms. It is a Devise Assembly Facility with containment rooms where a Devise could be assembled and in the event of something going wrong the problem would be contained in the containment room. I remember that there was 1 fenced in area in Camp Mercury that only a few people were allowed inside, in it was a small building where the bombs were almost completely assembled in before being placed on the tower and finally assembly.

As we returned we were on a different road home than the one we left on earlier in the trip I

“the Atomic Veteran seeks no special favor...simply justice...no amount of radiation is safe”

was able to see several of the small Quonset type of buildings like I lived in during my time at the Test Site.

My unit the 3623rd Ordnance Maintenance Co. lived in these buildings and paid 50 cents per day for staying in them and \$1.00 per meal at the old cafeteria that we ate in, since we were living in Camp Mercury and separated from the Military housing and mess hall of Camp Desert Rock we received a per diem pay to cover expense.

Gone was the latrine-shower buildings that were located among these buildings, and I did not see any sign of the motor pool area that I worked at. The garage building where we worked on vehicles, the wash rack where vehicles were washed, and the battery shack away from the main building. It was the battery shack while I was testing a battery that the accident happened when the rubber bulb on the glass tube on the tester popped off and sprayed battery acid in both eyes.

So all in all it was quite a trip, I seen a lot of things that I remembered, and I was delighted that my wife was able to see these things and the place where I had lived for almost six months. But I was disappointed in not seeing the old motor pool area and buildings, through 50 years have passed and they were not very well built buildings in the first place.

Kenneth Kendall
Portage, IN

Looking for Info

I would like very much if you would post a message for persons involved in the Nuclear test at Delta Junction, Gristle River Valley, Alaska. I believe it was 14 August 1964. It was called Project Chariot, Operation Plowshares. I know they told us at the time seven (7) soldiers were killed. They flew a group of us from Elmendorf AFB to Eilson AFB, then took us to the site. Everyone of the observers were injured in various degrees.

My home address in: Anthony Marceca, 2219 Dixie Drive, York, PA 17402.

Email: anthonymarceca@earthlink.net

Castle

Sir,

My deceased husband, Irwin S. Salovin, participated in the atomic bomb and hydrogen bomb development series called: Operation Castle. He witnessed the largest megaton detonation ever recorded: Bravo, in March, 1954. I conceived our first born son only six months after that horrific blast, and he has been suffering from Multiple Sclerosis since age 31 years. His sister, our second born is also afflicted by Multiple Sclerosis.

My husband and I tried to put in claims for his own illnesses and bodily complications, in addition to asking for disability compensation for our two children. To no avail.

My husband died 07-01-2001, at age 69 years, but I still maintain my children's illness is as a result of his damaged genes being passed on to them.

At this point, I personally have lost respect for our government which is so willing to send our soldiers into every part of this world and damn the consequences.

Helen Salovin
Woodridge, NY

Greenhouse

Dear Sir,

Would it be possible for you to send me some names and addresses of men who were in the boat crew on the USS Cabrildo LSD-16 who were in the atomic bomb test Greenhouse in 1951. I filed for VA compensation over three years ago and was turned down. They said I had the wrong kind of cancer in 1988.

I would like to ask the men about their health problems and see if they can give me some information about refiling a new claim. I wrote to my congresswoman 4 months ago - but no answer.

Thank you

Jerry C. Ford
19315 Weiser Ave.
Carson, CA 90746-2643

“the Atomic Veteran seeks no special favor...simply justice...no amount of radiation is safe”

Dominic

Dear Commander Harper,

I have received the Atomic Veterans News Vol. 23 Issue 4. The Letter to the Editor by Ike Smedley, I can relate to, except I have received nothing from the V.A. I have filed twice, and was turned down both times. All I've asked for is to be service connected. Here is my letter letting the world know what I remember during operation Dominic I. I know that I'm not to talk about it, but the U.S. has broken their word first by not taking care of us like we were promised. So now I'm a whistle blower.

Also in that newsletter on page 3 Ms Ayers said she drank water from wells there in Japan. All of us on the USS Reclaimer ARS-42 drank water that was made from the sea almost at ground zero.

