



NAAV NEWS

March 2024

1ST QUARTER

Publication of the National Association of Atomic Veterans

FROM THE DESK OF OUR NATIONAL COMMANDER

This year is passing by quickly. By the time the next newsletter comes we will have passed a RECA Bill or the program expires. More on this later. Please start planning and mark your calendar for Atomic Veterans Day (July), as well as, attending the NAAV Convention in August.

The updated State Commander list as promised, is on page 10. However, some of these positions are still in a state of flux.

Mark your calendar for our annual convention in Las Cruces, New Mexico August 21, with check out August 25th. The convention is being extended another day to take advantage of some of the opportunities in the area. We believe we will be getting a private tour of the Trinity site and McDonald Ranch House. Normally, the site is only open to the public twice a year. Usually in April and October. They/are expecting a record number of visitors this year due to the awareness the Oppenheimer movie has brought to the subject. For some reason the April opening to the public of the Trinity site has been cancelled.

We have been working to getting HR4566 "The Presume Act" attached to the National Defense Appropriation Act. We have picked up three more cosponsors for this bill. Please contact your Congressional office to support this bill. HR4566 picked up three more Congresspersons.

Many positive changes are occurring with the Veterans Administration (VA) health care side of the VA. This aspect of the VA is opening up enrollment for World War II Veterans and those Veterans exposed to toxic substances. On the VA benefits/service connected side, efforts are being made to "Expand Veterans' Disability Claim Appeals Options."

Thank you to Lt. Scott Milley VFW post 8771 in MA and Becky Tracey, MN for the generous \$500.00 (each) donations to further NAAVs mission.

Please contact your State Commander or Fred Schafer ((541) 258-7453) to verify your contact info. and when

your membership is up. This is important, not only to be good stewards of the funds entrusted to us, but so we can contact members when an event occurs or a reporter may want to talk with an Atomic Veteran in the area. We keep finding contact info that is no longer valid.

Below are a few photos from the Massachusetts Ceremony to Honor Atomic Veterans, which was hosted by Congressman James McGovern.



Ronald Benoit Richard Bee Frank Edward Brown Douglas Crumbey pictured on behalf of his dad Johnny Crumbey Joe Mondello Congressman Jim McGovern (speaking) Dr. Rhys M. Williams Defense Threat Reduction Agency Executive Director John O'Neal Leo Quinn Mrs. Orrie Tucker attending on behalf of her husband Orrie Tucker Holice Tunbow Stanley Siegel



L to R Congressman McGovern, State Rep John Mahoney, State Senator Robyn Kennedy, Atomic Veteran Joe Mondello, State Senator Mike Moore, State Rep Dan Donahue, City of Worcester Mayor Joe Petty



Keith (K²)

**Keith Kiefer
NAAV - Commander**

FROM THE DESK OF OUR NAAV VICE COMMANDER

March 1, 2024

HAPPY Saint Patrick's Day everyone. Let's work together and keep getting things done. We have updated our website. Check it out NAAV.com.



Fred Schafer

National Vice Commander

WE ARE still IN NEED OF A Newsletter Editor. Do you or someone you know want to help NAAV out? This is a lot of work, maybe a couple of people.

Mary Ann is now our secretary and doing the Newsletter, but we need someone to help with it. They'll learn the ins and outs of putting the newsletter together, then off to the printing.

We have new prices on some of our NAAV items in the store. I will get a new list out on the web page, soon. The jackets are \$75.00, T-shirts are \$35.00. and caps are \$ 30.00.

Also, the board has raised the annual dues to \$35.00 and the life membership to \$350.00.

VA is offering Veterans a fall alert free of any charges. It is called the "Liberty Honor Alert." Ask your doctor about this.

Keith is staying busy with a lot of projects. He is a very busy person. We need to thank him for the time he spends doing what he does.

We have many members and spouses with health problems. We need to keep them in our prayers.

Membership: We have lost several members due to age. We have been checking on members who have not updated their information. **If your dues are not up to date, you will not receive the next Newsletter.**

Keith has set up an account to pay your dues online, or you can order from the store if you want to pay online: call Keith. His phone # is 612-232-6596.

I will repeat this. "Keep working with your States' Congress to Get July 16th as Atomic Veterans Day annually. Also get a section of highway to become Atomic Veterans Memorial Highway.

State Commanders PLEASE. Please Make contact with your members and get members to get current in dues and Information. **Just \$35.00** will get them current. Please update your information. If your 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 to members that send in extra dues earmarked for helping someone that needs help with their dues and other support of NAAV.com. **Please make checks out to NAAV, Not to me. Let's help update the data base.**

A big **Thank you** to the State commanders and members that have supported NAAV. Many of our life members have passed away and we were not notified.

