



NAA&NV NEWS

DECEMBER 2018

4th QUARTER

Members Publication of the National Association of Atomic & Nuclear Veterans

FROM THE DESK OF OUR NATIONAL COMMANDER



December 2018 -- A lot has happened in the past few months. I will focus on only Nuclear Veteran related activities from a 10,000 foot look. Upon returning from the Portland, Oregon NAAV Convention, near the end of September, I attended a round table discussion with a United States Congressional Sub Committee (Veterans Assistance and Memorial Affairs) of the Veterans Affairs Committee. The subject was the Enewetak Atoll Radiological Cleanup Veterans. In attendance was myself, three other Enewetak Atoll Cleanup Veterans, the Committee leadership, other Veterans groups, representatives of VA (Veterans Affairs), DTRA (Defense Threat Reduction Agency (the department that tries to determine exposure levels), and several medical experts. I believe this was a real eye opener for those in attendance, as to what happened and the information we have gathered that disputed the VA and DTRAs findings ("Facts".) I received compliments from the medical experts on my testimony when I stated not all of the exposure pathways are being taken into account when determining exposure levels. More about this when I discuss the legislative activities.

In October I flew to Paris, France and drove (joined attendees) down to Montauban, attending the French Atomic Veterans Convention (AVEN & OBSIVEN). Like BNTVA's convention, it was a very warm welcome and I was showered with gifts and appreciation. Besides representing NAAV, I had the honor to speak on behalf of BNTVA delivering BNTVA's regrets regarding not being able to have a representative present. At the start of delivering BNTVA's regrets I shed my suit jacket, putting on the BNTVA Blazer I received in May. Most folks enjoyed the humor intended. I hope to soon get the video of this to share with all of you. Many in attendance wanted a picture with this American. I'm not sure if it was the novelty that I was about twice as tall as most of the French, or what the attraction was. Regardless, I enjoyed it as much as they did. I had a few say the last time they saw an American was their back as they were leaving after World War II. Maybe it was my typical American stereotype of someone that preferred Coca Cola over wine and Champagne. I learned that in many ways the French Atomic Veterans are similar, yet different. An example is the French government differentiates between the Service members that volunteered vs. those that were drafted. The members drafted have to fight tooth and nail to get support and compensation. Those volunteering for service are completely denied any compensation. The support and joint venues with other Veteran organization is and will be invaluable.

Later in October myself, Alex Partezana (a NAAV Atomic Veteran) & his son participated in a National Memorial & Veterans Museum grand opening in Columbus, Ohio, representing NAAV as a VSO (Veterans Service Organization.) The Key note speaker was former US Secretary of State and retired General Colin Powell. Legislatively, NAAV is in a holding pattern until the New Congressmen and Senators' swearing in mid January 2019. At this point we start all over getting a Bill for each subject introduced separately in the Congress and Senate, getting cosponsors and pushing them forward. We lost some of our supporters in the election. I have yet to fully assess the impact of the elections. We took some baby steps toward our legislative goals in 2018. Instead of an Atomic Veteran Service

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FROM THE DESK OF THE VICE COMMANDER



Dec 18th 2018

Well the holidays are upon us. Winter is here in a lot of places. Here it is still mild so far, very little rain.

The Challenge coins have been well received by members. We have several more for Christmas Presents.

They do make a nice gift. The address for the challenge is NAAV 130 CLEVELAND ST. LEBANON, OR 97355. Please make checks out to NAAV.

We have a very busy Veterans Day here in Oregon Banquets, dinners and parade.

Membership continues to grow and the items in the store continue to sell. Also several donations have come in.

Now is the time to start working with your State's Congress to Get July 16th as atomic Veterans day annually. I can send you a copy of what Oregon got passed on July 16th. Also get a section of Highway to become Atomic Veterans Memorial Highway.

Work with your members and get members to get current in dues, just \$25.00 will get you current. Please update your info. Phone numbers are not current. E-mail or call with that info. When you send in dues let us know of any changes.

Thank you members that send in extra dues ear marked for helping someone that needs help with their dues and other support of NAAV.

Wishing you and your family a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Thank you!

