

United States  
Atmospheric & Underwater  
Atomic Weapon Activities

- 1945 "TRINITY"  
ALAMOGORDO, N. M.
- 1945 "LITTLE BOY"  
HIROSHIMA, JAPAN
- 1945 "FAT MAN"  
NAGASAKI, JAPAN
- 1946 "CROSSROADS"  
BIKINI ISLAND
- 1948 "SANDSTONE"  
ENEWETAK ATOLL
- 1951 "RANGER"  
NEVADA TEST SITE
- 1951 "GREENHOUSE"  
ENEWETAK ATOLL
- 1951 "BUSTER - JANGLE"  
NEVADA TEST SITE
- 1952 "TUMBLER - SNAPPER"  
NEVADA TEST SITE
- 1952 "IVY"  
ENEWETAK ATOLL
- 1953 "UPSHOT - KNOTHOLE"  
NEVADA TEST SITE
- 1954 "CASTLE"  
BIKINI ISLAND
- 1955 "TEAPOT"  
NEVADA TEST SITE
- 1955 "WIGWAM"  
OFFSHORE SAN DIEGO
- 1955 "PROJECT 56"  
NEVADA TEST SITE
- 1956 "REDWING"  
ENEWETAK & BIKINI
- 1957 "PLUMBOB"  
NEVADA TEST SITE
- 1958 "HARDTACK-I"  
ENEWETAK & BIKINI
- 1958 "NEWSREEL"  
JOHNSON ISLAND
- 1958 "ARGUS"  
SOUTH ATLANTIC
- 1958 "HARDTACK-II"  
NEVADA TEST SITE
- 1961 "NOUGAT"  
NEVADA TEST SITE
- 1962 "DOMINIC-I"  
CHRISTMAS ISLAND  
JOHNSTON ISLAND
- 1965 "FLINTLOCK"  
AMCHITKA, ALASKA
- 1969 "MANDREL"  
AMCHITKA, ALASKA
- 1971 "GROMMET"  
AMCHITKA, ALASKA
- 1974 "POST TEST EVENTS"  
AMCHITKA, ALASKA

*" IF YOU WERE THERE,  
YOU ARE AN  
ATOMIC VETERAN "*



# NAAV

National Association of Atomic Veterans, Inc.

"Assisting America's Atomic Veterans Since 1979"  
Website: [www.naav.com](http://www.naav.com) E-mail: [naav.cmdr@naav.com](mailto:naav.cmdr@naav.com)



R. J. RITTER - Editor

November, 2011



*" Hey Sarge - I can still feel the heat "*



The motto of the day was *"Semper-Fry"*

The Newsletter for America's Atomic Veterans

**COMMANDERS COMMENTS**

We enjoyed our re-union in Richmond, VA and wish to offer our thanks to Director Jenkins for his efforts to make this event an overwhelming success. Gillie furnished a bus for an all-day ( ladies-only ) tour of the local historical sites. They departed from our hotel at 0900, returning at 1500, with a short lunch break at one of the sites of interest.



All of the ladies were thrilled with this event, and were discussing the events of the day at the evening dinner party. . . . .

Three Directors, Gillie Jenkins ( VA ) Rodney Lee Guidry ( LA ) and Bernie Clark ( OK ) were re-elected, and will serve for another 4 years. Directors R. J. Ritter ( TX ) and F. L. Grahlf ( WI ) will be eligible for re-election in October, 2013 given they will not be experiencing and serious health issues. . . . .

Since there were only three Directors present at the re-union, it was decided to post-phone the election of Officers posts until we meet in San Antonio, TX. on March 21, 2011. At that time a decision will be made to determine who will serve as National Commander, Vice-Commander, Secretary and Treasurer. Until then, the current slate of Officers will remain as is . . . . .

**VISIT WITH US IN SAN ANTONIO IN MARCH 2012**

The March Directors meeting will co-inside with the Annual meeting of The Veterans Advisory Board on ( radiation ) Dose Reconstruction, which will also be held in San Antonio, TX., at the Embassy Suites - San Antonio Riverwalk, on ( Thursday ) March 22<sup>nd</sup> & ( Friday ) March 23<sup>rd</sup>. There will be a "public-comment" session on the early afternoon of the 23<sup>rd</sup>, at which time any Atomic-Veteran who may be present can express their views, and or concerns, to the Board members – in session. There will also be a social hour after the Friday meetings, and again on ( Saturday morning ) March 24<sup>th</sup>. Full details are also posted on our ( naav.com ) website. . . . .

I am extending an invitation to all Atomic-Veterans, who may be able to attend, to make an effort to join us for this event, if possible. Given the age and health restrictions of our membership, it is getting increasingly difficult to travel, so if you can be there, we would welcome the opportunity to once again re-live our past experiences with one more meaningful fellowship, event . . . . .

**ARE YOUR DUES UP TO DATE ? ? ? ?**

To insure that you receive your periodic newsletters, we must remind you to keep your dues current. You can do this my looking at the mailing label on your newsletter. The numbers following your name, is your dues expiration date. Be sure to send you dues before this expiration date, if at all possible. Our operating income is diminishing rapidly, as no one over the age of 82 really wants to pay dues to any organization. So, we hope that you will continue to support our efforts in all areas. We also welcome "Good-Samaritan" contributions, as well. . . . .

**WHOLE BODY AIRPORT SCANS**

**Washington, D.C.** - Now that there are 247 full-body X-ray scanners in 38 airports around the country, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit ordered the Transportation Security Administration ( TSA ) to start soliciting comments about the machines' hazards and invasiveness. Ceding to pressure from the Electronic Privacy Information Center, a civil liberties group based in Washington, who argued that the full body X-rays violated privacy and religious freedom laws, as well as the Fourth Amendment, the court now is allowing citizens to voice their concerns. . . . .

**Final Muster**

- |                                |                                  |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Ted Hayes ( AZ )</b>        | <b>Clarence Roth ( CT )</b>      |
| <b>Howard Shertzer ( PA )</b>  | <b>Paul Bochon ( WA )</b>        |
| <b>Robert Hosley ( CA )</b>    | <b>John E. Forde ( CA )</b>      |
| <b>Ronald Talbott ( OH )</b>   | <b>William Grandstaff ( AL )</b> |
| <b>Robert Hatch ( OR )</b>     | <b>Thomas Walsh ( FL )</b>       |
| <b>Stanley Amsden ( SD )</b>   | <b>Richard Bump ( MN )</b>       |
| <b>Edward Haas ( CA )</b>      | <b>Jervis King ( CA )</b>        |
| <b>Lester McClure ( TN )</b>   | <b>Norman Rogers ( OK )</b>      |
| <b>Julian Sherar ( LA )</b>    | <b>Milton Hines ( IL )</b>       |
| <b>Frederick Reeves ( TX )</b> | <b>Glenn Stover ( PA )</b>       |
| <b>Joseph Yersha ( VT )</b>    | <b>David Smeltzer ( UT )</b>     |
| <b>Clarence Rivers ( SC )</b>  | <b>Daniel McElwee ( KS )</b>     |
| <b>Frank Maronne ( NY )</b>    | <b>Larry Pressley ( NE )</b>     |
| <b>James Petty ( MO )</b>      | <b>Malcolm LeJeune ( LA )</b>    |
| <b>Robert Franker ( MN )</b>   | <b>Dalton McMillian ( AZ )</b>   |

*We ask our members to observe a special moment of silence so as to properly recognize & give thanks for their honorable service, and total commitment to their God, their families and their Country.*



*"Rest in peace, our Atomic-Veteran friends."*



This comes after routine maintenance of the machines in December, 2010 showed they were emitting more than 10 times the radiation expected. The TSA says that the results were due to a mathematical error and that all the machines are now safe. U.S. Rep. Jason Chaffetz ( R ) Utah, was troubled by the information posted by the TSA. . . . .

Chaffetz chairs a House over-sight committee on national security and has sponsored legislation to limit the use of full-body scans. He has been pushing the TSA to release the maintenance records. At best, Chaffetz said, the radiation reports generated by TSA contractors reveal haphazard oversight and record-keeping in the critical inspection system the agency relies upon to ensure millions of travelers aren't subjected to excessive doses of radiation. "It is totally unacceptable to be bumbling such critical tasks," Chaffetz said. "These people are supposed to be protecting us against terrorists."

New York Times – July 16, 2011

**U.S. SENDS ENVOY TO NAGASAKI MEMORIAL**

**Nagasaki, Japan** – It took 66 years, but the United States, for the first time, sent a representative, Charge d'Affaires James Zumwalt, to the annual memorial service for victims of the U.S. Army Air Force's atomic bombing of Nagasaki. After a Uranium core bomb ( Little-Boy ) destroyed Hiroshima, on August 6, 1945. Three days later, the U.S. dropped a plutonium core bomb ( Fat-Man ) on August 9, 1945 over the Japanese port city of Nagasaki, killing 40,000 civilians instantly, and a total of 70,000 in the days that followed. The "Fat-Man" bomb was air dropped from the B-29 ( Bock's- Car ), of the 509<sup>th</sup>. Atomic Bombardment Squadron, and it exploded at an altitude of 1,625 ft., completely destroying the entire city. More than 3 million leaflets were dropped from American planes over the countryside in the days that followed warnings of a new and drastic weapon that might destroy whole Japanese cities, should the Japanese refuse to surrender. Zumwalt said in a statement that President Obama hoped to work with Japan toward "realizing a world without nuclear weapons." This is a goal that Japan has championed and persued ceaselessly since the end of WWII, but one the U.S. has historically undermined, today using a ruse called "warhead refurbishment."

## WHEN AN A-BOMB MIS-FIRES - NOW WHAT ??

We wish to thank ( **N.A.A.V.** member ) *Roman Maner* ( *MN* ) for the following story of an incident that occurred during a 1952 nuclear weapon test at Yucca Flats, NV. Portions of this report also appeared in the August 09, 1952 issue of Collier magazine.

**Yucca Flats, NV.** – When an Atomic bomb fails to detonate, who's responsibility is it to turn it off ? Now that is one helluva question to have to ponder about. Well, in this story, that was the job of a mild-mannered Scientist who, on two occasions, has risked instant vaporization, while meticulously neutralizing an armed nuclear weapon with his bare hands, while being subjected the potential for triggering the most terrible explosive



Dr. John C. Clark ( 1952 )  
Atomic Energy Commission

force known to man ! *"The time is now minus one minute,"* blared the voice from the public address system. *"Observers please put on your dark glasses, or turn away from the flash. All military test personnel, who are in trenches, must be tucked down as low as possible, and have their eyes covered with their arms."*

Ten miles from ground-zero, and inside the ( concrete blockhouse ) test control room, Deputy Test Director, Dr. John C. Clark ( Atomic

Energy Commission ) known as the "triggerman" for nuclear test detonations, watched his control panel as, on by one, the lines of indicator lights slowly turned from green to red. Two hours earlier, after the nuclear weapon was carefully secured in it's "shot-cab" at the top of a 300 ft. test tower, he had started the pre-test triggering operation by arming the weapon's detonation device and securing the cab entry door . . . .

At *"H-hour"* minus 15 minutes, he had pressed the last button on his control board to set in motion a sequence timer device. Now it was entirely the job of the robot-like mechanism to perform the thousands of minutely synchronized operations which would finally climax by firing the ( Pu-239 core ) bomb device. Then the loud speaker erupted with *"Minus 30 seconds . . . . all personnel hold your positions."*

Outside the control building, military and scientific observers adjusted their dark glasses and braced their feet for the flash and shock wave of the 18<sup>th</sup> atomic test performed at Yucca Flats. At that same instant, and only a few thousand yards from the bomb shot-cab, GI's crouched in their trench's & foxholes, shivering in the predawn cold and wondering why in the hell were they here. *"Minus 10 seconds,"* came the electronic voice. . . . .

Now Dr. Clark carefully watched another green light change to red. *"Nine – eight – seven – six – five – four."* The final green light turned red. The robot had almost finished it's work. At this time, Clark lifted his hand from a switch that could, until the last second, overrule the robot and disconnect the firing circuit. . . .

Now, all six men in the control room tensed - *"three – two – one – zero"* - - - - *nothing !!* The unanticipated silence was deafening. One second, two seconds, three seconds passed, and there was dead silence – a stillness more shocking than the violent combustion and ground rumble they had all expected. . . .

Hunkered down in their assigned trench's & foxholes, spaced at differing distances from "ground-zero," the test troops were also in a high state of anxiety, and were holding a long breath as the countdown reached "zero."

Given the shivering cold of the dark morning, beads of cold sweat began to appeared on the brow of ( U.S. Army ) Lt. Robert McKenzie . . . . .

