



# NAAV NEWS

Members' Publication of the National Association of Atomic Veterans

2nd QUARTER 2016



## The Four Points Hotel by Sheraton our Convention Site for 2016

### A Note from our National Commander --

Well gentlemen the Las Vegas Convention is just down the road and enclosed in this mailing is a form that must be filled out and returned to me by August 15 if you are going on the bus tour. I suggest you go to [http://www.nv.doe.gov/library/factsheets/DOENV\\_1033.pdf](http://www.nv.doe.gov/library/factsheets/DOENV_1033.pdf) for more information on the bus tour. The form can be duplicated and must be filled out for all who are going on the tour, so if your spouse is going or a friend, each must fill out a form. So gather up all the information needed and send it to me by August 10th or to NNSA by August 15th. The mailing also includes a form for getting information on how many will be attending the convention with you and the pricing for different activities and meals. Make sure you get that to me by Sept 1st so I can get everything locked in at the hotel.

NOTICE on page nine a box regarding dues. Several members are overdue on their yearly dues and this notice is to remind you if dues are not paid soon after receiving this newsletter you will be removed from the mailing list. We ***need your support*** to continue the newsletter and many have contributed (*beyond their dues*) to keep it coming. So we ask all of those who are overdue to get your renewal into me as soon as possible.

Much activity has been taking place in congress, having to do with recognizing the clean up crew as Atomic Veterans and trying to get July 16th to be a day recognized each year in every state as it was intended in a bill signed by President Reagan years ago. We have included information on this activity on page nine. If you haven't voiced your opinion to your congressmen do so, we need all the help we can get.

### Change of Address, Membership or Renewal...Write or E-Mail National Commander NAAV

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Deadlines are the 1st of every 3rd month and any material submitted after that time may be delayed until next issue. All submissions are to be e-mailed to [bobruyle34@gmail.com](mailto:bobruyle34@gmail.com) or mailed to Robert L. Ruyle-420 Steinway Road-Lincoln, NE 68505-2564. All photos must be sent in JPEG format preferably at 300dpi or mail us an original and we will copy it and get it back to you.

# Operation Hardtack

-- Continued from last newsletter--

The U.S. came to the Taiwan Nationalists aid and we still support their right to a free society. The body of water between the mainland of china and Formosa is called the Formosa straits, which is about 130 miles wide, this was the mission of our patrols, keeping the communist from crossing these straits and overtaking the islanders. I remember escorting a Taiwan troop carrier across the straits, a couple hundred Chinese soldiers were leaning over the rails and waving and yelling victory signs. We escorted them to Quemoy "Kinmen" island at dusk to defend their island. As our ship approached the island we could see the skies flash with explosions and hear the bombing of Quemoy in the black night, tremendous explosions on the Islands, red, orange, yellow fire balls filling the skies. The next morning we have seen ( have or had seen ?) this troop carrier badly listing in danger of sinking. I did not know the fate of these soldiers until Aug. 2008 when we were invited to Taiwan for their 50 year celebration of their freedom, (long sentence author might consider making a break at the comma) at this time I found out that the landing craft we were escorting was badly hit and numerous nationalist soldiers were killed or injured. That night the islands were bombarded heavily, the skies were a blaze of detonations, at general quarters we watched the bombardments. The top of our gunmount was draped with an American flag to identify ourselves with the US Marine pilots and Navy pilots who protected the skies.

The USS Benner would patrol the Formosa Strait for 30 day periods, then proceed to anchorage in Kaohsiung harbor for five days liberty. (I would consider rewriting the past sentence) My routine guard duty while in port was on the fantail or the forecastle of the ship. Armed with a carbine rifle, security was necessary to keep the islanders off the ship. The Chinese junk boats would come out of the fog and try to come along the fantail of our ship and try to buy brass projectiles, Navy "P" coats, blankets, and American currency. While on patrol duty we ran right into a large typhoon storm. A storm at sea can be terrifying. You are totally helpless out there bobbing around like a cork, swaying to and fro with large waves sweeping over the forecastle with each downward dip of the bow. There was no getting away from it. No place to hide! After dealing with this for 3 days, the storm finally let up and within 24 hours Mother Nature slammed us again. This time the typhoon hit a bit harder. So nothing to do but stay below decks and try to secure yourself into your bunk

by laying flat with your feet ankles locked around the bunk chains and your arms wrapped around the other bunk chain to hold yourself from flipping out of the bunk which was stacked 3 high with sailors. The ship's hull was next to my bunk, and I was able to hear and see the steel bulkhead bow in and out from the sea water pressure smashing against the other side. The creaking noise and thumping really played on your mind. Unable to work but, had to stand sea watches, had to struggle to crawl through the passageways and up the inside ladders to get to the bridge where I was the Helmsman and fought the helm wheel to keep the ship on course. The sea was so rough I had to turn the helm till I was almost 35 degrees above the deck to fight the hard rudder turning into the heavy waves. I guess you can say I was getting my Baptism at sea. The South China Seas are noted for its violent Typhoons.