Fred Schafer
National Vice Commander



COMING CONVENTION SAVE THE DATES

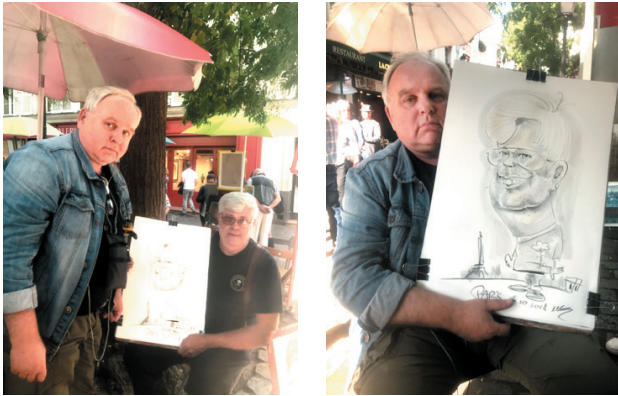
In 2019 we will be celebrating NAAV's 40th anniversary. The date **has not** been firmed up however, please mark your calendar for Sept. 1st thru the 16th. The convention will be Sept 4th to the 7th or Sept 11th to the 14th. Most likely the later dates. The location is being determined. Ohio, Minnesota or a cruise ship are in the running. If anyone has other suggestions please submit them ASAP. I hope this Convention has a record attendance. We hope to expand the international presence, as well.



TAPS



- JOHN TABOR.....Austin, TX
- HENRY W. GRAGE.....Devine, TX
- RAY C. BAKER, JR.....Urbandale, IA
- KEITH R. MUMAW. SR.....Dallas, TX



Medal, the Secretary of Defense was directed to create and issue a "Certificate of Participation" to be issued to the Veteran or requesting next of kin. We are not giving up on The Medal. For the Enewetak Atoll Radiological Cleanup Veterans, we had the round table discussion and the VA was given direction to provide a report on how they are addressing these Veterans' issues, short comings, etc. in 90 days or less.

Keith (K²)

Keith Kiefer, NAAV National Commander

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

4th Quarter 2018 -- S2821 (formerly S283 introduced by Senator Al Franken, Minnesota)/HR632. The Mark Takai Atomic Veteran Healthcare Parity Act has made some progress. On the Senate Side the Bill picked up two Senators (with 18 of the 100 Senators as authors or Cosponsors.) The Senators are; Heinrich (D-NM) and Booker (D-NJ). Presently, Minnesota, Oregon and Maine are the only states with 100% support.

HR632 has 239 of the 435 House members supporting the Bill. One Congressmen has been added; Burgess (R-TX-26). We await the report the VA was given 90 days to produce.

S197/HR2049 Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA) Amendments of 2017 has had no change.
S1283/HR2754 Atomic Veteran Service Medal has no change.

HR4675 Low Dose Radiation Research Act of 2017 passed the House, however, no visible activity has been seen regarding introduction of a companion Bill in the Senate. Unfortunately, we have to start all over with all of these Bills starting January 2019.

CHALLENGE COINS GOING FAST!

NAAV introduces a limited edition Challenge Coin. This is a 1.75 inch 10 Gauge Bright Bronze Challenge Coin. A picture is worth a thousand words. Briefly, one side has the color filled NAAV logo and the other side is dedicated to the founder with a general Mission Statement. The edge is stamped "MADE IN USA".

This would be a great gift for an Atomic Veteran, Widow, Children, a collector or your legislators (State and Federal). Legislators cherish Challenge Coins and collect them.

We have a few left. Anyone wanting a coin send \$25.00 each to NAAV C/O Fred Schafer, 130 Cleveland St., Lebanon, OH 97355-4505. First come first serve on the availability of these coins.



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Back

LOOK!



LOOK AT YOUR ADDRESS ON THE BACK PAGE! Is your subscription up to date? If not get a check for \$25.00 to Fred Schafer right now so YOU can keep getting the newsletter.

It's easy to forget to keep things up to date. So CHECK NOW -- and be sure your membership is up-to-date! To keep the newsletter going we need your help to stay current always! Have a good year and be on time with your subscription. THANKS!

STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

4th Quarter 2018 -- Congratulations to Ohio State Rep. Tim Schaffer (HD 77), NAAV Ohio Co-Commanders David Crawford and David England.