Please stay safe and be careful

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fred Schafer". The signature is written in a cursive style.

o Fred Schafer
National Vice Commander
derf@trcschafer.com



LABRATS INTERNATIONAL



As we start 2024, we are looking forward to an election year in both the USA and the UK. We have worked extremely hard to create close links with the UK Labour Party as they are currently leading in all Polls to become the governing party. It is important to maintain these links and to work with Members of Parliament across all parties to be able to have a voice in Parliament.

Work has been ongoing with Brian Cowden on an educational video of the British Nuclear Testing program, which will be made available to everyone across the world for educational purposes. We hope that it will be shown in schools and colleges across the world. A new educational leaflet and teacher pack will also be made available. The video was made possible by a grant from the UK Office of Veterans Affairs.

The video will be released very soon and will be showcased on our Academy website (www.labratsacademy.online)



The Nuked Blood Scandal

We are halfway to our fundraising goal of £100,000, but need more donations, fundraising efforts, and awareness-raising to get us to the steps of the High Court.



This is the first shot - a formal warning of court action if the records we seek aren't produced. The only way the MoD can fight it is to produce the records, or say they have been lost, destroyed, or were never taken. Each outcome could lead to compensation for some form of negligence, so the chances of success are very high.

After a debate in Parliament on the topic, there will now be a ministerial review of the blood records, although the minister in charge told the Commons he thought there was nothing interesting in them, despite admitting he had yet to see them!

This is important pressure, but the lawsuit in itself is a building threat which will do even more to move things along. It is unlikely the MoD will worry too much unless our total rises - because, without more money, we may not be able to do much more than send that letter. It is therefore vital that all those in the nuclear veteran community - because every single member of it stands to gain both compensation and answers from this case, ill or not - do all they can to donate and encourage others to do the same.

If you can donate to our cause, please do so at: www.crowdjustice.com/case/nuclear-veterans-case/ or share the link far and wide.

Thank you for all of your continued support. We continue to fight the establishment.

Alan



Alan Owen
LABRATS Founder

"The following article originally appeared in the January 18, 2024, edition of the Johnston County Sentinel, a weekly newspaper published in Tishomingo, Oklahoma, and is being reprinted here by permission. Article and photos copyright © 2024 by the Johnston County Sentinel."

AMERICA'S 'SECRET VETERANS'

AFTER MORE THAN SIX DECADES, WILSON HONORED FOR NUCLEAR TEST SERVICE

By John A. Small
Managing Editor

In this day when the headlines are so often dominated by one nation's continued threats of nuclear antagonism, and when one of the biggest movies of the past year centered around the birth of the atomic bomb, perhaps it is no surprise that our attention these days so often turns back to the fears and anxieties of those Cold War days.

For many Americans of the time, the possibility of nuclear war was an ever-present specter - one they somehow found a way to live with, thanks in part to those "duck and cover" drills at school, and the occasional spoofing of their fears in films like *Dr. Strangelove* or songs like Tom Lehrer's "Who's Next?"

But for those who were on the front lines, it was no laughing matter - and the shadow of that specter continued to loom over their lives long after the world's leaders declared that the Cold War had ended.

One of those individuals was Johnston County veteran Wilburn Wilson. For years he wasn't allowed to talk about it - but that time has passed, and Wilson told the *Johnston County Sentinel* last week that his Cold War service to the country has finally been officially recognized.

In a letter to Wilson dated Feb. 16, 2023 - more than six decades after the events for which he was recognized - the Department of Defense (DOD) Defense Threat Reduction Agency confirmed that the longtime Bromide resident was being presented with the Atomic Veterans Commemorative Service Medal and Atomic Veterans Commemorative Service Certificate.

Both awards are now given to officially acknowledge the service of those who directly participated in the detonation of nuclear testing; cleanup after such tests or accidents involving radioactive material; or were exposed to ionizing radiation resulting from such operations during the period between July 1, 1945, and Oct. 1, 1992.

Wilson and his wife, Judy, brought the awards - along with a folder full of clippings and paperwork related to their eventual presentation - to the *Sentinel* office in Tishomingo last Friday, Jan. 12. They were joined by Vickie Luster Parks, commander of the Davis-Moore American Legion Post 164 in Tishomingo, who presented Wilson with a special certificate of appreciation from the local Legion post.

"Congratulations on your persistence," Parks said upon hearing of the years of effort by Wilson and his fellow veterans to receive such recognition. "This has been a long time in coming, and is very much deserved."