As the USS Benner patrolled the waters searching for an unusual craft activity we approached a communist junk boat equipped with antennas for communicating and spying on our ship's location. There were 2 Red Chinese on board. Our officer of the deck signaled them to stop so we can board the boat and search for hostile weapons. The Chinese immediately tossed their communication equipment overboard and scuttled their boat and it sank in the heavy seas. They were hoisted aboard and transported them to an island in the Pescadore Islands where they were turned over to the Chinese Nationalist soldiers who escorted the two communist men over the hillside and then executed them. We do not know any details of this shooting.

The years have passed swiftly, and I am now 68 years old, I am proud to have had this adventure in my life. I was stationed aboard ship for three years, including two six month tours of Formosa patrol duty to the far east.

My wife Ann and I are now both 76 years of age and it is now July 2015. One year ago I filed a claim with the Veterans Administration for Radiation Exposure from Operation Hardtack in 1958. After one year of much paperwork and documentation I was awarded a disability claim for Urinary Bladder Cancer.

-- Submitted by Frank J. Dujanovic--

**In war, you win or lose, live or die -  
and the difference is just an eyelash.**

Douglas MacArthur



# Shot Encore • Upshot Knothole



***Atomic Bomb dropped from B-50 bomber caused complete destruction of target area. U.S. troops move in to secure areas around "Ground Zero."***

If you showed that "Headline" to a 30 year old college Graduate today where would they say this occurred? Japan? When? 68 years ago? I don't think so. Troops did not move in to secure anything when the atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, nor did they move in at Nagasaki on August 9, 1945. But they did move in at Frenchman flats Nevada on May 8, 1953 securing a "Target Area" devastated by a 27 Kiloton Atomic Bomb dropped from a B-50 Bomber flying out of Kirkland Air Force Base Nevada. The Bomb was delivered at approximately 0830 Pacific daylight time and detonated at 2,423 ft above Area 5 (Frenchman Flat), it was off target by 250 meters. It was called "Shot Encore" of a series designated as "Upshot Knothole" and the only "Air drop" in the test program at that time. To put that all in perspective, the bomb dropped here (27 Kilotons) was 10 times the strength of the bombs dropped on Japan.

A Uranium core bomb (Little Boy) destroyed Hiroshima, Three days later a Plutonium core bomb (Fatman) was dropped on Nagasaki, killing 40,000 civilians instantly and a total of 70,000 in the days that followed. The bombs were exploded at an altitude of 1,625 ft completely 'destroying the entire city.

Now here is my story. I had to tell you the above (which is fact, not a tale) because it relates to what the U.S. was doing in the aftermath of WWII. Testing, using actual personnel to determine the effects of Atomic Warfare on not only the enemy but on the troops involved once a bomb has been delivered (by whatever means). Nuclear weapons are usually detonated above ground (not upon impact) in order to maximize the effects of their spherical expanding "Fireball" and the resulting high temperature and blast waves. Immediately after detonation, the fireball itself begins to rise into the air, acting on the same principle as a hot-air balloon. Once the hot gas has cleared the ground sufficiently as a "spherical cap bubble" an instability factor forms, air is drawn upward and into the cloud (similar to the updraft of a chimney) producing strong air currents while inside the head of the cloud the hot gases begin to rotate in a "toroidal" shape.

These winds will draw in dirt, pebbles, rocks, and an assortment of other debris from the ground below that will then form the "Mushroom cloud". This "Mushroom" is what most people associate with an atomic explosion.

When this device was dropped I was hunkered down in a foxhole approximately 9,400 yards from "Ground Zero". How did I get there? Well, 20 April 1953 a special order was issued out of Headquarters 2781 Infantry Regimental Combat Team stationed in Camp Drum, New York under Special Order number 93 putting me on DS with Hq Co, 1st Army Desert Rock, Battalion V (Provisional X), Auth: Genl Order #45, Hq. 1st Army, GINY, <lttd 13 Mar 53.