Tim Schaffer

Ohio now perpetually recognizes July 16th as National Atomic Veterans Day. HB 414 passed the Ohio House 88 to 0 on June 7, 2018 and the Ohio Senate 30 to 0 in Nov. 28, 2018. It was signed by Governor John Kasich, Dec. 12, 2018, and takes effect 90 days after being signed by the Governor. Mr. England worked with Rep. Schaffer to get this moving and continued to follow it through to the conclusion. Mr. Crawford and NAAV Vice Commander (Kiefer) provided testimony for the House and again to the Senate. Mr. Crawford was present for the vote. Thank you. Job well done by all, Rep. Schaffer also introduced HCR 21. A resolution supporting the Federal legislation, Mark Takai Atomic Veteran Healthcare Parity Act. It has passed the Ohio House and sits in the Ohio Senate Committee.

DOES YOUR STATE?

Have you been working on your state to get July 16th recognized as National Atomic Veterans Day? If not, or if you have questions, on how some others have succeeded let us know. Keith Kiefer and several State Commanders have some suggestions on how they made it work. Some of us have tried and have yet to succeed, but keep trying. After all, it was a National Holiday once, back when President Reagan was in office, but got dropped after several years.

BEHIND IN DUES?

If you notice on your newsletter, on the last page where your address is, that your dues have expired, stop right now and send \$25.00 to Fred Schafer to renew it for another year. Dues need to be kept up to date so we can keep sending you a news letter about what is going on with the NAA&NV organization. All dues and questions about your membership should be sent to:

Fred Schafer, National Vice Commander
NAA&NV

130 Cleveland Street

Lebanon, OR 97355-4505

Any questions give him a call at 541-258-7453 or e-mail him at derf@trcschafer.com.



This should remind you all to keep pushing for the government to recognize the cleanup crew, that buried this waste. Keep pushing your congressman.



TO ALL STATE COMMANDERS

Recently all STATE COMMANDERS received an e-mail from your DIRECTOR OF STATE COMMANDERS - Gillie Jenkins and along with it you received the latest list of members. You were requested to update it from your information so #1 we know that they are still living. And most of all to keep track of any one moving or has a new phone number and/or e-mail. It's the State Commanders job to keep in touch so we always have any changes in address and/or phone number and e-mail. It's tough on those that have a large number of members in their state, but it is necessary. Those that have big numbers can ask another member to help any time. Our largest number at present is California and Bud does a great job doing it all by himself so those of you with smaller numbers should get busy and update your info. Get in touch with Gillie Jenkins with corrections so we can get all updated. We asked that you get it done by end of January 2019.

ENEWETAK ATOLL CLEANUP VETERAN IN THE NEWS



Aaron Ducote

“I added my own little twist to a family recipe, and changed up the recipe and made it more of what we’re accustomed to down here,” explained Ducote. In fact, he’s made a little name for himself, selling his product around Avoyelles and St. Landry Parishes; even a bit farther away. “We’ve sold it in Hawaii, we’ve sold it in Spain, and we’ve shipped it to a bunch of military friends in different countries,” said Ducote.



But, mass production was recently cut short. “We were selling good for a while until I got sick in 2015,” remembered Ducote. When Ducote said he was sick, it’s not like when you and I come down with a cold. He had to have heart surgery. “Whenever they first started seeing the signs of the heart valve problem, they asked ‘when did you get chemotherapy,’ recounted Ducote. “I said ‘I’ve never had chemotherapy.’ And they said ‘the deterioration of your heart valve, it’s consistent with the evidence of someone who’s been exposed to high amounts and doses of radiation.’”

So how did Ducote become so exposed to radiation? Well, he’s an army veteran and during the late 70s, he was a part of roughly 4,000 US soldiers sent to Enewetak Atoll in the Marshall Islands in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. It was an island used to test nuclear bombs. “They started a nuclear cleanup project,

sending servicemen out there to clean the debris and vegetation off the island to make it more inhabitable to the people of that area,” explained Ducote. For three years, soldiers were brought on the island in waves to work for six months at a time. There they became known as Lojwa Animals, named after the base they were living on. They were told there was a small amount of radiation, but near the end of the tour, Ducote said they started getting sick. And, it’s the lasting effect that’s really taking the toll. “People that were stationed on the island, they all started developing cancers and other illnesses,” expressed Ducote. “Some of them just didn’t make it too far in life. They got sick immediately. And I’ve been in touch with the 30 or 40 remaining vets that are there.”

