



# NAAV NEWS

DECEMBER 2019

4th QUARTER

*Publication of the National Association of Atomic Veterans*

## FROM THE DESK OF OUR NATIONAL COMMANDER



**Keith Kiefer**  
NAAV - Commander

**“Justice is like an orgasm. It can never come too late.”**

*Sherlock Homes  
(Johnny Lee Miller)  
Elementary Season 4  
Episode 1*

Greetings. At the risk of being accused of being insensitive or Politically Incorrect I'm going to wish all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

### **In pursuit of justice!**

Well, it has been busy here. On the heels of our (NAAV) convention, I headed to France to attend the AVEN Convention in Anger, France the end of September returning early October. We learned the French Government now recognizes two additional diseases which have been added, since last year, as presumed Ionization Radiation Induced. And another two are expected to be added. They have made more progress on approval of their DNA study plans and are working to secure funding. Upon return from France, a trip to Washington DC was made to twist, and if necessary break arms to gain more support for our various pieces of legislation. At the time of the visit, we were following six pieces of legislation and trying to add another four pieces of legislation. For each topic, a piece of legislation has to be introduced in both the House and ideally one with the same text language introduced in the Senate. They then have to pass both Bills in the session introduced. The trip was productive. We added several cosponsors and one of the additional four pieces of legislation has been introduced in the House. This piece of legislation introduced, if passed, would recognize July 16th nationally as Atomic Veterans Day perpetually.

The other topics of the legislation are: classification of the Enewetak Atoll Radiological Cleanup Veterans and Palomares Broken Arrow Operation Veterans as Atomic Veterans, Atomic Veterans Medal, and RECA reauthorization.

On a state level, we provided testimony to the Ohio legislation for a resolution to the Federal Government to support the Enewetak Atoll Veterans, a second hearing on the resolution took place with a favorable response. Additionally, the Wisconsin legislation has passed a resolution supporting our efforts.

We have also been working with the Marshallese, CANN, AAPCHO & APIAHF supporting Medicaid eligibility for COFA citizens.

Meanwhile, preparations and planning continue for a joint Marshallese, Clean up and Atomic Veteran Remembrance Day Feb. 28, 29th and March 1, 2020 in Springdale, Arizona.

The news on the Atomic Veteran Service Medal, appears that once again the provision was striped from the final NDAA Bill during the reconciliation process. we have a couple options we are looking at for the 2020 116th session of Congress.

During a period which our membership ( due to the age ) should be decreasing our number of members continues to increase. This trend holds true for all subsets of or membership base. Please continue to get the word out about NAAV.

Thank you to those that have made or plan to make donations to: the general fund, to offset convention over run, to the Feb.-March Remembrance Day/40th Anniversary and the DNA study. These donations are very appreciated and needed.

*Keith (K<sup>2</sup>)*  
NAAV National Commander

## FROM THE DESK OF OUR NAAV VICE COMMANDER



**Fred Schafer**  
NAAV VICE COMMANDER

Hope you have a Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

We have ordered more of the Challenge coins. We have started a new Challenge coin this year. It is the Crossroad Shot Baker.

Thank you to all that have updated their information to our Data-Base. It has made

me work harder to get the Data-Base updated. I feel that we have a very good place to start again.

Membership continues to grow and the items in the store continue to sell. Also several donations have come in. I will repeat this. "Keep working with your states and Federal 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. State Commanders work with your members and get members to get current in dues; just \$25.00 each, will get your membership current. Please update your information. Phone numbers are not current. E-mail or call with that information. When you send in dues let us know of any changes.

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

We have a lot of events planned for this coming year, and we are here to help anyone that wants help. Just let us know. Please make checks out to NAAV. Not to me.

A big Thank you to the State commanders and members that have supported NAAV, with donations and working with your State and Federal VA to make these happen.

## REMEMBRANCE DAY CLEANUP VETERANS 40TH ANNIVERSARY CONVENTION

This coming March will mark the 40 Year Anniversary for the completion of the Enewetak Atoll Cleanup Project! This date also coincides with the Marshallese Nuclear Remembrance Day and the Marshallese people have graciously invited us to join them in Springdale, Arkansas where the RMI will host a special Recognition Ceremony.

