



NAA&NV NEWS

DECEMBER 2016

4th QUARTER

Members Publication of the National Association of Atomic & Nuclear Veterans

Note from Editor

Gentlemen the many articles you had sent to Darryl and I early last year are now nearing the point of all being published. If any of you have stories that you would like published please get them off to me. As we have said before they will be edited to fit our newsletter so prefer that they are no longer than 600 to 700 words. If you have pictures please send them in jpg format at the best resolution you can if you cannot scan them send me the original and I will scan it and return it to you.

When sending pictures prefer color but will use b&w when no color photos are available.

We appreciate all articles that have been sent in the past and if you sent one and for some reason it did not get publish please let me know as when Darryl and I transferred files it may have been lost but hopefully we have now published all the old files.

Thanks again!

Bob Ruyle
Editor/Publisher



From the Commander--

After counting votes, the vast majority preferred Branson, Missouri. Please remember that wives can join NAAV. Annual dues \$25. It is NOT necessary for wives to join – just that some wives may prefer to also be official members of NAAV.

Some of the the wives have offered to help set up the next convention in Branson, MO. We would love to see next year's convention set a record of attendance. If you would like to help set up the convention at Branson, please contact my wife, and NAAV Secretary, Barbara Schafer schafeb@yahoo.com phone 541-401-3435. All ideas and help will be welcomed!

We have been busy here in Oregon getting ready for the Veterans Day parade. It was a great parade, the biggest west of the Mississippi. The streets of Albany, Oregon were crowded. Again, I want to thank the many NAAV members at convention who put money into helping the Marshall Islands dugout canoe appear in the parade. Thank you Vets for all your support of NAAV. We hope that all are getting ready to enjoy the holidays coming soon.

A note from Barb Schafer, Secretary --

Veterans and wives: I've been collecting notes about how to set up the 2017 Convention and want to share a few ideas with you. First, we have ideas from one of the wives about setting up "wives tours" to visit the area while the veterans are in their meeting. Sounds great to me. I have never been to Branson – has someone been there who can give us ideas? I'll write off and get Chamber of Commerce

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NOTE FROM SECRETARY

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information but love hearing from folks who've actually been there too. One wife suggested that we call these outside tours, "Atomic Wives Adventures!" Sounds great to me!

The hard work will begin now – pulling together a convention that is educational, informative and supportive for all attendees. Wanna help? Send me your email address and you will be in on all the particulars as we move forward.

Finally, it's almost Thanksgiving time. I'm thankful to be a very small part of this organization. I love meeting each of you and look forward to knowing more of you and doing my best to help by creating a convention you'll WANT to attend and be GLAD you DID!

In Thanksgiving,

Barb Schafer
E-Mail: schafeb@yahoo.com
Phone: 541-401-3435

ATTENTION ALL HANDS!

DUES NEED TO BE RENEWED

Gentlemen, many of you have dues that have expired. Please bring your dues up to-date by getting \$25.00 to Fred Schafer immediately, because in 2017 any one who is not up to date will be removed from the mailing list. Life memberships are still available, just contact Fred his address an phone number are listed in several places in this newsletter.

JUST A REMINDER

As I was preparing the newsletter for this last quarter of 2016 I had a call from an old Navy buddy. As we talked I was reminded of a time when we were in Nagasaki harbor for a little R&R. As we were touring the city I ran into a young Japanese man who spoke excellent English and was prompted to ask him what the word "hibakusha" meant in Japanese. Tears began to well up in his eyes, but he finally responded that it meant "exposed." He continued, I was in the womb of my mother when she was exposed by the bomb that was dropped on our city. The bomb killed my father and my sister instantly but my mother survived and it was years before we could even talk about being a survivor. I will never forget those times. So, if you guys have any stories out their get them to me, especially ones with pictures. BOB

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Table 2

Priority Group	Co-Payment Amount		
	1-30 Day Supply	30-60 Day Supply	61-90 Day Supply
1 & Exempted Veterans	\$0	\$0	\$0
2 through 6	\$8	\$16	\$24
7 and 8	\$9	\$18	\$27

"Military Exposure" prescriptions and medical care associated to the exposure should be covered 100% under "Other qualifying factors, including treatment related to their military service experience."