Among the documents Wilson shared with the *Sentinel* was an earlier letter from the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, dated May 3, 2007, which stated that Wilson - as a confirmed participant in U.S. atmospheric nuclear testing - "could have received" external gamma dosage of 18 rem; and total skin exposure (beta plus gamma radiation) of 550 rem.

According to government documentation, federal workers should not receive more than 5 rem - the term used for units of radiation dosage - per year. It was the greater exposure that eventually qualified Wilson for the Atomic Veterans Commemorative Service Medal.

It's not the first such award given to Wilson decades after the events being commemorated. In



Navy veteran and long-time Bromide resident Wilburn Wilson is presented with a special certificate of appreciation from Vickie Luster Parks, commander of Davis-Moore American Legion Post 164 in Tishomingo, in recognition of Wilson being awarded the Atomic Veterans Commemorative Service Medal. The front and back sides of Wilson's medal are pictured below. (*Sentinel* photos by Joshua Small)



October 2015 - 56 years after he served on board the U.S.S. John R. Craig as it entered the Strait of Formosa, where China and Taiwan were engaged in combat - he was presented with the Armed Forces Expeditions Medal in honor of that service.

That award was officially presented during a special ceremony held in Atoka County. (Wilson moved to Bromide from the Atoka area in 1991.) Making that presentation was former Atoka mayor - and fellow U.S. Navy veteran - Bill Miller. Both it and the more recent Atomic Veterans Commemorative awards are a source of pride for Wilson, especially after having to wait for so many years for the recognition.

"I wasn't sure it was ever going to happen," he admitted during his visit to the *Sentinel*.

In 1958, while serving in the U.S. Navy, the long-time Bromide resident took part in Operation Hardtack - the designation given to a series of 35 nuclear tests conducted by the United States between April 28 and Aug. 18 at the Pacific Proving Grounds in the Marshall Islands. The operation was directed by Joint Task Force 7 (JTF 7) - a collaborative project whose 19,100 members came from the U.S. military, federal civilian employees, and workers affiliated with both the Department of Defense (DOD) and the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC).

For Wilson and those fellow sailors serving aboard the dozens of ships assigned to witness the tests, it was a special moment in history - an opportunity to demonstrate the full extent of their patriotism and love of country, to themselves and to those with whom they served. But it was an opportunity they would not be allowed to speak of afterward for many years.

"Those of us who were there when all this was going on were sworn to secrecy - we were told that anybody who talked could end up getting 10 years in federal prison" Wilson told the *Sentinel*. "So nobody talked."

Until the veil of secrecy was lifted decades later, Wilson and his compatriots could not tell anyone about their experiences during Operation Hardtack. They were even forbidden from telling the doctors, who would be called upon to treat these "atomic veterans" for a variety of ailments over the ensuing decades, that they might have been exposed to nuclear radiation during the tests.

The health risks associated with exposure to radiation had been known to scientists from the earliest days of Project Manhattan. In the wake of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki that ended World War II, researchers discovered increased rates of certain kinds of cancers among the survivors - and that the children of those survivors faced greater risk of illness and birth defects.

But despite that knowledge, and despite the fact that top scientists and politicians began speaking out against such testing, there was no coordinated attempt on the part of the United States to track the health effects that exposure to radiation during Operation Hardtack - or during other nuclear testing operations, such as those conducted in the Nevada desert near Las Vegas - had upon those who were there... or upon their children.

During a televised speech to the nation on Aug. 6, 1963, President John F. Kennedy announced that the U.S., the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union had one day earlier signed the Partial Test Ban Treaty in Moscow. "Yesterday, a shaft of light cut into the darkness," Kennedy said at the time. "Negotiations were concluded in Moscow on a treaty to ban all nuclear tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and underwater."

But underground testing continued for many years - 800 such detonations alone at the Nevada test site, which reportedly remains pockmarked with craters to this day - before a multilateral treaty to ban such testing, for both civilian and military purposes, was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on Sept. 10, 1996.

(To date that ban has not yet entered into force, as eight member nations - including the United States - have signed but not ratified the treaty. Three other nations - India, North Korea and Pakistan - have not signed it at all; Russia signed and ratified the treaty, but subsequently withdrew its ratification.)

That same year saw Congress repeal the Nuclear Radiation Secrecy Agreement Act, thus rescinding the veterans' "oath of secrecy" and allowing them at last to recount stories of their participation in nuclear weapon testing and post-test event activities without legal penalty. But by that time, thousands of them had already taken that "secret" to their graves.

Over time, many individuals who had worked in connection with America's atomic testing program - military and civilian alike - began reporting health problems: cancer, thyroid problems, tumors of the central nervous system and more.