I didn't know it at the time but this was a very high priority order. Everyone transferred to this Battalion was checked out by the FBI for "Top security" clearance. I later found out the FBI even visited my parents back home to make sure there were no skeletons in my closet. A couple of weeks later we were loaded on a "Troop train" at Watertown, New York. This train moved through to Las Vegas, Nevada in three days (remember in 1953 that was the fast track move for troops, they didn't have the planes to move infantry except Airborne). The only stops were to change train crews. Coming out of upper New York we were in our winter uniforms. Imagine how that was getting off the train in Nevada the end of April. I don't know who's fault that was but it sure was hot on that train platform in winter uniforms. We were then moved to "Camp Desert Rock" Nevada by bus. About 70 miles out of Las Vegas. Camp Desert Rock was activated in the fall of 1951. The task of establishing the camp was assigned to the 231st Engineer Combat Battalion out of Fort Lewis, Washington who erected living quarters (tents), sanitary fill areas, garbage service, mess halls, wash racks and kitchen areas. Showers were provided from towers holding 3,000 gal water tanks. It all served it's purpose, but moving out of barracks in upper New York to tents in the desert in Nevada was a shock in itself.

President Harry S. Truman gave his approval to this site back in December of 1948 for the express purpose of Atmospheric testing of Atomic Bombs. At that time it was known as the "Nevada test site". After construction it became known as "Camp Desert Rock" and would be used to house troops who would be assigned to participate in "Atomic Warfare" training and exercises with real "Live" nukes.



# 1957 Army Experience



We were told one day that we, the 47th Field Hospital at Brooke Army Medical Center, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, were going on a mission that would require a top secret clearance and that would require some forms to be completed for the FBI before we went. The forms asked us about our lives, and inquired about anything we had done which was of a criminal nature, or about ever being a member of the Communist party (or related groups) or about ever having done anything in our lives which would be compromising or injurious to our integrity. They also asked us for the names of our former employers and the names of several friends who knew us well. Excitedly, I wrote to my parents about the coming adventure (whatever it was; we were not told of its exact nature) and also to the friends I listed on the form, to prepare them for an inquiry. And, would you believe, every one of them was questioned! It was surprising to me that the FBI had so many agents at their disposal. What were we going to do that would warrant a full field investigation? Word came down to headquarters a few weeks later that a top-secret clearance had been given to me. I didn't hear of anyone who didn't get a clearance, but there were too many guys in the hospital to keep tabs on. Then, orders were cut, and we were off to Las Vegas, Nevada, aboard the Southern Pacific Railroad, traveling first class. There, a bus met us and drove us to the Army town of Mercury, northwest of Las Vegas off Highway 95. This was the Nevada Atomic Test Site!

To our surprise, we were going to be living in trailers. The rest of the town was composed of Quonsets, tents, huts and a few small buildings, and WE had trailers, and they were air-conditioned! Wow! There were four of us per trailer, and it turned out to be a very private and wonderfully clean living, the best living I was to have with the Army. And, even though we were only about sixty miles from Vegas, most of us (including me) never went into town (in those days gambling was considered to be sinful for Christians, especially Lutherans. There were also rumors about the mob being in control of the city.

We were quickly oriented to the task: we were in a biomedical task force detachment called, Project 4.1, Operation Plumbbob. We were going to conduct the first medical experiments on animals for the U. S. who were exposed to an atomic blast. Pigs were the

animals we were going to use, and we were going to study the effects that these atomic blasts would have upon their bodies. In all, we participated in three blasts, Franklin, Wilson and Priscilla, over a time span from May 5th to July 11th, 1957. From the dates, you can see we had to have had many "dry runs", where weather conditions were not favorable for a blast to take place. The project administrators were extremely careful about the contamination of the countryside with particles that were radioactive.

From the day we walked in, we were trained in radiological safety and spent several hours in class each day. The classes were for the science major college graduates in the unit (leading to why our field hospital was selected for this duty, since we had so many). And, at all times we wore dosimeters and film badges that were on occasion developed and recorded for external radiological exposure. My total exposure for the entire project was 155 millirems of gamma radiation, which is not excessive.

On a typical day for a shot, we went out the night before and loaded our compliment of pigs from the pens. Most of us had never been around pigs before, and it was quite startling to discover that they were like little babies. They cried when we came near them, and they squealed when we placed them into their liners; it was unnerving. They knew instinctively that something was going to happen to them, and it was not going to be good. The pigs were placed at various distances from ground zero, so a variety of effects could be observed. Some were vaporized, some were blasted to smithereens (and you could pick-up a part here and there), some were whole, some received a lethal dose of gamma radiation, some a medium dose and finally, some, just a little dose. And, you could say that they were scared and cried themselves shitless. Yes, they evacuated their bowels as we moved them (most times it was a big fight), and we were covered with their BMs (in addition, they usually vomited any food they had recently eaten). Oh, we were covered with stuff from head to foot; the smell was overwhelming. After recording the pig number and the liner number (a device to hold the pig while it waited for the blast and which indicated the pig's exact location from ground zero), we went to higher ground up the mountain. It was usually around dawn when the blast would go off. Before