TAPS

Raywood Viator

.....New Lberia, LA

Frank Durbin

.....Port Townsend, WA

Bernard Tschoerner

.....Bartlett, TX

Bernie Clark

.....Tulsa, OK

Robert Trawick

.....Pensacola, FL

Wilbur Schneider

.....St. Joseph, MI

Robin Stout

.....Atlanta, GA

Brainard Blundon

.....Harrisville, NY

Joseph Steams

.....Belfast, ME

Joseph Scrapper

.....Lawrence, KS

James Jones

.....Corvallis, OR



OPERATION CROSSROADS MEMORIES

Memories of four WWII Atomic Veterans who were involved in “Operation Crossroads”, which was the testing of 2 atomic bombs in the Marshall Islands, Bikini Atoll in July 1946. All four served aboard the USS AJAX AR6, in the 7th Fleet.



Richard “Rich” Stachowiak (top left) - Fireman 1st Class - born 3/8/1928 in Lackawanna, NY. Now living in Orchard Park, NY. Joined the NAVY in November 1945 and was on active duty through November 1947. I worked in the motor repair shop. After the tests another sailor and myself were repairing a whaler boat which was used to run errands. I had both arms under the boat in the water when an officer came by with a Geiger Counter and told us to get out of that water because it was badly contaminated. I have been treated several times with skin cancer.

James “Jim” Laskey (top right) - Seaman 3rd Class - born 10/13/ 1927 in Medina, NY. Now living in Elba, NY. I was on active duty from October 1945 through October 1949. On the AJAX, I worked in the pipe shop and was also attached to the deck crew. Part of my duties in the pipe shop in preparing for the bomb tests was making tripods for the cameras which were welded to the deck of the test ships. They were also placed on the islands to film the bomb tests. I also assisted the welders in installing pipe scratch gauges on the test ships below deck from the port side to the starboard side to determine fill amount of concussion from the bomb. I went aboard several of the test ships after Test Able. I have had numerous basal cell skin cancers that had to be removed. I have a service connection for the skin cancer but at “0%”. I have also been diagnosed with asbestosis.

Kenneth “Lany” Avery (bottom left) - Machinist’s Mate 3rd Class - born 3/19/1927 in Beachlake, PA. Now living in Ithaca, NY. I worked in the tool room of the machine shop. I went aboard several of the test ships after Test Able. I served in the NAVY from October 1945 through April 1947. Was recalled to active duty from June 1949 through September 1952 when I served in the Korean Conflict. Many years ago a civilian doctor told me that I have a “substernal thyroid” and asked me if I had ever been exposed to radiation - but it was never checked out to see if it could have come from the bomb tests - I have also had prostate cancer which was never determined if the radiation caused it or not.

Jesus “Jesse” Trevino (bottom right) - Fireman -born 9/25/1928 in Texas. Now living in Chula Vista, CA. I worked in the machine shop on the AJAX. Including my time on active duty, inactive duty and the reserves, I served in the NAVY continuously from November 1945 through September 1971 and then 4 years of fleet reserve which completed 30 years of service. During that time, I was on Active Duty during the end of WWII, served in the Korean Conflict and the Vietnam War, where I was also exposed to Agent Orange. I have been diagnosed with asbestosis.

TEST ABLE was the first test - July 1, 1946. The AJAX was anchored approximately 5 miles outside

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IONIZATION RADIATION EXPOSURE CLAIMS/BENEFIT STRATEGIES

If you have been involved with military service activities that could result in Ionization Radiation Exposure, regardless of whether you have a radiological induced disease, your first step should be to contact your VA (Veterans Administration) Environmental Health Care Coordinator (the directory can be found here: <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/coordinators.asp> to schedule an Ionization Health Care exam (at no cost) and to be placed on the Ionization Radiation Registry. Remember there is strength in numbers, the larger the group the more likely they will receive attention. As with many VA programs, you may have to be persistent and insistent. In the past, the Registry has sent out a newsletter. Some of the things the registry can be used for is to find common ailments and the number of individuals exposed. **Step Two:** is to look at Table 1 RECA (Radiation Exposure Compensation Act) column and determine if you have one of the diseases listed. If you are an Atomic Veteran, but not a participant in the Hiroshima and Nagasaki operations, nor part of the Japanese occupation forces following World War II, nor presently being compensated for the disease as VA Service Connected, apply for the RECA of \$75,000. The forms and information can be found at http://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/claims-postservice-exposures-ionizing_radiation.asp The RECA is administered by the US Department of Justice by authority of 42 U.S.C. § 2210 note (2012). Claimants' experience has been that this Justice Department program tends to be faster and less predisposed to denial. After RECA award, a claimant can apply with the VA for a Service Connected Claim for the same disease. However, if approved, they will not receive additional compensation until after \$75,000 of compensation for this disease has been expended.