Lloyd Morris
Port Isabel, TX

Castle

Hi Bill,

My name is Bob Ederle atomic Veteran (USS Bairoko CVE115 Operation Castle). I had talked to you at Branson and I got an E-mail from Bill Fish (Nuked April 18 1953) He asked about an Atomic Vets Medal. He also sent me your E-mail back to him where you told him about your visit with Sen. John McCain. If I remember right, as you stated, some years ago this was brought up and at that time, I think there was some talk to try and get an approval for Joint Services Achievement Medal to be presented to Atomic Veterans. Maybe at this point we (NAAV) can ask for this medal to be approved for Atomic Veterans.

Thanks for your work as Commander, as well as all the new and old officers.

Good Luck,
Bob Ederle

Crossroads

Dear Sirs:

I am now the widow of a veteran who was exposed to radiation while aboard the "Niagara" in July 1946 at Bikini Atol. He fought to live most of his adult life and finally lost the battle in July 2000.

Bob had major surgery in late 1980's. His health gradually deteriorated. In mid 1990's an inoperable tumor was discovered in the back of his head. He began to have strokes. He went from cane to walker to wheel-chair and then had the big one July 1997 that left him completely helpless. We kept him at home 3 years before the final stroke. Doctors at VA Muskogee Hospital took xrays and said cancer had spread to all his vital organs and he could have had it 5 years or more.

Robert D. Mays passed away at Muskogee VA Hospital. His death certificate stated "Colon Cancer." VA determined that his illness was service connected, and he was a 100% total and permanently disabled Veteran.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Robert D. Mays

Sandstone

Dear Commander Harper:

My husband, Laurence J. Miller was in the Navy in "Operation Sandstone" - 1948. He passed away Nov. 3, 2001 with "Lung Cancer".

My daughter, Brenda Lucas and I would like to thank you over and over for the help provided by the NAAV, in applying for surviving spouse benefits. Dick Conant in particular, was a great help. My claim was approved and I'm now drawing monthly benefits.

Please accept the donation as a small token of our appreciation.

Keep up the good work.

Again thank you sincerely,

May the Lord bless all of you.

Mary Grace Miller
Brenda Joyce Miller

"the Atomic Veteran seeks no special favor...simply justice...no amount of radiation is safe"

Dear Sir:

So many of you work hard for us, that I feel I should at least give support the best way I can. Life membership is my way of saying thanks to you all.

My Thanks

Ed Monaham
Bath, NY

Dear Bill:

I wish to continue receiving the Atomic Veterans Newsletter by U.S. Mail. I have also enclosed a check for \$20.00 to assist NAAV with its operational costs.

As a NAAV Life Member I want to express my personal thanks for all you and the Board of Directors do for us.

Best wishes,

Bob DeBlasi
Rockaway, NJ

Bill,

Please use donation for the newsletter and anything else. Looking much more professional.

Vincent M. Della Jacono

Crossroads

Dear Sir:

I was in Operation Crossroads, Marshall Island, 1946 and when aboard those target ships. Had a lot of stuff I was going to send home and the captain said if you want to live put it all in the ocean so we did.

We had a lady doctor that was in the same test. She said I am lucky I don't light up at night.

I lost my wife, 2 little girls and have a daughter that is retarded and had to put her in a home. I can't say this was all caused by the atomic test. I don't know.

They gave us a beer party on Bikini. I thought it was because we had so much sea duty.

The one lady said that Kawajalin is still full of radiation. I am lucky I am still alive.

I was on a weather ship. I wonder how many of those guys are alive today? I never see our ship in any of the Vet's magazines. I sure would like to know.

Wayne Malarchick
Glendive, MT

Sandstone

Dear Bill,

Thank you for your dedication and hard work for the cause of NAAV. Keep up the good work.

Charles Savage
Capt. USMC Retired

Sir,

Enjoyed your last newsletter. Very informative and very professional looking. One of the best in a long time. Please accept my small donation.

Bill Johnson
Marion, MA

Dear Bill,

Great article re Shaw Pittman, LLP and their work on our behalf. Their Sean Barnett, esq. has won an appeal in my case and informed me of this just by receiving the latest NAAV newsletter. Good news and I clipped and mailed a copy to him in D.C. in case he didn't see it.

