



# NAAV NEWS

JUNE 2026

2ND QUARTER

## Publication of the National Association of Atomic Veterans

FROM THE DESK OF OUR NATIONAL COMMANDER

### IMPORTANT — TIME-SENSITIVE MATTERS

Please note the following deadlines and action items requiring your prompt attention:

- **Convention hotel reservations and registration** close on **July 10, 2026**. Do not delay.
- **We are actively seeking donations** — both cash contributions and auction items — for the convention auction. Please reach out if you are able to contribute.
- **State Commanders:** With this being the 250th anniversary of our nation, I strongly encourage you to coordinate with your state members to plan a meaningful observance honoring **Atomic Veterans Day**. This milestone year makes it all the more important that we mark the occasion with the recognition our veterans deserve.
- **Ballot reminder:** Please vote for four board members — selecting from the nominated candidates or writing in a member of your choice. Affix a stamp and **mail your ballot by July 31, 2026**.

In May, I had the honor of joining a panel of advocates alongside Democratic members of Nevada's congressional delegation for a roundtable on radiation exposure. Held at the National Atomic Testing Museum in Las Vegas, it was a rare public forum — one that brought together lawmakers, veterans, and survivors to confront a problem the government has too long treated as someone else's burden. Those of us in attendance were not there for pleasantries. We were there to deliver a message.

The issues we raised will be familiar to every NAAV member. We continue to fight the Department of Veterans Affairs for benefits that should never have required a fight in the first place. The barriers remain the same: proof. Records were classified, lost, or destroyed. Radiation dose estimates were never recorded — or have since gone missing. We discussed the unacceptable length of time veterans must endure to successfully obtain a service-connected disability rating. We pressed for legislation already introduced that must be passed, and we called for additional legislation that still needs to be written.

I believe our message landed. Consider the words of one congressman in attendance:

*"Our veterans do not have the luxury of time when they are standing toe to toe with toxic exposures."* — Rep. Mark Takano, Ranking Member, House Veterans' Affairs Committee

When a ranking member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee echoes what we have been saying for decades, it signals that the tide may be turning. We will keep pushing until action follows words.

Seated left to right are Rep. Susie Lee, Nevada; Rep. Mark Takano, California, ranking member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee; Rep. Dina Titus, Nevada; and Rep. Steven Horsford, Nevada. (Screenshot from roundtable)



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Keith (K<sup>2</sup>)

Keith Kiefer  
NAAV - Commander



## FROM THE DESK OF OUR NAAV VICE COMMANDER

June 4, 2026

Looks like summer is here in the Pacific Northwest.

Most of the items in the Store are on the webpages correctly now. Prices have settled down for a while. Some Items may not be available in different colors. I have ordered 50 headstone markers. As soon as I get them, I will post them on the website. The price will be \$50.00 including S&H. I plan on having a few of these markers with me At Convention.



**VA is offering Veterans a fall alert free of any charge. It is called the "Liberty Honor Alert." Ask your doctor about this. These really work well. Several veterans have told me about their experience with them. They really work and are at no cost to you.**

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

Membership: On the front of the newsletter, you will find the date your annual dues are due.

Keith has set up an account to pay your dues online or to pay your dues and orders 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 16<sup>th</sup> 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.

Looks like we will have a very interesting convention in August. Get your rooms and tours ahead of time. It should be a lot of fun. See you all there!

Thank you to the members that send in extra dues earmarked for helping someone who needs help with their dues and other supporting of NAAV.com, **Please make checks out to NAAV, not to me. Let's help update the database.**

A big **Thank you** to the state commanders who are getting info on members in their states and updating their info. 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, appearing to read "Fred H. Schafer".

**Fred Schafer**

National Vice Commander



**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**

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# LABRATS INTERNATIONAL



LABRATS have been working closely with the Office for Veterans' Affairs regarding an anticipated report into an 18 month long investigation into veterans' medical files. We hope that this report will be published before the UK Parliaments summer recess on the 16<sup>th</sup> of July 2026.

We have been working closely with the University of Liverpool analysing the Merlin database files which are being released by the UK Government. These files were declassified late last year and we are receiving 500 documents per week from the Ministry of Defence via the National Archives. We are receiving documents, images and videos which were classified under national security.



These include clean-up operations, which show that radioactive material was dragged into craters, set on fire and buried in Australia. I am sure this sounds familiar to many of you.