As they became ill, many veterans risked violating their secrecy oaths and began to speak out, saying they'd been forgotten and betrayed by a country they felt had used them, in the words of one of those veterans, as "guinea pigs."

But despite the 1996 rescinding of the secrecy oath - and the formal apology to the atomic veterans issued a year earlier by then-President Bill Clinton - there are still battles to be fought by those

atomic veterans who still survive, and by their families and supporters. The reality of the battle can even be found in the documentation Wilson shared with the *Sentinel* regarding his awards.

The 2023 letter Wilson received from the Defense Threat Reduction Agency states that the “Atomic Veterans Commemorative Service Medal and the Atomic Veterans Service Certificate is not intended to, and does not, confer any right of benefit, substantial or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, entities, or officers.”

In other words: the fight for broader recognition and legislation that would improve health care and disability benefits for service members and their survivors through the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Justice Department continues.

Leading that fight is the National Association of Atomic Veterans (NAAV), founded in 1979 by Orville Kelly, an Army veteran who himself witnessed 22 detonations in the Marshall Islands. Wilson, a member of NAAV, noted that its work has often been hampered by many veterans who - due to the long-standing veil of secrecy around nuclear testing - do not have documents showing they participated in the tests.

In addition, many of the documents that did exist were destroyed in a fire at a military records facility in St. Louis more than four decades ago.

In 1990, Congress passed legislation to compensate residents who lived downwind of atomic blasts, uranium miners and on-site participants in atomic tests. The program, administered by the U.S. Department of Justice, awards a lump sum of \$50,000 to \$100,000 to applicants with any of 20 cancers if a doctor attests that the disease was caused by ionizing radiation.

Some atomic veterans are eligible for this program, but any who receive it have to pay back prior VA compensation for the same health condition. Many of the veterans were not aware that they were eligible for such compensation at all; those who were aware have faced an arduous, complicated process to receive their compensation.

But even as the NAAV continues its work on behalf of Wilson and his fellow atomic veterans, Wilson is quick to point out that he remains proud of his military service - service that has long been a family tradition.

Wilson's great-great-great-grandfather, Samuel T. Wilson, was a soldier during the Revolutionary War and served in South Carolina's 6th Regiment between 1778 and 1780. His service as “a good and faithful soldier” during the Revolution, Wilson said, resulted in Samuel being granted land in Georgia in 1783.

Wilson also pointed out that he and his three brothers - Samuel, Bill and Bobby - along with son Michael and nephew Michael - have 89 years of combined military and federal service to their country.

When he speaks of that service, it becomes clear that - despite the many trials and tribulations that stemmed from his participation in Operation Hardtack so many decades ago - he remains as proud to have served now as he was when he first enlisted. And perhaps it is that very pride of service that lies at the heart of his ongoing efforts on behalf of his fellow atomic veterans.

“Let us remember those veterans who have served in the past, those who are serving today, and those who will serve in the future,” Wilson can often be heard saying. It is a mantra he holds close to his heart - and which he hopes will continue to reverberate long after he is gone, and others step forward to continue the fight.



Wilburn Wilson is joined by wife Judy (left) and local American Legion Post Commander Vickie Luster Parks during his visit to the *Sentinel* office last Friday. (*Sentinel* staff photo by Joshua Small)

Calling for Shipmates on USS Boxer Operation Hardtack

Atomic Veteran and NAAV member, Fred Jackson, would like anyone who served on the USS Boxer during Operation Hardtack to contact him. He would like to connect with his shipmates. Phone 828-332-0642 E-mail fred28904@gmail.com or snail mail:

Fred Jackson
62 Roupe Rd Sequim, WA 98382

World War II Veterans Now Get Free Health Care, VA Says in Holiday Rollout of New Programs



World War II veterans Paul Wirth, Charles Juror, Stanley Friday, Harold Terence and Vincent Hynes sit together after being awarded the French National Order of Merit from French President Emmanuel Macron at the 75th D- Day Anniversary ceremony at Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial in Colleville-sur-Mer, France, June 6, 2019. (Sgt. Henry Villarama/U.S. Army photo)

10 Nov 2023

Military.com | By **Patricia Kime**

All World War II veterans are now eligible for no-cost health care, medical services and nursing home care from the [Department of Veterans Affairs](#), the agency announced Friday in advance of [Veterans Day](#). These veterans, who number fewer than 120,000, according to data published Thursday by the Pew Research Center, will no longer have to make copayments or pay enrollment fees or monthly premiums, regardless of their disability ratings or priority group in the VA health system.