As most of us already know there is a sizable Marshallese community in Springdale, earning the nickname "The Atolls of Arkansas". Please mark your calendar; Friday 28th, Saturday 29th and Sunday March 1st 2020 for the Nuclear Remembrance Day Event, plan on joining in on this special event.

We will be staying at the Doubletree Hotel in Springdale. At this Hilton Hotel we have a discounted group rate of \$109 per night with the buffet breakfast included. The special rate code is "ATM." The four night event is check-in Thursday night February 27 and check-out Monday morning March 2, 2020. Please find the registration form included in this newsletter, fill it out and send it with your registration fees to NAAV C/O Fred Schafer by January 30th, 2020.

### Legislative Update from Page 5

A Bill, in Congress, to recognize July 16th Nationally as Atomic Veterans Day was introduced by Abigail Davis Spanberger H. Res. 687. It presently has 2.5% (11) of the House. We are looking for a Senator to introduce a companion Bill in the Senate. Thank you Gillie for your work and support here.

Wisconsin State legislation passed a resolution supporting our federal legislative Bills.

Ohio State legislators are in the process of trying to get a similar resolution passed. We provided testimony supporting their efforts and Resolution.

### UPDATE: OHIO SCR5 PASSED

**Contact your US Congressmen and US Senators to cosponsor and support the Bills listed in this article.**

## GRATITUDE

Thank you to those that have made or plan to make donations to: the general fund, to offset 40th anniversary convention over run, to the Feb.-March Remembrance Day/40th Anniversary and the DNA study. These donations are very appreciated and needed.

We received a Thank you card from Kathleen Barber, former RECA employee for the Recognition Award.

Received a Thank you letter and donation from the wife of an Atomic Veteran and former State Commander.

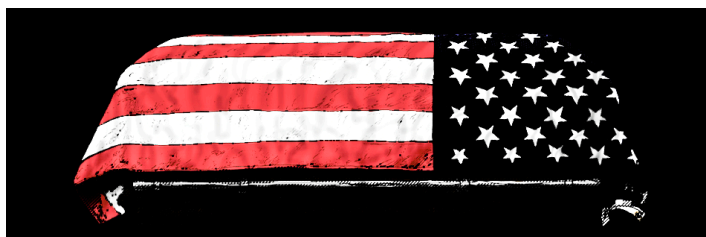
Received appreciation letters regarding the newsletter and legislative support.

Thank you to the Resolution of support from the Wisconsin Legislation.

Thank you to Senator Tim Schaffer on the work on a Resolution of support from the Ohio Legislation.

Thank you to those that verified and updated your membership and/or contact information.

We recieved a thank you letter from a Hawaii Senator for recieving a challege coin,



RICHARD A. CASTILE.....Oklahoma City, OK  
ALAN A. THOMAS.....Kokomo, IN  
JAMES F. CARTER.....Crossville, TN  
MELVIN J. BRADLEY.....Salisbury, MD  
ROBERT G. MEACHAM.....Monument, CO  
RONALD A. WIKE.....Maryville, WA  
WILLIAM "Bill" MCGEE.....Napa, CA

**MARK THESE ON YOUR CALENDAR** ▶▶▶

## SEEKING INDIVIDUALS WHO SERVED IN THE MILITARY!



We invite you to participate in a study focusing on your health behaviors and life experiences as a Veteran.

The goal of the **Health for Every Veteran Study** is to better understand the experiences of Veterans from all backgrounds and promote their health and well-being. We are interested in hearing the diverse voices within our communities.

The study is being conducted by researchers at the **VA Puget Sound Health Care System**. It consists of completing a confidential, web-based questionnaire every 9 months for approximately 2 years (for a total of 4 questionnaires). All research activities are completed online, with no in-person visits required. For more information, please go to <https://healthforeveryvet.questionpro.com>.

### **IMPORTANT DATES**

The **Clean-Up Veterans Remembrance Day Convention** is on February 27th, 28th, 29th, and March 1st.

Then the **NAAV Convention** is on September 9th, 10th, & 11th so be ready.



# NAAV MEMBER WITH THE AID OF YALE LAW STUDENTS MAKE HISTORY FOR PALOMARES-BROKEN ARROW OPERATION VETERANS

On Dec. 6, 2019 in the

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR  
VETERANS CLAIMS

In:

VICTOR B. SKAAR, APPELLANT  
(NAAV Member)

Vs

ROBERT L. WILKIE,  
SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS,  
APPELLEE.

