

The Atomic Veterans' View
Regarding VBDR, Dose Reconstruction
and the V. A. Claim Compensation Programs

By:

R. J. Ritter – C.E.M.
Director - National Commander
National Association of Atomic Veterans, Inc.

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Slide N001

On behalf of America's atomic veteran community, I am pleased to offer their views, issues, comments and suggestions to the Veteran's Advisory Board on Dose Re-construction, the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, the Department of Veteran's Affairs, and those interested parties who are with us today. When first asked to prepare this presentation, I found it impossible to adequately convey, those views, concerns and opinions in 30 short minutes. It is well to note that America's atomic veterans have been attempting, for the last 50+ years, to tell the stories of their experiences to those who have little or no interest in these events. With this in mind, I have selected a series of slides from a (90 minute) public awareness program developed by NAAV, Inc., that will address their core issues within the allotted 30 minute period. This approach will adequately convey the depth, magnitude and importance of those radiation exposure events that were a critical part of their life experiences, and bring to the forefront the root cause for our presence here today.

Slide N002

The year 1945 marked the dawn of the age of nuclear weapons, as the Manhattan Project proof tested the world's first atomic bomb, and the decision by United States to use these atomic weapons to shorten the war in the Pacific. It also marked the first year of debilitating radiation induced health issues that would be thrust upon America's atomic veterans, without their informed consent.

Slide N003

This is a photo of the July 16, 1945 Trinity test, in the New Mexico desert.

Slide N004

On August 6, 1945 an atomic bomb was detonated over the city of Hiroshima, Japan.

Slide N005

It is important to see the same Hiroshima post detonation landscape that was observed by the U.S. Occupation Forces assigned to assess this damage, shortly after the Japanese surrender in the fall of 1945.

Slide N006

This photo of the atomic bomb detonated over Nagasaki, Japan (on August 9, 1945), was taken by a Japanese civilian.

Slide N007

And this a snapshot of the results of that detonation.

Slide N008

Again, it is important to see the Nagasaki post detonation landscape that was observed by the U.S. Occupation Forces.

Slide N009

Operation "Crossroads" (in 1946) involved two atomic weapons tests and 42,000 military & support personnel. These tests were held at Bikini Atoll, located in the Marshall Island group.

Slide N010

This is a map of the Atoll, showing where those two tests occurred. Notice the large crater in the upper left end of the atoll. This crater is the signature of the Castle "Bravo" test that occurred in 1954. Bikini Island is three miles to the right of the "Able" and " Baker" blast zones.

Slide N011

This photo of the "Able" test was taken from a remote island camera. It was an Mk-3a fission core bomb, air dropped from a B-29 aircraft. The bomb detonated 500 ft. above the lagoon, and 1,200 yards off target. The surface temperature of the fireball was approx. 100,000 deg. F.

Slide N012

The "Baker" device was identical to that used in the "Able" test, however, it was detonated 90 feet below the lagoon surface. Here we see the fireball broaching the surface at an upward speed of 180 mph. As the hot gases broke through the surface they instantly created the "puff-ball" effect, which was a consequence of the high moisture-humidity condensation factor, as the water vapor is being forced rapidly upward from the lagoon.

Slide N013

As the hot gasses moved outward, they pull millions of gallons of radiated seawater up into the "heat-chute" forming a highly radioactive mist.

The downward (energy) blast wave reached the floor of the lagoon, some 200 feet beneath the surface , and spewed bits and pieces of sand and coral onto the decks of the ships in the target fleet. These tests resulted in serious radioactive contamination of the entire lagoon, with dangerously high radiation measurements recorded at the surface within the first 24 hours. It was also determined (by the scientific team,) that Bikini Island, some 3 miles from surface zero, could not be safely inhabited until several decades into the future.

There are a long standing, un-answered, questions about the effects of drinking processed (de-salienated) radiation contaminated seawater, and the effects of being allowed to swim in the contaminated lagoon after the tests. And, as a footnote, the military & support personnel involved in these two tests, could not tell their families, or their physicians, or the VA that they were a part of these ionizing radiation contamination events, because of their oath of secrecy.

Slide N014

In 1948, Operation “Sandstone” was a series of 3 tests, involving more than 10,000 military & support personnel.