Table 1

DISEASE	RECA Radiation Exposure Compensation Act	VA 38 CFR 3.311(B)(2) (as of Dec. 15, 2016)
leukemia, but NOT chronic lymphocytic leukemia	X	X (anytime after exposure)
multiple myeloma	X	X
primary cancer of the pharynx	X	Any other cancer
lymphoma, other than Hodgkin's disease	X	X
primary cancer of the small intestine	X	X Any other cancer
primary cancer of the salivary gland	X	X
primary cancer of the brain	X	Tumors of the brain and central nervous system

primary cancer of the stomach	X	X
primary cancer of the urinary bladder	X	X
primary cancer of the colon	X	X
primary cancer of the thyroid	X	X
primary cancer of the pancreas	X	X
primary cancer of the female breast	X	X
primary cancer of the male breast	X	X
primary cancer of the esophagus	X	X
primary cancer of the bile ducts	X	Any other cancer
primary cancer of the liver (except if cirrhosis or hepatitis B is indicated)	X	X (no exceptions listed)
primary cancer of the gall bladder	X	Any other cancer
primary cancer of the lung	X	X
primary cancer of the ovary	X	X
Bone Cancer	X	within 30 years after exposure
Skin Cancer	X	X
Kidney Cancer	X	X
Posterior subcapsular cataracts	X	(manifest 6 months or more after exposure)
Non-malignant thyroid nodular disease	X	X
Parathyroid adenoma	X	X
Cancer of the rectum	X	X
Prostate Cancer	X	X
Any other cancer	X	X
No Manifest time after exposure is listed.		Unless note otherwise in this column disease must manifest 5 years or more after exposure.

(4) If a claim is based on a disease other than one of those listed in Paragraph (B)(2) of this section, VA shall never the less consider claims under the provisions of this section provided that the claimant has cited or submitted competent scientific or medical evidence that the claimed condition is a radiogenic disease.

Step Three: if you have additional radiological induced disease(s) contact your local VSO (Veteran Service Office) to make a Service connected claim. Presumed radiological diseases are listed in Table 1 VA 38 CFR 3.311(B)(2) (as of Dec 15, 2016). Other diseases can be claimed with proper documentation. Step four, not as well known, is the Military Exposure category. Before determination has been completed on the previous applications, ask to be assigned to Priority Group 6 as "Veterans exposed to Ionizing Radiation during atmospheric testing or during the occupation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki". Non "Military Exposure" prescriptions are presently \$8.00 for a 30 day supply instead of \$9.00 for a 30 day supply. *Continued bottom Page 2*

OPERATION SANSTONE MEMORIES

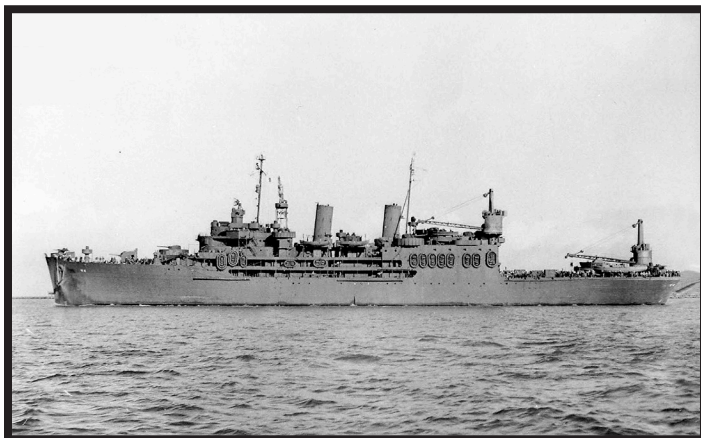
I joined the Navy in September of 1947 and was assigned aboard the USS Curtiss AV-4, a Sea Plane Tender. When we came aboard we were told not to have a camera and do not tell anyone where we are going. The ship was at Long Beach, CA harbor.

One event that took place was early one morning we heard the roar of engines and out came this Big Sea Plane, THE SPRUCE GOOSE, it rose above the water about 70 feet then settled down, turned around, and went back to its hanger.