The Court noted; (this motion for) “class certification in the context of an appeal of an individual Board decision—is one of first impression.” Until 2017 (and subsequent court cases) the court did not believe it had the authority to certify class actions. In a historic decision the Court:

“ORDERED that the motion for class certification is GRANTED IN PART and DENIED IN PART. It is further”

“ORDERED that the proposed class definition is modified as explained herein and the following class is certified in this matter: All U.S. veterans who were present at the 1966 cleanup of plutonium dust at Palomares, Spain, and whose application for service-connected disability compensation based on exposure to ionizing radiation VA has” (been) “denied or will” (be denied) “deny by relying, at least in part, on the findings of dose estimates requested under 38 C.F.R. § 3.311, except those whose claims have been denied and relevant appeal windows of those denials have expired, or those whose claims have been denied solely based on dose estimates obtained before 2001. It is further”

“ORDERED that Michael J. Wishnie, Esq., is appointed as class counsel. It is further”

“ORDERED that, within 30 days, the parties jointly submit a proposed class notice and plan for effecting notice. If the parties are unable to agree, they are to submit separate sections and include them in the joint submission. It is further”

“ORDERED that this matter is returned to the original panel appointed to this appeal for management of the class action and a decision on the merits.”

“Class certification will be reserved for those cases where appellants demonstrate the class device is a superior vehicle for litigating the class claim” (rather) “than a precedential decision. Applying these principles, we grant in part and deny in part the motion for class certification.”

Background:

Operation Chrome Dome  
SAC’s mission during the Cold War era result in constant airborne readiness. That meant that U.S. bombers would always be in the air, 24 hrs a day, 7 days a week. Long flight routes were strategically planned for different parts of the world to deter Soviet first strike. Mid-air refueling was a necessity. This was Operation Chrome Dome. One of those routes took B-52s from an air force base in North Carolina around the Mediterranean Sea and back.

On January 17, 1966, a B-52 bomber flying its Chrome Dome route from North Carolina was about to be refueled by a KC-135 tanker some 31,000 feet above the small village of Palomares on Spain’s Mediterranean coast. The bomber carrying four 1.5 megaton hydrogen bombs collided with the boom of the refueling tanker. The KC-135 was completely destroyed when its 40,000 gallon fuel load ignited, killing all four crew members. The B-52 broke apart, killing three of the seven crew members aboard. Four members of the B-52’s crew were able to parachute to safety. Of the four unarmed hydrogen bombs carried by the B-52, three crashed on the ground in the vicinity of Palomares, a poor farming community 1 mile off the coastal highway. The fourth sank off the coast of the Mediterranean and was missing for nearly three months. In theory, parachutes attached to the bombs should have borne them gently to the ground, preventing any contamination, but two of the parachutes failed to open. The two that fell to earth unsupported by parachutes blew apart on impact.

-- Continued on Page 5 --

## **PALOMARES-BROKEN ARROW OPERATION CONTINUED**

## **Federal Legislative Update 4th Quarter 2019**

### **Contamination:**

The first weapon to be discovered was found nearly intact. However, the conventional explosives from the other two bombs that fell to earth without parachutes had detonated. No nuclear explosion had occurred but the plutonium ignited, producing a cloud that was dispersed by a 35 mph wind. A radiation survey conducted jointly by the Defense Nuclear Agency (DNA) and the Junta de Energia Nuclear found that no less than 650 acres (more than 1 square mile) of residential areas, farmland (especially tomato farms) and woods were contaminated. However, during the survey, as winds picked up and scattered the plutonium dust, as the DNA's subsequent report noted: "The total extent of the spread will never be known."

### **Cleanup:**

The decision was made to remove the contaminated dirt from the most contaminated areas. With hand tools, workers literally scraped up the first three inches of topsoil, sealed it in barrels, and shipped it to a storage facility back in the US. For three months, hundreds of workers, including U.S. airmen from Morón Air Base, scientists, and Spanish Civil Guards worked to decontaminate the area. An estimated 1,400 tons of radioactive soil and vegetation was excavated and sent to the United States for disposal in the Savannah River Plant, and crops of tomatoes were buried or burned.