Back in the control center, Clark and his associates resembled a group of small boys watching a burning fuse sputter and disappear into a hushed vacuum. The only detectable sound was the metronomic ticking of the dependable old grandfather clock which, oblivious of the foibles of twentieth century inventions, served as the master-control timepiece amidst the galaxy of super-electronic circuitry. *"Damn. . .not again."* said Clark . . .

Out across the desert, the loud-speaker voice, that some of the GI's had nicknamed *"Big-Brother"* then boomed a warning. *"Now hear this - there has been a misfire. Everyone keep their positions. Do not move until further notice."*

For another few moments, the six-man firing team in the 20' by 20' control room

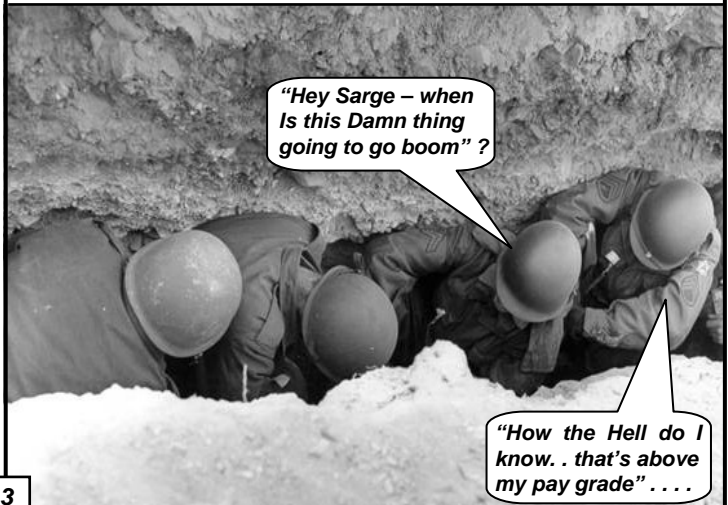


Back in the Control Room – Now What ??

were absolutely numb, frozen in time. Then their trained minds began groping for an viable answer. Somewhere in the labyrinthian web of tens of thousands of wires and connections, which lead from the control room to the bomb 10 miles away, something unplanned had happened. . . .

This particular test device included several new concept components, and was housed in a **Mk-5m** ( modified ) bomb case ( code named *XR-1* ). It would also serve as a calibration test of an experimental *Polonium-Uranium* composite ( internal ) neutron initiator system that would allow for the development of accurate time vs. yield curves. Given these additional "proof" burdens, it had rapidly become one of the most complicated experiments ever attempted, yet according to the control panel, everything in the firing circuit was in order, and there were no fault or warning lights visible on the panel.

Theoretically, the bomb tower at "ground-zero" should long since have been vaporized into a mushroom cloud. But this did not happen, and *"Murphy"* was lurking about in the most serious manner. Dr. Clark was also keenly aware that this new "initiator" system was complex as Hell, and getting it to "stand-down" to "inactive" status was not going to be an easy or simple task, by any measure. Each move, during the delicate process, may be his last. . . . *"Dam-it-to-Hell, this is going to be another wild day at the office"* he said to himself. . . .



Even while they were engaged in exploring previously planned emergency procedures and were searching for answers to their enigma, everyone knew what the next move had to be. Despite the elaborate controls, which left practically everything to the electrical-minded sequence timer, there was one thing that had to be done by the hand of man, and man alone. Disarming that damn device, and being able to talk about it, after the fact. . . .



THE "FOX" BOMB IS IN THE SHOT CAB - 300 FT. ABOVE GROUND-ZERO

And although, theoretically, it was agreed that there was no reason why the bomb should now explode, there was also no certainty that it wouldn't explode. If such a precise electronic system was capable of one mistake, well - you can surmise, with a high degree of certainty - the rest of their thoughts. . . .

Someone was going to have to climb that 300 foot tower and risk possible annihilation. It was not a question of asking for volunteers. Inevitably, the disarming chore was the responsibility of one man, and that man was the firing party commander, Dr. John Clark, a slight, bespectacled, forty-nine-year-old physicist, and a man who looked more like a school teacher than the triggerman for the *United States Atomic Weapon Test* detonations. . .

For most of his adult life, Jack Clark had, indeed, been a school teacher. Fifteen years earlier and while the 60 inch Cyclotron (atom smasher) was still under construction at *Lawrence Berkeley Labs (CA)*, Clark was teaching physics at nearby Stanford University. During the war, he had served with the Army specializing in ballistics and detonation research at the Aberdeen Proving Grounds. . . .

At the close of the war, while on a special intelligence mission to uncover German and Japanese research secrets, Clark found himself rapidly becoming involved in the field of nuclear energy. Then, in 1946, he was asked to take part in the University of California directed research program at the *Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory (N.M.)* where he rapidly advanced until he became the *Deputy Nuclear Weapons Test Director* for the *Atomic Energy Commission*. . . . .

**---- His Second Job of A-Bomb Disarming ----**

In October of 1951, when the nuclear device assigned to the 10<sup>th</sup>. Nevada A-bomb test, (*Operation Jangle*) test "Sugar" failed to fire, Clark had found it his duty to disarm "that damned nuke gadget." The purpose of the "Sugar" test was to measure the



JANGLE "SUGAR"

effects of a surface burst on weapons & field equipment. Up to this time there had been no "surface-burst" tests conducted on U.S. soil, therefore; this would be the first such test. . . . .

The bomb device (code named "Johnny") was identical to the *Ranger "Able"* device. It was housed in a **Mk-6** case, with an all Uranium core "pit," and was chosen for its predictability, with a limited yield, so as to minimize contamination. The test name "Sugar" was a mnemonic code for "surface." At this time, an 83 kiloton surface-burst implosion bomb was being considered for use as a cratering and "bunker-buster" weapon. The test indicated that such a weapon would produce an impressive crater 300 feet in diameter and 70 feet deep. . . . .

After two stressful & nerve racking hours of intense focus and concentration, Dr. Clark and his scientific team were able to disarm the "Sugar" bomb mechanism. This was also referred to, by the Nuke-Techs, as "Defanging-the-Dragon." Once the problem area had been identified & corrected, and after a few more days of resets and pre-test system checks, on November 19, 1951 the "Sugar" test was successfully completed, proving out the cratering theory. . . .



Seated from left: Gaelin Felt, Dr. Everett Cox, Barney O'Keefe, Alvin Graves and Herbert Grier. Standing from left: Dr. John Clark, Capt. Harry Haight, Cdr. Russell Maynard and Cdr. Elbert Pate.

And now, on May 20, 1952, at 0505 the *Snapper "Fox"* bomb failed to detonate, and Clark was once again faced with a task that no man should ever have to face, at any point in his lifetime. Clark had to, once again, "Pull the teeth of the Dragon". . . . .

In the test control building, the six men on the firing team - Alvin C. Graves (A.E.C. Nuke Test Director), Carroll Tyler (A.E.C. Nuke Test Manager), Dr. Clark, his assistant Dr. Gaelin Felt, and Engineer Tech.s' Herbert Grier and Barney O'Keefe - checked and rechecked their electronic recording instruments and firing sequence indicators. They simply could not find any malfunction indication, nor could they determine where, in the system, the problem event may have occurred. . . .

While they were pondering the situation, and in accordance with emergency procedures, the test troops, which had been prepared to move into the target zone shortly after the blast in a simulated atomic-warfare combat maneuver, were ordered to face away from the bomb tower and stand by for further instructions. . . . .

The cause of the misfire remained a mystery. "We'll let the bomb device sizzle for an hour, if it wants to," Clark told his colleagues as they moved to his office adjoining the control room, for a conference of key personnel called by Dr. Graves.

Jack Clark, as firing party commander, had given the orders. Now, with a misfire on their hands, the decisions and orders were up to Al Graves, the forty-two-year-old, boyish-looking test Director. . . .

For the next 60 minutes, these six test Scientists, assisted by three military advisors, pondered the current situation, while exploring all available options. After examining all avenues of approach, they discussed and weighted the most viable options, and a disarming procedure was soon adopted, after which a detailed check list was then quickly drawn up. . . .

Barney O'Keefe and John Wieneke, the two engineering specialists who had the most intimate knowledge of the elaborate circuitry involved with this particular test setup, were then selected to accompany Dr. Clark to the tower shot-cab, so as to assist, check and advise him during the actual disarming operation . . . .

Finally, at 0615, Al Graves, his face showing the strain, nodded across the room to Clark & his team. Clark then picked up some rope, a few system check instruments and a hack saw and headed for the block-house door. As he exited the building, he was followed by O'Keefe and Wieneke. . . .

Outside the block-house, Clark walked to his car as casually as if heading for the mess hall, exchanging greetings as he passed friends that he might just be seeing for the last time. As Clark got behind the wheel, Dr. Ralph Carlisle Smith ( A.E.C. Security Officer ), who has seen more A-bomb blasts than any other man in the world, came alongside to wish him luck. . . .

*"For this kind of work, a guy deserves double time pay,"* Clark joshed as he started the motor of the chartreuse Dodge sedan. *"OK, we'll pay you with double Martinis,"* replied Smith. Clark was laughing as he drove off into the unknown realm of pure luck & chance. . . .

With O'Keefe beside him, and Wieneke in the rear seat, Clark then headed up Jackass-Flats road that would lead them around the troop trench's and onward to the shot-cab tower that was looming patiently in the distance, as the morning sun began to rise slowly over the rolling background hills. . . .

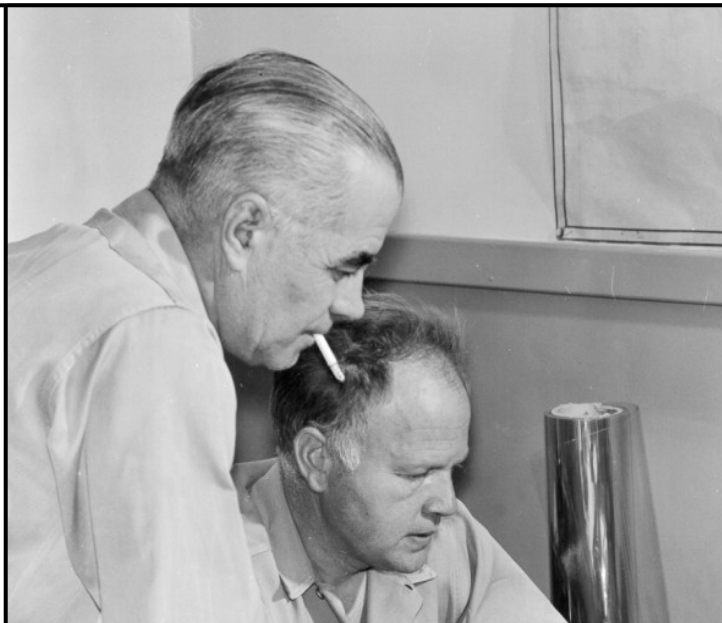
Along the blacktop road they sped onward, their eyes, partially shielded by the car's lowered sun visor, averted from the immediate target area to avoid being blinded, should the bomb go off before they arrived. Two miles from the tower they pulled up at a blast-proof switch station to disconnect some electrical circuits. . . .

After a few additional checks, they continued on. Finally, one mile from ground-zero, Jack Clark raised the sun-visor and looked straight ahead. Being blinded by the flash now was the least of their worries. They had crossed an invisible line into the area of total hazard, and one in which detonation spelled quick and certain death. . . .

Two minutes later, they arrived at the base of the three legged tower, and looked up at the menacing shot-cab. At the top, 300 feet up, and enclosed in the 15 square ft. cab, for protection against the elements, was a fully armed, live atomic bomb. This would be the longest climb of their lives. . . .

*"Al, we are now going to climb up that tower and enter the shot-cab,"* Clark reported over his two-way car radio, which was in constant contact with the control building where the test Director anxiously awaited the report. Dr. Graves knew only too well the danger now faced by three members of his team, and his anxiety was rapidly mounting. . . .

His thoughts flashed back to six years earlier, when he had been severely injured by a radiation overdose in a ( *Manhattan*



Back at the Control Center, Al Graves ( left ) awaits a status report from John Clark and his Bomb Deactivation Team. . . .

*Project )* laboratory accident which had been fatal to another Scientist standing next to him. Working with, or near highly radioactive materials, or devices containing such materials were extremely high risk events, often prone to the whims of *"Murphy"* who was always lurking about. On this cold morning, at the test site, he was surely hoping that *"Murphy"* was still asleep, and no where near Dr. Clark and his team. . . .

With tools and instruments dangling from a rope sling hung over his shoulder, Clark started up the ladder – which, but for the misfire, should at that moment have been drifting lazily away as part of the after-blast mushroom cloud. And behind him came Wieneke, then O'Keefe. Their progress was slow, and in many respects, this would be the longest climb in the lives of all three A.E.C. Scientists. . . .