Our feature documentary 'Our Planet, The people, My Blood' received great reviews after a screening in Leicester Square, London. Many other screenings have taken place across the UK, with screenings organised in Australia and possibly at the NAAV convention in August.



The screenings will be announced online at [atomicblood.com](http://atomicblood.com) and across our social media. The documentary is extremely powerful and it will be broadcast on a streaming platform at some point.

We hope to have representatives at the convention in South Dakota, so we may see some of you in person.

Stay safe and healthy.



Alan Owen  
LABRATS Founder

97355-4505  
Lebanon, OR  
130 Cleveland St.  
C/O Fred Schaffer  
NAAV

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Convention Hotel: Best Western, Rapid City, South Dakota officially starting Thursday 6:00 PM August 20th 2026, with hotel check out Sunday morning, 23rd August. The group rate is \$119.00 per night and includes breakfast for two persons Friday, Saturday and Sunday Mornings. Our group rate is also good for up to three days before and three days after the convention dates (these dates do not include breakfast). Please make your reservation now by calling in.

Note: The hotel is two stories and has no elevator. If you have mobility issues and want a main floor room make your reservations early. If you don't have a mobility issue please request a second floor room. Call Best Western 2111 N Lacrosse Street, Rapid City, SD 57701 (605) 343-8550 Special code rate is: NAAV \$119.00 plus taxes ( includes breakfast ) rate is good for dates of the convention and three days prior and after the convention. Limited number of rooms at this rate, first come first serve. Make reservations prior to July 10, 2026.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ATOMIC VETERANS  
CONVENTION

REGISTRATION FORM  
RAPID CITY, SD  
AUGUST 20, 21, 22, 2026

Attach Check here

-----fold here-----

Name (on name badge) \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse/Guest \_\_\_\_\_ Guest \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Wheelchair Access \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Yes Dietary Restrictions? \_\_\_\_\_

Member Required Registration Fee \$98.00

Convention costs and Activities \_\_\_\_\_ x \$220 = \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of attendees

Total due \_\_\_\_\_ (\$98.00 + (# attendees x \$220.00))

Check # \_\_\_\_\_

Attach check (tape in space above) payable to NAAV, fold form, tape edges, attach postage and mail by July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

Note: The Hotel room includes Breakfast for Friday, Saturday, and Sunday morning. Fees (\$98 + \$220.00) cover meeting room costs, Hospitality room (3 days), hor'dourves (Thursday), Box Lunch (Friday), two museum's (Friday), Minuteman missile site, Badlands, transportation, Dinner and lighting ceremony Mt. Rushmore (Friday), Lunch and Banquet with meal Saturday night and misc. costs.

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**NAAV**  
**c/o Mary Ann Kiefer**  
**14944 295th Ave NW**  
**Zimmerman, MN**  
**55398**



Fold here

# NAAV 2026 Board Ballot

Please vote for four members. Check by the name to vote for the individual or write in a member.

\_\_\_\_\_.

Fred Schafer

\_\_\_\_\_.

Robert Pfeifer

\_\_\_\_\_.

Haskel Watts Jr.

\_\_\_\_\_.

Paul C. Sparacino

\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_.

Please add your return address, a stamp and mail before July 31, 2026.

## COUNTDOWN TO CROSSROADS

In June 1946, plans were escalating for the first postwar atomic bomb tests code-named Operation CROSSROADS.

Atomic Veteran William L. McGee provided an eyewitness account in his definitive memoir of the Bikini nuclear tests.

by Sandra V. McGee



William L. McGee and his *Crossroads* memoir.  
(National Atomic Testing Museum, Las Vegas, NV, 2016)

In June 1946, 42,000 servicemen, scientists, and civilians were assembled at the remote Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands for the first postwar tests of the atomic bomb code-named Operation CROSSROADS.

It was the first year of peace after World War II, but global stability still remained elusive. Tensions between East and West gave rise to the Cold War. And there were questions about the atomic bomb. How to use it? Who would control it? At Bikini, the tests would determine the effects of the bomb on various naval vessels and animals.

Among the 42,000 participants was 20-year-old U.S. Navy Gunner's Mate William L. McGee. He had served three years in the hot and humid Pacific, and for the last year of his four-year hitch he requested duty with the European fleet.

But his hopes were dashed when his ship, the USS *Fall River* (CA-131), bound for Europe, received last-minute orders to head to the Pacific.