Enclosed \$50.00 donation to help cover the cost of newsletter.

Regards,

Bill D
Alameda, CA

Nagasaki

Commander Bill Harper,

Another year has just started. I and 24 other men were sent to Nagasaki to repair a ship that was hit by a torpedo. We were there when they dropped the bomb. We were approximately 10 miles from where the bomb hit. 30 minutes later the Japanese came and put us on a truck and hauled us about 25 or 30 miles away, where we stayed all night.

All the other 24 men are dead from cancer. I had cancer of the gall bladder and prostate. I have an enlarged thyroid gland the size of a softball. It pushes so hard on my throat it is hard to swallow food. I eat a lot of stuff that will slide down. I could send you a list of the other 24 men if you would need it.

Frank Mace
Cheney, WA

“the Atomic Veteran seeks no special favor...simply justice...no amount of radiation is safe”

Russian Tests

Dear Sir,

I am enclosing a check for annual dues and attaching along with completed application, information, which I hope will help in this fight against the DOD to release the findings on various tests both foreign and domestic.

In my case I need to get the actual readings that were taken from the dust and air samples from the Russian tests in 1953, the Air Force claims that the film badges were lost?????

It took me many, many telephone calls and letters to finally to get the Air Force that these tests actually took place and it was a woman at Maxwell AFB that was kind enough to follow through and have the historical supplement of the flights declassified.

I am all set as far as receiving a disability but I do want my rating (cause) for skin cancers changed from sun exposure to radiation exposure, this the VA will do if they can come up with the film badges that were supposedly lost or supply the actual readings of the dust and air samples.

I do deeply appreciate what you are doing for those of us who were exposed. Keep up the good work.

Bernard Byrnes
Westwood, MA

Monte Bello – Australia

Mysterious sickness in my youngest child. Her platelet count goes completely haywire. Doctors refuse to let her birth naturally due to this strange blood disorder. Before performing a caesarean birth, doctors waited for special types of blood to arrive. I was at the Monte Bello's twice, sitting on the beach three hundred yards from where the bomb had been set off six months before, dressed in a pair of shorts and sandals. Scientists I had ferried ashore were dressed in some sort of foil, they told me the place was RED HOT. Could my daughter's strange blood count have anything to do with radiation?

Thanks,
Barry Rowe
Ex-Australian Navy

“the Atomic Veteran seeks no special favor...simply justice...no amount of radiation is safe”

Crossroads

Dear Sir,

I was aboard the ATR40 in 1946 at Bikini Atoll for Atomic Able and Baker. The ATR40 was a wooden hull, wooden deck vessel. We were assigned to cool down target vessels after bomb explosions. We were saturated in salt water, backspray from our fire hoses, and water cannons, just like a bunch of rats. We were still there when the old Saratoga sunk to the bottom.

I've had medical problems most of my life. I was only 18 years old at Bikini. I went to private doctors all my life. I had a son born in April 1959 who was very frail, born with enlarged glands. Years later he had three sons. The first one born with his brain outside of his skull, the other two now in their twenties are slow, and they will never be able to hold down a decent paying job in our system nowadays.

In later years I went to the VA Hospital in Sacramento for my problems and I let them know that I was an Atomic Veteran. They called me an “ATOMIC BABY” right there in Sacramento. They would not acknowledge that there could be something connected with too much radiation exposure, which you know that is what we got on the ATR40, and so did the boys on its sister ship the ATR39. I think it's time that our politicians and the people in charge recognize that we were strictly used as guinea pigs.

Billy Wayne Willhoit
Challenge, California

Hardtack

I have learned that the USS Navarro APA-215 was used in Operation Hardtack in 1958. I was stationed on the Navarro from March 1962 until July 1964 during the SHAD tests in 1963. I am trying to find out if the Navarro was contaminated with radiation during the Hardtack tests. If you could help me in this matter it would be greatly appreciated.

Robert (Bob) Bates
8408 NE 142nd Ave.
Vancouver, WA 98682
RBates9976@aol.com

National Association of Atomic Veterans

P.O. Box 11517
Chandler, AZ 85248

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.