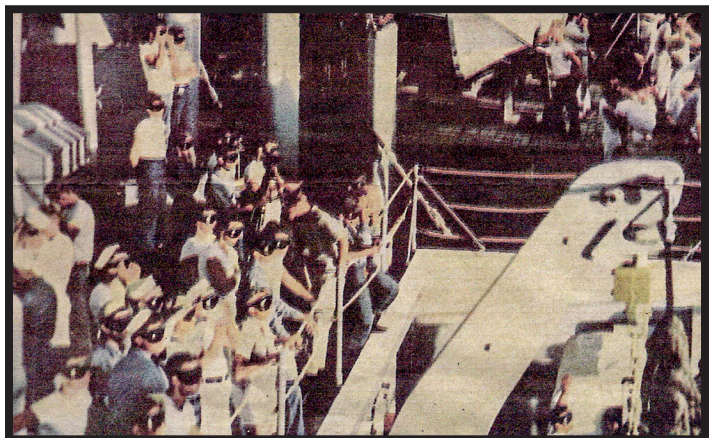


Maiden Flight of the Spruce Goose • November 2nd, 1947

The Curtiss left Long Beach and headed to the Marshall Islands and Eniwetok Atoll. The hanger deck had become a laboratory and only certain personnel were allowed in, with Marine Guards at all doors. When we arrived at Eniwetok we entered the lagoon and anchored near one of the islands. They were constructing a large tower on it. They took personnel to an atoll from that island. They placed a nuclear bomb on top of the tower and then the ship moved to the main island Eniwetok which was about 7 miles from the tower.



USS Curtiss AV-4



Atomic Blast Protection

One morning we were told to go up on deck, most personnel had dark goggles. They were told to face the tower and put on the goggles. Those of us that did not have goggles, were told to turn our backs toward the tower and put our arm over our eyes. A picture was taken of ship's personnel on the top deck of the Curtiss. I am in that picture with my arm over my eyes and my back turned towards the tower.

Submitted by Carl Johnson

OPERATION UPSHOT KNOTHOLE

April 15, 1953 • Shot Badger

I was attached to the 2nd Marine Division 1st Battalion Eighth Marines . In April we were scheduled to participate in an atomic Bomb test. We were flown in to Desert Rock V, which is a 2300 acre complex. It is called Yucca Flats where our series of shots were conducted. It also covers Camp Mercury where some shots are done at Frenchman Lake. We were assigned to squad tents that held 10 Marines each. There were 862 Marines from Camp Le June, NC and 907 Marines from Camp Pendleton, CA, 220 Marines from Fleet Marine Force . The next morning we were shown films on what to expect during our test. There were 11 detonations called shots in our series and our shot was called Badger. The whole operation was called Upshot Knothole. After class we were given liberty to Las Vegas from 10 AM until mid night. At that time the famous strip in Las Vegas was just being poured and the casinos were downtown.

The next morning after chow, we boarded trucks and visited the site where the bomb was . It was in a 300 foot tower and it was covered in a tarpaulin so we couldn't tell what the bomb looked like. The bomb was 23 kiloton (23,000 tons) of TNT. There were all sorts of equipment around the tower. Trucks, planes, cannons, tanks, and mannequins dressed in uniforms. They planted juniper trees and sequoia cactus at various distances. They had sheep tied to some of them. Film badges were tied to the sheep's neck. The sheep were placed at various distances from the tower. In our report they said that we would come across traps that held pigs and further would be rabbits. All had film badges on the traps. We walked back to where the trucks were and they drove us around to show us the large area of huge trees and buildings they constructed to show the effort of the shock wave. On April 18, 1953 we had revile at 12 midnight. We boarded the truck at 0100. When we arrived it was very cold. There were loud speakers directing us to our trenches. The trenches were 6' deep and 4' wide. We didn't have any special clothing, only what you would be wearing going into combat. We did not wear film badges or special goggles. While we waited, we built small fires to keep warm. After a long wait (waiting for all the other Marines to be directed to their trenches via loud speakers) the count down started. All lighting was turned off. It was so dark, you couldn't see your hand in front of your face. We were told to crouch down and lean against the wall toward the bomb. To keep our eyes open, wait for the shock wave to pass over us and wait for the shock wave to come back. At zero there were two distinct clicks. Then the world go so bright that it