But he said the worst part is that neither the military nor the VA will connect these health problems with the atomic cleanup, meaning he hasn’t had success in getting benefits. “There’s so few of us, it just seems like they would rather deny until we die than admit that we were in harm’s way, they put us there, and they know that there’s a problem with us,” said Ducote. “Just like the other Marshallese that were on the islands, they had no problem giving them millions of dollars in benefits and health care, relocated some to all over the United States. But the US is forgetting about the veterans that were there and served our country.”

Of course, Ducote isn’t the first atomic cleanup vet to share his story. He mentioned other efforts that have even led some U.S. politicians to push for the VA to recognize the efforts of soldiers like himself. He’s not positive it will lead anywhere, but he has hope that he’ll at least one day be recognized. “Why can’t we get recognition for it,” asked Ducote. “It’s all just pushed aside like it never happened. We were hidden for so long, it’s kind of hard for them to bring it up now and admit to it.”

In the meantime, he’s looking to get back on track with the barbecue sauce, hoping to make a big batch after the holidays, just in time for the spring cookouts. I mean, like I said, there’s something rewarding about a nice hobby. And in this case, it’s just what Ducote needs. “I have to keep my mind busy. Focus on something else.” For more information on the Atomic Cleanup Vets check out the attached link. If you’re interested in Ducote’s Barbecue Sauce and Spices you can reach him at samsducotesauce@gmail.com.

DELNO TAYLOR ARTICLE



After being exposed to radiation from testing of thermonuclear and hydrogen bombs nearly 70 years ago, 85-year-old Delno Taylor still believes this country will be safe as long as young men and women in the military defend it.

On May 19, which was Armed Services Day, a celebration was held in the pavilion at Snowball, Arkansas to honor Taylor and the sacrifices he made for his country, and the stretch of state Highway 74 leading to the community that has been named in his honor as well. At the ceremony, Taylor briefly told his story to about 100 people gathered in the pavilion on a sunny day with white clouds dotting the sky.

“April the 1st, 1950, we left San Diego early in the morning not knowing where we was going,” Taylor said. “We had a stop in the Philippines and refurbished the ship, then we went on. We crossed the equator and we were put through the belt line.”

(The belt line is a ceremony based on the naval tradition that those sailors who have never crossed the equator, called “pollywogs,” are initiated for the crossing and become “trusty shellbacks.”)

“We sailed on then and just before we got to Enewetak [Island], the captain brought the ship dead in the water and he told us where we were going,” Taylor continued. “We were going to be testing the atomic bomb proving grounds and some of it may be dangerous. In fact, some of it may be fatal. But he could assure us of one thing: We could never do anything more patriotic for our country than what we were going to do and when we got back to the United States we would probably get a hero’s welcome.

“After we had a few days of rest on Enewetak Island, the coconuts and bananas were radioactive, so we drank beer and had a few fist fights, which was about regulation for a bunch of drunk sailors. Then we went to sea.”

On April 27, they were told they were going to witness an atomic bomb blast. He was one of the sailors picked to be on the port side of the ship for the test. The uniform of the day was a white hat, white shirt, a pair of dungarees, a pair of socks and a pair of shoes.

“Well,” Taylor said, “they dropped this bomb in the atmosphere and the heat was so intense it made ashes out of the casing and the casing flew on the ship and on us, the ashes. We were told to change clothes just as soon as we could. So we did.”

The next test was an underwater detonation of a bomb.

“I think we were about eight miles from that, but the concussion was so intense that the wave it set off almost capsized the ship,” Taylor recalled.

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DELNO TAYLOR ARTICLE CONTINUED

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The next bomb was detonated on a barge.

“On a day as clear as this, with our eyes shut, looking through dark glasses, with your hand like this,” he said, putting his hand over his eyes, “you could see every bone in your finger.”

After being on the water for about 30 days — “I don’t know how many bombs we tested,” Taylor said — the commander decided they were due for some rest and recreation. So, they were taken to New Zealand.