## 1957 Army Experience (Continued)



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the blast, we covered our bodies with a white, plastic space suit (including our shoes) and sealed each seam with tape. This was to keep any dirt or dust particles from coming into contact with our skin or clothes. We put on gas masks and turned our backs to the area of the blast. Then, as we heard the countdown, we closed our eyes and covered them with our fingers to make sure that no light entered the area around them. When the blast occurred, I can tell you that the light was so intense, it was blinding (we could see right through our fingers). They told us that if we had looked directly at the blast, the light would have resulted in our permanent blindness. After the light flash, we were able to turn around and observe the blast area.

We could see the mushroom cloud that is associated with an atomic blast form above ground zero. Then we saw the base of this cloud slowly move up the mountain. When this hit us, our bodies were pretty resilient and nothing happened (it was just like riding over a bump in the road while in a car), but it did blow away a small building standing behind us after one blast. It was the sound/shock wave, and it was loud and surprising. This wave had materials (dust, dirt, debris) that contained most of the alpha and beta radiation particles we were trying to avoid, which is why we wore our space-like suits. We were covered with this stuff. About an hour later, we dusted ourselves off, and removed our white suits. It was time to recover the pigs. The distribution process was then just reversed. Whatever was left of the pigs, including those who were still alive (but, soon to be sacrificed) was labeled and sent to the pathology laboratory.

My second job on this project was as a pathology assistant. We prepared the tissues for the pathologists to take samples; we did all of the dirty work, so the pathologists only had to cut tissue samples and to make slides. The slides were sent to Bethesda for analysis. As a side note, this was a radiation study on animals (to be extrapolated to humans), and the pigs that were in the sample were all castrated (as are all male pigs which are brought into the commercial market for purposes other than breeding). We did not get from this study the effects of radiation on the reproductive organs of males.

When we were in the area for the blast observation, there were many observers (many from foreign countries); you wonder where they all came from. There were several Orientals, and many in uniforms of foreign countries. I also wondered why so many of these people had those silver stars all over their shoulders. Then someone told me that they were generals! I had never seen a general before, and to be honest, there must have been a hundred of them (with various numbers of stars) at each blast.

We were so continuously reminded about security while at Camp Mercury, it affected our whole lives in our thinking about this experience. When I got home to Phoenix (my folks had moved there after my graduation from college), even the letters which were written to my folks were discarded. And, I did not say much about these events to anyone. Looking back, it now seems a little over-kill; at the time it loomed as critical. Everything we could say about this experience was supposed to be said only on a "need to know" basis, and to be honest with you, I never met a person who needed to know! I did not talk about this experience to anyone for years.

While we were dressed in space suits watching the bomb blasts, we could see down the mountain that many soldiers and marines were doing combat exercises. Where they were when the bomb went off was anyone's guess, but, only a few minutes later, they were in the thick of things – running over ground zero and doing all sorts of maneuvers. It was very impressive. But, looking back, they did not have any protective gear on at all. It was not until some time later that the word came out about so many soldiers who were in these exercises were getting all sorts of cancers, many of them, rare types. It dawned on me, although not admitted by the Department of Defense, that maybe every soldier at the blast was also part of a larger radiation experiment to study what the long-term effects of atomic radiation would be on all of the soldiers who observed the blasts. Every one of us had a documented radiological exposure on record with the Army (except for the alpha and beta radiations). However, I've never felt bad about being caught-up in this concept, because all of us have a responsibility during our lifetime to contribute to the maintenance of the overall freedom of this country; this episode is really a small payment by me for the lives that my family now lives.

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# Operation Plumb Bob



This is a story of the Plumb Bob atom shot on the desert floor of the Yucca Flat in Nevada. I was a 1st Lt. helicopter pilot connected with Marine Helicopter Squadron 361 of Marine Air Group 36. We were located at the old blimp base in Sana Anna California. We received orders for maneuvers at Desert Rock in Nevada. The 1st Marine Brigade were already deployed there. We moved up there July 18th 1957 and the bomb was scheduled to detonate July 28th. We were stationed on a flat lake bed, some had tents, otherwise we slept in our helicopter. However since we were only there for the bomb exercise, we had a lot of free time and went into Las Vegas when the opportunity existed.