At the 100 foot level, they stopped to catch their breath and rest a few minutes. Normally, they would have ridden an elevator to the top, but the elevator was removed prior to the actual test, and they had to endure the long hand-over-hand climb. *"Damn, we should have left the elevator,"* mumbled Wieneke. *"I guess we were we trying to save the taxpayers some money,"* said O'Keefe. *"And I hope we are all available, after this picnic, to accept their thanks"* said Clark. . . .

After they started their upward climb to the 200 foot level, Clark heard a moan from below. O'Keefe had slipped and banged his left knee against one of the tower's steel cross-braces. . . .

*"Are you OK,"* asked Clark. *"I think so,"* answered O'Keefe, *"should have put on my tennis shoes, instead of these dam hard soles."* After checking with Wieneke, all three began the slow upward climb. A debilitating incident, at this time, would be totally unacceptable. . . .

#### --- Three Who Braved Death In The Tower ---

Nearing the top, they paused more frequently, silent, saving their breaths, a grim triumvirate; Clark, a mild graying bachelor with no living kinsfolk, was constantly reviewing his options and procedures, in his thoughts. Wieneke, a stocky thirty-four-year-old electronics expert who hoped soon to return to his wife and two children at Los Alamos, was also doing a mental fact check, and the thirty-two-year-old O'Keefe, employee of a Boston firm developing secret equipment for the Atomic tests, who had a

wife and three children in Natick, MA., was also mentally lost in the complex world of nuke technology. . . .

Shortly before 0700, Clark finally reached the shot-cab, after which he then removed the hack saw from his rope sling. It was only hours earlier, that after final checks of the nuclear device, and before leaving the cab via the elevator, and as a routine matter, he had wired shut the cab access door, a precaution that he now regretted. As he was sawing through the hasp, he was thinking *"Who in the Hell did I think would be nuts enough to climb up this tower and enter a shot-cab with a live nuke inside."* He knew then, that he did not have to think of any answer. . . .

Finally, the hasp was severed, and Clark forced the door slightly open. Clark and Wieneke went directly to the bomb device and it's associated control hardware, while O'Keefe picked up a telephone in the corner of the cab. Back at the control center, Dr. Graves abandoned a game of solitaire and hastily grabbed the receiver at the first ring. . . .

*"We're in the cab, Al,"* he heard O'Keefe report. *"Jack & John are at the device now."* Graves motioned for a secretary to listen in on an extension. *"Barney, I hope you and I can figure out how to defang this new neutron system, without an extreme incident."* said Clark. *"Those are my very same sentiments,"* answered O'Keefe. *"Well then, why don't we just give it a try,"* said Clark. If the bomb did go off now, at least they would have on record every possible bit of information that might help them find out what had happened. . . .

In the shot-cab, Clark carefully began to removed the initiator circuitry cover panel, describing each move, into the Cab-phone, for the record. In the shivering morning chill, beads of sweat began to gather on his forehead. Placing the cover panel aside, he carefully inspected each of the firing circuitry components, while he mentally traced the sequence of actions before approaching the necessary de-arming procedures with his bare hands. This, was indeed, a real surgical process. . . .

The first order of business was to carefully de-activate the circuits controlling the "initiators." These were used to trigger the explosive charges that would, in turn, compress the Uranium "tamper" material inward with a force great enough to cause the Plutonium ( Pu-239 ) fission core "pit," to reach "critical-mass" and thus produce an uncontrollable chain reaction followed by a really, really big bang . . . .

After what seemed like an eternity, Clark had reached the crucial point at which the complex circuitry could be interrupted, and rendered in-operative. Beside him, Wieneke was carefully checking his every move, against a de-activation "punch-list."

This list was new to the team, as it was drawn up for the newly designed, and untested, neutron initiator principle. There were two basic components which had to be disconnected. Any change in the wiring circuits, or even just pulling out any one of several wire plugs, out-of-sequence, might cause the "big-bang."

*"Jack is now unscrewing the tightening collar of the firing circuit plug,"* reported O'Keefe tersely over the phone. Clark nodded in agreement and slowly continued his concentrated efforts, pausing just long enough to wipe his brow. Shortly thereafter; he looked up at O'Keefe and held up a small object. *"Now he's got the hot-side plug out,"* said O'Keefe. . . .

Clark nodded again, then went back down into the bomb case. Minutes seemed like hours, and twice Clark had to stop, take a few deep breaths, wipe his brow and get back into the program. Then, he looked up at O'Keefe with a smile on his face. *"Now he's got the cold-side plug out,"* said O'Keefe, who's face also lit up with a large smile. Clark then let out a big sigh of relief. . . .

After doing the same, O'Keefe and Wieneke then walked over to Clark and gave him a high-five. *"Are we having fun yet."* asked Clark. Wieneke then said, *"I am damn sure ready to go back to my day-time-job."* The resulting laughs should have been heard a mile away. . . .

The three men in the shot-cab, and their colleagues 10 miles away, now began to relax. There was no longer a probability of the atomic-bomb going off, but it still was necessary to dis-assemble the bomb partially, and to completely disarm the detonating device – which itself contained enough high explosive to kill all three men in that small cab, 300 feet above ground-zero, out in the middle of Yucca, Flats, with no "wet" bar. . .

The next order of business would be the removal of the fission core "pit," and a complete run-down of all components. At this time, nuclear weapons were installed in test stands, or loaded aboard aircraft, without the fissile material "pit" installed. This configuration was commonly referred to as the "Mod-0" status. After all pre-checks and final procedures, and just prior to a ground test, or air-drop, the "pit" was then inserted into the weapon, after which the configuration was commonly referred to as the "Mod-1" status. . . .

The removal of the "pit" would have to be accomplished by a technician who would place it into a lead-lined container for proper storage until the device would be "re-armed" for the test or intended detonation event. O'Keefe radioed a request for a Nuke-Tech. back to the control room, for such purposes . . . .

At this point, should there be an explosion, it would not be nuclear in nature. *"Disarming of the device is now complete,"* reported O'Keefe, finally. *"We're going back down now, and we'll be seeing ya soon,"* was O'Keefe's final sign-off. Like a returning infantry patrol, Clark and his associates climbed down the tower rungs and drove back to the control building, listening to some good-ole Cowboy music on the way . . . .

Their work, however; was not yet completed, as they still did not know the root cause of the bomb detonation failure. According to the monitoring instruments in the control room, all elements of the primary firing circuit had functioned flawlessly. Given this, Clark and his team knew there was a system flaw, but finding that flaw may prove to be as allusive as Hell. . . . .

#### ---- Photographers Solve the Mystery ----

The answer to their questions surfaced a few hours later, after a photographic recovery team had brought back and processed film from a lead-lined underground bunker near ground zero. After careful examination of the film, the mystery was finally solved. . . . .



One of the instrumentation measuring devices had not been ready to record, and this malfunction had been detected by the master sequencing system, as per design. This, in turn had caused the firing circuit to shut-down, preventing final sequencing and explosive initiator activation. At some point in the pre-planning phase, a new test instrument was introduced into the system, and technicians had failed to include "over-ride" protection sensor indicators for this particular instrument. Given this, the sequencing process had no way of knowingly sensing that it had been over-ridden by a sensor that was not programmed into the check-list . . . . .

Had the bomb gone off at "H-hour," one of the most important measurements would have been lost, and the root purpose of this particular test would have not been realized. Also, given the scarcity of weapons grade Uranium & Plutonium, the expensive charges of each, assigned to this test device, would have been totally wasted. With the situation now under control, and the Scientific test team greatly relieved, John Clark completed his role as Atomic-triggerman and re-assumed his post as Deputy Test Director. Over the public address system, he gave the orders permitting test preparation personnel to return to the test shot tower . . . .

Then he issued a directive that all team members perform a complete system check, after which they were to restore all instrumentation and re-set the bomb device to it's make-ready status. He also issues an order that the tower elevator to be re-installed, permanently. Finally, at 1500, and after 36 hours of continuous duty, Clark climbed into his sedan and drove back to his bachelor quarters at Camp Mercury. Bone tired, he undressed, showered, poured two double martinis, and went to bed. . . . .

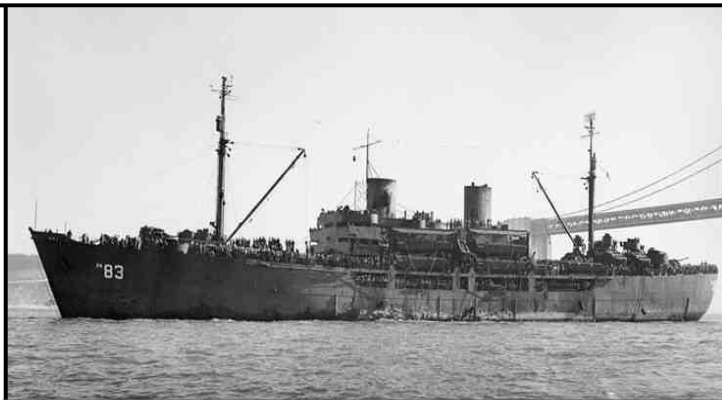
Over the next two days, scientists and engineers carefully traced all system over-ride functions, so as to insure proper activation identification. They then re-programmed all test monitors accordingly. Then, on May 25, 1952 when the sequence timers reached "zero." for the second time, the "Fox" bomb did not miss it's cue, and performed as planned. The resulting flash was seen as far away as *Los Angeles*, more than 300 miles away, and Dr. John Clark and his team began preparations for the next scheduled nuclear weapon test event at the Nevada Test Site, code named "George." And so it was, just another day of "earth-shaking" events for Dr. Clark & his team, and, least we not forget, for another group of G.I. "Guinea-Pig" Atomic-Warfare grunts. . . . .

**CROSSROADS VET SEARCHING FOR SHIPMATES**

**Port Washington, N.Y.** - Hello there: My name is *Herbert K. Johnson*, and I was at Operation "Crossroads" in 1946. My ship was the *U.S.S. Fillmore ( APA-83 )* a target for the "Able" and "Baker" tests. Given the proper information and assistance from **N.A.A.V.** I recently received 100% disability from the V.A. as a result of my exposure to radiation at the Bikini testing site . . . . .

After the two atom-bomb tests, we ( the skeleton crew ) were told that our ship had not been sunk, or was not severely damaged, and we were given two hours to get her out of the lagoon, since the radiation levels were rising at a rapid rate. They neglected to say that when the "Baker" bomb went off, it splashed the entire ship with radio-active seawater . . . . .

We had no gloves, hats, boots, etc. and no protective clothing and the Geiger counters we were using were making constant noises. The test animals on the ship were partially burned and the plane they put down in the forward hold had been damaged when the deck hatch cover caved in on top of it. Most of the deck rigging & machinery were also all bent our of shape, or



U.S.S. FILLMORE IN SAN FRANCISCO BAY - 1945

broke up to some great degree. We were on that ship for another seven months, until it was finally de-commissioned in the Norfolk Naval Shipyard. I would love to hear from any of my old shipmates who served on that old "rust-bucket" during those nuke tests. If you read this message, please contact me as follows:

**Herbert K. Johnson**  
 100 Harbor View Dr. Apt. 547 Port Washington, N.Y. 11050  
 Phone: 516-944-0768 E-mail: arsonfire1@optonline.net

**ARE THE SCALES BALANCED YET ???**

I am scheduled to have knee surgery at the **V.A.**, and as a part of the process, I am required to have a nuclear stress test. As I was waiting to start the procedure, one of the doctors noticed that I was wearing my **N.A.A.V.** ( Atomic-Bomb-Veteran ) cap. I was surprised when he said "I would like to thank you for your sacrifice and contribution to the research into the development of nuclear medicine." I was in total shock, as I had never heard



anyone ever give praise to Atomic-Veterans, and wondered what the Hell this was all about. He went on to say that without the research that was obtained from the nuclear vet "guinea-pigs" that it wouldn't be possible to have this nuclear stress test, or a lot of nuclear medicine like cancer treatment radiation, or a multitude of other life saving procedures. After I recovered my composure, I told him of the experiences I had when I served on the *U.S.S. Boxer ( CVS-21 )* during "Operation *Hardtack-I*" in 1958, and I went thru approx. 25+ nuclear tests and told him that we weren't allowed to talk about it until after the late 1990's . . . . .



U.S.S. BOXER ( CVS-21 )

I also told him that I can still see the flashes from those nuke detonations when I close my eyes, and can still hear the rumble of the shock waves and feel those hydraulic shocks hitting the

hull of our ship. He then asked me if I had suffered any adverse effects from the ionized radiation and I told him about the tumor about the size of a lemon that had to be removed from an area between my lung and a rib . . . . .