VA officials announced several new initiatives to improve health care and expanded several programs to draw in more veterans after a record-breaking year of providing health care and benefits to veterans -- largely the result of the [PACT Act](#), which added hundreds of thousands of new beneficiaries to VA rolls.

The VA was required by the 2022 Cleland-Dole Act to provide the no-cost care to those who served between Dec. 7, 1941, and Dec. 31, 1946.

"These members of the Greatest Generation answered the call to serve when our nation -- and the world -- needed them most. Now, it's our job to serve them in every way that we can," VA Under Secretary for Health Dr. Shereef Elnahal said in a statement Friday.

The department plans to reach out by phone and mail to encourage WWII veterans who aren't currently enrolled in VA care to apply, officials said. According to the VA, those veterans will be able to keep any private providers, Medicare and most other insurance they have if they enroll.

Officials described VA care as "the best, most-affordable health care in America for veterans," adding that those who get their care from the department "have better health outcomes than non-enrolled veterans," based on reviews of studies published in the *Journal of General Internal Medicine* and the *Journal of the American College of Surgeons*.

With those benefits in mind, the department launched a new national advertising campaign Friday that is designed to bring more veterans into its fold. The \$5 million campaign, "What You Earned," will focus on the cost comparisons of VA care, education benefits, home loans and burial benefits, according to officials.

The campaign, which will go out on television, print, radio, social media, billboards and public transit advertisements, is the next step in what the department called its "aggressive efforts" to bring in new veterans.

A similar awareness campaign launched last year on the PACT Act resulted in veterans seeking appointments and applying for benefits at record numbers. In fiscal 2023, the number of appointments rose by 2.6%, while claims applications were up 39% from 2022, with 2.4 million filed.

"All too often, veterans don't know about the full scope of the health care and benefits they've earned

WORLD WARS DON'T MAKE SENSE

by F. Lincoln Grahls

World War I, which pitted Germany, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire against Great Britain, France, Russia, Italy and Japan, began in 1914 and ended in 1919. I was born on December 4, 1922, just about three and a half years after that.

In those years, with three thousand miles of Atlantic Ocean separating them, it was not hard for the Government of the United States to pursue an attitude of neutrality, which was generally supported by the American people. But, the US did maintain commercial shipping with some European countries, and American ships were attacked by German submarines. So, early in 1917 the United States declared war against Germany. American troops made a difference, and an Armistice was declared on November 11, 1918.

The terms of the peace treaty were so extreme as to be an important element in the rise of Hitler and the Nazi Regime. Ultimately, in September of 1939, German forces invaded Poland. England and France responded in support of Poland. Germany, Italy, and Japan quickly responded with a 'Tripartite Pact' aimed at deterring the United States. Our government responded wisely by starting a military draft, to be prepared. And frankly I, like many Americans, wondered why it was not possible for nations to settle problems between them BEFORE fighting about them; after all, that's what we try to teach our children. I even wrote an essay to that effect when I was in junior high school.

But, on December 7, 1941 Japanese planes attacked our fleet at Pearl Harbor and we were in World War Two. I was still definitely a pacifist, but late in 1942, as I approached my 20th birthday, I was about to be drafted into the army. I chose, instead, to enlist in the navy for six years. Then, when I was finally discharged, I obtained an education, courtesy of the GI Bill, and spent four happy decades as a professor of sociology. But my war-time experience was inescapable; through the years, I have been contacted for interviews, written books and articles and become active in veterans' affairs. (Even more so since my official retirement in 1988).

Skip ahead to the year 2023, when I received an invitation to the dedication of the LIBERATION PAVILION at The National WW II Museum, located in New Orleans. I had earlier learned that this was the culmination of what originated in 2000 as Professor Stephen Ambrose's brain-child, The National D-day Museum. It had been such a success that it was given Congressional recognition and greatly expanded and been re-named.

The dedication ceremony had been scheduled for the first week-end in November. American WW II veterans and their immediate families were special guests, with all expenses paid. Of course, estimates indicate fewer than 200,000 of them to be still alive. Also clearly, a number were unable to make the trip and some that did were in wheel chairs. I feel certain, also, that all my fellow veteran-guests will agree with my sincere thanks for the great hospitality we enjoyed. However, I feel certain important facts regarding the conclusion of World War II were overlooked.

It just happens that the USS ATA199, the sea going tug on which I was a crew member, spent what would turn out to be practically the last month of the war (July 2 to July 29 of 1945) in Nakagusuku Wan the harbor at Okinawa. We were less than a thousand miles from Tokyo, and experienced nightly air attacks. However, word was going on that the Japanese had begun attempts to negotiate peace terms.