We returned to our desert base for the explosion of Priscella on the 27th of July. Our shot was to be a tower explosion. We moved to a location near some rocks to get ready for the shot. We were grouped around a radio jeep so we could listen to conversations of the Command Headquarters. The bomb was to explode

at 0447 on the 28th. The Command voice started his count down with 2 minutes then 30 seconds and finally 10 to 5-4-3-2-1- then dead silence. Next voice said Sorry MISFIRE! We were disgusted because we were fed up with the heat, sand and the wind. During the day the temperature never went below 110 degrees, but it did cool off real well at night. We were complaining, but we weren't the ones that had to go and disarm the bomb in the tower. There was a big article in the Life Magazine explaining the entire process.

The Atomic Energy Commission in cooperation with the Marine Corps decided to use a different bomb. This one was called "Hood" This one was previously scheduled to detonate on the 3rd of July. We moved into position on the 2nd and all got in position. Only to be notified that it was postponed. So we flew back to camp and flew in position again on the 4th of July. After sleeping in the helicopter again, to keep away from snakes and scorpions, we were awakened to listen to the count down from the radio jeep once again. Then 0435 we saw and heard the explosion. I could see the bones in my hands as I covered my eyes. We waited an hour for the dust to settle before we could move the Marine Infantry personnel into their designated positions in the objective area. We flew for about 2 hours in the area before returning to camp at Desert Rock. We all turned in our radiation badges to determine how many milli-rankens of radiation that we were exposed tool.

After finalizing our objective we flew to George Air Force Base for fuel and flew home.

--Submitted by Ordean Bierman--



## TAPS

PHILLIP R. SALYERS..... Kaneohe, HI  
 JAMES LAZALIER .....Norman, OK  
 DONALD R. NORTON ..... Burlington, IA  
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 CLARENCE M. WILSON JR. .... Bossier City, LA

# (New Book) Operation Crossroads

## OPERATION CROSSROADS

### LEST WE FORGET!

An Eyewitness Account  
Bikini Atomic Bomb Tests 1946

WILLIAM L. MCGEE with SANDRA V. MCGEE



Seventy years ago in July 1946, millions of people around the world waited anxiously by their radios for broadcasts of the results of the first postwar atomic bomb tests code-named Operation CROSSROADS.

In the words of Vice Admiral W. H. P. Blandy, USN Commander of Joint

Task Force-One: “In the face of this new knowledge, these recently discovered truths concerning the atom, so suddenly thrust upon an already chaotic world, not only warfare but civilization itself literally stands by the Crossroads—hence the name of this Operation.” No one knew what to expect.

Timed for the 70th Anniversary of Crossroads in July 2016, NAAV Life Member William L. McGee provides his personal account in Operation Crossroads—Lest We Forget! An Eyewitness Account, Bikini Atomic Bomb Tests 1946. (BMC Publications, June 2016, Foreword by F. Lincoln Grahls, National Association of Atomic Veterans. 134 pp, 59 b/w photographs and illustrations. Softcover \$19.95, Kindle Edition \$9.99, Available from Amazon June 2016).

“This subject is very time sensitive,” says McGee. “I wrote this book to help preserve a part of history few know about today. When I was writing the Preface, the Nuclear Security Summit was wrapping up in Washington, D.C. which clearly reinforced the nuclear threats that still exist in the world today.”

McGee, USN, was one of the 42,000 military, scientific, and civilian personnel assembled at the Bikini Atoll test site. He witnessed Crossroads from the heavy cruiser, USS Fall River (CA-131), Flagship for the Target Fleet under the command of Rear Admiral F. G. Fahrion, USN, and responsible for organizing the guinea-pig fleet of 95 target ships.

Today, McGee is legally blind from macular degeneration and his body is a road map of skin cancers. When he asks a doctor if these problems could have been caused by radiation exposure at Crossroads, the doctors, to a man, are quick to answer: “I don’t want to go there.”

William L. McGee has garnered critical praise for his World War II military histories including his memoir within a history, Bluejacket Odyssey, 1942–1946: Guadalcanal to Bikini, and the acclaimed Pacific war trilogy, Amphibious Operations in the South Pacific in WWII. Visit the author’s website at WilliamMcGeeBooks.com.



Author William L. McGee proofing a digital proof of OPERATION CROSSROADS ... Legally blind since 2003, Bill is using his desktop magnifier to view the text and his Eye-Pal Solo (to his left) to listen to the text ... Proof that one can still “write” after losing vision.

## LOOKING FOR...

- Atomic Veterans who served with the Marine Helicopter Squadron HMR-361 on Bikini Atoll in 1958. Wanting to compare Health Issues (several) and Benefits (none) from the VA. Contact Kenneth Oeschger at 84-991-1637 or e-mail me at scotchgrove1937@gmail.com!