I had heard the Doctors, who did the operation, talking to one another, and they were saying that they were convinced that the tumor was caused by the radiation exposure I got from those *Hardtack* tests. He also asked me if I had put in for any compensation or disability. I told him that I had, and that it was turned down because ( I think ) they didn't want to set a precedent. Then I told him that I also wrote to my Congressman and Senators and the Armed Service Committee for some kind of recognition and was given the old story that they would "look into it." Of course, as usual, nothing happened. I also send this story to the folks at 60 minutes, and I am still waiting for an answer. . .

Now I realize that the Government is really hurting for money at this time, but I found out that the Canadian Atomic-Vet's got compensated, and the Brit's received special medals for their Nuke test assignments. The Hiroshima and Nagasaki ( A-bomb ) survivors are also receiving compensation & free medical benefits for being nuked so as to stop the Japanese war against the U.S., and to also stop law-suits that they were losing, hand over fist. . . . .

If our Government can spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on turtle tunnels, or a hell of a lot of money for a shrimp to run on a treadmill, or for research on the strange sex life of a bowling ball, maybe they can spend a few bucks on a proper recognition Medal for us Atomic-Vet's. Hey you folks up there in D.C. . . . . listen up . . . . . we ain't getting no younger !!!

The Doctor told me that he had heard that any such recognition would set a precedent that would open a Pandora's box of law suits that would cost the Government billions of dollars, and it was the Government's policy to wait out these atrocities. . . .and in another ten or 20 years, or so, all Atomic Vet's would be dead and gone, and the incident would be swept under the rug. Geeze, you'd think we were asking for the damn Moon or something !!!

So that is where we stand, on our fight to get recognition for Atomic Vet's. I do feel some-proud that I got some recognition from that Doctor. I guess, in a weird way, that is the only thanks I have ever gotten from anyone, for being an Atomic Vet. And I guess that's the only thanks I think I will ever get from here on. . .

Now is here is my question - **DO THE SCALES BALANCE ?? Is the number of lives lost by the Atomic Test Guinea-Pigs equal to the number of lives saved by Atomic Medicine ?**

If anyone out there wants to beef about my gripes I can be reached at:

**Leo "Bud" Feurt – Atomic Guinea-Pig**  
( *NAAV Life Member* )  
12709 Kaitz St. Poway, CA. 92064

### ATOMIC-VETERAN FAMILY FEEDBACK

To all *N.A.A.V.* members and Newsletter readers, I just wanted to let you guys know that filing the Atomic-Veteran compensation claim with *D.O.J.* ( *R.E.C.A.* ) was fairly easy. I found the ( *N.A.A.V.* ) website, downloaded & printed all forms & instructions, then received my confirmation from *Ms. Gates* ( at *D.T.R.A.* ), after which, I then obtained documents for the last 25 years from hospitals, doctors, etc. . . .

I then copied all military records from the 1950's including awards, and assisted my father-in-law in filling out his claim, purchased a large envelope & shipped it off via. certified mail. The total time involved in gathering up the required paperwork

was about 3 months. The claim was then approved within 3 months ( after submittal ) and he has now received his payment. We also learned that all medical expenses will be paid by the *V.A.* and they also want to 'study' these radiation exposed Veterans. After my success, I called ( *N.A.A.V.* ) with an update, and received a "well-done" from *Cdr. Ritter*, whom I had discussed the situation with at the start. Thank goodness for the *N.A.A.V.* website and excellent contact information. . . .

I am: **Sharon Engle ( AL ) Atomic-Vet family member**

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Hi Sharon: I second *Cdr. Ritter's* "well done." I too, was successful, and after doing the same research, submitted my claim, and it took exactly 4 days shy of 2 months for the approval. Needless to say I was shocked when I read the letter telling me that I would be getting my "survivor" benefits. In fact I had to re-read it several times to be sure that it said what it said . . . . .

My experience began two years ago, when I had a chance encounter with an Atomic-Veteran, while performing my volunteer hours at our local *V.A.* hospital. He was a most amazing person, and I will forgo naming names, as that's not the important part of this message. . . . .

My new friend was wearing a very unusual jacket, that I had not seen before. When I finished with the protocols of my job, I asked if I could speak with him, and he said he would be pleased to talk with me. I wanted to know what the symbolism of his jacket represented. I thought I already knew the answer, but wanted to know for sure. . . . .

This gentleman was a member of the *National Association of Atomic Veterans*, and he was also a retired Navy Chief Petty Officer, who had proudly served his country with great honor. He said that he wished he could go back to sea, only for a few days, so he could re-live his boyhood experiences in the Navy, one more time. . . . .

He also said that he was suffering from many debilitating health issues. Those illnesses appear to be the direct result of his service during the 1962 nuclear weapons tests at Johnston and Christmas Islands. He said that these tests were associated with Operation "*Dominic-I*". . . .



During our discussions, he told me that he, along with others, has worked tireless hours to obtain proper honor and respect for Atomic Veterans, who were all exposed to ionizing radiation particles, many of whom are now suffering from health issues resulting from those exposure events. Many of the U.S. service-men who participated in those tests have already



passed on to their greater rewards. A large percentage of those, who are now deceased, were victims of radiation sickness that shortened their lives, and prevented them from enjoying, to the fullest extent, their families & friends ....

You may ask why am I writing this ? I am writing this because 10 years ago I lost my beloved husband to pancreatic cancer. After his passing, many questions were on my mind. I expressed them to my sons, but try as we might, we could not find a sensible answer. We could not understand nor reason why a 56 year old healthy & active man would be stricken with this deadly disease. .

He was in the prime of his life, successful in his career, a loving father, husband, son, brother, uncle, friend and last but not least a grandfather who lived every moment for the four beautiful grandchildren that graced our lives. He did everything right, and took care of the vessel that God had provided for him. I kept asking myself, over and over again, what would have caused this to happen ?

Then, when I met this remarkable Atomic-Veteran, I found the answers we had searched so long for. My husband was also aboard a Navy ship in the South Pacific during those very same tests, and he was also exposed to nuclear weapon radiation particles. Now you might ask - why would I think this affected his situation, 30 years later ?

Radiation poison stays within the body, no matter how slight or how little exposure the body may have been subjected to. It attacks the cells, molecules, tissue and organs of the body, deteriorating the body's ability to function as God had intended. One fact, that has been brought to light, is that it can affect the children of those veterans, as well. And that fact totally shakes me to the core, and no-one seems to want to address that issue.

My new friend ( and his *N.A.A.V.* buddies ) has spent years fighting tirelessly against the bureaucratic system, to try and bring proper honor to those who were assigned to participate in nuclear weapon testing. He said that all he, and his friends are asking for is an official *Atomic-Service-Medal* to honor them for their dedicated service to their country, and their ( forced ) physical sacrifices in the name of National Security. ....

It is my understanding that the such a medal would only cost a measly \$8.00 to make. But, this could not be, as like so many things our elected officials do, they say that they are going to do something for you, and then just let it die off in the cloak halls & ( smoke filled ) back-rooms of Congress. ....

They would rather spend trillions of dollars in bail-out funds to companies that were driven by greed and graft, or reward illegal aliens with American citizenship, or do everything but what they should be doing. As my friend said *"Their motto is - promise em everything - and give em nothing"* . . . . .

Oh, the government has offered compensation, finally; to those service men in need of medical assistance, and money to the veteran, or his widow, or children. This is good, and it's about time someone has pushed forth these tidbits-of-tribute. . . .

But, as usual, the road to this compensation is paved with red tape and mountains of paperwork. Many of these people who have applied for the help, have either been turned down or they were scared off by the "burden-of-proof" paperwork, or they didn't live long enough to see it come to a worthy conclusion. . . .

It is my opinion ( an the opinion of a few others that I have since discusses these issues with ) that the government only made this pitiful gesture, so no one would bring a law suit, because one law suit could lead to another. I guess they figured out, if they made some kind of gesture it would bring enough satisfaction to dilute the complaints, and the complaints would therefore go away. . . .

My friend said that most Atomic-Vet's are currently under the impression that the they ( *D.O.D.* & the *V.A.* ) pick and choose who receives those benefits, and who may not. And, until they can be convinced otherwise, they will most probably keep those impressions and opinions . . . .

Approximately 325,000 men and women participated in all of those nuke tests. Many are no longer with their families now, lying under a grave marker that makes no mention that they are Atomic-Veterans. And, oh yeah, let's not forget that these operations were a "top-secret." No one could talk about those events, or talk about being there, or even tell of their exposure to nuclear radiation. Their discharge papers were absent of these facts. . . .

My friend went on to say that he was told, by some of his military friends, that most of the records ( related to those events ) were purged of any radiation exposure particulars, or that the Dept. of Defense kept two sets of records, one for the government, and one for anyone who might be poking around, asking questions. *"And now they use some fancy arithmetic to 'assume' how much exposure you might have gotten, or to 'assume' what caused you to be sick, and to 'assume' how sick you might be."* he said. He also said *"Heck, I don't 'assume' that I'm sick. . . I am sick. . . and there's no 'assuming' about it"* . . . . .

It has only been since 1996 that they did away with the secrecy pledge. Before that, it was almost impossible to verify that a veteran was involved in any kind of nuclear weapon test. After the secrecy pledge was lifted, it became possible to call a toll free number and speak to a very nice ( *D.T.R.A.* ) lady about getting proof that the Atomic-Vet was involved any kind of nuclear test . .

I also learned from my friend that our allies, who participated with our service men in those Pacific nuke tests, have honored those veterans that served their respective countries. The United States of America is the only country that has not given their veterans any proper, visible & meaningful recognition for being placed into harm's way, and being wounded by an invisible enemy. What a disgrace this is !!!

I am asking our Representatives and Senators to stand up for what is right. I am asking all of you to call, or write to your Congressmen & women, your Senators and even the President and ask them to do the right thing, before these veterans all die off. All it's going to cost you is a stamp and small bit of your time. My husband was a casualty, not in the sense of him





NANCY YOUNG

taking a bullet from an enemy's gun, but rather an invisible ( radiation bullet ) from an atomic weapon enemy. He was a very young man during those tests, a young man dedicated to serving his country, and a young man that was unaware that he was being taken advantage of, and I think "we" owe him and **all** of the other young men & women who were also taken advantage of, in similar nuclear weapon radiation exposure assignments a big debt of thanks and gratitude. . . .

Those tests were a necessary mission of fact finding. The time has come for the *United States of America* to, once and for all, honor them as heroes. Please join me in this fight, we need you to help us do the right thing. We cannot let another Atomic Veteran die without proper recognition . . . .

My sons had to give up their Dad, just like lots of other sons & daughters of deceased Atomic-Vets. At a time in their lives when he was most needed, he was not there. My grandchildren have no memories of their Pa-Pa . . . .

He didn't get to stand on the sidelines and watch them play Little-League baseball, or take them to Boy-Scout camp, or share with them some of their other favorite things. He had no chance to cheer them on, or tell them stories. My family was cheated of his time. And we all miss him so much . . . . .

Life is not fair, and no one said it would be. This honor is something "we" as Americans owe my husband and all of America's Atomic-Veterans. I am asking you all to join me, and to **"step up and make today count for something."**

Atomic Veterans are not getting any younger, and they are now dying off at the rate of several thousand per month. Maybe my friend was correct, and the last Atomic-Veteran standing will be standing without proper honors, and just a lone obscure figment of the past "cold-war" frenzies. . . .

I want to offer my special thanks to all *N.A.A.V.* Officers & Directors for their dedicated efforts, and for helping me get through the claims system. And I want to also say, God Bless America's Atomic-Veterans and their families. . . .

**My name is: Nancy Young ( MN ) Atomic-Veteran widow**

*Editor's note: Sharon Engle & Nancy Young are only two of more than 50+ surviving widows, or family members, of Atomic-Vets, who have visited our website ( within the last 36 months ) downloaded the A-Vet-Claims data, gathered the required info., filed a ( V.A. or D.O.J. ) claim, and are now receiving their rightful benefits. We take special pleasure in thanking Sharon & Nancy for making public their successes in these areas, and are also thankful to all who have sought out our assistance in these areas of extreme importance. We are also humbled by the many grateful "thank-you" phone calls that we have received, after the fact. It is of prime importance that we continue our Atomic-Veteran survivor outreach efforts, so as to produce similar results. . . .*

**VOICES FROM NUCLEAR HELL !!!**

**Crossroads ( 1946 ):** Hello *N.A.A.V.* – I am *Dick Cusolito*, and I joined the *393rd Bomb Squadron*, based out of Roswell New Mexico, in March of 1946 and was assigned to the aircraft electrical shop as an electrician *MOS 747*. A few weeks later me and some of my bud's were transferred to the *Air Instrumentation and Test Requirement Unit ( AITRU )* and was shipped out by rail to Camp Stoneman in Pittsburg, CA. From there, we then were transported by truck

to Oakland, CA., boarded a U.S. Navy ( AKA ) troop ship, and we then sailed to *Bikini Island* which is a part of the Marshall Island group in the far western Pacific Ocean. The trip took about ten days to Honolulu, where we stayed overnight and then it took ten more days to get to *Enewetak*. We lived in a two story Quonset hut. I was fortunate in being assigned to the electrical shop. While there, I got into some real good fishing, until they started blow-in up everything with atom bombs. . . .