In the meanwhile, development of an atomic bomb, a long-time secret project of American scientists, was ready for testing; the test would take place on the New Mexico desert on July 16. Without going into detail, Truman and his advisors made the fatal decision to drop Atomic bombs on Hiroshima

August 6 and on Nagasaki August 9. This killed or maimed thousands of people in those cities; many others were seriously injured. After that, Japan surrendered.

BUT, PANDORA'S BOX HAD BEEN OPENED! I am writing this 79 years after WW II, but are we any better off? There are more than two thousand nuclear bombs in the possession of at least nine countries; also many nuclear power plants are operating around the world. It is known that a single atomic bomb blast or malfunction of a nuclear machine could kill many people and cause massive destruction. Also, nuclear waste from a generator or machine remains radioactive for an interminable length of time, and appropriate storage location is hard to find.

I do recall that after WW I a similar problem with poison gas led, ultimately, to a serious international ban of its use. I see that as serious motivation, but the task is made much greater by the quantity and durability of the product and the number of parties involved. However, I see it as absolutely necessary!

¹ By the end of the war, in 1945, over 10 million men had been drafted into our military (not including those who volunteered to serve)

² When the American troops took possession of this island they re-named it Buckner Bay.

³ Although Americans exerted great effort to keep this project absolutely secret, Soviet officials had been aware of it for several years.

Continued from Page 7

through their service to our nation," VA Secretary Denis McDonough said in a statement Friday. "The goal of this campaign is to change that. We want to show veterans and their families -- in the most tangible terms possible -- how VA can help them afford to stay healthy, go to school, get a job, buy a home, and more."

For Veterans Day, McDonough was scheduled to participate in a wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery, Virginia.

In other announcements, the VA expanded a program that reimburses families who lived at [Camp Lejeune](#), North Carolina, from 1952 to 1987 for health care expenses, to include Parkinson's disease.

During a press call with reporters Thursday, Elnahal described the absence of Parkinson's from a list of diseases that are covered by the Camp Lejeune Family Member Program as a gap that needed to be covered. Parkinson's is an illness that is presumed by the VA to be linked to the water contamination at the [Marine Corps](#) base for veterans' health services and disability compensation.

The risk of Parkinson's is **70% higher for veterans who were stationed at Camp Lejeune from Aug. 1, 1953, to Dec. 31, 1987**, when the water supply was contaminated with industrial solvents, dry cleaning fluid and other toxic chemicals -- the result of years of improper dumping and waste management.

"Veterans and their families deserve no-cost health care for the conditions they developed due to the contaminated water at Camp Lejeune," Elnahal said in a statement.

Finally, the VA also announced a pilot medical residency program to expand health care services in rural areas, as well as reservations and other underserved areas.

Under the program, the VA will fund the salaries and benefits of at least 100 physicians who will rotate to non-VA medical facilities run by tribal organizations, the Indian Health Service, the Defense Department and other health centers.

The VA will work with academic institutions to begin offering the residencies in 2025.

-- Patricia Kime can be reached at Patricia.Kime@Military.com. Follow her on X @patriciakime.

From VA Press Secretary Terrence Hayes:

To clarify, nursing home care is free (no copays) for nearly all World War II Veterans who are eligible for nursing home services at VA, including 1) anyone in need of such care for a service-connected [disability](#), (2) anyone in need of such care who also has a service-connected [disability](#) rated at 70 percent or more. However, contrary to the language of the release, not all World War II Veterans are eligible for nursing home care under this new law.

Additionally, as stated in the release, all World War II Veterans are eligible for VA health care and will not have to pay inpatient or outpatient copays. However, these Veterans may still have to pay modest copayments for medication or urgent care or long-term care in some cases, depending on their [eligibility and service connection](#).

We at VA apologize for this mistake and any confusion that it may have caused. We are continuing to reach out directly to these Veterans to inform them of the expansion of care available to them, and we urge any WWII Veteran to enroll in VA health care today.

