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(This letter was originally written in 2007 and has from time to time been updated. 2021 update is written in bold) This letter is written as an expanded statement for my claim for service-connected compensation in letter (refer to:XXXXXXXXXXXX, File Number: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX), and is also a request for the proper consideration of a group of veterans I believe have been either forgotten or ignored. This letter is also written as a declaration of frustration with the exclusion of sailors that had been involved in the maintenance of navy nuclear weapons, in the radiation exposure lists maintained by the Veteran's Administration, and the Justice Department.

My career as a nuclear weaponsman commenced with Navy Nuclear Weaponsman Course, Class 73, which began June 5, 1961. The class convened at Sandia Base, Albuquerque, New Mexico. I graduated August 15, 1961. I attended this school after my enlistment in the U.S. Navy June 30, 1960, completing boot camp, followed by an assignment on USS Haven (AH-12), home ported in Long Beach, California. I also completed Phase I of the Navy Nuclear Weaponsman course, which consisted of courses in electricity & electronics in Great Lakes, Illinois, prior to my graduation as a Gunner's Mate Technician Seaman (GMTSN).

The rating of Nuclear Weaponsman (NW) was changed to Gunner's Mate Technician (GMT) during my school attendance in the early part of 1961. This change was to preclude kidnappings of nuclear weaponsmen by the soviets, and to give anonymity to Nuclear Weaponsmen, as the rating badge now looked like a standard Gunner's Mate Badge.

During my courses of instruction, we were told that the effects of radiation exposure were highly dramatized in Hollywood movies. We were also told the public's conception of the dangers of radiation were extremely exaggerated. Further, there was virtually no training (other than "avoid contact") about the hazards of the chemicals, particularly chlorinated hydro-carbon solvents, used while performing maintenance operations on the weapons. We constantly used solvents such as Trichloroethylene (Technical and Reagent) and Toluene in large quantities during our instruction and were not provided with any respiratory protection against the fumes. I used the above listed solvents in very large amounts when cleaning the weapons. I was provided Latex gloves, but the solvents dissolved the rubber, and my hands would be soaked with the chemicals. Again, no protection against solvent fumes was provided then, or at any other time in my career with nuclear weapons.

Before I write further, a word of explanation is necessary. It has long been the policy of the United States Department of Defense to neither confirm nor deny (NCND) the presence or absence of nuclear weapons at nuclear capable activities. Since the presidential order that removed all tactical nuclear weapons from navy surface ships and attack submarines, on September 27, 1991, this policy has been modified to apply only to Trident submarines and certain bases that are nuclear capable. I was assigned primarily to nuclear capable activities throughout my naval career from 1960 to 1991. My assignments from 1986 to 1991 did not include nuclear capable units. Nothing in this letter should be viewed as confirmation of the presence of nuclear weapons at any nuclear capable activity during any specific time period.

My first assignment was to an overseas location that maintained a capability for the Mk 90 Betty Depth bomb, and the capsule balls for this system, and also the Mk 101 Lulu Depth Bomb. The only personnel radiation exposure monitoring for these systems was the operation of a T-289 Tritium Monitoring Test set. There were no dosimeter film badges worn, nor were there any required "stay-times" in the vicinity of the weapons. My assignment was for period of twelve months. My exposure was significant, but none was recorded in my medical record.

My next assignment was on board an aircraft carrier. The weapon capabilities were the BOAR 20.7 (Air to Surface Rocket), Mk 7 Bomb, and associated capsule balls for these systems, and also the Mk 27 Bomb, Mk 28 Bomb, and the Mk 43 Bomb. As detailed in Navy SWOP 20-7, which lists the radiation emissions of weapons, the MK 27 was not only the largest weapon deployed on aircraft carriers, but also the highest "emitter". One of my duties was as a Hook Leader on this system. I also performed the regularly scheduled maintenance operations checking capsule balls and cleaning them of spalling radioactive material. This operation consisted of removing the active material capsule ball from its storage container, placing it on a table, and positioning it under a plastic box which contained holes on the sides for the insertion of arms.

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If spalling was observed, the capsule ball was placed into a paper bag, and with gloved hands the ball was vigorously rubbed to remove the spalling material from the surface of the capsule ball. It was not unusual to see the spalling material “pop-off” the surface of the capsule ball. The paper bag was treated as contaminated waste.