The *Fall River*, as it turned out, played a leading role at Crossroads as the Flagship for the Target Fleet, responsible for positioning the 97 target vessels in the Lagoon for two atomic blasts—ABLE dropped from the air, and BAKER detonated from underwater.

What Bill and his shipmates witnessed from the deck of the *Fall River* about 10 miles from the blasts was both spectacular and terrifying, and with consequences some would not survive later in life.

In *Operation Crossroads, Lest We Forget! An Eyewitness Account*, Bill has written what is called “the definitive memoir of the 1946 atomic bomb tests at Bikini.”

As Bill's co-author and now the steward of his literary legacy, I was updating his atomic memoir for the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary in July 2026. I had a sobering thought. Likely few Crossroads participants were still alive. Bill passed away in 2019 and the Crossroads participants he interviewed for the book had also passed away. Many – including Bill – from illnesses now linked to their radiation exposure at Crossroads.

Nuclear testing and control of the atomic bomb still grabs the headlines, but today few know about the first tests in the summer of 1946. I am proud to play a small role in helping to preserve this nuclear history.

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*Operation Crossroads, Lest We Forget! An Eyewitness Account* by William L. McGee with Sandra V. McGee is available on Amazon in paperback and ebook. Visit [McGeeBooks.com](http://McGeeBooks.com) to view the Book Trailer, the NBC live radio broadcast from Test Baker, and other bonus extras.

Images from...

80 YEARS AGO  
JULY 1946

## OPERATION CROSSROADS, LEST WE FORGET!

William L. McGee

with Sandra V. McGee

CORAL REEF  
TAVERN  
Operation Crossroads  
[10c]  
TEN CENTS —





## USAF MSC ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCEMENT – OBITUARY



James Moses Kiser (“Jim”) died on March 29, 2026, ending a remarkable journey that began June 3, 1932, in Olive Hill, Kentucky, and extended throughout the world. Jim was born to Grace and Finley Kiser and grew up in the Cincinnati area of Ohio with his siblings Robert, Vera, and Vivian.



### Major (retired) James M. Kiser

June 3, 1932 – March 29, 2026

Jim graduated from Milford High School in Ohio in 1950 as Salutatorian and Class President and enlisted in the United States Air Force in 1951. Jim took great pride in his military career, and his high intelligence was recognized by his early assignment to cryptology functions in post-war occupied Germany. Subsequently, as a noncommissioned officer, he served in NATO’s Allied Forces Southern Europe Headquarters – first in Florence, Italy, and then in Naples.

Jim served at the Hollywood Motion Picture Squadron in the mid 1950’s, where he filmed the nuclear blasts from above at the Nevada Test Site during Operation PLUMBBOB. He then couriered the films back through Death Valley to the Motion Picture Squadron. During this assignment, Jim was exposed to nuclear radiation and later became a member of the National Association of Atomic Veterans.

Upon completing Officer Candidate School in 1958, Jim was honored as a Distinguished Graduate and was commissioned into the Regular Air Force at the direction of President Eisenhower. Jim chose to serve in the USAF Medical Service Corps, where his career centered on hospital and health services administration and construction. His promotion to the position of Health Facilities Officer reflected his lifelong desire to provide exceptional medical care to active-duty service members, military veterans, and their dependents. Jim was awarded the USAF Commendation Medal four times, and, at the direction of the President, he was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal for outstanding noncombat meritorious service.

Jim was tenacious and believed strongly in self-determination, self-improvement, and education. He was one of the early participants in the Air Force’s “Operation Bootstrap.” Under this program, he completed three years of college in his off-duty hours. The Air Force gave him temporary duty to enable him to finish the courses for his Baccalaureate degree from the University of Nebraska at Omaha in 1966.

Once again demonstrating his determination to pick himself up “by his own bootstraps,” Jim attended university classes in his off-duty hours to obtain a Master of Science degree. Again, the Air Force granted him temporary duty to complete this degree from the University of Colorado at Boulder in 1969. Jim retired from the Air Force in 1971, after achieving the rank of Major.

Post-retirement, Jim continued his career in the civilian sector. He directed healthcare planning programs, spearheaded project management, and led hospital design and numerous major construction projects of facilities for healthcare, as well as university facilities for the education of healthcare professions both nationally and internationally. He was employed by Stanford University and the University of California, for example, and was recruited by Gordon A. Friesen International, Inc. to design hospitals around the world, including the teaching hospital for the National University of Singapore School of Medicine.

