



**National Association of  
Atomic Veterans, Inc.**  
Including Nuclear Veterans



To: Committee of Armed Services, Veterans Affairs, and Homeland Security

Representative Terry Johnson Chairman  
Representative Laura Lanese Vice Chair  
Representative Harken F, Craig Ranking Member  
Representative Marlene Anielski  
Representative Richard D. Brown  
Representative Teresa Fedor  
Representative Al Landis  
Representative Adam C. Miller  
Representative Rick Perales  
Representative Craig S. Riedel  
Representative A. Nino Vitale  
Representative Ron Young  
Representative Paul Zeltwanger

From: Mr. Keith Kiefer, NAAV (National Association of Atomic Veterans) National Vice Commander, NAAV Minnesota State Co-Commander, & Enewetak Radiological Cleanup Veteran (1978)

Subject: H. B. No. 414, Sponsor; Rep. Schaffer, Tittle; Designate National Atomic Veterans Day

I would like to thank this committee and Rep. Schaffer for their interest in and support of Atomic Veterans and the opportunity to testify.

My name is Keith Kiefer, I have the honor to serve as the NAAV National Vice Commander and as the NAAV Minnesota State Co-Commander. I was also part of the Enewetak Radiological Cleanup Project in 1978. This project was conducted from 1977 to 1980.



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I often get asked what is an Atomic Veteran. The definition depends on who you ask. NAAV considers Veterans that have been or have had the potential of being exposed to Ionization Radiation. Groups that fall into this category are those involved with the atomic testing from 1945 to 1962, POWs and occupation forces in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Enewetak Atoll Radiological Cleanup Project Veterans, Veterans exposed to Deleted Uranium (DU), and those Veterans stationed in Japan or part of the Humanitarian effort surrounding the Fukushima disaster. The federal Government/VA recognizes those involved with the atomic testing from 1945 to 1962, POWs and occupation forces in Hiroshima and Nagasaki as both Atomic Veterans and Occupational Exposure Veterans. While veterans exposed to Deleted Uranium (DU), and those Veterans stationed in Japan or part of the Humanitarian effort surrounding the Fukushima disaster are classified as Occupational Exposure Veterans. The Enewetak Atoll Radiological Cleanup Project Veterans are excluded from both classifications.

NAAV, its members, other Atomic Veterans and their family members and friends are interested in designating July 16th as Atomic Veterans Day in remembrance and honor of the sacrifice these Veterans and their family members have made. The significance of July 16th is that the first atomic bomb was tested July 16th, 1945 at Alamogordo, New Mexico.

In 1983 Public Law 98-54 (designating July 16 Atomic Veterans Day) was passed unanimously and signed by President Regan. Unfortunately, due to an error or omission, it failed to include "and every year here after." We have tried to correct this on a national level, however, have had more success on a State by State basis. I believe 12 to 16 States have Passed this into law. Minnesota last year passed the Senate Bill, as a stand alone Bill, unanimously. The MN House Bill was attached to other Bills also passed. However, the composite Bill was Vetoed by the Governor. The plan is to resubmit the Bill as a stand alone Bill prior to recess this year. We anticipate the Governor will sign it into law since he has issued a proclamation declaring July 16th Atomic Veterans Day the last two years.

Atomic Veterans had been under an oath of Secrecy until it was lifted in 1996 when Congress repealed the Nuclear Radiation and Secrecy Agreements Act freeing Atomic Veterans to describe their military involvement in nuclear testing to talk with their doctors, family members and the VA.

Atomic Veterans have played a vital role in the defense of the Nation.

We favor this legislation and urge it's expedient passage.

Thank you,

Keith Kiefer, NAAV National Vice Commander, etc.