Slide N015

Sandstone “ X-ray” was a 37 kiloton fission device, similar in design to those used in the “Crossroads” tests, however; it incorporated the use of a (new) Oralloid-Plutonium composite core. Both the “Yoke” and “Zebra” shots were used to proof test additional weapon design concepts and features, including the effects of using a combination Polonium-Beryllium urchin initiator.

Slide N016

This is a photo of the flight crew of the B-29 “Over-Exposed” being checked for radiation levels after flying through the “Sandstone” mushroom clouds to gather radiation particle samples. After returning to their base of operations, these aircraft were scrubbed down and de-contaminated by ground crews prior to their next assigned mission. There was no way to measure the amount of radiation particles ingested or inhaled by the air crews, or the ground crews.

Slide N017

In 1951 there were 11 tests conducted at the Nevada Test Site, involving more than 7,000 military & support personnel. And 5 tests were conducted at Enewetak Atoll, involving more than 7,500 military & support personnel.

Slide N018

Here we see military personnel, assigned to Camp Desert Rock, receiving final instructions prior to a series of nuclear weapons tests.

Slide N019

These Operation “Ranger” test participants are seen moving out to their assigned pre-test positions.

Slide N020

And here, they are shown positioning themselves in trenches, at select intervals from ground zero prior to a test detonation.

Slide N021

And now they are in the crouched position, with their heads down, during the final countdown.

Slide N022

Ranger “ Baker II “ was 8 kiloton air dropped weapon device.

Slide N023

This Officer, is shown standing in the mist of a cloud of blast wave dust particles, many of which were inhaled and ingested.

Slide N024

They are now following orders to move forward through the rubble and debris of ground zero.

Slide N025

Buster “ Charlie “ was a 14 kiloton air dropped weapon. If you look closely, you can see the troop trench line at the front edge of the grassy area.

Slide N026

These are battle ready troops awaiting pre-test instructions before the Buster “Dog” test shot.

Slide N027

Buster “ Dog “ was a 21 kiloton air dropped weapon, shown here with military observers sitting out on the desert sands. Again, dust particles from the blast were inhaled and ingested by the test observation troops.

Slide N028

Several species of animals were used as nuclear weapons test subjects in the Pacific, and at the Nevada Test Site. In this photo, we see technicians collecting animal specimens shortly after a nuclear weapons test.

Slide N029

This is a map of Enewetak Atoll, where 43 atomic weapon tests were conducted.

Slide N030

The Greenhouse “ Dog “ test was an 81 kiloton barge burst. The explosion lifted 250,000 tons of radiated soil to a final dispersion and fallout altitude of 35,000 ft.

Slide N031

These “Greenhouse” technicians are preparing the nuclear weapon device for the “George” test.

Slide N032

Greenhouse “ George “ was a 225 kiloton barge burst, and was primarily designed as a thermonuclear physics experiment, producing the largest yield to date. “George” created a crater in the sand and coral atoll, measuring 1,140 ft. in diameter. and 75 ft. in depth. This photo shows the “mach-stem” as the fireball shock wave reflects off the ground. The mach-stem is a belt of intensified shock pressure at the base of the shock front. In this phase of growth, the temperature and brightness of the fireball is determined by the strength of the shock wave, and we can see a bright band that marks the location of the rising mach-stem.

Slide N033

Greenhouse “ Item “ was a 45.5 kiloton tower shot, that proof tested the principle of “ fusion-boosting “ or the use of a thermonuclear fusion reaction for the purposes of boosting yield efficiency. This was to be known, by some of the technicians, as the improved nuclear fuel “cocktail-kick” effect.

Slide N034

These are typical shipboard observers witnessing the “Greenhouse” tests. The photo was taken by one of the observers, and is a bit grainy.

Slide N035

In 1952 there were 8 tests at the Nevada Test Site, involving more than 10,000 military & support personnel. Both parts of “Tumbler-Snapper” series were focused on developing tactical nuclear weapons, with special emphasis on weapon performance, and the knowledge & experience necessary for their operational use. There were also 2 tests at Enewetak involving more than 1,200 military & support personnel.

Slide N036

Tumbler-Snapper “Charlie“ was a 19 kiloton air dropped weapon. The aircraft used for these tests was a B-50, which was in actuality, a B-29 re-fitted with larger engines, since the new Mk-5 bomb was several hundred lbs. heavier than the old Mk-3 bomb that was dropped on Nagasaki.