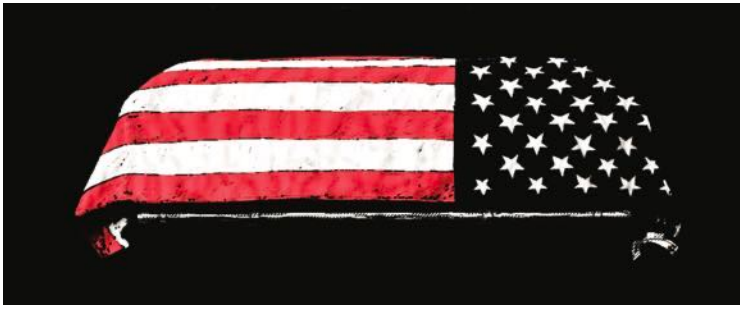
In the next chapter of his life, Jim obtained a Real Estate Broker’s license. He started his own brokerage and was joined there by his wife, Lorie. He was then able to devote his efforts to acquiring and developing residential and commercial properties while Lorie ran the brokerage for over thirty years.

Although his career achievements were both impressive and gratifying, the greatest source of joy and fulfillment in his life was his 46-year marriage to Lorie Kiser (nee Stober). They loved each other deeply, and their life was filled with care, admiration, devotion, appreciation, and affection. They realized all the goals that they valued and shared in their close and happy marriage.

Jim is survived by his wife, Lorie, his four children, Randall, Bruce, Kimberlee, and Diana from his first marriage to Mildred Kiser (nee Guilmette), as well as his grandson, Kasey, and nephew, Michael Webb. He loved his children dearly, and their well-being was always on his mind and in his aspirations and plans.

Throughout his life, Jim was committed to helping veterans, particularly young or disabled veterans, and supported them compassionately and generously.

# TAPS



**Timothy J. Miller.....Rochester, NY**  
**James E. Bradley...East Hartford, CT**  
**John P. Farrelly.....Williams Park, NY**  
**William E. Jones.....Glen Falls, NY**  
**Ron R. Lockwood.....Dallas, OR**  
**Harry L. Francis.....Elliston, VA**  
**James M. Kiser.....Oakland, CA**  
**Hugo Dezio Sr. ....Netcong, NJ**  
**Richard E. Wilder.....Jamestown, KY**  
**Bob F. Grimes.....Crestwood, KY**  
**Harmie J. Reed....East Bernstadt, KY**  
**Ernest E. Profitt.....Nortonville, KY**  
**James C. Jacobson....Cedar Falls, IA**  
**George A. Forsyth....Washington DC**  
**Lawrence R. Horowitz.....Port St. Luce, FL**  
**Richard C. LaPine.....Naples, FL**  
**James M. Kiser.....Oakland, CA**

# NAAV BOARD ELECTIONS

## 2026 2nd / 3rd Qtr NAAV Board Election

Ballots should be sent to Mary Ann Kiefer. Fred Schafer, Frank Farmer, Bob Pfeifer and Haskel Watts Jr.'s term(s) will be ending. We need a minimum of four nominees. Frank Farmer recently passed on March 7, 2026. Louisiana State Commander Paul C. Sparacino has agreed to serve on the board in Frank's place. Fred Schafer, Bob Pfeifer and Haskel Watts are willing to continue to serve. Please have nominations/votes mailed in by **July 31, 2026**. Ballots are in this Newsletter.

## Hugo Dezio Sr. 1932 - 2026



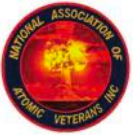
**Note the NAAV hat!**

Hugo served as a Lieutenant in the U.S. Navy from 1957 through 1960. He was the navigator and the electronics officer on the destroyer USS Perkins. While on the Perkins, he participated in the nuclear detonation tests at the Enewetak and Bikini Atolls in the Pacific Marshall Islands. Later he was a development project officer at the Naval Ordnance Unit in Key West, FL.

## 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.

**[maryannnaav@yahoo.com](mailto:maryannnaav@yahoo.com)**



**NAAV**  
**130 Cleveland Street**  
**Lebanon, OR 97355-4505**

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

## **NAAV BOARD MEMBERS**

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**Have a good day!**