When the ship steamed in tropic climates, the coolest section of the ship was the nuclear weapons magazines. Since there were no restrictions on how long we could remain in the vicinity of weapons, we often remain in the magazines overnight, since it was cooler sleeping in the magazine than in our berthing compartment. It was an everyday occurrence to lie down between stacks of weapons and take a nap following lunch. The enforcement of the two-man rule was a new requirement, and not always complied with, as often there would not be two persons in the magazine who were awake to observe if unauthorized operations or actions were taking place. I was also involved in the emergency evacuation of a large number of capsule balls via aircraft from one country to another country, or safer storage location. There were no personnel radiation dosimeters worn during this operation. Onboard ship the only personnel radiation monitoring was the operation of a T-289 Tritium Monitoring Test Set, and we wore dosimeter film badges which only detected gamma, and beta radiation. This was a casual program and not rigidly enforced. I was assigned for fourteen months to this carrier. My exposure times are listed in my medical record only for August and September 1963, proving this program was not rigidly enforced. The readings show 0.00 for both months. I do not believe they reflect accurate amounts of exposure, since x-ray and neutron radiation were not considered.

My next assignment was to another aircraft carrier, with capabilities of the Mk 7 Bomb, Mk 105 Hotpoint, Mk 28 Bomb, Mk 43 Bomb, and the Mk 57 Bomb. There was no restriction on the amount of time we could remain in the vicinity of weapons. We often would remain in the magazine, as this was the coolest place in the ship while steaming in the tropics. During the Gulf of Tonkin Incident there was a period when we remained in the magazines for 24 hours daily, for two weeks. Personnel radiation monitoring involved T-289 Tritium Monitoring Test Sets. And the infrequent use of dosimeter film badges. I don't recall a regime of dosimeter film badge wear. It was during this assignment that dosimeter film badges were done away with completely, and personnel exposure to radiation was thought to be negligible. There is a blank entry in my medical record showing only the name of the ship, with no date or exposure totals. My assignment to this ship lasted 26 months.

Next, I was assigned to an Advanced Underwater Weapons (AUW) Shop, with capabilities of the Mk 101 Depth Bomb, Mk 57 Bomb, and trans-shipment capability of the MK 28, and Mk 43 Bomb. The only personnel radiation monitoring equipment was the T-289 Tritium Monitor Test Set, and the portable T-290 Tritium Monitoring Test Set. There was no dosimeter film badge program. My assignment was for 36 months.

My next assignment was an overseas location at a magazine that had the nuclear capabilities of a variety of navy nuclear weapons, as well as army nuclear weapons. I was a hook leader (maintenance petty officer) on the W45 MADM, W54 SADM, Talos, and Mk 48 Projectile, as well as the M57 Bomb. My work on one system involved the physical contact with active material target rings. This work was accomplished in a “hot room” equipped with an exhaust fan. There was no restriction on the time limits personnel could remain in an area that contained a nuclear weapon (exclusion area). Radiation monitoring equipment included the operation of T-290 portable Tritium Monitoring Test sets at specific times. There was a dosimeter film badge program in force at this command. The dosimeter measured only gamma radiation. My exposure amounts are listed in my medical record only for a period of six months and show an accumulative total dose of 00.24 gamma. My assignment at this location was for ten months.

My next assignment was an aircraft carrier, with capabilities of the Mk 28, Mk 43, Mk 57, and Mk 61 Bombs. There was no dosimeter film badge program in effect, and the only radiation monitoring was accomplished with a T-290 Tritium Monitor Test Set, at specified times. There was no restriction on the time limits personnel could remain in a magazine that contained a nuclear weapon (exclusion area). Also during this assignment, the ship's nuclear weapons magazine was flooded, which necessitated the disassembly of the weapons exposed to seawater, to a point that was beyond the normal maintenance procedures, to cleanse internal bomb parts. This cleaning job exposed sailors to weapons for much longer time frames than normal to

the weapons in an unshielded state. Also, during this time frame, a new program was instituted on board aircraft carriers.

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The new maintenance procedures were the accomplishment of warhead maintenance, which in the past had been accomplished only at shore locations. This involved disassembly of weapons to a point where there was much less shielding between nuclear weaponsmen and the warhead case that contained the active material. During this assignment, the berthing compartment air conditioning unit frequently broke down. The nuclear weaponsmen were also involved in conventional bomb building for bombing mission in Vietnam, which was very hard physical labor. The W Division officer permitted sailors to sleep within the nuclear weapons magazine, as this was the coolest space on the ship. My assignment to this carrier was for a period of twenty-six months and marked the last of my five deployments to the Vietnam War Zone.

My next assignment was in the United States, and was at a Nuclear Weapons Supply Annex, which only involved short radiation exposure times to nuclear components, I happened to be near as an armed forces courier. There were no personnel monitoring devices, or dosimeter film badges in use at this assignment. This assignment lasted for thirty-six months.