There were fifteen electricians on the atoll, but only five were assigned to the shop. The rest were assigned to other duties. The *AITRU* turned out to be a B-17 outfit consisting of mother ships and ( radio-controlled ) drones. The Mother Ships were rigged to guide the Drones through the Atomic cloud and collect air samples. The B-17's required very little from electricians in the way of service. . . .

We shared a Quonset with the post electrician and I found my self helping him out with his duties. We expected we might get to fly to parallel the generators, but there was no chance, as the Crew-Chiefs took care of that job. I never did get to work on an airplane while I was there. . . .

I only got to fly once as an observer on a search and rescue mission. I was fascinating to watch the air crews and ground controllers practicing takeoffs and landings and the ground control handing off the drones to the mother ships and the mother ships returning control on the landings. . . .

The first Atomic test "*Able*" was an air drop and we embarked on an *APA* the day before the first test and sailed away in case, we were told, the wind should blow toward us at the time of the explosion. We returned to the lagoon, a day or two after the test. . . .

The second test ( Baker ) we remained on Bikini and watched the B-17's leave for the test site and return. Now that Baker test was the damnest thing I have ever seen. The whole lagoon was one big tidal wave, and ships were tossed all over the place. After the test, all monitor aircraft returned safely, except the last one. As it approached the end of the runway it did not stop ( something failed ). . . .

There was no barrier and it rolled of the end of the runway down a low embankment across a perimeter road and another embankment and out onto the reef. Fortunately the tide was out and we all rushed out the airplane and managed to push it back to the roadway where it was winched backup on to the field and repaired. . . .

After that, we were told it was flown back home with the rest of the Squadron. By the first of August we embarked on another Navy AKA for the return trip home. We stayed two nights in Honolulu and then we sailed on to San Francisco, where we went under Golden Gate bridge at noon on my 20th birthday - August 22, 1946. We then returned to Roswell by train and after a few days I was given per diem and 15 days delay en-route to Fort Dix, N.J. where I got my final discharge. . . .

Since then I have had a few bouts with skin cancers and other "old-age" afflictions, and I have heard that some of my buddies have died from radiation sickness of various kinds. I tried to keep in touch with them and get some updates on their health, but none of my letters were answered. . . .

My attempts to get information from the Dept. of Defense was also ignored, or denied. I guess we were not supposed to mention anything about those days, but I was told that it's OK now. Thanks for letting me tell my part of the Atom-bomb tests that I was in. . .

*Richard D. Cusolito ( Atomic-Veteran ) status - unknown*

## NEW H-Q FOR NUKE WAR STAFF

**Omaha, Nebraska:** U.S. taxpayers are set to be fleeced of \$565 million for a new *Air Force Strategic Command* headquarters at Offutt Air Force Base near Omaha. The control center manages the entire U.S. nuclear weapons arsenal, and carries out missions in space and cyberspace as well. Planning and design of the new complex started in 2009 with a \$10 million earmark, and construction is expected to be completed in 2016. Nearly 4,000 military personnel work at the nuclear war complex in support of the Joint Strategic Target Planning Staff, which oversees the country's land-based missiles, nuclear-armed jet bombers and ballistic missile submarines. . . .

*Omaha World Herald – Feb. 14, 2011*

## "RAD-BADGES" AT THE OLYMPICS !!

### "A Little Radiation with the Olympics"

**London England -** More than 7,000 metric tons of radioactive wastes, including Thorium, Plutonium, Uranium and Radium were buried under the site of the 2012 Olympic Games stadium that is now under construction in London. The waste was accidentally uncovered during site excavation activities. Government authorities okayed the mixing, or "diluting" of some of the contaminated soil from near the surface with other ( low-level ) waste and had it placed in a radiation storage bunker and built into the approach to a bridge in the Olympic Park 400 meters from the Olympic Stadium. Officials of the Olympic Delivery Authority ( in July ) denied a request for data on radiation monitoring, and told the *Guardian* "*The public interest in maintaining the exemption [ to withhold the information ] outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information*" . . . . .

The Banner Chemicals Company contaminated the soil and groundwater beneath the site with vinyl chloride, and the company's chemical storage facility was bulldozed to make way for the stadium. Cleanup will continue after the games conclude. The *Guardian* uncovered the facts about the dumps through ( Britain's ) Freedom of Information Act. . . . .

Banner Chemicals was paid almost \$20 million for the land. After the games finish, a housing development is planned in that area. Remediation has been on-going at a cost of approx. \$15 million and Olympic organizers assure the government that athletes, spectators, staff and service workers will be safe from any harm. . . .

Questions remain about the long-term radiation exposure risks to future residents who may purchase, or lease homes on, and near the site. The Olympic location was once home to many polluting industries and contained a number of landfills where illegal toxic dumping was commonplace. . . . .

## RUSSIA'S RADIOACTIVE MYSTERY

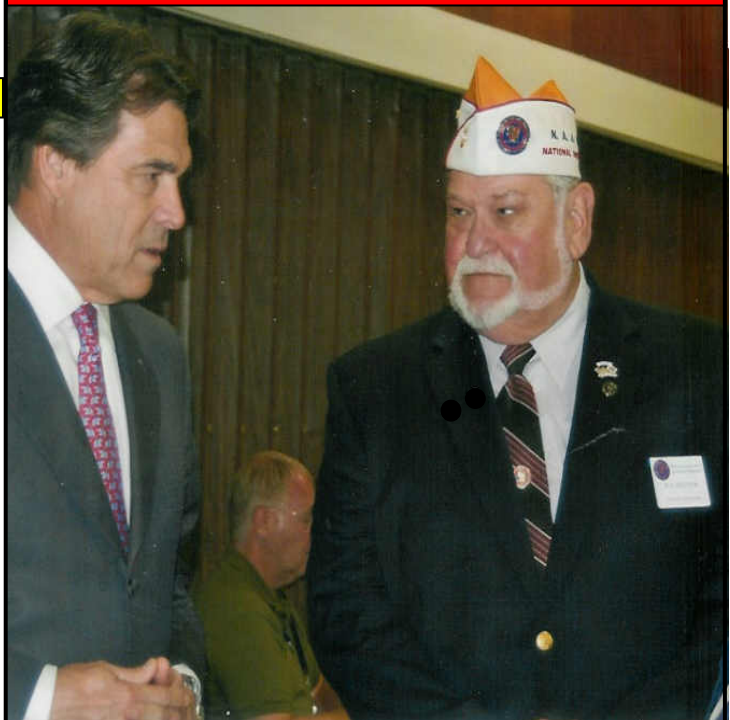
**Vladivostok, Russia -** Radiation alarms went off in the Sea Port of Vladivostok after highly contaminated metal pipes made their way to the city by rail – without detection - from St. Petersburg, in Russia's far west, to the east coast, a journey of more than 4,000 miles across 12 time zones. The pipes were reportedly emitting four times the gamma radiation allowed under government limits. . . . .

The cargo is too hot for local authorities to handle, and Bogatyr, the company responsible for the shipment, has said it will retrieve the highly hazardous materials. An investigation into the origin of the ( illegally hot ) shipment is ongoing. The pipes were described by *Bellona* as "*highly dangerous to human health,*" and the train car hauling the load was moved to a dead-end

track, and placarded with radiation danger signs. The pipes were bound for a \$9.2 million construction project at the upcoming Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit to be hosted in Vladivostok in 2012. The project's prime contractor is reportedly checking all the on-site construction materials for any evidence of radiation emissions. The status of the project schedule is in question, until authorities can be fully convinced that all will be safe for further activities.

*Bellona - Nov. 13, 2010*

## GOVERNOR PERRY SET'S UP VET'S BOARD



**American Legion Post 490 ( So. Houston, Tx. )**

Texas Governor *Rick Perry* ( shown above with *N.A.A.V. Cdr. R.J. Ritter* ) selected American Legion Post 490 to announce the formation of a new *Texas Veterans Advisory Board* for the purposes of working with all State-wide *Veterans Administration* ( *V.A.* ) facilities, so as to insure the timely and complete processing of service connected health issue claims filed by Texas Veterans returning from the Gulf-War region. *Ritter* is a member of Post 490, and over the last several years, has held several Officer positions . . . . .

Perry expressed an interest in the workings of the ( *National* ) *Veteran's Advisory Board on ( radiation ) Dose Reconstruction* ( of which *Ritter* is a member ), and was open to any and all suggestions that may be helpful to the newly appointed members of the *Texas Veteran's Board*. One of the issues of major concern was the long term effects of exposure to the residues of Depleted Uranium munitions . . . . .

The State of Louisiana has a ( legislated ) mandate that all returning Veterans, residing within the State, be tested ( by the *V.A.* ) for any traces of *D.U.* that may be in their system. This normally can be accomplished with a complete blood test and urinalysis . . . . .

It must also be noted, that on Gov. Perry's watch, the State of Texas became the 12<sup>th</sup>. State to adopt a resolution recognizing *July 16<sup>th</sup>*. as *Atomic Veteran Day of Remembrance*. We will follow up on the developing status of the new *Texas Veteran's Board* at a later date. . . . .

## "TUMBLER-SNAPPER" FLASHBACK

My name is *Clark Caldwell*, and the following comments are related to my Atomic-Veteran nuclear weapon test experiences. While in the Air-Force, and during the first part of April ( 1952 ) I noticed a sign-up sheet on our squadron bulletin board. It was a notice for a limited number of volunteers to participate in an Atomic Bomb Exercise at *Yucca Flats, Nevada*. . . . .

Quite a number of men had already signed the "nuke" sheet. There was no indication on that sheet that we could be putting ourselves into "harms-way." Using "great wisdom" and "foolhardy anticipation," I signed my name and that of my close friend, *Bill Thomas*, right at the top of the sheet ( above all the other names ). . . . .

A week or so later *Bill* and I were notified that our orders were being processed and that we would be part of the planned exercise. We were also told that we were leaving in 2 days. . . . .

The flight to Nevada was most eventful. I believe the plane we were on was a C-119, perhaps, the first version of the famous "Flying-Boxcars". The C-119's were most famous for their blazing speed ( maximum of 250 mph ), and their smooth ride - if a flight of geese flew a cross pattern in front of them, the wake would cause the plane to shake like a belly dancer traipsing on a hot grill . . . . .



C - 119

The base cooks had made up box lunches for everyone. We had barely started the flight when we experienced a high amount of turbulence. As the plane was not pressurized nor heated, the flight had to stay low, at about 8,000 - 10,000 feet, or so. The plane pitched, dropped and bucked all the way to *Indian Springs AFB*, which was a short distance from *Camp Desert Rock*. . . . .

Between the turbulence, engine noise and the predestined smell of engine oil & gas, I had never before, nor since, ever seen so many folks get air-sick. They used up all the "barf-bags," many of the lunch boxes, and in some instances, their fatigue hats. I can only remember the flight crew, *Bill* and myself as the only ones that didn't get sick on that flight. We had a great time eating fried chicken, rolls and drinking lots of milk. . . . .

I guess the bananas caused the most problem. We talked with our mouths full, and offered mashed bananas to everyone. The only remarks we seemed to get was something like "*were going to kill you ass-holes before we land.*" We weren't worried as none of them could hardly move anyhow, let alone stand up and cause us any trouble. . . . .

After setting down at Indian Springs, & getting cleaned up, we were trucked over to Camp Desert Rock, where we unloaded our gear, then it was over to Camp Mercury for orientation. We were first greeted by one of the Scientists who was in charge of the test procedures, then we heard from a Maj. Gen. who was in



NUKE TEST ORIENTATION DRILL AT CAMP MERCURY, NV.

charge of the test exercises. During this drill, a Master Sgt. said "*I know you all are young and full of piss & vinegar, and most of your brains are below your belt buckle. But know this, if you pay attention to what you are told to do, and how to do it, you will not have any serious problems.*" . . . . .

It was only when we got back to Camp Desert Rock, which was only a few miles from Camp Mercury, that I got the feeling that we were being treated special. We were told we were the first Air Force troops to participate in an Atomic bomb test exercise. . . . .

