



# National Association of Atomic Veterans, Inc.



## Written Testimony of Keith Kiefer, National Commander of the National Association of Atomic Veterans (NAAV)

Submitted to the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs (DAMA)  
Committee on Veterans' Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives  
Tuesday, February 3rd, 2026  
CHOB - 10:15 AM ET

Chairman, Ranking Member, Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony to you today.

My name is Keith Kiefer.

I am the National Commander of the National Association of Atomic Veterans (NAAV).

I served active and inactive duty from 1975 to 1981 in the United States Air Force. Part of my service was in the Marshall Islands, Enewetak Atoll in 1978 as part of the Enewetak Atoll Radiological Cleanup Project, which took place from 1977 to 1980.

The item I've been asked to address is H.R. 4469 Presume Act. The National Association of Atomic Veterans is pleased to support the Presume Act.

The legacy of Nuclear tests/cleanup is riddled with Veterans not having proper Personal Protective Equipment and/or failure of monitoring radiation levels. Few of the Veterans were issued radiation badges and of those that had them, there were high failure rates due to environmental factors. Further, these badges only measure external gamma rays, X-rays, and high-energy beta radiation. They do not measure alpha, neutron, or low energy beta radiation. Additionally, none of the monitoring methods measure internal radiation doses of any form. Records remain classified Secret and have been intentionally and unintentionally lost or destroyed, like the 1973 Saint Louis fire.

The legacy is also riddled with failure to establish a baseline prior to Veteran exposure (we believe for the purpose of plausible deniability). There has also, from the beginning, been an effort to minimize the effect(s)/danger(s) of nuclear radiation because of the impact on National Security and economic impact on the Nuclear industry. See attachment A.

Radiation exposed Veterans face several obstacles perfecting a service connected claim. Those being access to records, a bias, radiation threshold and time between exposure and manifestation of the Presumed Disease and NEXUS letters. Despite the belief/ statement Feb 3, 2026, STATEMENT OF MS. JENNIFER BOVER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PENSION AND FIDUCIARY SERVICE VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA) BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES (page 4 of 7) both myself and NAAV members experience has been different. For some Atomic Veterans two methods of token radiation exposure exist. One is administered by Veteran Benefits Administration (VBA) the other Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA) in the Justice Department. (It should be noted it is one or the other, no double dipping.) Our experience is on average it takes 14 years to perfect a claim with the VBA and six to twelve months with the Justice department.



14944 295th Ave NW, MN 55398 PH: 612 232 6596



The main difference is the application of Presumptive diseases, as Congress intended, by the Justice department. That intent being if the individual was on-site during the specified time, and the individual has been diagnosed with the presumptive disease, it is assumed/Presumed the disease was due to exposure and compensation is provided. There is no exposure level or manifestation time requirement. The VBA does not follow this process. I have been diagnosed with a presumptive disease, was on-site at a recognized site during the prescribed timeframe, and without explanation have still been denied compensation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I look forward to any questions, follow up and passage of this bill.

*Keith Kiefer, TTEE*

Keith Kiefer  
NAAV National Commander.

Attachment A

THIS DOCUMENT CONSISTS OF 1 PAGES  
COPY NO. 1 OF 3 SERIES A

WAR DEPARTMENT  
WASHINGTON

~~TOP SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED  
E.O. 11652, Sec. 3(F) and 5(D) or (E)  
NND 730039  
By ERC NARS, Date 6-4-74

24 August 1945.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHIEF OF STAFF:

Teams of investigators headed by General Farrell are moving into Japan with our occupying forces. Their mission is to make absolutely certain that there can be no possible ill effects to American troops from radioactive materials at either Hiroshima or Nagasaki as well as to ascertain the extent of all damage at these two places. Although we felt that Japanese casualties from radioactivity were unlikely it is most important, for the future of the atomic bomb work as well as for historical reasons, that we determine the facts.

As soon as General MacArthur is established in Japan, the remaining scientific personnel and all secret equipment at Tinian will be brought back to the United States.

*L. R. Groves*

L. R. GROVES,  
Major General, USA.

S.C.M.

DECLASSIFIED  
Authority NND 730039  
BY EN NARS, Date 10-29-73



~~SECRET~~  
DOD Dir. 5200.3, Sept. 27, 1958  
NWD by 983 date 26 Feb 60

~~TOP SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED  
Authority NND 730039

~~TOP SECRET~~

MEMORANDUM of Telephone Conversation between General Groves and Lt. Col. Rea,  
Oak Ridge Hospital, 9:00 a.m., 25 August 1945.

G: ". . . . which fatally burned 30,000 victims during the first two weeks following its explosion."

R: Ultra-violet - is that the word?

G: Yes.

R: That's kind of crazy.

G: Of course, it's crazy - a doctor like me can tell that. "The death toll at Hiroshima and at Nagasaki, the other Japanese city blasted atomically, is still rising, the broadcast said. Radio Tokyo described Hiroshima as a city of death. 90% of its houses, in which 250,000 had lived, were instantly crushed." I don't understand the 250,000 because it had a much bigger population a number of years ago before the war started, and it was a military city. "Now it is peopled by ghost parade, the living doomed to die of radioactivity burns."