## 1957 Army Experience (Continued)

--Continued from Page 5--

However, I did feel as though the servicemen were not given a fair shake when the Veteran’s Department refused to pay servicemen at these atomic blasts for any type of radiation-related diseases; they called them non-service related. Well, a lot of us supported the formation of an organization called the National Association of Atomic Veterans; I am a life member. We lobbied Congress until we got the Veterans Department to change their attitude and to list all of us as Irradiated Veterans, and to pay for medical help to those in need. July 16th is now Atomic Veterans Remembrance –Day.

-- Submitted by Ronald P. Betz--



## Shot Encore • Upshot Knothole (continued)



--Continued from Page 3--

The army acquired 23,058 acres at this site. These exercises included “test” troops with various types of battlefield equipment and gear for the purposes of exploring the effects of blast, overpressure, heat and radiation from the detonation of a nuclear weapon . Various types of Military equipment, including jeeps, trucks, tanks, personnel carriers and half tracks were placed in positions at various distances from ground zero. Some were buried to various depths ranging from a few hundred yards out to three miles from the point of detonation so the effects of the exposure could be measured .



Frenchman Flat

Troops received training on the effects of radiation from nuclear weapons and personnel were provided with booklets that explained the importance of secrecy on this mission. They were prohibited from discussing any aspect of any nuclear test including the military maneuvers or any effects of the tests with friends, relatives or even doctors. They were constantly lectured with incorrect information and secrecy threats. From July of 1945 to November of 1962 over 550,000 military personnel were involved with these tests. In 1996 the government released us from this oath of secrecy. By that time 300,000 had already died and approximately 198,000 do not know this release had been issued. At this time there are approximately 85,000 known survivors.

Most of what you read was what we all had to deal with that participated in these tests. Now about what I can remember and what still looks very real to me as I recall these events. This was 60 years ago and although I think I have a good memory sometimes it tricks me into only seeing the highlights. I remember the morning of the drop, it was cold as it usually is in the desert that time of the year (we slept in tents and water froze in the butt-cans at night and it was 110 degrees in the tents during the afternoon). We

had one last briefing and then were moved out to our assigned positions. I was in a foxhole that had already been dug for me (great), it was about 7 ft deep with a couple of steps up to get out. We were told to stay at the bottom during the initial blast and would be told when we could get up and look at the blast area. I’m glad I listened to that part. We got into position at about 6:00AM, the actual drop was at 08:30 so for 2 Yz hours we were subject to the morning cold. I knew they said they wanted to get the test under way before the winds started to come up. Finally, close to the drop the loudspeakers informed us the aircraft was approaching the drop area flying at about 40,000 ft. The drop would be detonated at about 2,500 ft but we were warned not to look at the blast. I listened to that, when the bomb went off I was in the bottom of my foxhole at about 9,400 yards from ground zero and the light from the initial blast lit up the bottom of that hole to the point of there being no shadows. This only lasted for a few seconds (they said if you looked at the blast, it would burn out the retinas in your eyes and you would be blind) I believe it. They then told us we could climb out of our holes and view the spectacle before us. The initial part of the explosion forms a fireball as I explained earlier but before the debris gets into it you witness the most beautiful sight you will ever see. The fireball is every color of the rainbow and as it rises into the atmosphere it forms a white cap on top (Which is ice). We were told at that time it was at about 20,000 ft in the air.

Then you see the blast coming across the desert ( we were on high ground) and you brace yourself for it to hit. Even with the warning you can’t stand up, it knocks you down, and remember this is 9,400 yds from ground zero. We were told the blast broke windows and knocked items off shelves in Las Vegas 70 miles away. With the resulting change in pressure etc and the debris field going up to meet the fireball you see the Mushroom develop. The devastation at ground zero is complete. Nothing remains. There were buildings there, a field hospital and I remember they set up a forest of red wood trees that were brought down from the northwest and anchored in 10 tons of concrete. All I can remember of that forest were toothpicks. Everything was gone. We were then ordered to saddle up and move out with a assault on Ground Zero. I probably went a couple hundred yards and I remember a Jack Rabbit running across in front of me and his fur was smoking. Military vehicles at various distances had damage appropriate to the distance away from the heat and blast. I remember a couple of tanks above ground with the tracks melted

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off and the side facing the blast had the paint burned off. We didn't get to look inside so don't know what that looked like. There were sheep, goats and pigs, some exposed at ground level, some in bunkers. All those I saw were dead. The sheep had blood around the nose and eyes, no other sign or trauma. We were told later most died from the blast that picked up small particles of dirt and drove it through their bodies like small bullets.