Slide N037

Tumbler-Snapper “How“ was a 14 kiloton tower shot, designed to proof test the use of a newly designed Beryllium-Neutron reflector-tamper, which would become a standard component in later nuclear weapon mechanism designs.

Slide N038

Back at Enewetak Atoll, Ivy “ Mike,” was a proof test of the first Hydrogen bomb, a 10.5 megaton barge burst, using a TX-5 fission device, as the primary stage, with a Deuterium fusion second stage, based on the principles of staged radiation implosion. The Enewetak Atoll island, on which the test device was detonated, was completely obliterated, with a resulting crater 6,240 ft. in diameter, and a depth of 164 ft.

Slide N039

In only 90 seconds, the “Mike” fireball rose to a height of 57,000 ft. One minute later it had reached a height of 108,000 ft. Thirty minutes after the detonation, the mushroom cloud measured 60 miles in diameter, and joined the mach-stem at an altitude of 45,000 ft.

Slide N040

Ivy “ King “ was a 500 kiloton weapon device, air dropped from a B-36H Strategic Bomber. With more than 4 critical masses of enriched Uranium, the bomb was skirting the edge of the absolute limits of safety. Prior to the flight, chains made of aluminum & boron filled the central portion of the bomb to absorb stray neutrons and prevent collapse if, for example, the high explosives were accidentally detonated. The chains were then pulled out just before the bomb was released from the aircraft, after which, the air crew was greatly relieved, as the bomb streaked downward to the target area.

Slide N041

Operation “Upshot-Knothole” was a scatter-shot effort to proof test new atomic weapon designs and devices, and to develop new technical information that would assist in future weapons design. These 11 tests would include the participation of approx. 21,000 military & support personnel. At this time, there were concerted efforts to prepare U.S. military forces for atomic warfare, with proof tests of a number of new tactical weapons. One such weapon was the Mk-65 “Atomic Cannon” that would fire a 250mm (Mk-9) nuclear artillery shell.

Slide N042

Upshot-Knothole “Badger” was a 23 kiloton tower shot.

Slide N043

Upshot-Knothole “Climax” was a 61 kiloton air dropped weapon.

Slide N044

Upshot-Knothole “Grable” was a 15 kiloton (Mk-9) projectile fired from the Atomic Cannon. The detonation occurred 5.8 miles downrange of the firing point. Visible in the lower center of the picture are the gun crew members, tucked down in a trench. This would be the first, and only live nuclear projectile fired from the Mk-65 field piece.

Slide N045

Upshot-Knothole “Harry” was a 32 kiloton tower shot.

Slide N046

In 1954, Operation “Castle” included a series of 6 high yield thermonuclear weapon tests conducted at Bikini Atoll, involving more than 10,000 military & support personnel. The original “Castle” schedule included proof testing of a weaponized version of a new cryogenic fuel system, plus a variety of other newly developed concepts. Some of the tests were also much larger than expected, in fact, the 3 largest tests carried out by the U.S. were all part of Operation “Castle.”

Slide N047

Castle “Bravo” was a 15 megaton barge burst.

Slide N048

This is a photo of the offshore test barge being readied for the Castle “Romeo” test shot.

Slide N049

Castle “Romeo” was an 11 megaton barge burst. The “Castle” series released 48.2 megatons of nuclear (fission) products into the atmosphere, causing hundreds of radiation injuries, and contaminating a major portion of the Marshall Islands.

Slide N050

On August 30, 1954 Operation “Teapot” was authorized by President Eisenhower. It was a series of 14 tests at the Nevada Test Site, involving more than 8,000 military & support personnel. The “Teapot” series included proof testing of a broad variety of tactical weapon applications, including those used for air defense and those required for anti-submarine warfare. And in 1955, there was 1 underwater test off the coast of San Diego, California, that included more than 10,000 military & support personnel.

Slide N051

Teapot “Turk” was a 43 kiloton tower burst.

Slide N052

In 1955, the Scripps Oceanographic Institute was making preparations for Operation “Wigwam”, off the coast of San Diego, California, that would involve 30 Navy ships, 6 scientific vessels and more than 10,000 military & support personnel. The “Wigwam” test set-up is as shown here.