Our tents had wooden floors, how about that ! We were also told that only the Army personnel who were permanently assigned to Camp Desert Rock had facilities as good as ours. Our bunks were already set up and made, and our tent had been recently cleaned. Someone put up a sign that said: *Welcome to Motel Desert Rock* . . . . .

Our assigned camp mess-hall tent was really close. The only negative aspect was the latrine. It was inside a big tent, and they had constructed a long wooden trough out of lumber. The bottom was raised about a foot off the ground at one end, then sloped down to about six inches at the other end. The short guys always sat on "low" end. . . . .

A constant flow of water was maintained at the upper end and flowed out of the shallow end into a drainage ditch. Not what you would expect at a motel, but our latrine was a little better than just a plain pair of boards over a slit trench. . . . .



CAMP DESERT ROCK TROOPS "FALL-IN" FOR A ( 1951 ) BUSTER-JANGLE NUKE TEST EXERCISE BRIEFING. THEY SOON ADOPTED THE MONIKER OF "THE GUINEA-PIG BRIGADE"

I am not sure, but I think that normally there were about 12 men to a tent. The only men that I can remember, by name, being in our tent were: *Verl Jensen, Bud Killgren, Bill Thomas* and myself. I can't remember where they were from, but I do know that they were all out of *Clovis Air Force Base*. . . . .

I remember *Verl* because he was an instrument technician with a good knowledge of electrical circuits. There were no electrical outlets in the tent, only a hanging cord with a light bulb, so *Verl* "jerry-rigged" a way to be able to plug in my electric razor, and we all used it every day we were there. . . .

We went through various briefings regarding the forthcoming A-bomb drop, and were briefed in every aspect of the test; the mission purpose, what they expected to prove, what our participation would accomplish, and specifically that we had nothing to worry about. They said "everything would be OK." We were even told the size of the bomb. It would be much bigger than either of the bombs dropped on *Hiroshima* or *Nagasaki*. They also told us that we would witness the blast from approximately 4 miles from ground zero. . . .

At the end of every briefing, whoever was in charge would open up the briefing for any questions. It seemed that the question most asked was "will the radiation make me sterile?" The answer was always "No it won't. If you get enough radiation to make you sterile, you won't have to worry about it because you will be dead by then." Now I have to tell you, that those words were a real comfort, and perked us up all to Hell . . . . .

During the time we were at *Camp Desert Rock*, we were trucked out to *Yucca Flats* three times. The first time was for a "dry-run" so we would know exactly what to do. The second trip was supposed to be for the actual drop but was delayed after we were deployed because of unfavorable winds. We were then trucked back to camp. I believe the actual drop was delayed three times because of unfavorable weather conditions . . . .

I mentioned earlier about being treated special. I will explain that now. With the exception of one night, there were Greyhound buses at the base every evening to take us into *Las Vegas*, if we wanted to go.



THE B-50 "BUTTER-CUP" ( A B-29 FITTED WITH LARGER ENGINES TO CARRY HEAVIER LOADS AND INSTRUMENTATION ) WAS THE DELIVERY PLATFORM FOR THE "RANGER" & "TUMBLER-SNAPPER" NUCLEAR WEAPON TEST BOMBS OVER THE NEVADA TEST SITE. . .

over to slowly count to 15. Then we could get up and look at the bomb blast. The Sergeant told us to do exactly what we were told, but don't count to 15. As soon as the blast ( flash ) was over to jump up turn around, and look at the blast. He said if we waited to count, we would miss the most amazing thing we would ever see. . . . .

After all the delays the day finally came, and we were trucked out to *Yucca Flats* and assembled just four miles away from ground zero. The foxholes were already prepared, they were about 5 ½ feet deep, 2 ½ feet wide and about 6 feet long. Two men were assigned to each foxhole. We had about an hour or two to wait before the drop. To give us some kind of a comparison between atomic power and conventional power, the Army set of an explosion of TNT. To the best of my recollection it was about 2 tons, but it could have been much larger. The blast was in an area near the mountains to the North and slightly East of where we were. We could feel the ground shake, and hear the noise of the blast. . . .

There were two young soldiers from New York City that had just got out of basic training, who claimed they were raised in a tenement area of the city and the only time they had ever seen grass, was when they went to a local park. They seemed to be having "a ball", one of them was a real nut, and nicknamed him "Nutsy." He was always chasing lizards, horny toads and snakes. When he would catch one he would chase down his buddy, who was scared to death of them, all over the area, eventually throwing them on him, after which he would scream and holler and jump around all over the place. Once he so scared, that he pissed on himself. But "Nutsy" just kept on bugging the Hell out of his buddy. . . . .

I am telling this only because of what happened next. We were advised to get ready as the B-50 bomber that was carrying the bomb would be arriving shortly. The Army Lieutenant in charge of our group, started yelling at everyone to get in their assigned fox-holes. About this time *Nutsy* dove under a sage brush, jumped up with both hands clasped in front of him, with what appeared to be a lizard tail sticking out of his hands. . . . .

*Nutsy* ran to his foxhole and threw the object right down on top of his buddy. His buddy screamed like Hell, jumped out of the foxhole and started jumping up and down. All this time the Lieutenant was screaming for him to get the hell back in the damned fox hole, and of course, he would not do it . . . . .

Looking up in the sky to the Northeast, we could see the bomber approaching over the mountains, and even hear the roaring engines as it got closer and closer to the drop zone.



" HEY SARGE, WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THAT THE AIR FORCE WOULD BE INVOLVED WITH TRENCH WARFARE EXERCISES "

The only night we didn't get to go was when they let the Army and Marine test troops go into town, which was the only night they got to go. We were told that the paratroopers never got to go into *Las Vegas* at all. Now you can't tell me them paratroopers don't like to look at sexy gals !!!

The night before the actual drop, *Bill* and I talked with a Master Sgt. who was stationed at the base. He told us he had witnessed many A-bomb blasts and that we should disregard one of the main things we had been briefed on. In the briefings we were told that we were to kneel down in the trenches, close our eyes and cover our faces with our hands, and when the blast was



Even seeing that plane and knowing that the bomb would be dropped very shortly couldn't convince *Nutsy's* buddy to get his ass back in the damn foxhole. . . .

The Lieutenant kept on coaxing him, to no avail. He finally threatened him with physical violence and a Court Marshall if he didn't come over and get in the Lieutenant's foxhole. That got his attention, but by that time the bomb drop was only a minute or so away. . . .

It was a wonder that any of us could see anything after that, as we were laughing so damned hard we were crying. Incidentally, what *Nutsy* threw into the foxhole was only a handful of dirt with a crumpled up thistle stalk protruding out of it. We then knelt down, closed our eyes, placed our hands over our faces and within just a matter of minutes the bomb roared to life. With your eyes closed and covered by your hands you could see all of the bones in your fingers. . . .

As soon as the flash was over, Bill and I both jumped up and looked out over the edge of the foxhole. Man-o-man, were we both speechless. It seemed that even though we were four miles away from ground zero, that bomb blast was right on top of us. .

The name of this test shot was "*Charlie*" at it was a 31 kiloton blast. It was also beautiful, a massive flaming doughnut was in the center, and just about every color in a rainbow could be seen in the flames being burned into that slowly rising doughnut ring. . . .

There was no beginning point for the flames, they appeared to come from the outside, being swept underneath and then pushing up through the center, all in one continuous sweeping circular boiling motion. It was a raging, boiling inferno that defied one's capability of being able to adequately describe. . . .

Less than 10 seconds after the bomb exploded the blast shock wave reached us. The force of that wave slammed us back against the wall of our foxhole. Shortly thereafter, we were hit with another blast, this time from behind, smashing us into the front of the foxhole. We were told later that the rising mushroom cloud was causing a vacuum, and that then caused to winds to change direction. . . .

The doughnut was obviously the most beautiful and impressive part of the blast but the monstrous billowing mushroom cloud that appeared was also mind boggling, as the cloud was right over us and swayed backwards and up as it rose into the sky. If the outside parameter of the blast reached us, then it would have been eight miles in diameter when it reached to the other side. .

Anything standing would have been knocked slap-dab on it's ass. I have got to say, that it was a helluva gigantic desert-fry event.

In trying to put this in perspective, imagine being in a desert and seeing a dirt storm rushing toward you. It hits you, goes right on past, then without warning, it reverses itself and comes back over you then heads back toward where you first seen it coming from. Then all at once all this power, dirt and debris is suddenly sucked up into the sky by a giant vacuum. Now that is one helluva sight to behold. . . .

We watched and marveled at the size and magnitude of what we were experiencing, and I can still see, hear and feel those effects today. Another unbelievable part was the shear noise and feel of the explosion. The ground rumbled and shook like there was 1,000 dinosaurs stampeding towards our foxhole. That noise and feel in comparison to the TNT explosion we had earlier experienced would be like comparing an ant with an elephant. There just was no comparison. . . .

We have all seen thunderheads in the sky. They are the beautiful white clouds that generally start about 10,000 to 15,000 feet and reach upwards of 40,000 feet. That mushroom cloud from this nuke test reached from the ground up and beyond the 15,000 ft. altitude. . . .



PARATROOPERS DROP INTO THE GROUND-ZERO "HOT-ZONE"

All of us climbed out of our foxholes and tried to adequately describe what we had just witnessed. It was like everyone thought they were the only who saw it and wanted to tell everyone else what it was they saw. After a head-count and fast check, everyone was laughing and having a good time. Even the Lieutenant was happy. Hell, I think he was so damn happy that by then, he had even forgiven *Nutsy*. . . .

About a half-hour after the blast, several planes appeared from the south. They were carrying paratroopers that were to be dropped into the ground zero "hot-zone" area, to show that it was possible to disperse troops into an area where an above ground atomic bomb had just been detonated, before enemy troops had time to regroup and prepare for ( a real ) battle. . . .

The first planeload of men were dropped and the second planeload was only partially dropped when the aircraft crew's got orders from the control base to cancel anymore of the paratroop drops. We were later told that the nuke explosion had changed the atmospheric pressure or the density of the air, or something to that effect, and the size of the chutes were not adequate for the weight of the men. . . .

They were coming down way too fast and were landing very hard. Many had minor injuries; broken or sprained ankles and knees, bruised arms, busted butts and especially bruised egos. Those paratroopers were housed in a row of tents right behind ours at the *Desert Rock Hotel* camp. . . .



THE SLOW MARCH TO THE GROUND-ZERO "HOT-ZONE"

We talked to them about the hard landings and what I just described was the information they passed on to us. We were originally scheduled to be picked up by trucks, taken to within one mile of ground zero, and then we would join the other military types to march into the "hot-zone" one hour after the blast. For some reason this was delayed, so we waited for a couple of hours and then we were trucked to within one mile of the "ground-zero" blast area. . . .

At this point we were all issued radiation badges. They were pinned onto the front of our uniforms, chest high. We then marched toward the smoldering remains of the "hot-zone." It was not a formal march, we were in route step but were told to stay on a straight-line narrow path and not to wander from it. While we were doing this, the paratroopers were "limping" into the same area. . . .

As we got closer to ground-zero there were significant changes. We saw snakes, several lizards and a rabbit. They appeared to have been blinded by the flash, as they moved irrationally, slowly wandering about in circles. I got chewed out for stepping out of line to kick a small snake out of the way, all the while keeping a eye on *Nutsy*, to see what he was going to do next. . . .

When we got within ¼ mile from ground-zero the desert sand was becoming harder and blacker, and that was when we started seeing the test animals. There were goats and sheep moving around aimlessly, some were bleating & moaning. You could tell by looking at them what direction they were facing when the bomb lit off. Their hides were burnt black on one side or the other. If their legs were white and their bodies black they had probably been laying down, before getting half fried by the blast. They were also blind. . . .

They had originally been tethered and the blast had blown them loose, many had short strands of rope around their necks. Army personnel were trying to round them all up. They were hard to catch, as they jumped at the slightest noise. The animals were all part of the exercise. We soon got the feeling that they didn't want us to see the animals and that was why we were delayed earlier.

At ground zero and the surrounding area many structures had been built. Buildings, building faces, lean-to's, bunkers, etc. Some were made out of concrete, some from wood and other materials. There were many aircraft strategically placed around the area; in ravines, behind mounds of dirt and in some instances right out in the open.

They were all busted to Hell and back. The same held true for many kinds of Army weapons. Every thing had been built and placed to give the broadest and best information possible as to both the destructive and protective capabilities in regards to the

blast. As we walked into the heart of the ground zero area, the desert sand was more solidified, it was crusted from the heat of the bomb. You could easily break through it by stomping your feet. We were not allowed to pick up anything or touch any objects, including the badly damaged equipment. . . .