It was reported that U.S. personnel wore protective clothing and underwent regular radiation checks, but such measures were not taken for the Spanish workers. However, the Air Force commander in charge later stated, "The U.S. Air Force was unprepared to provide adequate detection and monitoring for its personnel when an aircraft accident occurred involving plutonium weapons in a remote area of a foreign country."

In 2015 the US agreed to additional remediation. This was called "one of the worst nuclear disasters of the cold war."

The Mark Takai Atomic Veteran Healthcare Parity act was introduced in both the House and Senate on the same day (26 Feb., 2019). This was referred to the two committees (House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees). To date, we have 33.3% (145) of the House and 16% (16) Senate members as Authors or cosponsors of the Bills. These Bills recognize the Enewetak Atoll Radiological Cleanup Veterans as Atomic Veterans for medical coverage of 22 diseases. The Bill numbers are HR1377 and S555 for the 116th session. In the House, Congresswoman Grace Meng authored the Bill and in the Senate, Senators Tina Smith and Thom Tillis authored S555.

HR1628 was introduced by Congressman Gregory Steube. Its title is; To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to seek to enter into an agreement with the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to conduct a study on radiation exposure relating to the cleanup of Enewetak Atoll, and for other purposes. To date eight Congresspersons are sponsors of this Bill. A Senate version has not been introduced. NAAV will support this Bill provided it does not delay the passage of HR1377 and S555.

We now have HR3783 & S947 introduced. These bills extend the sunset date of RECA (Radiation Exposure Compensation Act,) increases the compensation and includes cohort groups not previously included. To date, we have 10.3% (45) of the House and 9% (9) Senate members as Authors or cosponsors of the Bills.

The Atomic Veteran Service Medal that was in the NDAA did not survive the reconciliation process. we are exploring additional options to obtain this recognition.

S1896 Palomares Veterans Act of 2019 was introduced. We expect a House bill to be introduced in January. Presently, we have 3% (3) Senate members as Authors or cosponsors of this Bill.

**-- Continued on bottom of Page 2 Column 2 --**



# BRITISH NUCLEAR TEST VETERANS ASSOCIATION



**Alan Owen**  
BNTVA - Chairman

enjoyed a night of entertainment from the Kiribati dancers.

Since returning from the NAAV Conference, we have been extremely busy supporting our Veterans.

The All Tests Reunion took place at Pontins, Sand Bay, Weston-Super-Mare with over 100 veterans and their families attending the week long event. The veterans attended the Helicopter museum and

standards will allow us to honor our veterans at their funerals and at ceremonial functions.



During the event, the Labour party announced that if they were elected into government that they would provide £50,000 compensation to each surviving Nuclear Veteran. We must wait and see if they get into power on the 13th December.



Our new National standard was dedicated on the 3rd October (National Atomic Veterans Awareness Day) at the National Memorial Arboretum. These

The above pictures were taken at our National Memorial.



# WILLIAM "BILL" MCGEE



# TIDBITS



We had a goof up in mailing of newsletter last issue where software that they use to check addresses rejected some 123 addresses. Had to redo them and send them by hand to get them off and running so I appreciate those who put up with the delay and thanks for the calls from you that said you got them late. Just reminds us all to keep in touch with your State Commander and/or any of the officers of NAAV of any changes in your address as well as e-mail and phone numbers.



On October 30, 2019, NAAV Life Member William "Bill" L. McGee, age 94, passed away peacefully at his home in Napa, California. Bill is survived by his wife of 38 years, Sandra. Remains will be placed at Arlington National Cemetery.

In World War II, Bill served in the Pacific theater as a Gunner's Mate in the U.S. Navy. He received the Bronze Star for his participation in an enemy attack by torpedo off Guadalcanal on 23 June 1943. After the war, Bill served on the heavy cruiser USS "Fall River" (CA-131), the Flagship for the Target Fleet at Operation Crossroads, the first postwar atomic bomb tests at the Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands. His military service earned him the honors of being a member of the Greatest Generation, a WWII veteran, and an atomic veteran.