It incorporated the use of a Mk-90 nuclear device, with the submarine test hulls positioned at pre-determined intervals from the center of the blast zone. When the detonation occurred, this entire array was being towed, by the U.S.S. Tawasa, through the center of a nest of test monitoring instrument pods.

Slide N053

This is an aerial view of an underwater nuclear detonation breaching the ocean's surface.

Slide N054

Here, an F-84 pilot has just returned to San Diego after collecting "Wigwam" cloud radiation samples.

Slide N055

Ground technicians used wooden poles to remove the samples from the wing storage pods, without the use of any special protection.

Slide N056

Here we see one of several radiation monitor pods being retrieved by crew members of the "Tawasa". Because of limited space on the ship's fantail, several of these pods were placed along the ship's port side main deck, adjacent to the galley and mess hall spaces. Within a few hours, Scripps personnel assigned radiation monitoring duties, declared the ship's galley and mess hall spaces off-limits, due to unacceptably high radiation levels. Several Navy auxiliary ships were tasked with similar duties, involving post test, "high risk," radiation exposure assignments. Additionally, the "Wigwam" test resulted in a large radiation "hot-spot", (approx. 2.5 miles in diameter), that drifted slowly to the Southwest. A Scripps research vessel, and a Navy auxiliary ship were assigned to track & monitor this drifting spot in the ocean, taking frequent radiation samples at various depths. After the 41st day of constant monitoring, the vessels were released from their duties and ordered to return to port. There will be no way to accurately determine how many fish encountered that drifting "hot-spot" of radiated ocean, or how many of those fish may have been harvested for human consumption.

Slide N057

All ship's personnel, participating in the "Wigwam" test, were constantly checked for radiation levels, and many were required to take several showers prior to being allowed to re-enter the ship's living spaces. Their clothes were collected in 55 gallon drums, which were then sealed and removed shortly after returning to Port. There were no instruments that would measure levels of radiation from particles that may have been inhaled or ingested by those exposed to the contaminated seawater mist.

Slide N058

In 1956, Operation "Redwing" (a series of 17 tests) was devoted primarily to proof testing improved thermonuclear designs of actual deployable weapons, and involved more than 10,000 military & support personnel. Due to the extensive roster of megaton range tests scheduled for the "Redwing" series, both Bikini and Enewetak Atolls were used to make the test detonation schedule more tractable. Some of these nuclear weapons were considered to be "clean" (low fission yield) devices, while others were considered to be "dirty" (high fission yield) devices.

Slide N059

Redwing "Apache" was a 1.9 megaton barge test. At this time, high yield weapons tests were being set up on large, offshore barges, since the availability of suitable (non-contaminated) Pacific Atoll sites were rapidly diminishing.

Slide N060

Redwing "Dakota" was a 3 megaton shot.

Slide N061

Redwing "Huron" was a 270 kiloton shot.

Slide N062

In 1957, Operation "Plumbbob" would be the sixth test series conducted at the Nevada Test Site, and would involve more than 18,000 military & support personnel, as a part of the Camp Desert Rock VII and VIII exercises. It must also be stated that the "Plumbbob" tests released some 58,300 kilocuries of radioiodine (I-131) into the atmosphere. This was more than twice as much as any other continental test series, producing total civilian radiation exposures amounting to 120 million person-rads of thyroid tissue exposure.

Slide N063

Plumbbob "Boltzman" was a 12 kiloton tower shot.

Slide N064

Plumbbob “Stokes” was a 19 kiloton tower shot.

Slide N065

Airborne troops, assigned to post test maneuvers, are shown here dropping into the “hot zone” shortly after a nuclear test at the Nevada Test Site. Elements of both the 11th and 82nd Airborne participated in chute drops at the Nevada test site. These veterans have found it almost impossible to prove that they were assigned these post test “high radiation exposure risk” duties.

Slide N066

Airborne troops are shown here, approaching their assigned areas shortly after dropping into the test area.

Slide N067

And now they are seen, walking through the ashes and debris of ground zero, at the Nevada Test Site.

Slide N068

Plumbbob “Priscilla” was a 37 kiloton “balloon effects” test.

Slide N069

Plumbbob “Hood” was a 74 kiloton test.