NAAV STATE COMMANDERS

STATE	NAME	PHONE
ALABAMA	FRANK G BOLTON III	251-533-2283
ALASKA	BARBARA J JORDAN	907-841-0493
ARIZONA	DENNIS L MILLER	520-575-9544
ARIZONIA AREA	DONALD G KELLY	480-720-9079
ARKANSAS	W.C. 'JAKE' LAMKINS	479-878-8358
CALIFORNIA	JONATHAN J KING	209-408-8331
COLORADO	PAUL V. ROBERTS	970-858-6429
CONNECTICUT	MARK SARGENT	207-474-8415
DELEWARE	LOU WALLS, JR.	302-322-9978
FLORIDA	THOMAS G. BOTCHIE	843-607-3842
GEORGIA	KENNETH P. PRICE	912-381-6337
GUAM	ROBERT N. CELESTIAL	671-688-7277
HAWAII	FRED SCHAFFER	541-258-7453
IDAHO	STEVEN L GABBERT	360-270-7335
IDAHO AREA	JEFF A FORTIN	208-292-8313
ILLINOIS	GARY C PULIS	260-927-5349
INDIANA	GARY C PULIS	260-927-5349
IOWA	GILBERT F. AMDAHL	712-362-5607
KANSAS	DALLAS W. BROWN	816-807-3147
KENTUCKY	RAYMOND E. WILDER	270-566-4343
LOUISIANA	PAUL C. SPARACINO	225-252-0537
MAINE	MARK SARGENT	207-474-8415
MARYLAND	JAMES H. THOSMAS, JR.	301-722-1280
MASSACHUSETTS	RON T BENOIT	413-245-7819
MICHIGAN	MICHAEL D WREGGLESWORT	269-362-4076
MINNESOTA	PAUL B GUNDERSON	763-571-4347
MISSISSIPPI	GEORGE A. BLAYDON	601-924-0793
MISSOURI	CLAYTON B. CROSBY	479-270-8087
MONTANA	PETER H. BESAS	360-269-7051
NEBRASKA	ROBERT L. RUYLE	402-488-7927
NEVADA	ALBERT F. GETTIER	702-518-8595
NEVADA AREA	JOE MARTENEZ	702-884-5393
NEW HAMPSHIRE	MARK SARGENT	207-474-8415
NEW JERSEY	ROBERT DE BLASI	973-627-5163
NEW MEXICO	PAUL L. GRIEGO	505-306-1902
NEW YORK	KENNETH A BROWNELL	518-409-2023
NORTH CAROLINA	JOHN C WILLS	919-339-2404
NORTH CAROLINA AREA	DAVID C GUY	370-965-5344
NORTH DAKOTA	FRED L. HARTLEIB	701-663-5854
OHIO	GARY C PULIS	260-927-5349
OKLAHOMA	CLIFFORD R. LEWIS	405-341-6679
OREGON	FRED SCHAFFER	541-258-7453
PENNSYLVANIA	ANTHONY B. MARCECA	717-600-8668
RHODE ISLAND	MARK SARGENT	207-474-8415
SOUTH CAROLINA	JOHN C WILLS	919-339-2404
SOUTH CAROLINA AREA	DAVID C GUY	370-965-5344
SOUTH DAKOTA	GERALD A. JOHNSON	605-224-9533
TENNESSEE	THOMAS W. ALES, SR.	423-276-9430
TEXAS	RANDELL E. MILLER	956-262-6533
UTAH	PETER H. BESAS	360-269-7051
VERMONT	MARK SARGENT	207-474-8415
VIRGINIA	JOHN C. WILLS	919-339-2404
VIRGINIA AREA	DAVID C. GUY	370-965-5344
WASHINGTON	STEVEN L. GABBERT	360-270-7335
WASHINGTON AREA	JEFF A. FORTIN	208-292-8313
WEST VIRGINIA	HASKELL WATTS, JR.	304-752-5552
WISCONSIN	JEROME W. GEHL	920-759-5334
WYOMING	ROBERT L. RUYLE	402-488-7927

Change of Address,
Membership or Renewal
Write or E-Mail

Fred Schafer
Vice Commander & Treasurer
NAAV

130 Cleveland Street
Lebanon, OR 97355-4505
Phone: 541-258-7453
E-Mail: derf@trcschafer.com

Save the Date!

It's our 46th convention, and you won't want to miss this one since we will be in New Mexico! The dates are August 21-25. (Wednesday through Sunday.)

Site is Las Cruces, NM.

In addition to conference activities, we will potentially tour the Trinity Test site.

When we have hotel, and prices, and a complete schedule, we will post it on the website, and also announce it in our next newsletter.

NAAV New State Commanders From Gary Pulis

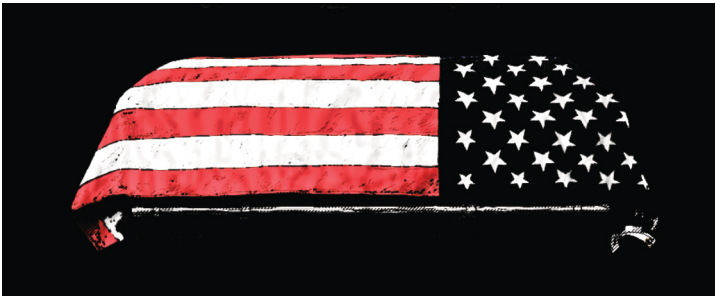
It is with gratitude that we introduce our new state commanders.