After five hours in the general area we were all assembled again and waited for transportation back to the camp area. All radiation badges were checked and we were decontaminated (what a joke, but at that time they thought their process of decontamination was sufficient).

For the most part, it was an experience I will never forget. I am somewhat saddened that our government still fails to recognize what all this was about, especially with live troops. I can go on and on about all the problems many of these people faced later in life including the results of factors showing up in a second generation. I know we were released from the secrecy surrounding these tests but so many have passed on and the years have gone by that much of the details are forgotten. I was sent a letter asking for information on my health from the dept of defense as early as May 11, 1979. They knew then I had participated in this test, yet when I asked for information in 1985 they told me I wasn't there. Fortunately I had a copy of my original order, I sent it to them and the reply came back, "we thank you for the information and acknowledge your participation but the records originally were lost in a fire in the records section in St Louis, MO." Now doesn't that sound familiar. I have to thank every veteran in every war and situation our government puts us in because many times they don't want to acknowledge we were there. But, we remember.

--Sgt. Robert C. Abbey RA 16 395 061

## **TAKE NOTE...** DUES DUES DUES

For some time now we have been getting the newsletter to all member regardless of whether their dues were current. Well that gift will stop come the 4th quarter issue of the NAAV Newsletter. If your dues are not current now, I suggest you get in touch with Fred Schafer immediately and bring them up-to-date. \$25.00 will put your current no back dues will be necessary. If you fail to do so, this will be the LAST newsletter you will be receiving. Sorry to see you go, but we need your support to keep the newsletter going.

DUES DUES DUES



At the time of this writing NAAV, Enewetak Radiological Cleanup Veterans, American Legion, AMAC (Association of Mature Americans) and some of the general public are lobbying our lawmakers to support Atomic Veteran Bills. We have been getting some good press too. The efforts are as follows:

We have the House (Congress) Bill HR3870 and the Senate companion Bill S2791, both titled Atomic Veteran Healthcare Parity Act, that adds the Enewetak Radiological Cleanup Veterans to CFR 38 for purposes of presumptive diseases. Many of these veterans are caught between the "at risk" and "Occupational exposure" categories conveniently being denied as either category. Presently, HR3870 authored by Congressman Takai (HI-1 D) is in the VA Health sub committee and has 87 sponsors. Four of the twelve sub committee members are sponsors. S2791 Coauthored by Senators AL Franken (MN D) and Thom Tillis (NC-1 R) is in the Veterans Affairs (VA) committee. Senator Tillis sits on the VA committee. This Bill has three sponsors. It should be noted Congressman Takai (Bill author) has been diagnosed with Pancreatic Cancer and will not be running for reelection. He/we would like this to be part of his legacy.

House Bill HR2747, titled Atomic Veteran Service Medal Act, is coauthored by Congresspersons McGovern (MA-2 D), Jones (NC-3 R), Pompeo (KS-4 R), Ellison (MN-5 D), Clark (MA-5 D), Tsongas (MA-3 D) and has fourteen sponsors. This Bill was attached to the NDAA (National Defense Appropriations Act) as an amendment, passed the house and is sitting in the Senate. If it is not stripped off, passes the Senate and not Vetoed by the President, will become law.

House Resolution 377 (H.Res. 377), Recognizing "National Atomic Veterans Day" on July 16, is authored by Congressman Dave Brat (VA-7 R) and has four sponsors. We have been told Congressman, Speaker Paul Ryan (WI-1 R) is not taking any Resolutions. Congressman Brat's office has been contacted and asked to consider authoring a bill to amend Public Law 98-54 adding the words "and every year hereafter". We will be following up on this.

We have less than 180 days to get these bills passed. An outside source has a website under construction to aid in this. The web site is [www.Project180.Today](http://www.Project180.Today) Please visit this site and follow the tips on how to help these efforts. Also, tell your friends and relatives to go here. If these are not passed in the next 180 days we have to start all over again. Submitted by Keith Kiefer

# **2016 CONVENTION**

**September 14-16 at Four Points by Shearton East Flamingo**

**4055 Palos Verdes Street • Las Vegas, Nevada 89119**

Hotel Reservations on line at [WWW.starwoodmeeting.com/stargroupsweb/res?id=1506129393&&key=17199F65](http://WWW.starwoodmeeting.com/stargroupsweb/res?id=1506129393&&key=17199F65)