Slide N070

Plumbbob “Fizeau” was an 11 kiloton surface burst. Again, you can see the troop trench line just at the edge of the brush line.

Slide N071

Plumbbob “Smokey” was a 44 kiloton tower shot.

Slide N072

1958 was a busy year for U. S. nuclear weapons testing, with 35 “Hardtack I” tests at Enewetak Atoll, Bikini Atoll and Johnston Island, involving more than 20,000 military & support personnel. There was also “Argus”, the only clandestine test series in the 17 year history of atmospheric testing. “Argus” consisted of 3 high altitude test shots secretly conducted 1,100 miles southwest of Cape Town, South Africa, in the South Atlantic. And “Hardtack II” was a series of 37 tests conducted at the Nevada Test Site, involving more than 1,200 military & support personnel. The “Hardtack II” tests consisted exclusively of low yield weapons, and was a dramatic departure from the previous “Plumbbob” series, in which the above ground “Hood” shot, by itself, was 74 kilotons. At this time, the concern about ill effects from radiation fallout on the U. S. general population was seriously making itself known.

Slide N073

Hardtack I “Butternut” was a 1.3 megaton barge burst.

Slide N074

Hardtack I “Oak” was an 8.9 megaton barge burst.

Slide N075

This is a photo of test “Oak” ground observers.

Slide N076

Hardtack I “Umbrella” test was a 31 kiloton underwater anti-submarine warfare test.

Slide N077

1962 was the year of mass-megaton detonations, with “Nougat” conducted at the Nevada Test Site and “Dominic” and “Fishbowl” conducted at Johnston & Christmas Islands. These collective Operations included a total of 86 tests, that involved more than 31,000 military & support personnel. The “Nougat” series was conducted at the Nevada Test Site, which permitted the rapid initiation of tests, but restricted them to low yields, due to the increasing concerns of harmful radiation fallout. The “Dominic” series included 36 tests, and there were 5 “Thor” rocket-launched tests designed to gather further weapons effects data on high-altitude phenomena.

There were also 2 operational weapon systems tests, one of which was the launch of a Polaris SLBM, with a live nuclear warhead. The second was an underwater detonation to proof test the new nuclear Anti-Submarine Rocket (ASROC) warhead design. As a note of interest, several test failures occurred, with missiles being destroyed in flight by range safety officers, when electronics failed, or when rocket motors malfunctioned, or when missiles veered out of control. The Bluegill Prime test was particularly disastrous, since the missile was blown up while still on the launch pad, requiring complete reconstruction of the demolished and (plutonium) contaminated launch facility.

Slide N078

Dominic “Bluestone” was a 1.3 megaton air dropped weapon.

Slide N079

Dominic “Arkansas” was a 1.9 megaton air dropped weapon.

Slide N080

Operation “Frigate Bird” was the first live nuclear tipped missile launched from a submerged submarine. Shown here is a group of British military observers viewing the (700 kiloton) mushroom cloud from Christmas Island.

Slide N081

Air Force ordinance technicians are shown here preparing a nuclear weapon for installation into an aircraft.

Slide N082

Dominic “Yeso” was a 1.5 megaton air dropped weapon.

Slide N083

Dominic “Tanana” was a 73 kiloton air dropped weapon.

Slide N084

The W-54 Recoil-less Rifle Nuke (RRN) was developed for use in NATO countries against Russian Tank columns. The destructive yield was 22 tons (on the low side) and 1 kiloton (on the high side), and it had a maximum launch range of 2.5 miles.

Slide N085

This is a photo of Operation “Little-Feller I”, an actual (W-54) nuclear warhead detonation test. Although there would be more atmospheric testing in the Western Pacific, this was the last atmospheric test of a nuclear weapon device on U.S. soil.

Slide N086

In 1993, (Secretary of Defense) William J. Perry finally releases America’s Atomic Veterans from their oath of secrecy, 48 years after the fact.

Slide N087

Now those atomic veterans, who are still alive, are free to tell their private physicians, or those at the VAMC that they were involved in nuclear weapons testing activities that may have exposed them to ionizing radiation particles, while those Atomic Veterans who’s lives were shortened by the effects of radiation exposure, and who are not with us today, were denied that opportunity.