At the center point of ground zero was a Sherman tank. The bomb had exploded in the air directly above it. The tank had been burned black and the wide track treads were torn off and deposited 300 yards to the south. The tank tread wheels had then been forced straight down into the ground about 1-1/2 feet. The pressure to accomplish this must have been tremendous. As we walked all around the ground zero area, we were amazed at the additional destruction; however, there were some positive sides to it. . . .

Dummy bodies had been placed in ditches, by buildings, on benches, chairs, inside buildings and wherever they thought they might get some kind of protection. In observing all the dummies, it was apparent that it was possible to keep from being burned with a minimum amount of protection. All the dummies that were outside, without protection were burnt. Those that were in the ditches, even shallow ones ( 12-14 inches deep ) were not burnt. Those along side or behind buildings were also protected. . . .



SCIENTISTS FROM LOS ALAMOS LABS INSPECT THE REMAINS OF MILITARY FIELD ARTILLERY & VEHICLES AFTER A NUKE TEST

We surmised that you could survive the burning with little protection, but protection from radiation would be another story. We felt all the animals that were burnt, even though they were alive when we saw them, would die from either the burns or the effects of the radiation that they were exposed to. . . .

As this stark realization began to sink in, we began to wonder if the dust from the blast that had originally hit us had contained radiation particles. We also began asking each other how much radiation was still hanging around at ground zero ?? And how much did we breath into our lungs, or swallow into our guts ?? By now we were beginning to realize the serious nature of the predicament we were all in at this time. Other than the brevity of those issues, the march back to the trucks was uneventful. . . .

On the way back, we discussed what we had seen previously as well as what we had just witnessed. And when we got back to the pickup area, Army personnel retrieved our film badges and threw them all into a box. If there had been any irregularities with the badges, they would have never known who wore which badge. They were given out randomly without any type of identification as to who received which one. . . .

They then went over each of us with a Geiger-counter to see if we had any radioactive elements on us. As they went over me the Geiger-counter beeped, an officer standing right there said the beep was attributed to the radium dial on my watch. . . .



THE UNIT PHOTOGRAPHER GETS A FAST RADIATION CHECK-UP

The Army had a truck there that had a shower installed in it, in case someone showed up with radioactive elements above the predetermined levels. We were never told what that level was. I did not see anyone go into the shower, or receive any new "radiation-free" clothing . . . . .

That night a ( C.I.D. ) Officer gave us a debriefing, telling us what we could say and what we couldn't say. We were allowed to express what we saw when the bomb went off, our feelings about it, but nothing about the size and power of the bomb and absolutely nothing about the paratroopers, or the animals, or what we saw at ground zero. We were told that if we said anything about that, it would be a Court-martial offense, and we could do some serious time in a Federal prison. . . . .

They also told us we hadn't received enough radiation to matter much. For a long time I have felt that last statement was not completely true, but back then, we were dumb volunteers who wanted and received a night out "on-the-town" on the government's nickel. I would realize many years later, that it was a small price for the government to pay for the "goods received". . . . .

Wilbur Clark, the owner of the *Desert Inn* in Las Vegas, hosted a dinner for a few servicemen from each branch of the service. He also invited those that had witnessed the blast from a safe distance, which was about 20 miles away from ground zero. This included the news media, and the Generals and a few high ranking government officials. . . . .

Every news correspondent at the dinner tried to get someone to tell them, in great detail, what happened, as they wanted to have a scoop on a nuke blast. No one obliged them, as we all had our dire warnings to "not spill the beans," regardless of who was doing the asking . . . . .

I will be turning 81 in less than a month and thought it was time to let my grandchildren know about one of the most eventful things in my lifetime experience. Back then, I was only 21 when I volunteered for that event. Back then, I was also Young, Dumb, Trusting, and Ready for a host of new adventures. . . . .

I was also ripe for the plucking to become a military "GUINEA PIG" for the good old U. S. of A. I had friends who were in the service with me at Clovis Air Force Base, who have died of cancer but I can't remember if they were at "Tumbler-Snapper" or any of the many other Nevada nuke tests that followed the T-S series. It would be interesting to know if that was so. . . . .

I don't know if my being a participant had a detrimental effect on my health but I have had several different forms of cancer,

but fortunately I have been lucky, so far, and healed well. I also have had two total hip replacements, one in 1985, the other one in 1994. Both hips work fine and only stop me from running and jumping. . . . .

I am as active as I can be, and try to enjoy life the best I can. I have never blamed the government for any of my problems, nor have I sought compensation. I guess I am one of the lucky few. Of course, it sure would have been nice though to have gotten a "Nuke-Medal" of some kind. Time and the possibility of serious health problems, coupled with new findings from radiation researchers, may eventually change my present attitude. . . . .

After I found out, a few years ago, that I could now talk about those experiences at the Nevada Test Site, I could not find anyone who was fully able to understand what it was I was trying to say, or who would believe the brevity & substance of my story. So now, I can thank **N.A.A.V.** for putting my recollections of those events in their newsletter, and wish all of my fellow Nuke-Vet's, who were with me, back then, the very best. And wouldn't it be nice to catch up with ole "Nutsy" one more time !!

Clark Caldwell ( Atomic-Veteran ) current status, unknown

## RUSSIA TO CONTROL U.S. URANIUM FIRMS

**Cheyenne, Wyoming** – ARMZ, the Uranium holding company of Russia's state-owned nuclear energy group *Rosatom Corp.*, has taken control of *Uranium One America*, a Vancouver, Canada firm and with it, both a Uranium mine and a Uranium processing facility located in the state of Wyoming. . . . .

The *Nuclear Regulatory Commission ( NRC )* was quick to assert that it's oversight of the mines should negate any military concerns over foreign control of U.S. Uranium resources. About 4.4 million pounds of Uranium are extracted every year in the United States. ARMZ's production likely won't exceed a third of this U.S. total because other mines are set to open, that would boost total production this summer. . . . .

Julian Steyn, at a Washington D.C. consulting firm, *Energy Resources International, Inc.*, told the press, "They [ Russia ] didn't buy it because of the U.S.," he said, "Unlike what some may think, it wasn't a cunning, scheming Russian thing." Well, maybe, or maybe not, or perhaps it was just a "selling off of U.S. resources sort of thing." . . . . .

Bloomberg News – Dec. 12, 2010

## "TOXIC WASTE" CANDY - NOT GOOD

### "Toxic Waste Candy is Really Not Good" – Really ??

There was a report floating about, several years ago, describing a not-so-popular candy absurdly called "Nuclear-Sludge." The stuff is back in the news, this time because it actually is toxic. . . . .

A recall of all flavors of the "Toxic-Waste" brand of chewy bars, brought to you by *Candy Dynamics*, was issued on January 27, 2011, after a partial recall went public January 13<sup>th</sup>, because it contained lead. The California Department of Public Health measured some of the candy's lead contamination at .24 and .311 parts-per-million, which is two to three times greater than the 0.1 ppm ( Food & Drug Administration ) limit. . . . .

Lead poisoning can lead to nervous system injury, brain damage, seizures or convulsions, mental retardation, coma, kidney damage, depression, panic disorders and even death for young children. Pregnant women are particularly at risk from the toxicity of lead. Symptoms of lead poisoning include stomach aches, colic, nausea, vomiting and insomnia. . . . .

The candy was sold individually, in 30, 80, and 120 piece bags and in large "party-bag" size. Flavors of the "Toxic-Waste-Nuclear-Sludge" include cherry, green apple and blue raspberry. The "Toxic-Waste" brand candies, distributed by *Candy Dynamics* have been purchased & imported from Pakistan since 2007. The California DPH says it is not uncommon to find elevated lead levels in imported candies. . . . .





**HOUSTON, TX. - Erin Slotnick**, a member of Girl Scout Troop 2024 ( Rancho Santa Margarita, CA. ) & her mother *Mary-Anne* were in Houston visiting with family, and her Grandfather ( *Fred M. Soland* ) who participated in the ( 1946 ) "Crossroads" tests, as a crewmember of the *U.S.S. O'Brien ( DD-975 )*. . . . .

After leaving Navy "Boot-Camp" ( in San Diego, CA. ), Fred, was then engaged in extensive training for the invasion of *Japan*, when *Hiroshima & Nagasaki* were destroyed with Atomic-bombs in August, 1945. After the Japanese surrender, his ship was then assigned to participate in the "Crossroads" tests in the Marshall Islands. . . .

As is the case with America's aging Atomic-Vet's, *Fred's* memory is beginning to "fog" up, and he is having a bit of a problem with his "recollections." From time to time, he will remember the name of an old shipmate, but can't quite remember what that shipmate's duty specialty was. . . . .

Learning of her Grandfather's nuclear radiation exposure events, and the pain & suffering experienced by several thousand Atomic-Veterans, *Erin* elected to dedicate her Girl Scout "Gold" award project to the construction of a Memorial at a local public park adjacent to El Toro Marine Base, that would properly honor America's Atomic-Veterans. The Girl Scout "Gold" award is the equivalent of the Boy Scout's "Eagle" award. . . . .

Given that *Erin* & her Mom were in Houston, she wanted to discuss her project, first hand, with ( *N.A.A.V.* ) *Cdr. Ritter*, who was most impressed with the outline and substance of her project layout, and furnished her with an "official" letter of approval & sponsorship that will assist her in promotion & fund raising for her dedicated project . . . .

Any **Atomic-Veteran**, or the family member, or friend of a deceased Atomic-Vet, who would like to have that A-Vet's name on the Memorial, can do so by filling out the form ( below ) and sending a **\$50.00** contribution to *N.A.A.V.* for such purposes. . . .

**Atomic-Veteran Memorial Plaque Application Form**

Name ( print ): \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Service Branch: \_\_\_\_\_

Test or Series: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Test location: \_\_\_\_\_ Fee: \$ 50.00

Mail this application to:

**N.A.A.V. 11214 Sageland Houston, TX. 770889**

My name is *Edward J. Cushing*. I was an *Electronic Technician's Mate 2/C* assigned to the *U.S.S. Barton ( DD-722 )*. I boarded the *Barton* at the Alameda Naval Air Base. Across the bay from San Francisco. Back then, I was the Ships Electronic Technician. . . .

It was my job to repair all ship's electronic equipment, including Sonar, Radio and Radar. That was a great responsibility at age 19. ( They now have a Technician for each of those positions. ) I was told we were heading to Bikini for the Atomic Bomb tests. No mention was ever made about nuclear radiation hazards. . . . .

While tied to the Dock, they placed ( on the after-deck ) a very large wooden crate - about 10 ft. long, 6 ft. wide and 8 ft. tall. That crate was guarded by ( armed ) Marines 24 hours a day all the way to "Kwajalein" where it was then removed. After the "Able" test, our Captain said that crate contained the Atomic Bomb that was used over Bikini, for that test. . . .

We also had several military photographers on board our ship. Before the tests, they removed the 20 mm Gun barrels from their turrets and installed very large cameras with long-distance lens. They were about 3 ft. long with a 6 inch lens opening. . . . .

*U.S.S. Barton*, and several other ships, was east of the Bikini Island from the "Able" test. Our glasses were so dark, you could not see your hand in front of your face. When that bomb exploded with it's brilliant flash, I could see the Island and water as clear as day, but just for a second or two. . . .

At the moment of the bright flash, all I heard was cameras clicking from the crew all around me. With the glasses off, I watched the big fire ball roll up through the Atomic cloud. Our ship was nearest to rising mushroom cloud, and we could see the shock wave ( a strong wind ) as it came across the water. When the shock pressure wave hit our ship, I lost my cap, and my shirt flapped so hard, it almost pulled out of my pants. . . .

Then the wind passed and was no more. The explosion sound wasn't very loud, and somewhat muffled. It arrived about the same time as the shock wave. We watched that radiation cloud turn a soft pink, about the color of strawberry ice cream, then it was mixed with lots of other colors. . . .

Then radio controlled airplanes flew through the smoldering cloud, as it drifted to the north-east, while the *Barton* entering the Bikini Lagoon through the *Eneu* entrance. Our job now was to gather water samples from the lagoon. As we were moving into our first position, two small Navy gun boats entered the lagoon at full speed, and then headed into the center of the target fleet. I then lost them between the target ships. Shortly thereafter, the gun-boats appeared and left the lagoon, again at high speed. . . .

On board our ship were two Radiological Survey Scientists, who took water samples. These men wore white smocks with high black rubber boots and black rubber gloves with long cuffs. On their smocks were badges with a large dot in the center. I had no duties and was curious so I watched them closely, as they went about their business. . . .