**Hotel Reservations by phone -- Call 702-473-6400 and mention code AN14AA**

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Wed Sept 14 <sup>th</sup> | 9:00AM to 11:00 AM Check in and Register                        |
|                           | 1:00PM to 4:00 PM Atomic testing Museum • \$14.00 Per person    |
|                           | 7:00PM NAAV Board Meeting                                       |
| Thur Sept 15th            | 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM Testing Grounds Tour                         |
|                           | Bus Persons Min 30 to Max 50                                    |
|                           | Lunch At commissary Approx \$10.00 or all take<br>a sack lunch. |
| Fri Sept 16th             | 9:00 AM NAAV Meeting  |
|                           | 11:30 Lunch break   |
|                           | 1:00 PM to 5:00 pm NAAV Meeting                                 |
|                           | 5:00 PM Close convention  |
|                           | 6:00 PM NAAV Banquet  |

**Convention Registration Deadline Sept 1, 2016.**

## **Before August 15th**

Registration \$ 35.00 Spouse free

Banquet \$ 30.00 Per person. Couple \$ 50.00

## **After August 15th**

Registration \$ 45.00 Spouse Free

Banquet \$ 45.00 Per person. Couples \$ 60.00

Tour of Atomic testing Museum \$ 14.00 per person.

**Send Checks to: NAAV • 130 Cleveland Street • Lebanon, OR 97355**

# CONVENTION REGISTRATION

DUE BEFORE AUGUST 15TH

Registration \$35.00 Spouse free

Banquet \$30.00 Per person. Couple \$50.00

## After Aug 15th

Registration \$45.00 Spouse Free

Banquet \$45.00 Per person. Couples \$60.00

Tour of Atomic testing Museum \$14.00 per person.

Send Checks to:

NAAV • 130 Cleveland Street. • Lebanon, OR 97355



**CHECK LIST!  
GET YOUR REGISTRATION  
AND MONEY TO FRED ON  
TIME.**

Registration ----- \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
\$35.00 Spouse free

Banquet ----- \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
\$30.00 Per person. Couple \$50.00

**TOTAL** ----- \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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ATTENDEES:

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*Wife or Friend*

*Last Name*

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***IF UNDELIVERED PLEASE RETURN TO THE ADDRESS ABOVE!***

All NAAV members – here is a list of all State Commanders as of 1 June 2016. Your Director of State Commanders Gillie Jenkins wishes for all members to be able to contact their State Commander for questions. Hopefully this will “keep us together.” If your state does not have a State Commander and you would like to volunteer to be a State Commander, please, call or write to Gillie.

**National Commander** - Fred Schafer - derf@trcschafer.com

**Director of State Commanders** – Gillie Jenkins - atomicgillie@verizon.net

**Alabama:** Ronald H. Holmes - sgme9holmes@charter.net

**Alaska:** Terry T. Brady - terrybrady9462@gmail.com

**Arizona:** **POSITION AVAILABLE**

**Arkansas:** W.C. 'JAKE' Lamkins - jake@lamkins.com

**California:** Leo "Bud" Feurt - bufeurt@yahoo.com

**Colorado:** Beverly A. Gray - bevnan@comcast.net

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**Florida:** Fred Gosain - fredgosain@gmail.com

**Georgia:** Kenneth P. Price - ppprice@surfsouth.com

**Hawaii:** Bob Kiltbau - RAKaloha@yahoo.com

**Idaho:** William Sills III - 262-215-3398

**Illinois:** Bill Fish - NukedApril181953@aol.com

**Indiana:** **Gary Tulis - pending**

**Iowa:** Gilbert Amdahl - naaviagfa@yahoo.com

**Kansas:** Dallas Brown - dbrown192@kc.rr.com - 913-334-9928

**Kentucky:** Raymond E. Wilder - buckskin@me.com - 270-566-4343

**Louisiana:** **Aaron Ducote pending**

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**Maryland:** Richard L. Goetsch - s\_goetsch@msn.com

**Massachusetts:** Ronald T. 'RONNIE' Benoit - atomicvet024@gmail.com

**Michigan:** Robert Jackson - rjack506@msn.com - 248-622-0055

**Minnesota:** Jim Hamman 763-428-2193

or Keith Kiefer -kiefer4ramsey@yahoo.com

**Mississippi:** **POSITION AVAILABLE**

**Missouri:** Thomas Bair - tombair@hotmail.com

**Montana:** Pete Besas - bhbesas@aol.com

**Nebraska:** Robert Ruyle - bobruyle34@gmail.com - 402-488-7927

**Nevada:** Joe Martinez - moosewa@icloud.com - 702-346-7690

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**New Mexico:** Glen Howard - Leprechaun40@juno.com

**New York:** Ed Gettler - pappypac@verizon.net

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**West Virginia:** Haskell Watts Jr. - hwatts4@frontier.com

**Wisconsin:** Jerome Gehl - jerrygehl@twc.com

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