Slide N088

This is all well, and good, however; there are thousands of atomic veterans who are still not aware of the fact that they have been released from their oath of secrecy. And, given that they can now tell their stories, when they choose to do so no one has a clue as to what they are referring to, since the entire nuclear weapons development and testing program was cloaked in secrecy. It is our view that the only practical way to get this word out to those veterans is to place repeated notifications at all VAMC locations, as well as in those monthly magazines and newsletters issued by the American Legion, VFW, DAV and the Am-Vets, as most of America’s atomic veterans will be a member of one or more of these groups. The VA does publish the periodic Ionizing Radiation Review, copies of which are distributed to all VAMC’s across the country. However; in many cases, they are not placed in high traffic areas, such as the blood collection waiting rooms, where atomic veterans would have easy access to the information contained within each issue. In a few cases, I have found them in an empty waiting room in the fourth floor of a VAMC, on the same shelf as issues of the Agent Orange Review.

Slide N089

The burden of proof of participation in an atomic weapons test, or being assigned to a post test radiation exposure risk event, is still the responsibility of the atomic veteran, who, in most cases, is in ill health, not computer literate, cannot understand the

mountain of paperwork required by the VA claims process, and is limited in income, which restricts their ability to seek professional assistance in acquiring such proof, and in sorting out the issues. The results are, in most cases, that of total frustration and resignation on the part of America's (forgotten) atomic veterans.

Slide N090

Additionally, Atomic Veterans also feel that they are grossly limited in their ability to receive proper assistance from VAMC personnel who, in most cases, are not fully informed, or experienced in diagnosing ionizing radiation particle induced illnesses.

Slide N-091

NAAV has received numerous complaints from atomic veterans, some of whom have had to drive 150 miles to the nearest VAMC, for the purposes of taking an Ionizing Radiation Registry physical, only to be asked a few questions, after which they were told to go home. These veterans were not given any blood or urine tests, as required by the VAMC manual describing IRR physical procedures. There seems to be no uniformity in IRR examination procedures, from clinic to clinic. Given that there appears to be more than 25,000 atomic veterans who have taken the IRR examination, it is doubtful that they were all given full and complete physicals including blood and urine tests. If this is the case, in our opinion, the system is seriously flawed.

Slide N092

And so, we ask, what is the Legacy of America's atomic veteran's, as viewed from their collective perspectives, and as they relate to the VBDR, or to the DTRA Dose Reconstruction methods, and the VA claims approval process, given that they were wounded and handicapped by an invisible enemy, while serving their country proudly and honorably.

Slide N093

This Veteran's cemetery scene says it all. After decades of sworn secrecy, decades of total frustration, decades of futile attempts to file claims for radiation exposure illnesses, or for service connected "radiation exposure" disability benefits, and decades of continuous denials by the Federal Agencies responsible for their conditions, the only thanks America's atomic veterans truly feel they can expect is shown here.

Slide N094

According to the DOD's own figures, almost 1 million Veterans participated in the entire U. S. nuclear weapons testing program, from 1945 to 1992, including involvement in many (high risk) post event radiation exposure activities. And there were those veterans who participated in the "clean-up" of Enewetak Atoll, collecting the highly contaminated soil and burying it beneath a thick concrete dome. It is unfortunate that only a few in Congress are willing to speak for these veterans who deserve better treatment that they currently have access to. We can only estimate that fully one half of those America's atomic veterans are not with us today, having succumbed to long term, life shortening health issues precipitated by inhaling or ingesting ionizing radiation particles, on one or more occasions, while those atomic veterans who are still alive, continue to wait for the opportunity to be fully recognized by their Government. Currently, atomic veterans are supposed to be placed into VA (medical) Group 6, the same group as those veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange. This is well and good, however; they all share the same strong opinion that while the VA recognizes that they were involved in a radiation exposure risk events, they do not qualify for no-cost medical exams & treatment or no-cost prescription drugs, unless they (the veteran) can prove that they are suffering from a "service connected" affliction.

And it is their collective opinion that if the VA has proof that a Veteran was a participant in any atomic weapon test, or post test event, where there was any potential for exposure to ionizing radiation, to any degree, then said veteran should be awarded un-limited access to no-cost medical exams, no-cost medical treatment, and no-cost prescription drugs.