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

“the Atomic Veteran seeks no special favor...simply justice...no amount of radiation is safe”

THE N.A.A.V. QUARTERMASTER STORE (Web site: www.naav.com)

I. D. #	ITEM DESCRIPTION	PRICE EACH
N-1-C	"Atomic Bomb Veteran" Auto decal (3" round)	\$ 4.00
N-2-C	"Atomic Bomb Veteran" Auto decal (4" x 5" rectangle	\$ 5.00
N-4-S	"Atomic Veteran" Auto side window decal	\$ 5.00
N-4-C	"Atomic Veteran" Auto bumper sticker (3" x 11.5")	\$ 5.00
N-5-S	"Atomic Soldier" Auto windshield sticker	\$ 4.00
N-6-C	"Atomic (Bomb) Veteran" Auto license plate	\$10.00
N-7-S	"Atomic Soldier" 3.5" NAAV Embroidered shoulder patch	\$ 8.00
N-8-C	"Atomic Bomb" 3.5" NAAV Embroidered shoulder patch	\$ 8.00
N-9-C	"Atomic Bomb" 2.5" NAAV sew-on patch (for caps or T-shirts)	\$ 4.00
N-10-S	"Atomic Soldier" 3.5" NAAV (Blue) embroidered baseball cap	\$14.00
N-11-C	"Atomic Bomb" 3.5" NAAV (Blue) embroidered baseball cap	\$14.00
N-13-C	"Atomic Bomb" NAAV lapel pin	\$ 9.00
N-13-S	"Atomic Soldier" NAAV lapel pin	\$ 9.00
N-13-J	"Atomic Bomb" NAAV Jacket (Blue) 10" embroidered logo an back and "Atomic Bomb Veteran" on front Sizes: M - L - XL - XXL - XXXL - allow four weeks for delivery!!	\$40.00
N-13-T	"Atomic Bomb" Bolo-Tie with 2" red / gold / blue NAAV logo	\$14.00
N-14-C	"Atomic Bomb Veteran" participation certificate (4 color) Note: If you can remember the test name and location, we can find the date from our master list of Atomic Tests...so as to insure certificate accuracy.	\$10.00
N-17-C	"Atomic Bomb Logo" - Navy blue T-shirt Sizes: M - L - XL - XXL - XXXL - allow four weeks for delivery!!	\$14.00

ORDER ENTRY INSTRUCTIONS

1. Circle the item I.D. number you wish to purchase & note quantity or size beneath the item number.
2. When ordering an Atomic Veteran's Certificate, be sure to include the required information for design.
Your name (as you want it to appear on the certiicate)
Your Service branch (Navy – Army – Air Force – Marines) ship / unit / squad / etc.
The "Test Name" / shot / or description of your atomic test participation.
4. Let us know if you are ging ti include your annual \$20.00 dues.
5. Let us know if you are going to include all, or a portion of your "Paid for Life" dues.
6. Forward your personal check, company check or money order to:

N.A.A.V. Quartermaster - 11214 Sageland - Houston, Tx 77089 - Phone: 281-481-1357

Please allow three to four weeks for shirt or jacket orders to arrive. If you have any questions, please phone, or e-mail: rjritter@ev1.net

Note: You may also include contributions or donations, which will be applied to the operational costs of newsletter prepration, mailings, atomic veteran records research, etc. The purchase of N.A.A.V. stores will increase our visibility in the community...so as to let our friends and neighbors know about the neglect and needs of all Atomic Veterans...N.A.A.V. needs your help.

The mission statement of N.A.A.V. is to continue to serve and assist all Atomic Veterans, military or civilian, who were involved in any manner with atomic materials activities, including manufacturing, storage, deployment and the detonation of atomic weapon devices.

R. J. RITTER – NATIONAL DIRECTOR – TREASURER – QUARTERMASTER

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:

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ATOMIC VETERANS

P.O. Box 11517
Chandler, AZ 85248

Please Remember!!

Those currently subscribing as NAAV members, please indicate in writing that you wish to continue receiving the newsletter by mail. You may also get your newsletter from the internet at www.naav.com.

fold



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ATOMIC VETERANS

P.O. Box 11517
Chandler, AZ 85248

NON-PROFIT
US POSTAGE
PAID
Phoenix, AZ
Permit No.
1161