was blinding. The trench shook so bad that it looked like a whip looking down the trench. After the shock wave, we were told to stand up and look at the bomb. There was a large mushroom cloud with an angry red ball in the center rolling upwards. We got out of the trench and each squad leader had a Geiger counter and ran it over each of the 8 Marines in the squad. We started walking toward the bomb. After several hundred yards the Geiger counters were going crazy. They announced that we would return to the trenches. We waited several hours until they determined that it was safe to start toward the bomb. On the way to the bomb, we came across the pens that held the rabbits, further were the pens that held the pigs. They were very agitated. Then we came across the sheep. All wore the film badges. They were either dead or badly burned. When we reached the site where the tower stood, there was a huge crater . There were pieces of green glass from the heat turning sand into glass. This is called Trinitite.

The equipment around the tower was melted, badly burnt and thrown various distances. Were were there quite awhile walking around and checking everything. Later we returned to our trucks and headed back to camp. There we were told to shed all of our clothes and equipment except the rifle. They put everything in a large pile and set it on fire. Then we were told to take a long shower. Afterwards were issued new clothing and participated in a debriefing meeting. We were told that most of us would be sterile up to 7 years, also we could not sue the government for any injuries, and were not allowed to talk about the bomb or the experience under penalty of prison. The gag order was rescinded in 1996. We all had trouble proving that we took part in this test until they started the ionizing radiation review and the VA started looking into our claims.

Submitted by Alex Partearna



OPERATION PLUMBBOB 1957

I am Sheldon M. Wallerstein and I was stationed at Camp Desert Rock, NV. in 1957. I was a 1st Lt. assigned as the Operations Officer in the Military Police Headquarters. My unit was the 293/298th MP Company, 5th Infantry Div. stationed at Ft. Ord, CA

I was also the MP Town Patrol Officer headquartered at the Las Vegas Police Department and at the Air Force base in North Las Vegas.

I along with an advance unit helped open up the camp in April and May, 1957. When we arrived there it was cold at night and hot during the day. Later it just hot all the time.

I was at the Camp during the following experimental exercises:

1. **BOLTZMAN, May 28, 1957* Observer**
2. **FRANKLIN, June 2**
3. **LASSEN, June 5**
1. **WILSON, June 18**
2. **PRISCILLA, June 24 *Participant**

I remember, and have never forgotten, the first total experience of standing on a "hill" and watching the "first" shot in the series. It was early morning light, wearing "protective" goggles and regular uniform.



Shot Priscilla courtesy of Nuclear Weapon Archive

However the exercise I will also remember best is "Priscilla". One of the last duties I performed before returning to Ft. Ord was as an Escort Officer for 23 Lt. Colonels. We were to witness the "Priscilla" shot from a Trench about a mile from "Ground Zero". I was the last one to go down the incline into the Trench. I was seated on a field coffee canister, wearing regulation field uniform (fatigues), Helmet, Lined Gloves and "Mask". When the shot detonated you heard nothing but silence until the "shock wave" came over the top of the trench, then you waited for the after shock to return back over the trench. At the time of detonation my hands covered

my "mask" and I remember seeing the bones of my hands, just like an x-ray picture.

The announcement came that we could leave the trench and walk towards Ground Zero. One of the Colonels was buried in the trench from the shock wave and had to be pulled out. His watch came off and he wanted to retrieve it but was told to leave and he could not get it since it might be contaminated. At that point we proceeded to about 500 feet from Ground Zero.

Along the way we observed what was left of some experimental equipment (vehicles, stick dummies with uniforms burnt off). I remember thinking it was like walking on cracked glass.

We were then told to leave the area and board buses to take us back to camp. The decontamination process consisted of someone brushing off our uniforms with a broom before we boarded the bus (I thought how inefficient the monitoring procedure was), I will, however, always remember the "shock waves" and the "beauty" of something that could be so horrible and destructive. **Submitted by Sheldon Wellerstein**

Continued from Page 3 • CROSSROAD MEMORIES

outside the lagoon. The bomb was exploded above the test ships. Our instructions were to face the bulkhead with our hands covering our eyes. After the explosion, we were told to turn and view the huge "mushroom cloud". A great hot wind hit the ship and struck us all as a huge tidal wave came through rocking the AJAX. The next morning our ships all went back into the Lagoon. Some of the four of us, along with many others were instructed to get aboard a motor launch where we were transported to the test ships. We went aboard several of the test ships, including a Japanese Battleship. We were given no protective clothing or gear and no test badges. We were instructed not to go below deck but to visually assess the damage on the deck. Back aboard the AJAX, we were given no instructions to shower or change clothing or any other special cleansing. When we did shower, it was with water from the lagoon, processed through the evaporators.