The DTRA maintains that the "benefit of doubt" should always be in favor of the atomic veteran. Since there has never been a "dose reconstruction" assessment that has produced a "conclusive" or "provable" result, we strongly suggest that the VA find in favor of the Atomic Veteran, in granting no-cost medical and prescription drug benefits, quickly and permanently, without any additional qualifiers, and without any form of "means-testing." We feel that the Secretary of Veteran's Affairs can make this decision without the approval of Congress.

This would allow a small measure of instant relief to those dwindling ranks of America's atomic veteran's, and would be viewed (at a minimum,) as a gesture of relief and good will by the VA. Additionally, it is the collective view of America's atomic veteran's that "dose reconstruction be abolished altogether. It is estimated that each "dose reconstruction" assessment costs the U.S. taxpayer as much as \$20,000. It is also the firm opinion of atomic veteran's that the VA should apply these dollars to the costs of maintaining their health, rather than the continued use of these funds for dose reconstructions with "in-conclusive" findings.

And, given the recent comments and issues related to an “Atomic Veteran Medal”, the following is an example of the current viewpoint of the Dept. of Defense. In a recent letter from William J. Carr (Acting Deputy D.O.D. Under Sec. of Military Personnel Policy) to U.S. Senator Charles E. Grassley, Carr says the following. “ The Department has no decoration, award or certificate to specifically recognize those who were exposed to ionizing radiation. “ Mr. Carr goes on to state that “Commanders have a variety of individual awards available to recognize a member’s contribution to the organization’s mission. It is our view that such a well-intended effort would create the perception, if not the reality, of inequity amongst the host of other Service members who engaged in a wide variety of peacetime hazardous activities over the years. We appreciate your request and concern for the recognition of those who have faithfully served the United States of America.”

Mr. Carr’s statement to Senator Grassley implies that being exposed to ionizing radiation particles was a normal part of “peacetime hazardous activities,” and, in his opinion, was acceptable as a part of everyday military workplace risks. America’s atomic veteran community is grossly offended by Mr. Carr’s (seemingly) ill-informed views, as they fail to recognize the seriousness of the issues, or the years of human misery and personal sacrifice experienced by these veteran’s and their families, as the result of their exposure to ionizing radiation particles while involved with what Mr. Carr refers to as “ peacetime hazardous activities.”

Final Comments:

In the course of putting together this presentation, and after informing the NAAV Directors, Officers and membership of your invitation to do so, I received several letters and e-mails from our Atomic Veteran community. To stand here and deliver all of the letters or comments that I received would take at least a week. Given this, I have selected a few that will be representative the collective comments of all.

From: John Nelson “ Buz “ Broussard (USMC Ret.) Past NAAV Director - Lafayette, La.

In March of 1953, my company of Marines crouched less than two miles from ground zero, of Operation Upshot-Knothole, shot Badger, a 23 kt. atomic bomb detonated at the Nevada Test Site. We were then ordered to walk through the resulting destruction and remains of ground zero, and we did not have any personal radiation detection devices. My (AN/PRC-10) 2-way backpack-radio sounded like hailstones falling on a tin roof. Today, nearly all of us are dead, and the few who are still living have a multitude of cancers, and health issues that are not common to military veterans who were not directly involved with the nuclear weapons testing projects. We know that cancer is a radiogenic disease, which scrambles, or mutates the body’s DNA; thus, no one seriously denies that being close to the detonations at Hiroshima or Nagasaki, or in the desert of Nevada, or in the Marshall Islands, has caused cancers in those who were there. The Government continues to use “Radiation Dose Reconstruction” as a delay mechanism to keep G.I.’s from seeking statutory benefits from the DVA. No one knows how to “reconstruct a radiation dosage” estimate any more than we know how to reconstruct Sara’s dosage at Sodom, before she became a pillar of salt. Even now, they are still trying to guess the parameters of an unknown quadrilateral equation, the results of which are always “ in-conclusive.” Each dose reconstruction cost’s the U.S. taxpayer as much as \$20,000, the results of which are always only theoretical, not factual. I echo the belief’s of all atomic veterans, that the sole purpose of “Dose Reconstruction” is to act as a roadblock for atomic veterans claims for radiation induced illness compensation, which are always routinely denied by the DVA. And I will also agree that “Dose Reconstruction” should be abolished by the Congress of the United States of America.