“We figured when we got there we’d died and gone to heaven, because there were about 250 beautiful women who met the ship,” he said. “And they looked like Coke bottles turned upside down.”

After 10 days of R&R, they went back to Enewetak. When the next bomb was tested he said he got a “terrible dose” of radiation. “If a 4-year-old mule kicked you in the belly it wouldn’t hurt any worse,” Taylor said.

He was loaded on a helicopter and taken to Okinawa Island for medical treatment. The doctor said he’d been overdosed with radiation and the only treatment was excessive urination, so he should drink all the beer he could hold.

“They gave me a slip and I’d go to the enlisted men’s club and drink all the free beer I wanted,” he recalled.

After treatment, he was reunited with the ship’s crew in Japan and they started home. Before they got to San Diego, they stopped the ship and told them the things they had seen were highly classified and they were sworn to secrecy. In fact, they were told they could face up to 10 years in prison if they told anyone about the tests.

“Needless to say, I never told anybody,” Taylor said. “So, I got discharged and I come home.”

But he always wondered why it was he and the crew were exposed to radiation. Years later, he spoke with a man who had been in the CIA at the time and he offered an account of why the tests were undertaken.

“Russia was getting ready to attack this country ... and President Eisenhower knew about it,” Taylor said. “But he wasn’t going to say anything because he wanted to get out of office.”

When Soviet Union Premier Nikita Khrushchev addressed ambassadors from the west at Moscow, he famously took off one shoe and beat it on the table in front of him, he threatened to “bury” the capitalists.

When John F. Kennedy took office, it was discovered the Soviets had installed missiles in Cuba.

“So he massed up all the ships to come in there, then he told Castro and Khrushchev, ‘I’ll bury that whole island.’ I didn’t hear him say that — I’m quoting somebody else. I don’t know if he said that or not. That’s what this guy told me he said,” Taylor said.

Thus ended what has long been known as the Cuban Missile Crisis and Taylor believes the testing he and other Atomic Veterans gave the United States the power to stop that threat.

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DELNO TAYLOR ARTICLE CONTINUED

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In 1996, Congress passed the Nuclear Radiation Secrecy Agreement Act, which rescinded the oath of secrecy Atomic Veterans were under for decades. Since that time, he has worked to bring attention to those veterans who witnessed atomic testing. After having to go through the Secretary of State Mark Martin's office (he thanked former Searcy County Judge Johnny Hinchey, who now works as a community outreach coordinator in that office, as well as former state Rep. David Branscum), the Arkansas Department of Transportation and the Searcy County Quorum Court, a sign has been erected on Highway 74 naming it "Atomic Veteran Delno Taylor Highway."