In 2016, Bill and Sandra co-authored "Operation Crossroads - Lest We Forget! An Eyewitness Account, Bikini Atomic Bomb Tests 1946." Timed for the 70th Anniversary of Crossroads, Bill provides his personal account combined with history to tell the story. NAAV member, F. Lincoln Grahlfs, Ph.D., wrote the Foreword.

Bill authored four other WWII military histories. In 2009, "Pacific Express: The Critical Role of Military Logistics in World War II" was selected to be on the Marine Corps Commandant's Professional Reading List on the subject of Logistics for all officer and enlisted Marines, whether active duty or reserve. In 2018, "The Solomons Campaigns, 1942-1943: From Guadalcanal to Bougainvillea" won the Military Writers Society of America Silver Medal Award for History.

Submitted by Sandra McGee



**To all those who were in OPERATION HARDTACK 1 in 1958 in the Pacific and would like to know how much ionizing radiation you were actually exposed to, and not the reconstruction of the NTPR (NUCLEAR TEST PERSONAL REVIEW PROGRAM) info get in touch with me. I have the OFFICIAL LEGAL DOCUMENTS.**

**Bud Feurt**  
**Phone: 858-748-7204**  
**E-Mail: bufeurt@yahoo.com**

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# REMEMBRANCE DAY/ CLEANUP VETERANS 40TH ANNIVERSARY CONVENTION

Springdale, AR

Feb. 27, 28, 29th, Mar. 1 2020

(Tentative schedule, detailed schedule to be provided at the event)

Thursday 27	Friday 28	Saturday 29	Sunday 1
<p><b>DoubleTree Suites by Hilton</b></p>  	<p><b>Breakfast</b></p> <p>8:00 am to 9:45 am, Meet and Greet Coffee, sponsored by NAAV @ the Hilton</p>	<p><b>Breakfast</b></p> <p>9:00 am to 10:00 am Coffee and Marshallese pastries, sponsored by Arkansas Coalition of Marshallese, George Junior High School cafeteria, 3200 S Powell, Springdale AR 72764.</p>	<p><b>Breakfast</b></p> <p>Hilton 8:00 am - 10:30 am, Informal Gathering and media interviews. 10:30 am -12:00 noon. Church Service recognizing the fallen and those impacted. Coalition of Marshallese Churches uniting for a special Nuclear Remembrance Day Event. Special performance by the Springdale Marshallese Choir. Springdale Convention Center, 1420 S 48th St, Springdale, Arkansas.</p>
<p>Dinner on your own</p>	<p>9:45 am to 10:00 am, "Voices From Ground Zero", F. Lincoln Grahff's</p>		<p>Speakers, 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm Dinner and media Interviews. Cotton Patch Cafe, 6:00 pm -8:00 pm Round Table Radio Show with KMRW-989 and Veterans Take Charge Radio with Justin Baker and the ZBS Radio Network. (logistics to be announced)</p>
<p>7:00 pm-11:00 pm, informal gathering for early birds, Foghorn's (Bar and Grill), Meeting Room 1100 48th Pl, Springdale, AR 72762 meeting room.</p>	<p>Additional speakers, activities, lunch on your own, media conferences and interviews, Marshallese themed dinner at the American Legion ( advanced registration required)</p>		

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**NAAV**

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Convention Hotel: DoubleTree Suites by Hilton Springdale, AR  
4677 W Sunset Ave., Springdale, AR 72762 USA Tel +1 479 751 7200  
Special code rate is: ATM \$109.00 plus taxes ( includes breakfast ) rate is good for  
dates of the convention (Feb. 27, 28, 29 & Mar. 1, checkout Mar. 2). Limited number of  
rooms at this rate, first come first serve. **Make reservations prior to Jan. 30, 2020.** Go  
to reservations then click "add special rate code" use the code ATM, then the one king  
bed code is NK1, two queen beds is NQ2, Wheel Chair code is NQRQA,NQRQB and  
NKXDWG. Or call for reservations at 479-751-7200. Let's all try to stay at this hotel for  
meetings, transportation and media coverage.  
<https://doubletree3.hilton.com/en/hotels/arkansas/doubletree-club-by-hilton-hotel-springdale-FYVDTDT/index.html>

**SPRINGDALE, AR REMEMBRANCE DAY 40TH ANNIVERSARY  
CONVENTION  
REGISTRATION FORM**