(East Longitude Time)
TEST BAKER was about 3 weeks later on July 25th, 1946 and the bomb was exploded under one of the test ships. We left the Lagoon and was instructed the same as the first time for the explosion, but the ship did not return to the Lagoon after the test. We left the test area and if memory holds true, was refused entry to another of the Marshall Islands as well as, Hawaii due to contamination of the ship. The AJAX was also held up outside of San Diego until the ship was cleared by a special test group. **Submitted by Jim Laskey**

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NAA&NV MINUTES

National Association of Atomic Veterans 2016 Convention Four Point Sheraton, Las Vegas, NV September 14, 2016, Wednesday

The 2016 National Association of Atomic Veterans Convention Board Meeting was called to order by National Commander, Fredrick Schafer, at 7:00 p.m. Meeting was open to all attending members.

Fred Schafer appointed a nominating committee consisting of current and present state commanders: Pete Besas, Washington, Jim Hamond, Minnesota, Carl Waddell, Arizona, and Paul Sparacino, Louisiana. These state commanders were directed to nominate four new candidates to the national board.

Discussion of Thursday's, September 15, 2016, field trip to Nevada Test Site ensued. Meeting was adjourned until Friday, September 16, 9:00 a.m.

September 16, 2016 Fred Schafer, National Commander, opened the general convention meeting at 9:00 a.m.

Old Business: Nominating Committee presented nominees for the four board positions. The committee nominated Gille Jenkins, Virginia, F. L. Grahlf, Michigan, Robert Ruyle, Nebraska and Keith Kiefer, Minnesota. It was moved and seconded that the slate of officers be accepted as presented.

At 11:30, all established and newly elected board members were seated: National Commander, Fred Schafer, Vice Commander, Keith Kiefer, Haskell Watts, Historian, Board member at-large, Robert Pfiefer, F. Lincoln Grahlf, board member at-large. Treasurer, Frank Farmer, Director of State Commanders, Gillie Jenkins, and newsletter editor and publisher, Robert Ruyle were absent.

Discussed filing with R.E.C.A. (Department of Justice), how to get help for veterans filing claiming health care claims due to radiation exposure through Veterans Administration, American Legion and V.F.W., D.A.V. and other service officers. Members recounted stories of personal experiences and health care claims.

New Business: F. Lincoln Grahlf reported on possible 2017 Convention site, Madison Wisconsin. Due to time of year, that city not recommended as convention site 2017.

It was recommended that wives and other family members of atomic veterans be encouraged to help setting up convention activities along with possible wives and family activities in preparation for Convention 2017. It was further recommended that because wives and families have vested interest in the veteran who has endured radiation exposure, they be permitted and encouraged to become N.A.A.V. members in order to have full partnership in the efforts on behalf of atomic veterans.

Five cities were recommended as potential 2017 Convention sites: Branson Missouri, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Dayton, Ohio, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota, and Chicago, Illinois. Members may email their 2017 convention site preference to the National Commander who will tally responses and report on preferred site in January newsletter. The email address to state your preferred site is derf@trcschafer.com.

It was moved and seconded to donate \$100 to the Marshall Island Canoe project to help with travel expenses to the Albany, Oregon Veterans Day Parade which will be held November 11, 2016. The motion passed.

In addition, several convention attendees individually added funds totaling another \$325.00 for expenses related to Marshall Island Canoe travel to Veterans Day Parade.

Guest Speakers:

Ernie Williams, N.A.A.V. member, and National Nuclear Security Administration spoke about Nevada and other test site operations.

Kianna Angelo, of Marshallese descent, spoke about the Marshall Islands, the impact of atomic testing upon the islands and about the Marshall Island Canoe project (above). Her husband, Jasper, spoke about C.O.F.A., Alliance National Network for the Marshall Islands. He stated that the organization is seeking alliance with N.A.A.V. to establish a support system to help support Marshall Island issues.

Convention closed Friday evening, September 16, 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Barbara Schafer, NAA&NV Secretary



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