My next assignment was at an overseas location I mentioned previously. I performed the duties of a maintenance hook leader, and as a senior petty officer, was the Leading Petty Officer of the division. New personnel radiation monitoring directives were being issued during this assignment. We again used the portable T-290, and also began once again wearing dosimeter film badges, however these badges detected gamma, x-ray, and neutron radiation. I do not believe the dosimeter program was strictly enforced, as there are only entries in my medical record for a period of eleven months out of my thirty-six-month assignment. Also, a new storage device began to be developed. These were radiation-shielding devices that were placed on weapons storage containers. All weapons systems did not have the shielding device, only specific systems. Also, a sandbag requirement for weapons magazines was instituted. This system was primarily for the prevention of sympathetic detonations, but it also had the added effect of providing shielding between the weapons and nuclear weaponsmen. This assignment lasted thirty-six months.

My next assignment was at Kirtland Air Force Base, as the Assistant Naval Liaison Officer, in the Joint Nuclear Weapons Publication System (JNWPS) Office. In this position I was in close daily contact with Field Command Defense Nuclear Agency (FCDNA), Sandia Corporation, Los Alamos, and Lawrence Livermore scientists, and service publication offices. In my day-to-day work, I constantly heard concerns expressed over the exposure levels weapons maintenance personnel had been exposed to in the past. This concern was unique to navy nuclear weaponsmen, as no other service stored large stockpiles in such confined spaces, as in magazines on board ship. My assignment at Kirtland lasted nine months.

Following my commissioning, I was assigned as a division officer of a nuclear weapons division on an aircraft carrier. The nuclear capabilities of this carrier were the B43, B57, and B61 Bombs. During my absence from aircraft carriers for eight years, many changes in radiation monitoring had taken place. It had been determined for many years concern about a specific type of radiation (gamma) had been misplaced. The concern should have been about neutron radiation. During my assignment, gamma, x-ray, and neutron detection film dosimeter badges were worn by all nuclear weaponsmen while inside magazines. Radiation shields were gradually phased in for all weapons storage containers. There were also restricted stay times within the magazines that were strictly enforced. Magazines were only occupied for necessary work on the weapons, which still included warhead maintenance operations. There were padlocked neutron radiation detection boxes placed at all external bulkheads (walls) of all magazines containing nuclear weapons. The exposures of all nuclear weaponsmen were closely monitored and recorded in medical records. The T-290 was used at specific times. During my assignment, one sailor had an unexplained high exposure reading, which was investigated but never resolved. This assignment included numerous underway transfers between two ships which I'll not detail, but merely say these operations involved more than normal exposures for the men in my division. My medical record shows entries for all my exposures while onboard. The total lifetime dose shown is 0.335 rem. I know this is far from accurate, as my lifetime exposure is unknown due to the sporadic personal dosimeter use during my career, the failure of clear direction from higher authorities concerning radiation monitoring, and the failure

to record neutron exposure for the majority of my time as a nuclear weaponsman. My assignment on this ship lasted thirty-eight months.

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My next assignment was at Field Command Defense Nuclear Agency (FCDNA), located at Kirtland Air Force base, Albuquerque, New Mexico, in the FCDNA Stockpile Maintenance Branch. I was responsible for the maintenance procedures on over one third of the nation's stockpile. In this position, I acted as a liaison between all the services and Department of Energy (DOE), Sandia Labs, Los Alamos, Lawrence Livermore Labs, and numerous Department of Defense (DOD) Contractors. I was responsible in this capacity for numerous weapons systems, including the Ground Launched Cruise Missile deployment to Europe. In May 1986 a Los Alamos scientist approached me who had a unique request. He had been referred to me, as I was one of the oldest nuclear weaponsmen available that had experience on the weapons systems of the 1960's. He was tasked to investigate what radiation exposure a sailor might have experienced as a nuclear weapons aircraft-loading crewmember on an aircraft carrier in the 1960's. A sailor had submitted a request for service-connected compensation for cancer to the Veteran's Administration. He claimed radiation exposure was the cause of his cancer. I agreed to assist the scientist and asked him to return in a week. However, when I began investigating the past maintenance procedures on the old weapons systems, I was shocked to discover that all maintenance manuals, since they were classified had been destroyed. There was no repository of history on the old systems. The only knowledge of past maintenance operations was in the minds of the men who had worked on the weapons. I asked the scientist to delay for an additional week, and I arranged to give him a tour of a nuclear weapons museum, that contained trainers (or dummy bombs without explosives, or active material). I enlisted the help of a chief petty officer that had 23 years nuclear weapons experience, and during the tour, which was attended by the initial scientist, and five of his assistants, we showed them the maintenance operations we used to perform. What captured the attention of the chief and I was the exclamations of amazement and looks of horror on the scientist's faces when we explained the maintenance operations, we used to perform on the various active material capsule balls. They had not imagined that maintenance men had been exposed at such levels. We worked with them for two days. One of their comments was that we both should be aware that we might experience future health problems. I never learned the outcome of the sailors VA claim. It was also during this assignment that I learned that the "hot room" I had worked in at an overseas location had been monitored for radiation contamination, and it was discovered that no one had ever thought to monitor the hot room exhaust fan vent area, and it was discovered to have extremely high radiation levels, that required extensive decontamination. This leaves doubts as what levels of radiation the persons working in the hot room may have been exposed to. I was assigned to FCDNA for a period of thirty-four months.