From: Major Donald L. Reiminger (U. S. Army –Ret.) NAAV Member - Georgetown, Tx.

As a 2nd. Lt., in a tank battalion, I was assigned to participate in Operation Upshot-Knothole, shot “Grable”, (the 280mm atomic cannon test). Before the test shot, I was given a 2 hour course on handling a Geiger-Counter. After the detonation, and at the sound of a whistle, we were ordered out of our trenches, and proceeded towards ground zero, while the main body of test troops followed approx. one half mile behind. Our instructions were, that If we encountered a really “hot” item, we were to hand signal the technicians, who would then rope off the object, or the high risk radiation area. During this exercise, we encountered a big problem, as the Geiger-Counter’s operated haphazardly and randomly, often showing questionable readings. After all was over, we were then ordered to dump our film badges in a cardboard box at the rear containment area. Since this date, I have not been able to confirm, or show proof of orders assigning me (or my men) to the test site, nor can I get any information on the amount of radiation that was registered on my film badge. I have written to various U.S. Agencies, with absolutely no results. When I go to the (Temple, Tx.,) VAMC they give me a blank stare when I mention an Ionizing Radiation Registry exam. I do go there, from time to time, for blood tests, and prescription drugs, but they do not want to hear anything related to “Atomic Illnesses”.

From: Dr. Lincoln Grahlf (U.S.N. Ret.) N.A.A.V. Director - St. Louis, Mo.
Comments from Dr. Grahlf’s book, “Voices from Ground Zero,” published by the Univ. Press of America, Inc.

What do Atomic Veterans Want ?

I would certainly not presume to speak for all atomic veterans. However; based upon my research, I would like to offer the following observations. A large portion of these men state, one way or another, that they wish the government would acknowledge, openly, that they were subjected to unusual risk. Military service is classified as a hazardous occupation, and they all accept that fact, but they are offended by the government's denials. Some of us would like to see legislation making it a criminal offense for any government employee or contractor to lie about, or cover up exposures or potential exposures to radiation. A significant number of them feel that the government should provide them with free medical care for ailments which may possibly have been induced by their exposure to radiation; some feel they should receive monetary compensation; many others want nothing more than official recognition, by either a public declaration, a certificate, or a medal. Several have suggested that medals have been awarded to veterans for much less. Atomic veterans, like almost everyone else, are concerned about the world in which their children and grandchildren will have to live. They are concerned about both the prospect of a horrible nuclear war, as well as the harmful environmental effects of nuclear weapons. Most, however, are pleased to see the United States playing a significant role in working for worldwide implementation of both nuclear disarmament and a comprehensive test ban. America's military veterans have, in general, had a great tendency to be patriotic and supportive of a strong national government. The findings of my study greatly support that proposition. At the same time, however; there is an appreciable degree of cynicism and disillusionment expressed by America's Atomic Veterans. National leaders might do well to take notice. Is not the alienation of this potentially most loyal group and supportive segment of the population a sign to be taken seriously ?

*From: Richard U. Conant (USAF Ret.) Albuquerque, N.M.
Past N.A.A.V. Nat. Cmdr. – Past N.A.A.V. Director - NAAV Medical Database Custodian*

Please refer to the attached multi-page letter from Richard U. Conant to the V.B.D.R.

*From: Charlie Clark – President of Radiated Veterans of America, Inc. - Past NAAV Director - NAAV Member
Mr. Clark forwarded the following Resolutions adopted by the American Legion at their 2006 National Convention*

RESOLVED, By the American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion seek legislation to eliminate the radiation dose estimate requirements in claims of veterans who were exposed to ionizing radiation during their military service; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the American Legion seek legislation to recognize military duty at all DOE nuclear weapons development, testing and manufacturing facilities as a “ radiation-risk-activity”; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That the American Legion seek legislation to include in title 38, United States Code, those diseases recognized, for benefit purposes, under the Radiation Compensation Act of 1990, as amended, and including those resulting from exposure to beryllium and silica.

Closing Statement:

On behalf of America's Atomic Veteran community, I thank you for allowing me to submit this presentation, including my observations and personal comments.

Prepared and presented by:

*R. J. Ritter – C.E.M.
Director – National Commander
National Association of Atomic Veterans, Inc.
11214 Sageland - Houston, Tx. 77089
281-481-1357*