R: Let me interrupt you here a minute. I would say this: I think it's good propaganda. The thing is these people got good and burned - good thermal burns.

G: That's the feeling I have. Let me go on here and give you the rest of the picture. "So painful are these injuries that sufferers plead: 'Please kill me,' the broadcast said. No one can ever completely recover."

R: This has been in our paper, too, last night.

G: Then it goes on: "Radioactivity caused by the fission of the uranium used in atomic bombs is taking a toll of mounting deaths and causing reconstruction workers in Hiroshima to suffer various sicknesses and ill health."

R: I would say this: You yourself, as far as radioactivity is concerned, it isn't anything immediate, it's a prolonged thing. I think what these people have, they just got a good thermal burn, that's what it is. A lot of these people, first of all, they don't notice it much. You may get burned and you may have a little redness, but in a couple of days you may have a big blister or a sloughing of the skin, and I think that is what these people have had.

G: That is brought out a little later on. Now it says here: "A special news correspondent of the Japs said that three days after the bomb fell, there were 30,000 dead, and two weeks later the death toll had mounted to 60,000 and is continuing to rise." One thing is they are finding the bodies.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 7360 39  
BY SA NARS, Date 10-24-77

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~  
DOD Dir. 5200.9, Sept. 27, 1958  
NWD by 98 date 26-7-60

~~TOP SECRET~~

- R: They are getting the delayed action of the burn. For instance, at the Comanut Grove, they didn't all die at once, you know - they were dying for a month afterward.
- G: Now then, he says - this is the thing I wanted to ask you about particularly - "An examination of soldiers working on reconstruction projects one week after the bombing showed that their white corpuscles had diminished by half and a severe deficiency of red corpuscles."
- R: I read that, too - I think there's something hookum about that.
- G: Would they both go down?
- R: They may, yes - they may, but that's awfully quick, pretty terrifically quick. Of course, it depends - - - - but I wonder if you aren't getting a good dose of propaganda.
- G: Of course, we are getting a good dose of propaganda, due to the idiotic performance of the scientists and another one who is also on the project, and the newspapers and the radio wanting news.
- R: Of course, those Jap scientists over there aren't so dumb either and they are making a play on this, too. They evidently know what the possibility is. Personally, I discounted an awful lot of it, as it's too early, and in the second place, I think that a lot of these deaths they are getting are just delayed thermal burns.
- G: You see what we are faced with. Matthias is having trouble holding his people out there.
- R: Do you want me to get you some real straight dope on this, just how it affects them; and call you back in just a bit?
- G: That's true - that's what I want. Did you also see anything about the Geiger counter? It says that the fact that the uranium had permeated into the ground has been easily ascertained by using a Geiger counter and it has been disclosed that the uranium used in the atomic bomb is harmful to human bodies. Then it talks about this, which is just the thing that we thought -- The majority of injured persons received burns from powerful ultra-violet rays and those within a two-kilometer radius from the center received burns two or three times, which, I suppose, is second or third degree. Those within three to four kilometers received burns to the extent that their skin is burned bright red, but if these burns are caused by ultra-violet, they hardly felt the heat at that time. Later, however, blisters formed resulting in dropsy.
- R: That's why I say it's got to be a thermal burn.
- G: Then they talk about the burned portions of the bodies are infected from the inside.
- R: Well, of course, any burn is potentially an infected wound. We treat any burn as an infected wound. ~~I think you had better get the anti-propagandists out.~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

G: We can't, you see, because the whole damage has been done by our own people. There is nothing we can do except sit tight. The reason I am calling you is because we can't get hold of Ferry and because I might be asked at any time and I would like to be able to answer. Did you see about the Army men who had received burns on reconstruction? "Examination of 33 servicemen, of whom 10 had received burns in reconstruction projects, one week after the bombing took place, showed those with burns had 3150 white corpuscles and others, who were apparently healthy, had 3800, compared to the ordinary healthy person who has 7,000 to 8,000." This is a drastic decrease. Comes over from Tokyo. On the other hand, servicemen with burns had only 3,000,000 red corpuscles and others apparently healthy had just a little bit more when compared to 4,500,000 to 5,000,000 in the ordinary healthy person." What is that measured by?

R: You go by cubic millimeters. I would say this right off the bat - Anybody with burns, the red count goes down after a while, and the white count may go down, too, just from an ordinary burn. I can't get too excited about that.

G: We are not bothered a bit, excepting for - what they are trying to do is create sympathy. The sad part of it all is that an American started them off.

R: Let me look it up and I'll give you some straight dope on it.

G: This is the kind of thing that hurts us -- "The Japanese, who were reported today by Tokyo radio, to have died mysteriously a few days after the atomic bomb blast, probably were the victims of a phenomenon which is well known in the great radiation laboratories of America." That, of course, is what does us the damage.

R: I would say this: You will have to get some big-wig to put a counter-statement in the paper.