My next assignments, as a Limited Duty/Chief Warrant Officer Assignment Officer in Washington, D.C., and as an Officer in Charge of a naval base in Oregon did not involve work with nuclear weapons.

I belong to an organization called Navy Nuclear Weapons Association©™*, with a membership of over 500 members that were involved with navy nuclear weapons. Our job was done away with in 1996. They are a humble group, and there remains a deep sense of pride for a "job well done." Because our work was highly classified at one time, there is a hesitancy to talk about their experiences, which I feel would enlighten those involved in the medical profession. In the latter years of my naval career, I noted that much of the early knowledge of maintenance on the first weapons was gradually fading away. Much of this was due to the aging, and retirement of the early nuclear weaponsmen, and the scientist that were involved in the development of these systems. One objective of the Navy Nuclear Weapons Association©™* is to preserve this portion of our military's history. I firmly believe that little has been done as far as research on the impact of radiation exposure on the health of nuclear weaponsmen. I have noted, as have others, that many of the members of our association have died at a young age, and cancer is a prevalent disease. I should explain that I am very proud of my career as a nuclear weaponsman. I feel this job contributed to the defense of our nation in a way that will never be fully appreciated by the American public, and as a deterrent probably saved our nation from annihilation. I feel the least our government should do, would be to investigate to see if those who served as nuclear weaponsmen should be included on the radiation exposure list along with the "Atomic Veterans" that have a presumption of service connection for specific diseases. A radiation dose reconstruction program for navy nuclear weaponsmen

would be an honorable effort on behalf of these sailors. I feel the majority of Atomic Veterans probably had less radiation exposure than most career navy nuclear weaponsmen.

This letter with occasional updates was written in 2007. At this time, I feel it is appropriate that I include some relevant information. During the annual 2020 reunion meeting of the NNWA in Colorado Springs I requested that a survey of members be conducted to evaluate how many members had experienced cancer and if so what type.

NNWA membership rolls include over 400 active members. The cancer survey was sent to all members with an active email address. This was the first survey of this type ever conducted. There were 40 responders with a total of 61 cancers reported. If this were compared to the general population, I am sure those working with nuclear weapons would be shown to have higher cases of cancers. I greatly appreciate NNWA President Kris Hobbs and NNWA Webmaster Ray Margeson for their work conducting this survey. The survey results follows:

Results of NNWA Cancer survey	
Prostate	19
Renal	1
Colon	3
Basal cell squamous	1
Skin	9
Pancreas	2
Squamous cell	4
Lymphatic leukemia	1
Bile duct	1
Lymphoma	1
Melanoma	3
Thyroid	1
Lymph node	1
Penis	1
Urethra	1
Bladder	3
Laryngeal squamous cell	1
Basal cell	2
Basal Cell carcinoma	1
Cartoid	1
Lung	2
Squamous cell skin	1
Basal cell skin	1
Total reported by 40 respondents	61

This was not a scientific survey, but an effort to get the attention of those who promised to take care of those who went in harm's way for the defense of America. I feel Navy Nuclear Weaponsmen (and women) have been ignored by the VA and not considered as (some say) radiated veterans just as Atomic Veterans are. It seems a deaf ear has been turned toward veterans who I believe prevented WWII and are now being discarded as used pawns by the country they served. My passion for this is fueled by the many shipmates I have seen carried to their gravesite without any compensation whatsoever, leaving in many cases, families unaware of the sacrifice their loved one made for America.

As President Bush stated during a speech made August 16, 2004, before the Veterans of Foreign Wars:

“One of the great honors of being Commander-in-Chief is meeting the courageous men and women who stand watch for freedom. Nothing gives me greater pleasure than to look them in the eye and say on behalf of our country, thank you for your service.

The same is true of each of you here today. When the enemies of freedom were on the march, and our country and the world needed brave Americans to take up arms and stop their advance, you stepped forward to serve. And today, I'm proud to stand before you as Commander-in-Chief, look you in the eye, and say, America thanks you for your service.”

I feel an appropriate “thanks” would be the diligent attention to the health of those nuclear weaponsmen who put their health in harm’s way to serve our great country. I am grateful to the VA Healthcare System and particularly the Roseburg VA Healthcare System for my continuing care

I CERTIFY THAT the statements on this six (6)-page statement are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief:

James S. Little

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