Mark Sargent- All of New England
Girard Frank Bolton III- Alabama
Gary Pulis- Illinois, Indiana and Ohio

All 3 are veterans of the Enewetak Atoll Cleanup Project, all served in the U.S. Army.
All three are, also, life members of NAAV.

Be expecting a phone call from your state commander to introduce themselves and to make sure you are up to date on benefits you may qualify for.

TAPS



Carl Beals.....Salem, OR
Norm H Lebrun.....Ruhland,VT
James E Alty..... Dover, NH
James J Kelly.....Rockingham, NH
Scott Lecuyer.....Bethlehem, NC
Bernard F Wynn...Hillsborough, NH
Charles S Agnew.....Norfolk, MA
Henry F Cabral.....Plymouth, MA
Howard J Farquharson..Burlington, MA
Robert W Heim..... Worcester, MA
Bob P Lyons..... Norfolk, MA
John Shea.....Worcester, MA
John Waters.....Westport, MA
Alan A Weiner.....Quincy, MA
Tom Donermeyer.....Auburn, WA
Ed A Hatchett, Jr.....Evans, GA
Leo R Birkholz.....Fennville, MI
Paul W Wright.....Springville, AL
Willie Vicknair.....Lutcher, LA

James Hamann.....Robinsdale, MN
John Paul Casbergue.....East Lansing, MI
Robert Eldin Lozon.....St Clare, MI
Cornelius John Lubberts.....Bryon Center, MI
Kenneth Frank Rose.....Detroit, MI
Lenz Temple..... Muskegon, MI
George C Thompson Jr....Clarkson, MI
Charles W Holeman.....Julian, CA
Lawrence Davidson.....CA
Jack Quartaroli.....CA

Sincere Apologies

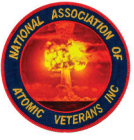
Paul S. Mason of Winston-Salem, North Carolina was listed within Taps in the 4th Quarter 2023 NAAV Newsletter. He reports to being alive and well. I'm very sorry to have reported erroneous information. And also to have caused any confusion or distress as a result.

Mary Ann

FOR NOTIFICATIONS

Please use the following email address to submit articles for the newsletter and to notify NAAV of members who pass so we can include them in taps. (Fred Schafer is the other option for taps.) Pics of Atomic Veteran events, new Atomic Veteran Memorial Highways, and Atomic Medal recipients are also welcome.

maryannaav@yahoo.com



NAAV
130 Cleveland Street
Lebanon, OR 97355-4505

IF UNDELIVERED PLEASE RETURN TO THE ADDRESS ABOVE!

NAAV BOARD MEMBERS

NATIONAL COMMANDER

Keith Kiefer • 14944 295th Avenue NW
Zimmerman MN 55398 • Phone: 612-232-6596
E-Mail: kiefer4ramsey@yahoo.com

NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER & CO-TREASURER

Fred Schafer • 130 Cleveland Street
Lebanon, OR 97355-4505 • Phone: 541-258-7453
E-Mail: derf@trcschafer.com

SECRETARY (ACTING)

Mary Ann Kiefer • 14944 295th Avenue NW
Zimmerman, MN 55398
E-Mail: maryannaav@yahoo.com

TREASURER

Frank Farmer • 32255 Hidden Valley Road
Lebanon, OR 97355 • Phone: 541-259-1559
E-Mail: hfrankfarmer@gmail.com

NAAV CHAPLAIN

Fr. Patrick Rohen, Chaplain (Captain), U.S.Army (Retired)
Senior Status Priest • Diocese of Toledo in America
Phone: 567-213-1652
patrickrohen1957@icloud.com

DIRECTOR OF STATE COMMANDERS (ACTING)

John Wills • 823 Lake Artesia Lane
Furquary Varina, NC 27526 • Phone: 919-339-2404
E-Mail: johnwills132@yahoo.com

DIRECTOR AT LARGE

Bob Pfeifer • 61374 Stardrift Lane
Bend, OR 97702-2051 • Phone: 541-330-1134
E-Mail: oldreliable2@live.com

DIRECTOR AT LARGE • NAAV HISTORIAN

Haskel Watts Jr. • 75 Good samaritan Street
Logan, WV 25601 • Phone: 304-752-5552
E-Mail: hwatts4@frontier.com

DIRECTOR AT LARGE

Lincoln Grahls • 333 W. Main Street Apt. 104
Madison, WI 53703 • Phone: 608-230-5870
E-Mail: flg17@caa.columbia.edu

**Have a good
day!**