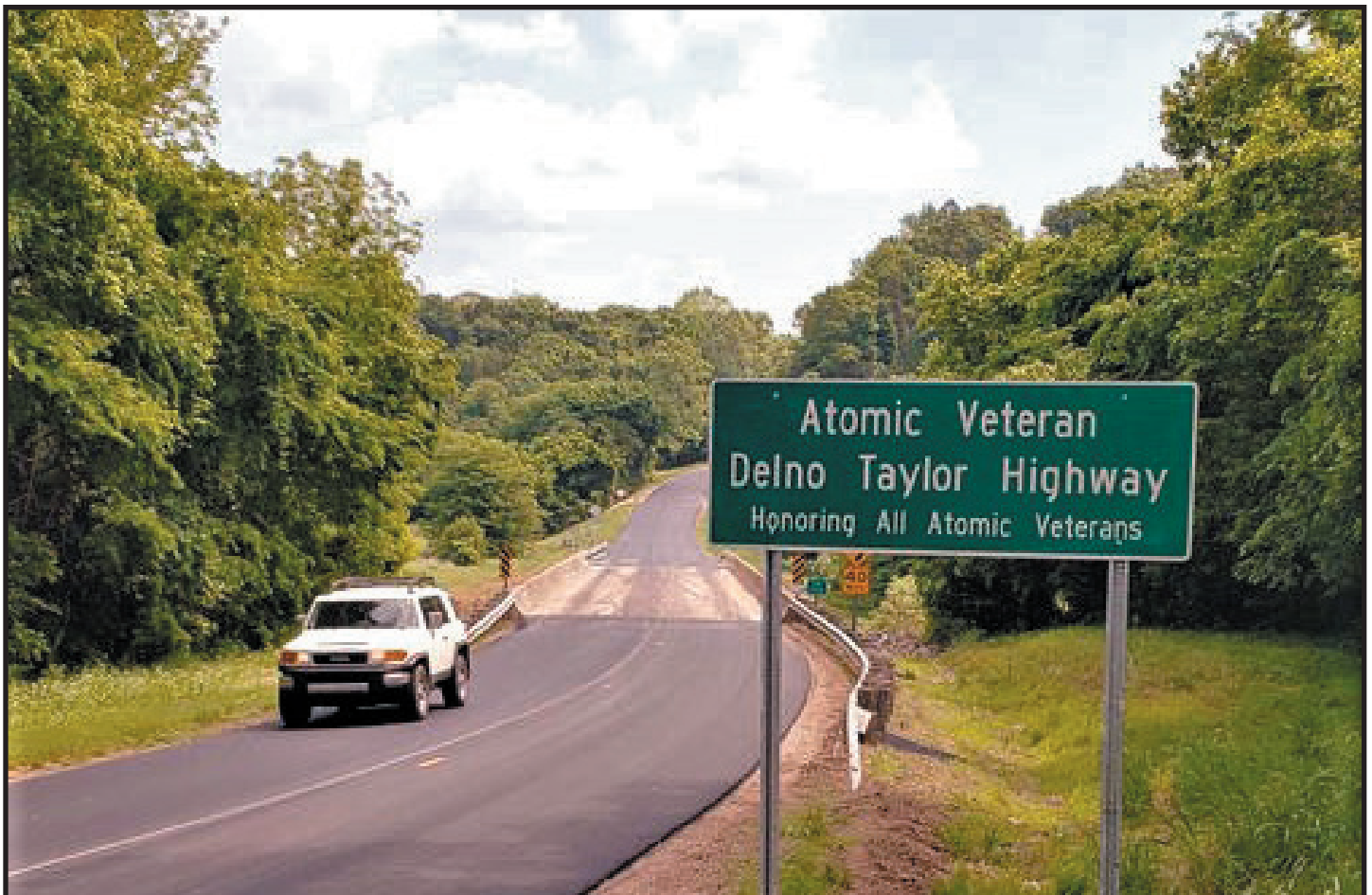
Of the 160 men who were on his ship, only 10 were alive when he last checked in September.

"There's only two Atomic Veterans left alive in northwest Arkansas," Taylor said. "That's me and a guy from Fayetteville, and I'm not sure he's still alive because I never could get a hold of him."

Taylor feels America's future is still bright and safe as long as young men and women are courageous enough to swear an oath to protect the country from all enemies, both foreign and domestic.

"And I tell everybody, if you see some man or woman in uniform, you shake their hand and thank them for their service," Taylor said. "And the old dilapidated veterans like me, you shake their hands and tell them, 'thank you for your service' because they may not have done anything courageous, but they made themselves available for it.

"And with that said, God bless America," he told the crowd.



DISTINGUISHED VETERAN OF THE YEAR



Fred Schafer & Barbara Schafer

Fred was a U. S. Navy veteran serving aboard the USS Chipola AO-63 from 1961 to 1966. Fred was also the National Commander of the National Association of Atomic Veterans and now still serves as the Vice Commander. This year he was given the Distinguished Veterans Award during the annual Veterans of the Year Banquet to be held at the Linn County Fair & Expo Center.

During his service he and his shipmates were asked to observe various atomic blasts. Many suffered physical deterioration after being exposed to significant amounts of ionized radiation. These experiences were labeled government secrets and among the service members it was felt to be their patriotic duty to uphold this silence.

Schafer joined the American Legion Post 51 in Lebanon in 1971. He has been a consistent and reliable volunteer. In the early 1980s he met someone who spoke about a National Association For Atomic Veterans. He immediately joined and assisted in starting an Oregon chapter.

Schafer began a newsletter and made contact with over 300 members of the Chipola. Through this newsletter, servicemen began to talk about their health issues and lobbied the Veterans Administration to get the help they needed. Working with the Oregon Legislature, the group was successful in having July 16 designated as Atomic Veterans Day in Oregon.



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