They had a ( boat ) Davit turned over the starboard side with an electric wench. The cable had a heavy weight with a clamp about a foot above. Empty Canisters were sent down the 50 foot cable and upon hitting the clamp, the Canister would trip allowing sea-water inside. The Rad-scientists took water samples at different depths. When they retrieved the Canisters from the cable, water was spilled from the ships rail all over the walkway where they then poured the water sample into grey lead-lined bottles. . . .



Members of the U.S.S. Barton view the "Baker" test from the ship's deck. . . .

( radiated ) water from the Canister into one of the lead bottles. My thought was, more water was getting on the ship's deck than was getting into them bottles. They then capped the lead bottles and put them into a metal clad trunk with cubed compartments. They then used a Geiger counter to measure the radioactivity of the water samples. .

That information was entered into a book. ( I knew they were measuring for something but I didn't know what, at that time. )

We stopped several times along a path toward "surface-zero." I noticed several of the target ships had fires on their decks, in areas where hose or rope was stored, and there were also fires in the ship's pennant ( signal flag ) boxes. The *U.S.S. Nevada's* large smokestack was bent over to the side, and the paint was burnt from the top of the stack, right down to the ship's deck. . . .

The ( Japanese heavy cruiser ) *Nagato's* upper superstructure paint was burnt all to hell, and some of the other target ships were missing. I had written down the hull number of a Destroyer. It was *DD-411* and I wanted to know its name. It was several years later that I finally learned it was the *U.S.S. Anderson*. . .

By now, the Bikini Island palm trees had very little to no branches, there were no nuts hanging from the palms, and the trunks looked more like toasted telephone poles. The Bikini foliage was smashed flatter than Hell. The Lagoon water was clear and I could see a few fish swimming close to our ship. At this time, we were told that the water radiation count was so low the Geiger counters measured little to nothing. But this was about to change, as radiation levels would be above measuring levels, after the "Baker" test. The scientist-geeks collecting water samples finally finished "surface-zero." Then they radioed the *U.S.S. Mt. McKinley* that the Bikini lagoon was safe, and the other support ships could now return. . . .

With our job completed, and we would not be needed again until the *Baker* test, we steamed across the equator for a Neptune ( Shell-Back ) celebration, which is an old Navy tradition. All Navy personnel ( Officers & enlisted men ) are "Polywogs" until they cross the equator and participate in a special ritual governed by "Neptune," the mythical Lord of the Sea, after which they are forever referred to a "Shell-Back". . . .

While we were converting our Officers & crewmembers to a new level of mystical elegance, a radio broadcast originating from the command ship, *U.S.S. Mt. McKinley* was beamed toward the United States. I had that broadcast piped through-out our ship. The announcer must have been reading from a prepared script, because nothing was happening the way he said it was happening. He acted as if the *Mt. McKinley* was in the lagoon during "Able" test, when actually, the ship was so far off in the distance that it was barely visible. It kept a safe distance from the A-bomb blast because of all the brass, politicians & dignitaries on board. . . .

Then, on July 25, the Barton was one of the last ships to leave the lagoon before the Baker ( underwater ) test shot. We stopped at the lagoon's entrance and watched a gun-boat re-enter the test area. We learned later on, that they had forgot two men who were doing last minute setups on the test "Shot-Barge" that held the "Baker" bomb 90 feet below. The gun-boat Coxswain signaled that they had the two men and was now returning to their assigned test position. . . .

By that time, we were now at our assigned east of the Bikini lagoon entrance. When the Baker bomb erupted from the lagoon's surface, we did not have to use dark glasses to view the rising mushroom cloud. Watching that large wide column of water rise so high was far more impressive than "Able" test. . . .

From our position we could see a small Ship being thrown out of the water column like a toy boat. We were told to brace ourselves for the impact of a large tidal wave. The Island reef must have broke it up and we didn't experience any exceptional wave action. We heard no explosion sound, just the rumbling noise of the rising and falling of millions of tons of sea water. . . .

Once the cloud cleared the Lagoon, we headed to the *Eneu* lagoon entrance. As we steamed slowly into the remains of the target fleet, I noticed that a few more ships missing. Especially one Submarine we passed while taking "Able" radiation samples.

We again stopped several times, along a path toward surface-zero, to gather more sea-water samples. At this time, we were the only ship operating inside the Bikini lagoon. As we approached the center of the blast area, the water was very murky, and saturated with coral flakes & silt. We also saw an occasional group of dead fish, here and there. The Island vegetation was so flat, I could see across the Island from our main deck clear out to the ocean. . . .

The *U.S.S. Saratoga* was listing and the *Nagato* was lower in the water. The *Nagato* had a narrow ledge around the ship just above the water line, and as we arrived close aboard, small waves were splashing onto that ledge. Being the only ship operating inside the lagoon, it felt so eerie not hearing other sounds you would normally hear. Like sounds from other ships, or bish jumping, or bird sounds. It was so quiet we felt we were in a grave yard or on another world. . . . .

The only sound was the idling of our ship's engine, and wind and the waves splashing against our hull. We were talking in whispers until something came over the loud speakers. I then went to the radio shack and piped the radio broadcast from the *Mt. McKinley* over our ships squawk-box speakers. The wind created by the "Baker" test was much stronger than the "Able" test. . . . .

While I was operating the wench to retrieve the water sample canisters, radiated sea-water was carried up the cable to the wench along with the dripping canisters. The wind blew that water, like rain, toward myself and the two radiological survey-geeks. Their white smocks, and my shirt & blues were dripping wet, and sticking against our skins. I had to wipe the water off my face with my shirt sleeve. Mostly my left side as I faced aft with my right side toward the bulkhead while watching the geek-team in front of me. My canvas deck shoes were also soaked from the spilled sea-water. . . . .

I was within arms reach of the sample team. No one told me about any radiation danger, so I let my cloths dry on me. What the Hell, I felt it was only sea-water, and after-all, I was a "salty" sailor. After our second stop, to gather more samples, one of the survey men noticed that the large green dot on his film badge had turned black, and showed it to his partner. . . . .

They seemed very bothered by that, then turned away from me, and talked between themselves in low whisper's. After they stopped talking to each other, their actions were hurried, and they moved faster and talked faster than before. I can remember clearly that one of the men asked the other, "What number do I put in the book when the Geiger counter needle is higher than the meter's printed numbers and it's against the stop?"

The other man said, "Just enter the highest printed number, don't guess." Now I have to interject here, that history would show the radiation levels ( in the lagoon ) were not as strong as it really was because the test equipment could not measure the full effect, and consequently, reconstructed levels of radiation were taken from those low readings. Given that I was a witness to the logging of incorrect data, how can I believe what some government officials are now saying about how much radiation exposure was really experienced by those who were actually there ??

At surface-zero the sample team asked our Captain to leave the lagoon, but would not say why this was an urgent request. Now I knew the sample team wanted to leave the lagoon for some important reason, and I also knew that they were worried about high levels of radiation, but I did not know the nature of the dangers we were facing at that time. The Captain said he had to get permission from the command ship, ( Mt. McKinley ) to leave our assigned post. Our Captain went to the radio shack and sent a message. He then returned and told the survey team that he was waiting for a reply. . . . .

While all this was happening, our ship's pumps were on and the ( fresh-water ) evaporators were converting ( radiated ) seawater to drinking water. While still waiting for a reply from the Mt. McKinley, the ship's squawk-box announced "The Mt. McKinley is now entering the Bikini Lagoon." A good part of our crew rushed to one side of our ship to see the Mt. McKinley, still way off in the distance, and not even close to the lagoon's entrance. .

Still waiting for a reply, one of the sample team said to our Captain, "Sir, it is very dangerous for us to stay here a minute longer. We've been here way too long as it is. I'll take all the responsibility for leaving, now." With that he took a large bolt cutter and cut the cable from the wench. . . . .

The Captain gave orders for "full speed out of here." I never knew a Destroyer could move so fast. After leaving the Eneu entrance, we backed off to normal speed and followed an ocean current from Bikini toward Fiji, taking more water samples along the way. We were told, later, that the trip was intended to wash off radiation from the ship's hull with cleaner ocean water. That didn't seem to work out as planned, as the radiation problem didn't go away. . . . .

I was told the Barton had the highest radiation of any support ship at the Crossroads tests. A few months after those tests, I was transferred to the U.S.S. Blue Ridge ( AGC-2 ) just prior to my discharge. I spent most of my time on the Blue Ridge in sick-bay, with bad ear infections, and had to take lots of penicillin shots. I am convinced that my ear problems were from the radiation contaminated water that was constantly sprayed on me while taking those water samples. On page 230 of the Nuclear Test Personnel Review ( N.T.P.R. ) book, it clearly says that the "U.S.S. Barton ( DD-722 ) crew had higher than average doses of radiation because of the radiological ( contaminated sea-water ) survey activities following the 'Baker' test" . . . . .

Over the years, I have had several medical problems, on my left side. My left ear went dead. I had a growth removed from my left chest. My left Testicle shrunk to half the regular size. I had a left Hernia. I had a cancerous melanoma removed from my left leg. I went through a very serious mental depression, that the Md's said was a chemical imbalance in the brain. I had my cancerous prostate removed. My left Wrist aches. Both Feet ache. I was told those conditions are not due to radiation so don't bother making a claim for those issues. . . .

My thought is this. "If it looks like a Rose. smells it like a Rose,

then I sure as Hell can't be a dill pickle."

Because I was drenched with that highly radioactive Bikini sea-water on my left side, and having developed these conditions on my left side, then none of the physicians could tell me what else could be the underlining cause ? I was also told that crewmembers who were assigned duty aboard the U.S.S. Barton, after the Crossroads tests, had a higher percentage of radiogenic health problems, after the fact. But the U.S. Navy, however; would not acknowledge the Barton's crew having higher than normal medical problems. If the Barton wasn't still radioactive and a health hazard, it could have been used for scrap metal, but the U.S.S. Barton was used for target practice and was sunk.

Edward Cushing ( Atomic-Veteran ) current status - unknown

## AMERICA'S OLDEST ATOMIC-VETERAN



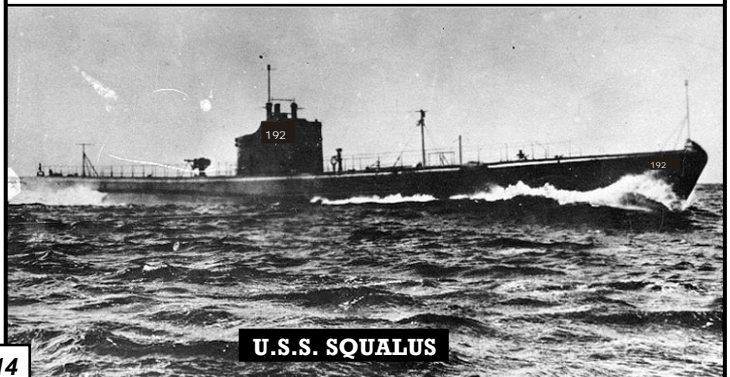
Skip Matthews & wife Vena celebrate his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday with a cake from his crew.

**Lt. Cdr. Floyd H. "Skip" Matthews** ( U.S.N. Retired ) passed away on Feb. 24, 2008 at the age of **105**, and at that time, was Alabama's oldest veteran, and perhaps also the oldest Atomic-Veteran, as well. Born on Feb. 03, 1903, Cdr. Matthews joined the U.S. Navy ( lying about his age to do so ) in 1919, and shortly before the Peace Treaty of Versailles, thus qualifying him as a **WW-I** veteran. During his 30 year naval career, he served as a submariner, under the legendary Adm, Charles "Swede" Momsen, who invented the "Momsen

Lung" re-breathing apparatus used as an underwater escape device. In 1939, Matthews was involved in the rescue of 27 crewmembers of the U.S.S. Squalus ( SS-192 ), which sank off the coast of Portsmouth, New Hampshire during a routine training exercise. . . . .

After receiving his own Submarine command, he was assigned several patrol missions in the western Pacific during **WW-II**, and participated in the ( 1946 ) **Crossroads** and ( 1948 ) **Sandstone** nuclear weapon development tests in the Marshall Islands. He then retired from the Navy in the fall of 1949. It wasn't until he has reached the age of 103, that he and his wife decided to move into a retirement apartment. . . . .

*Editors notes: We just recently learned of Cdr. Matthews death, but given the breath and depth of his service to our country, serving in WW-I & WW-II, and also having participated in Atomic weapon tests, we thought it would be proper to honor his memory in our newsletter. We wish Cdr. Matthew's surviving family the very best. And, as a point of sheer interest, C.A. Powell, who was Chief Radioman on the U.S.S. Squalus, was also my next door neighbor when the Sub went down, and our family was with his family when they received the news that he was rescued by Adm. Momsen's team. . . . .*



U.S.S. SQUALUS

# National Association of Atomic Veterans

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